



## The Study of

## The First Letter of Peter

### First Peter Studies Lesson Divisions:

- Lesson Text: Title:
- 01: 1.1-2 **Praescrpto: Getting to Know First Peter**
- 02: 1.3-9 **Proem 1: Peter's Prayer for His Readers**
- 03: 1.10-12 **Proem 2: Peter's Prayer for His Readers**
- 04: 1.13-16 **Body 1: Living in Holiness**
- 05: 1.17-21 **Body 2: Living Smart**
- 06: 1.22-25 **Body 3: Living in God's Truth**
- 07: 2.1-8 **Body 4: Living like New Babies**
- 08: 2.9-10 **Body 5: Living with a New Identity**
- 09: 2.11-12 **Body 6: Living as Aliens and Foreigners**
- 10: 2.13-17 **Body 7: Living Obediently to Human Authorities**
- 11: 2.18-25 **Body 8: Living as Christian Slaves**
- 12: 3.1-6 **Body 9: Living as Christian Wives**
- 13: 3.7 **Body 10: Living as Christian Housebands**
- 14: 3.8-12 **Body 11: Living Obediently**
- 15: 3.13-22 **Body 12: Living with Abuse**
- 16: 4.1-6 **Body 13: Living in Paganism**
- 17: 4.7-11 **Body 14: Living in Service to Others**
- 18: 4.12-19 **Body 15: Living in the Fire**
- 19: 5.1-5 **Body 16: Living with One Another, Leaders and Members**
- 20: 5.6-9 **Body 17: Living in Victory over the Devil**
- 21: 5.10-11 **Body 18: Praising God**
- 22: 5.12-14 **Conclusio: Saying Goodbye**

### Outline of Contents in First Peter:<sup>1</sup>

- Praescrpto: 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**

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**First Peter is a neglected treasure of spiritual insight. Only in recent times have Bible students begun to value the vast amount of wisdom contained in this small letter. Written by Silas from Peter's dictation in the late 50s to early 60s of the first century, this document lifts up Christian hope to believers suffering hardship and persecution for their faith. The theme of living in Christ permeates the letter, and spells out many of the implications of devotion to Christ, especially when facing opposition to one's faith. Studying this document will change your life!**

## First Peter Studies

1.1 Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκλεκτῶν ἡμῶν διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, 2 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖν.	Page:
<b>The Study of The First Letter of Peter: Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 01: <i>Praescriptio</i>: 1 Peter 1:1-2, "Getting to Know Peter"</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 02: <i>Proem</i> 1: 1 Peter 1:3-9, "Peter's Prayer for His Readers"</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 03: <i>Proem</i> 2: 1 Peter 1:10-12, "Longed For Salvation"</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 04: <i>Body</i> 1: 1 Peter 1:13-16, "Living in Holiness"</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 05: <i>Body</i> 2: 1 Peter 1:17-21, "Living Smart"</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 06: <i>Body</i> 3: 1 Peter 1:22-25, "Living in God's Truth"</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 07: <i>Body</i> 4: 1 Peter 2:1-8, "Living Like New Babies"</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 08: <i>Body</i> 5: 1 Peter 2:9-10, "Living with New Identity"</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 09: <i>Body</i> 6: 1 Peter 2:11-12, "Living Above the Flesh"</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 10: <i>Body</i> 7: 1 Peter 2:13-17, "Civic Duties of Believers"</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 11: <i>Body</i> 8: 1 Peter 2:18-25, "Serving Non-Christian Bosses"</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 12: <i>Body</i> 9: 1 Peter 3:1-6, "Winning a non-Christian Husband"</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 13: <i>Body</i> 10: 1 Peter 3:7, "Husbands, live with your wife"</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 14: <i>Body</i> 11: 1 Peter 3:8-12, "Live compassionately"</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 15: <i>Body</i> 12: 1 Peter 3:13-22, "Suffering Unjustly"</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 16: <i>Body</i> 13: 1 Peter 4:1-6, "Understand Suffering"</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 17: <i>Body</i> 14: 1 Peter 4:7-11, "The End is Near"</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 18: <i>Body</i> 15: 1 Peter 4:12-19, "Understand Suffering"</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 19: <i>Body</i> 16: 1 Peter 5:1-5, "Develop the Right Atmosphere"</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 20: <i>Body</i> 17: 1 Peter 5:6-9, "Standing up to Opposition"</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 21: <i>Body</i> 18: 1 Peter 5:10-11, "God's Promise"</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>Bible Study Session 22: <i>Conclusio</i>: 1 Peter 5:12-14, "Saying Goodbye"</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>Appendix 1: ΠΕΤΡΟΥ Α Diagram</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>Appendix 2: First Peter - English Text Diagram</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>The First Letter of Peter: Bibliography of Secondary Sources</b>	<b>361</b>
<b><i>Explanation of Contents:</i></b>	
Two versions of the studies are presented. The first is labeled "German Version" because a copy of the German Die Gute Nachrichten-Bibel is presented in the translation text columns at the beginning of each study. The second is labeled "Spanish Version" because a copy of the Spanish La Biblia de las Américas is presented in the translation text columns at the beginning of each study. The exposition of the scripture text is the same between	
<b>Access Instructions:</b>	
<b>German Version of Studies:</b>	
The hyperlink under the designation of <b>letter type</b> takes you to the online copy of the chapter at cranfordville.com. But the hyperlink under the <b>chapter title</b> takes you to the corresponding chapter on this CD.	
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The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 01**  
**1 Peter 1:1-2**  
**“Getting to Know Peter”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

1.1 Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, 2 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοήν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνην πληθυνθείη.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

1 1 Diesen Brief schreibt Petrus, der Apostel von Jesus Christus, nach Pontus, Galatien, Kappadozien, Asien und Bithynien.

Ich schreibe an die Erwählten Gottes, die dort als Fremde in dieser Welt leben, mitten unter Ungläubigen. 2 Gott, der Vater, hat euch erwählt, wie er es von Anfang an beschlossen hatte. Er hat euch durch den Heiligen Geist ausgesondert und zubereitet, damit ihr euch Jesus Christus im Gehorsam unterstellt und durch sein Blut rein gemacht werdet.

Gnade und Frieden sei mit euch in immer reicherm Maß!

**NRSV**

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

**NLT**

1 This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God’s chosen people who are living as foreigners in the lands of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia. 2 God the Father chose you long ago, and the Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed Jesus Christ and are cleansed by his blood. May you have more and more of God’s special favor and wonderful peace.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [From Peter](#)
  - b. [To the churches](#)
  - c. [Hello](#)

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**Introduction to Study.** This study begins a twenty-two session exploration into the riches of the New Testament document known as First Peter. This ancient letter stands as the second document in the General Letters section of the New Testament, and is the first of two documents attributed to the apostle Peter in the early church. The letter expresses hope and confidence in the face of suffering and persecution. And as such it stands as a source of great encouragement to believers of all times undergoing similar experiences. Its initial reminder of us in the *Praescriptio* that all believers stand as foreigners in this world while we await God’s calling us to our eternal home with Him provides all believers with important insights into the nature of the Christian life lived out on planet earth. The implications of being ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις are spelled out in the Body proper of the letter with challenging implications for discipleship.

Come journey with us in the exciting venture of studying First Peter. You will find it rewarding and challenging. With this first study we get acquainted with the basics -- who was responsible for the letter, who were the initial readings, something about the circumstances of the writing of the letter in the mid-first century world.



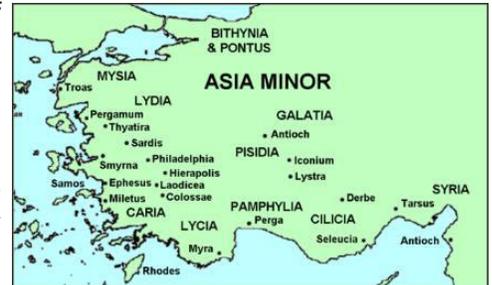
**I. Context**

Have you ever listened to someone talking on a phone but didn’t know who they were speaking with? If so, then you understand something of the challenge of interpreting ancient letters. The letter sender is “talking” with his initial readers through the ‘substitute presence’ of a letter. We don’t know these individuals personally, and are dependent on the letter sender to give us clues about the identity of his targeted readers. The more we learn about them, the better we can understand what the sender is attempting to say to them.

Identifying the circumstances for the writing of this New Testament document is the goal of this first study, based on the letter Praescriptio in 1:1-2 as the launch pad into the who and to whom, the when and where, the why questions that comprise the background understanding of First Peter. In addition, the rich doctrinal expression in the first two verses open up avenues for understanding important aspects of Christian experience, as well as signal major themes to be developed in greater detail in the Body of the letter.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The historical circumstances of the writing of the letter are helpful for understanding the content of the entire letter. Precise dating of the letter is not possible, simply because not enough data about time and place inside the letter exists in order to determine an exact time for the writing of the letter. Thus only an approximation of date can be suggested, based loosely on generalized signals of circumstance from the details provided in the letter. Early church history strongly suggests that Peter was martyred by Nero in Rome in the mid 60s of the first century about the same time as was the apostle Paul. In the assumption of Petrine authorship of the letter,<sup>1</sup> the mid-60s would be the latest possible time for the composition of the letter. Add to that the issue of Second Peter, following First Peter, and this would push back the time of the composition somewhat prior to Peter's death. Given the clear presupposition of a reasonably well developed Christianity in much of what is modern Turkey today by the letter, the date of the letter would more naturally come at least toward the end of the 50s with the Pauline mission in much of this world establishing churches during the early to middle 50s. So the best estimate of date is sometime between the end of the 50s and the middle 60s of the first Christian century.



The 50s and 60s of the first Christian century was the time of the reign of Nero as emperor of the Roman Empire. The time of Nero's reign during the middle of the first Christian century (AD 54-68) was both good and bad for the empire. The early years were productive in expanding the empire, promoting building programs, and strengthening the borders of the empire.<sup>2</sup> The latter years, especially of the 60s, were characterized by challenges to his reign from within and troubles with old enemies. The Roman-Parthian War of 58-63 over control of Armenia to the east of the provinces address in First Peter helped to secure Armenia as a buffer zone between the Romans and the Parthians, and represented the only reasonably successful military campaign of Nero's reign. The stability this gave to the provinces mentioned in First Peter made Nero very popular in this region. Additionally he cultivated popularity among the masses by implementing laws to make life easier for them. Thus during the 50s and early 60s the eastern provinces mentioned in First Peter would reflect popular support for Nero. Given the Asian influences of worship of a king as divine, loyalty to him came easily. During the 60s Nero enthusiastically promoted emperor worship, claiming that he was equal to Apollo and the other gods. He is known in history as the first systematic persecutor of Christians as a result of blaming them for the great fire in Rome in AD 64.<sup>3</sup> Thus the theme of state sponsored persecution of Christians in Asia and the other eastern provinces



<sup>1</sup>Of course, if one views the letter written in the name of Peter and not by Peter himself, a much later date for the time of composition is possible. Many scholars take this position, but the arguments in favor of such a view are not convincing to me. The traditional view that Peter dictated the letter to Silas at some point prior to his martyrdom is the preferred position. 1 Peter 5:12 is important here: (NRSV) "Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it." (Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογιζομαι, δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε.)

<sup>2</sup>Nero became emperor at 17 years of age. These early years were largely the product of his two main advisers, Lucius Annaeus Seneca and Sextus Afranius Burrus. Jealously by his mother Agrippina of these men led him eventually into a downward spiral. In AD 59 Nero had his mother murdered, which began a series of murders of people close to him. Increasing conflict with the Roman Senate eventually led to his banishment from Rome and his death on June 9, 68 AD.

<sup>3</sup>Christian tradition and secular historical sources hold Nero as the first major state sponsor of Christian persecution, and sometimes as the killer of Apostles Peter and Paul. Some 2nd and 3rd century theologians, among others, recorded their belief that Nero

by First Peter can easily fit the time frame of the late 50s to middle 60s.

**Internal History.** Time and place references in vv. 1-2 focus on the listing of the Roman provinces mentioned. The geographical and historical aspects of these spatial references will be treated in the exegesis below. Beyond this, for Peter to have had a direct role in the composition of the letter, the dating would have to be prior to his death at the hands of Nero in the mid-60s.<sup>4</sup> If one adopts Petrine authorship of Second Peter as well, then First Peter would have preceded this second letter by considerable time.

## b. Literary

### Literary Form (Genre).

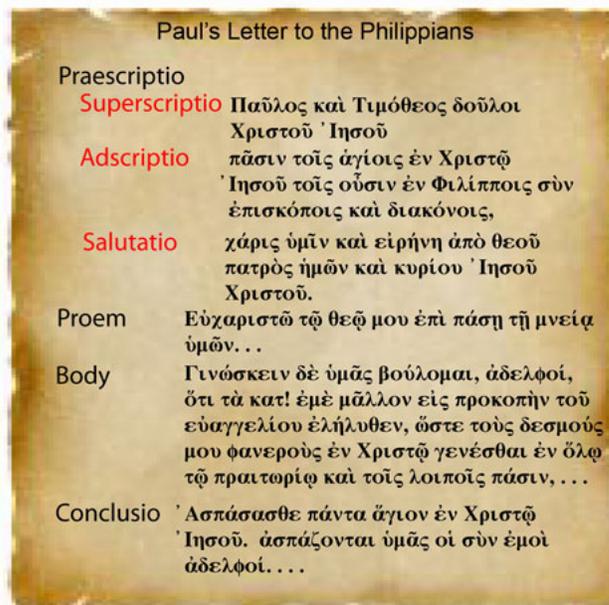
These first two verses stand as the *Praescriptio* of an ancient letter. Both of these aspects are important. Regarding the **'broad genre'** issues, letters in the ancient world served as a substitute presence of the writer. Various circumstances prevented the sender of the letter from being physically present with the recipients of the letter. Consequently in that world, unlike ours today, the only other option was to send a letter to the individual / individuals expressing the thoughts and desires of the sender.

This reality has several implications for interpretation. **First**, the sending of the letter was occasional. That is, some particular circumstance, or set of circumstances, prompted the composition of the letter. The Bible interpreter needs to identify that as a crucial part of the process of making correct sense of the content of the letter. In most ancient letters, especially those of a formal nature, the situation prompting the sending of the letter can be gleaned from the *Praescriptio* and the *Proem* sections of the letter at the outset. Such is the case with First Peter.

**Second**, the sending of the letter will assume knowledge of the details of circumstances etc. by the letter recipients that later readers in a different time and situation may not know or understanding. This always complicates the understanding but strongly implies the need to understand everything possible about both the letter sender and the letter recipients. The more we can discover about the individuals involved and the situation behind the sending of the letter, the better we can make sense of the words of the letter. **Third**, the occasional nature of the letter means that the issues being addressed in the letter are specific to the initial recipients of the letter. Whether what the sender says to them has relevancy to a modern reader depends entirely on how closely the issues being addressed correspond to similar or the same issues in a modern setting. The basic premise of historical interpretation of ancient texts becomes all the more crucial with ancient letters. Thus one has to carefully sort out the 'then' and 'now' meanings of the text. Building adequate bridges between these two levels of meaning necessitates following solid, time tested principles of hermeneutics. Central to this is the 'analogy of faith' principle that asserts the closer the circumstance of today to that being addressed in the text, the more exact the application of the text to the modern situation. Significant distances of culture etc. between the 'then' and 'now' meanings result in less clear applications of the text to today. Always the Bible student needs to be seeking 'timeless' truths from the text that will have relevancy to any period of history.

would return from death or exile, usually as 'the Anti-Christ.'" ["Nero: Christian Tradition," Wikipedia online]

<sup>4</sup>"The first text to suggest that Nero killed an apostle is the apocryphal *Ascension of Isaiah*, a Christian writing from the 2nd century. It says, *the slayer of his mother, who himself this king, will persecute the plant which the Twelve Apostles of the Beloved have planted. Of the Twelve one will be delivered into his hands.*<sup>182</sup> Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 275–339) was the first to write that Paul was beheaded in Rome during the reign of Nero.<sup>183</sup> He states that Nero's persecution led to Peter and Paul's deaths, but that Nero did not give any specific orders. Several other accounts have Paul surviving his two years in Rome and traveling to Hispania.<sup>184</sup> Peter is first said to have been crucified upside-down in Rome during Nero's reign (but not by Nero) in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* (c. 200).<sup>185</sup> The account ends with Paul still alive and Nero abiding by God's command not to persecute any more Christians. By the 4th century, a number of writers were stating that Nero killed Peter and Paul." ["Nero: Christian Tradition," Wikipedia online]

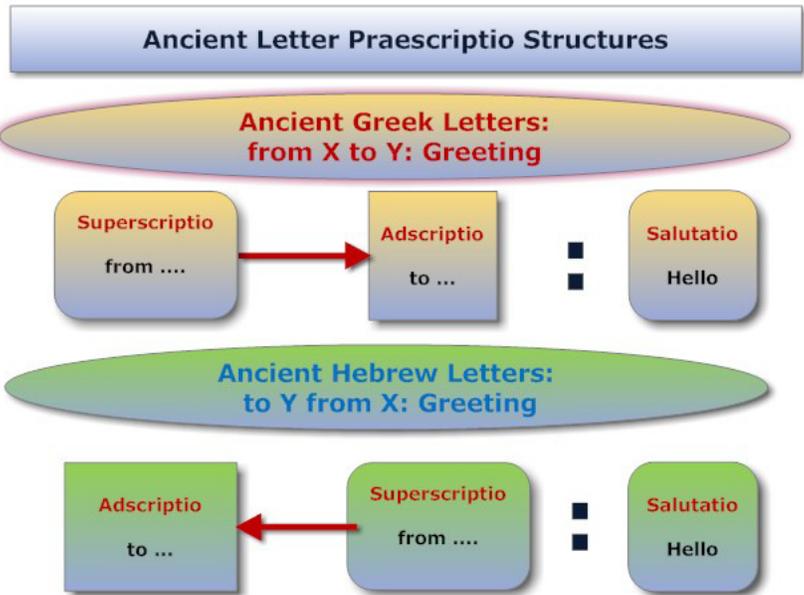


Ancient Letter on papyrus

Our study of First Peter will be sensitive to this reality in reading the letter of Peter to believers in the middle of the first Christian century.

The intention of the letter is stated in 5:12 as a “letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God” (ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ). This aim is affirmed by the inclusion of large amounts of hortatory and parenthetical material in the letter body. Thus the letter falls under the category of an ancient hortatory letter written to encourage and inspire its readers.

Regarding the ‘*narrow genre*’ concerns, 1:1-2 constitute an ancient letter *Praescriptio*. This Latin term simply means ‘pre-writing’ and designates the labeling of an ancient letter, often found on the outside of the rolled up scroll. This material served to identify the scroll in terms of the sending and the recipients) of the letter. Three elements typically were contained in most ancient letters, although the third element was more optional than the first two.<sup>5</sup> These elements were the *Superscriptio*, the *Adscriptio*, and the *Salutatio*. The *Superscriptio* identified the sender(s) of the letter, usually by name and also by title. If more than one individual was involved in sending the letter, these persons would typically be identified in the *Superscriptio*.



One important observation to note is that the sender did not do the actual writing of the letter, except for very short personal letters to family members. In the more formal letters written to groups of people -- as is the case uniformly in the letters of the New Testament -- a writing secretary was used to do the actual writing of the letter. In the case of First Peter, Silas, who is identified by the Latin form of his name Silvanus in 5:12, did the actual writing of this letter. In that world professional scribes were typically used and paid set fees for their work. In early Christianity various individuals with writing skills voluntarily fulfilled this responsibility for different Christian leaders as a part of their ministry calling from God.

For interpretation purposes the Bible student should pay close attention to the ‘expansion’ elements contained in the letter *Praescriptio*. When the letter sender ‘expands’ beyond the core elements of identifying himself, his initial readers, and saying hello, he typically adds expansions that signal major themes to be developed in detail in the letter body. Doing this in both the letter *Praescriptio* and the *Proem* sections was common in the ancient world as a communication technique to help the initial readers anticipate the points of the letter that were important to remember. Sometimes also in the *Conclusio* section at the end of the letter a summary of major themes was included for the same purpose. These signals are invaluable to the modern reader seeking to understand the content of the letter.

The *Praescriptio* of First Peter contains the typical elements as follows:

**Superscriptio:** 1.1 Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,)

**Adscriptio:** ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ: (To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:)



**Salutatio:** χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖη. (May grace and peace be yours in abundance.)

From this one can readily notice that the major expansions are attached to the Adscriptio section. The Superscriptio contains both name and title with minor expansion of the title: an apostle of Jesus Christ. The Adscriptio contains significant religious and geographical details identifying the targeted

<sup>5</sup>First Peter contains all three elements, as is illustrated in the block diagram below.

recipients of the letter. The *Salutatio* has a Pauline echo with the dual emphasis on grace and peace, but contains the verb expression *πληθυσθείη*, not found in the letters of Paul.

**Literary Context.**

The *Praescriptio* in ancient letters served to identify the basics about the letter contents contained on the inside of the rolled up scroll. Typically this information was located on the outside of the scroll. Thus the formula nature of the *Praescriptio*. By glancing at this information on the exterior side of the scroll the individual could understand the basic identity of the document in terms of who was sending the letter, to whom it was being sent, and the basic greeting that was intended to bridge sender and reader together in a favorable tone.

Consequently, this material serves as a formal introduction to the letter and comes at the very beginning of the document. Only in more recent translations has the formula nature of the *Praescriptio* been recognized and thus translated in a quasi poetic form which each element indented separately.

The title of the letter found in most modern printed Greek New Testaments (e.g., SBL-GNT: “ΠΕΤΡΟΥ Α”) and the translation language title (e.g., NRSV: “The First Letter of PETER”) is a later addition to the document for identification purposes for modern readers.

**Literary Structure.**

The *Praescriptio* of ancient letters stood as independent, formula elements to the letter. And as such do not typically contain complete sentences. But the block diagramming of these formal elements is helpful to see the internal structure of these elements:

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in First Peter:**

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    - *Haustafeln 2:18-3:7*
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  - *Encouragement 3:13-4:11*
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  - *Benedictio, 5:14b*

1.1 **Peter**

an apostle of Jesus Christ

**To the chosen immigrants of the diaspora**

in Pontus  
Galatia  
Cappadocia  
Asia  
and  
Bithynia

1.2

according to the foreknowledge of God  
the Father

in sanctification by the Spirit  
for obedience

and  
the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,

**Grace and peace be multiplied to you**

The *Praescriptio* of First Peter follows the standard pattern of ancient Greek letters: **A to B: Greetings**. Peter is identified as the sender; the believers in the specified Roman provinces as the recipients; and an expanded greeting that is distinctive from the Pauline model in the New Testament.

## II. Message

The natural structure of the text provides the basis for the outline of the passage. The importance of following such a process is substantial as one aid to help avoid reading false meaning back into the scripture text. When the outline accurately reflects the historical meaning of the text, the applications drawn from the text have a defined framework that will strengthen their accuracy and biblical basis.<sup>6</sup>

The central theme of these verses is the communication of a Christian leader to beloved believers in a way to not just inform them but to inspire them to new levels of commitment to Christ. Peter's preference would have been to make a personal visit to encourage the struggling communities of faith. But circumstances made such impossible. So the next best option in the ancient world was to send a letter of encouragement to them.

### a. A Christian leader sends an encouraging message, v. 1a

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

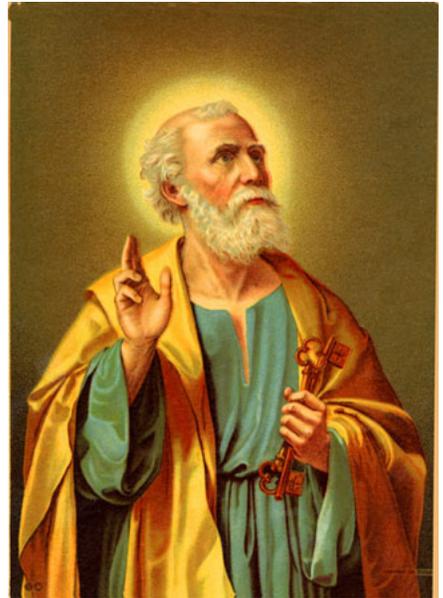
#### Notes:

Were you to open up your mail on some particular occasion and discover a personal letter from Billy Graham addressed directly to you, what would your reaction be? I suspect you would feel excitement and elation that a Christian leader such as Dr. Graham would take time to write you a personal note of encouragement. You would carefully pour over each word, anxious to glean all the insights possible from the wisdom of such a recognized preacher of the Gospel.

A similar reaction by the various communities of faith where this letter was read most likely took place in the early 60s of the first Christian century. The aged apostle of Christ had sent them a letter! It was read, and re-read, many times. I suspect each congregation eagerly sought to make a copy of it before the letter was carried to another congregation in a different town. Since the letter was addressed to a large number of congregations scattered over a wide territory, having a copy for themselves took on major importance. They wanted to have at least one permanent copy of the letter for their community of faith. And most likely it didn't take very long before multiple copies would begin circulating within the individual communities of faith.

Who was the person responsible for sending this letter? He identifies himself in the *Superscriptio* both by name and by title. Both these identifiers provide important understanding about the letter. The man Simon Peter played a pivotal role in apostolic Christianity as one of its key leaders. Knowing all we can about him helps us understand better what he will say to these ancient believers. Also, understanding the acknowledged role of apostle is important for our grasping the ideas of the text.

**Simon Peter: Πέτρος.** Who was this person? Norman R. Ericson ("Peter, First, Theology of," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*) provides a brief synopsis of the self-identity of Peter<sup>7</sup> inside the letter



<sup>6</sup>I will construct the outline for each of the First Peter studies attempting to reflect these basic hermeneutical principles, that build off of what I taught seminary and university students for four decades. These are summarized in my "Guidelines for Exegeting a Text from the Greek New Testament," at <http://cranfordville.com/Exegeting.html>. See Step 7 in this article for more details. The one deviation from this in these First Peter studies will be an *Expositional Outline* that builds off the *Exegetical Outline*. For details on this difference, see my "Steps to a Literary Structural Analysis of the Greek Text," at <http://cranfordville.com/gkgrma05.pdf>. In essence, the verb tense will be present time and not past time; the thrust of the simple sentence heading will be applicational, rather than just historical etc. The alert Bible student will recognize in these headings a potential sermon and / or teaching outline of the passage.

<sup>7</sup>"The names of Peter. The NT uses four names to refer to Peter. Least used is the Hebrew name Symeon (Ἰσμεων; Σεμεων), which appears only in Acts 15:14 and in most Greek MSS of II Pet. 1:1. The Greek name Simon (Σιμων) occurs much more often: in Matthew, five times; in Mark, six; in Luke, eleven; in John, twenty-two; in Acts, four (all in the Cornelius story); and possibly in II Peter, one (1:1). Nearly twenty times, almost all of them in John, the name Simon is used in the double name Simon Peter. The other two names, Cephas and Peter, are identical in meaning. Both mean "rock." Cephas (κηφας) is the Greek transliteration

itself:

The author calls himself Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ ( 1:1 ), a fellow elder, a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a participant in the eschatological glory ( 5:1 ). He has written by means of Silvanus ( 5:12 , or Silas; cf. Acts 15:22 Acts 15:27 Acts 15:32 ), with greetings from his “son,” Mark ( Acts 12:12 ; 15:37 ; Col 4:10 ) as well as from the elect church in “Babylon” a symbolic name for Rome (5:13 ; cf. Revelation 17:5 Revelation 17:18 ; Revelation 18:2 Revelation 18:10 ).

This Galilean fisherman was the son of a John (Jhn 1:42) or a Jonah (Mt. 16:17), who grew up on the western side of the Sea of Galilee in northern Palestine. Perhaps Capernaum (Mk. 1:21, 29) or Beth-Saida (John 1:44) was home town. Later on Peter had a home in Capernaum where Jesus healed his wife’s mother (Mt. 8:14 // Mk. 1:30 // Lk. 4:38). We don’t know his wife’s name but she traveled with him on his missionary endeavors for Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 9:5). His brother’s name was Andrew, and they were business partners of James and John before coming to Christ (Lk. 5:10). Andrew led Peter to Christ at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry in Galilee and Peter quickly become one of the leaders of the group of the Twelve. After Jesus’ ascension back to Heaven, Peter became the leader of the twelve apostles and of the Christian movement in its beginning Jewish days (Acts 1-11). The biblical record doesn’t contain details of his ministry after the 40s of the first century. Acts 12:17 indicates that he left Jerusalem and continued ministry largely outside Palestine. Some of the possible cities where he may have ministered include Antioch, Corinth, and Rome, as well as Asia Minor. From 1 Peter 5:13, he evidently was in Rome at the time of the writing of this letter.<sup>8</sup> Church tradition asserts that he was put to death in Rome by Emperor Nero in the mid-60s during the same period that the Apostle Paul suffered the same fate.

Peter was an established and widely acknowledged leader of the Christian movement, although the title ‘pope’ doesn’t belong in spite of Roman Catholic tradition. Both his strengths and weaknesses surface in the biblical story of his life. We would like to know more about his education, since the quality of the Greek in First Peter is very good but is very poor in Second Peter. Perhaps Silas as writing secretary of First Peter accounts for the quality of the Greek in the first letter (5:12), but Peter had no writing secretary in the composition of the second letter.

**Apostle of Jesus Christ: ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.** In ancient formal letters the *Superscriptio* typically included not only the name of the sender but an indication of his official title as well. This provided the authority base for any demands the sender would make on the recipients in the body of the letter.

Peter’s title is stated simply as ‘apostle of Jesus Christ.’ Three simple words with enormous meaning both then and now. Paul claimed this title in nine of his thirteen letters in the New Testament, but Peter is the only one in the General Letters to make this claim.<sup>9</sup> Who was an ἀπόστολος? Although the term can mean missionary out of the root meaning of ‘one sent’, in such titular uses as here the term is referring to the Twelve Apostles that Jesus especially commissioned to lead His church after His departure. These men were given unique authority to oversee the launching of the Christian movement in the first century; the New Testament that we have today is the written record of their witness to Christ. The Christian gospel is built on the foundation of the witness of the apostles.<sup>10</sup> They possessed special authority that no one beyond them or since them of the Aramaic word כּהן, “rock.” It occurs in John once, in I Corinthians four times, and in Galatians four times. The Greek word πέτρος has the same meaning (John 1:42). It occurs in Matthew twenty-three times, in Mark nineteen, in Luke seventeen, in John thirty-four, in Acts fifty-six, in Galatians twice, and in I Peter and II Peter once each. Because Greek MSS vary in the name given in some passages, these figures are only approximate, but they show clearly that the name Peter is dominant in NT usage, and that the name Simon, though used often, is much less frequent. The double name Simon Peter and the phrase “Simon called Peter” recall that Simon was the earlier name and the name Peter was given later. The frequency of the name Simon in the gospels and the rare use of Symeon in the NT indicate that the name Simon was not merely a later Greek substitute for Symeon, but that the name Simon was his alternate original name and was in common use during Jesus’ ministry. If this is so, it hints at some Greek background for the pre-Christian life of Peter. He was not an Aramaic-speaking Jew who had no touch with the Hellenistic forces in Galilee, but a bilingual Jew who thereby had some providential preparation for later missionary preaching.” [F.V. Filson, “Peter,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach online]

<sup>8</sup>NRSV: “Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark.” Babylon is a code word for Rome.

<sup>9</sup>See the listing of the epistolary Praescriptia in the Greek New Testament at <http://cranfordville.com/g496CLess01RIPraescriptioList.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup>Eph. 2:20 NRSV: “19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.”

has been given by God. Consequently when an apostle spoke, his words carried special authority -- both then and now.

*What can we learn from the Superscriptio?* Most importantly we see in this the effort of an older Christian leader to reach out to struggling believers in order to give them words in insight and inspiration. By this point in time Peter was at least in his 50s if not older. He had been serving Christ well over three decades. His life had not been easy or comfortable. Serving the Lord had taken him well out of his 'comfort zone' of Galilee into places where he faced hostility and all kinds of challenges in preaching the gospel of Christ. And he had been faithful in that service, along with his wife. Now toward the end of the journey he learned of believers in the eastern part of the Roman empire who were struggling with persecution. We can't say whether he had ever visited them personally prior to the writing of this letter. But he cared deeply for them and desired to help them. Not being able to personally journey there to encourage them, Peter composed this wonderful letter of hope and encouragement to be read to each congregation by trusted assistants.

How often do we as Christian leaders continue to care for God's people? Perhaps for believers that we don't know personally? Peter's example challenges us to indeed 'shepherd my flock' as Jesus had instructed Peter to do years before (John 21:15-18).

Many preachers and Christian leaders today claim authority from God. But none possess special authority from God, like that of Peter. And as we will see in chapter five, even Peter's authority as an apostle was gained through shepherding example, not through possessing an office.<sup>11</sup> Biblical authority rests solely in God, and not in men. People gain influence over others by being someone intensely dedicated to God. This authority comes out of character and actions. Never out of claiming a title of authority! To see Peter in the 'office of apostle' is to read back into the text something that did not develop until centuries after the writing of this letter. Peter, himself, would have been vehement in rejecting any authority from 'occupying a office.' Apostleship was a *ministry* and a *calling* to serve God, and thereby to serve God's people.

### **b. Struggling believers need to hear that message, vv. 1b-2a**

To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:

ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας, 2 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

#### **Notes:**

The *Adscriptio* identifies the initial recipients of the letter. The first readers of this letter were scattered over a wide geographical region in the northeastern Mediterranean world. In the eyes of the government authorities of that region they were 'nobodies,' that is, people of questionable character who needed to either be brought in line with Rome or else eliminated. Against this negative portrayal of these believers, Peter characterizes them 'spiritually' with some of the most beautiful titles possible -- labels that aristocratic Roman society was not worthy to wear. With this expanded *Adscriptio* designation of the initial recipients of the letter we are introduced to themes and tones of Christian status that will permeate the entire letter.

**To the chosen exiles of the Dispersion: ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς.** The identification of the recipients begins with a spiritual designation of them. The first adjective, *ἐκλεκτοῖς*, affirms them as 'chosen of God.' Immediately we sense Peter's view of his first readers as the elect people of God.<sup>12</sup> These folks, both Jewish and Gentile,



<sup>11</sup>1 Peter 5:1-4 NRSV: "1 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, I exhort the elders among you 2 to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it — not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away"

<sup>12</sup>"The identification of the readers as "elect" (ἐκλεκτοῖς) employs a term that in the OT refers to Israel's special status as the people chosen by God.<sup>29</sup> This term, also familiar to the covenanters of Qumran,<sup>30</sup> became a common designation in the NT for Christians.<sup>31</sup> The idea of Christians as elect receives its fullest treatment in the NT in 1 Pet 1:3–2:10\*, with the specific term repeated in 2:9\*, indicating the importance the author ascribes to the OT understanding of the special place Israel occupied in God's economy of salvation as paradigmatic for understanding the new elect community. In 1 Peter, such election is based in Christ, whose election as the foundation for the church is from eternity (1:20\*; 2:4\*). Such election eventuates in final salvation (5:10\*), but as the ethical

were now God’s people, rather than ancient covenant Israel. The God of this universe had chosen them to be His own people.

The second adjective phrase, **παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς**, underscores their transient status in this world. Παρεπιδημος basically designates an alien, that is, someone living in a foreign country. These ‘foreigners’ are a part of the διασπορά, i.e., the Dispersion. This very Jewish term<sup>13</sup> is here applied to believers generally, whether Jewish or Gentile. Beyond the deliberate re-application of these otherwise Jewish designations to the believing community, this designation reminds



believers that life on planet earth is temporary, and that this world is not the real home of God’s people. In general, ancient Roman society considered being a παρεπιδημος as a disaster for it meant the loss of homeland and having to live in a foreign culture etc. usually as a conquered person. Massive numbers of people, mostly having been conquered by the Romans, found themselves living in such a strange circumstance in the empire. The yearning, at least early on, was to return home to things familiar and comfortable. Believers, so declares Peter, are foreigners in this world. Things should be strange and we live ‘out of our comfort zone’ in this world. But as the chosen of God, we are not homeless. We have a wonderful home to go to, the very city of God Himself, prepared for us by none other than Christ (cf. John 14:1-6).

Some older interpreters tend to see these very Jewish oriented terms here as signaling that Peter was writing to Jewish Christians living in the specified provinces. But the remainder of the letter clearly is targeting mostly Gentile Christians (cf. especially 1:18, 4:3-4). The letter sender is re-applying terms previously specifying covenant Israel to the mixed believing community of Jews and Gentiles.

**In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας.**

As the above map illustrates, the sequence of the listing of the Roman provinces draws a clock-wise circle<sup>14</sup> beginning with Pontus and ending with Bithynia.<sup>15</sup> This area comprises a major portion of the modern country of Turkey. The region varied in its population density with some provinces like Asia being fairly densely



admonitions throughout the letter make clear, such election puts upon those elected the responsibility to live in accordance with the character of the one who elected them (1:15–16\*).<sup>32</sup> [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), 81.]

<sup>13</sup>“Although Peter’s greeting is not quite so specifically Jewish as that of James (‘to the twelve tribes in the diaspora,’ James 1:1), the terms ἐκλεκτοί, παρεπιδημοί and above all διασπορά, appear to be expressions of a Jewish consciousness arising out of the Jewish experience.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 6.]

<sup>14</sup>The reason behind this circular listing of the Roman territories is unclear and has prompted speculation along one of two lines of reasoning. **First**, the sequence may suggest the travel route of those carrying the letter to the churches. But the logic assumed here is not entirely sustainable given the layout of the major roads, rivers etc. Also the starting point of Pontus is illogical for a messenger coming from Rome, and given that persecution of believers was the strongest in Pontus. **Second**, the sequence may signal the location of the writing: “the order moves from the area nearest to the area furthest for an author writing in Chaldean Babylon,<sup>95</sup> or conversely, it moves from the area furthest to the area nearest for one writing in Rome.<sup>96</sup>” [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, in Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 86.] In reality neither of these explanations is free of serious problems, and we must conclude that we really don’t know why this sequence is given.

<sup>15</sup>“The area included in the opening verse of 1 Peter (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia) was part of the Anatolian peninsula, which was very important in the mission of the early church, and appears to have been Christianized very rapidly.<sup>54</sup> The five areas named cover virtually the entire peninsula except for the regions south of the Taurus Mountains, in all some 300,000 square miles.<sup>55</sup> It was not a homogeneous area, either in terms of culture — while in general this area was very Greek in its culture,<sup>56</sup> Asia, Bithynia, and Pontus were more completely Hellenized, Galatia and especially Cappadocia to a lesser extent<sup>57</sup> — or in terms of wealth — while the area as a whole was prosperous, there was great inequality in its distribution of wealth,<sup>58</sup> a general characteristic of the Roman Empire at this time. The area enjoyed for the most part competent administration on the part of the Romans during the time 1 Peter was written,<sup>59</sup> and was a scene of continuing and extensive road building.<sup>60</sup> [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, in Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 83-84.]

settled, but others like Cappadocia being very sparsely settled. So the culture ranged from mostly rural to largely urban. Ethnically it was diverse. The mixture included local tribal groups, Persians and Iranians who had migrated from the eastern fertile crescent, Greeks (especially in Asia) and Romans, as well as substantial numbers of Jews who had come largely from the Babylonian Exile period in the eastern fertile crescent. Of the mentioned provinces Asia, on the west, was more heavily populated, economically wealthier, and more strategically located from the Roman government standpoint.<sup>16</sup> Cappadocia, on the eastern side, was the most sparsely populated that was mostly rural, and the poorest economically of the provinces mentioned here.<sup>17</sup> That Christian congregations had emerged in all of these provinces by the early 60s is a testimony to the faithfulness of believers to spread their new faith. These churches were made up of people out of this diverse cultural background. The letter is then addressed to believers in the churches located in these provinces.

But, in spite of the wide diversity of background of the church members, the language of spiritual status is eloquent and underscores the great blessing of God upon these people. As the Block Diagram above illustrates, the following qualifiers are connected to the adjective “chosen.” The first two qualifiers define the actions of God, and the second two specify the objective or goal of those actions. These immigrants are chosen 1) according to the foreknowledge of God and 2) by the sanctification of the Spirit. This election and sanctification is intended to 3) produce obedience to Christ, and 4) to sprinkle them with the blood of Christ.

**Destined by God the Father: *κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός*.** Believers are chosen foreigners in this world, and this choosing of believers has been done ‘according to’ (*κατὰ*) the foreknowledge<sup>18</sup> of God the Father. The preposition *κατὰ* defines the reference point of the choosing action. Not just anybody chose them. Rather, the God of this universe chose them to be His own people. And -- most importantly -- He chose them well in advance of their birth on this planet. His selection was arbitrary or an after thought. He decided to make them His children long before they existed. Against the backdrop of kings and emperors choosing people for special privilege usually because they possessed something attractive that drew the ruler to them, God chooses individuals not because of what they possess or who they are. The divine selection of sinners highlights the grace of God, not the worth of the chosen. And being chosen by God’s foreknowledge stresses the reality that God took the initiative in reaching out to us; not us first deciding to choose God. As 1 John 4:19 stresses, “We love because he first loved us.” With this language often used of Jesus and His sacrificial death, we believers should take immense satisfaction in realizing that just as God chose Jesus to be Savior before He created the world, He likewise chose us to be His children. We are privileged and blessed beyond measure!

**Sanctified by the Spirit: *ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος*.** The corollary to divine knowledge is the divine

<sup>16</sup>“The Roman province of Asia was the richest and best endowed of all the provinces of the peninsula. In the first century B.C., Cicero wrote: ‘In the richness of its soil, in the variety of its products, in the extent of its pastures, and in the number of its exports, it surpasses all other lands.’ Its cities were centers of culture where the sciences, philosophy, and literature flourished. In the interior the rich natural resources were developed into thriving industries. Woolen fabrics, particularly from Laodicea, were world renowned. The economy was brisk. Trade routes from the east passed down the valleys of the province to the coastal ports where costly merchandise was shipped to Greek and Roman ports to the west. Goods from western countries followed the same routes in reverse, as wealthy entrepreneurs traded with eastern importers. The Roman province of Asia became the crossroads of the empire.” [Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988), 217.]

<sup>17</sup>“The great plateau which dominated central Asia Minor contrasted markedly with its surroundings. Flat, treeless, ringed by forested mountains, broiling in summer and gelid in winter, it constituted a land apart, difficult to reach but then easy to traverse. Its climatic extremes limited most agriculture to cereals and some fruits; most of its surface lay in pasture.” [David Noel Freedman, vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 870.]

<sup>18</sup>Πρόγνωσις only surfaces twice in the New Testament, here and Acts 2:23. The verb form προγινώσκω is used on five times: Acts 26:5; Rom. 8:29; 11:2; 1 Peter 1:20, and 2 Peter 3:17 with either the meaning 1) to know beforehand or in advance, or 2) to choose beforehand. The noun πρόγνωσις carries the same twofold range of meaning:

“**πρόγνωσις, εὖως**, ἢ (cp. προγνώστης; Hippocr. et al. as a medical t.t.; Plut., Mor. 399d; 982c; Phlegon of Tralles [time of Hadrian]: 257 Fgm. 16e Jac. [in Orig., C. Cels. 2, 14]; Lucian, Alex. 8; Vett. Val. 220, 9; 221, 25; 355, 9; Jos., Ant. 15, 373 πρόγνωσιν ἐκ θεοῦ τῶν μελλόντων ἔχων; 17, 43; PGM 7, 294; Jdth 11:19; Just.; Tat. 1, 1) **1. foreknowledge** πρ. λαμβάνειν τελείαν receive complete foreknowledge 1 Cl 44:2. **2. predetermination**, of God’s omniscient wisdom and intention (so Alex. Aphr., Fat. 30 p. 200, 31 Br.; Proverbia Aesopi 131 P.; Jdth 9:6; Just., D. 92, 5 πρόγνωσιν ἔχων) w. βουλή Ac 2:23. κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός destined by God the Father (NRSV) 1 Pt 1:2 (Just., D. 134, 4; s. WArndt, CTM 9, 1929, 41–43).—DELG s.v. γινώσκω. 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), 866-67.]

action of the Holy Spirit in setting apart these people to God as His children.<sup>19</sup> When God chooses us to be His people, we must be made acceptable to Him as such. In the Gospel, this can only be achieved by divine action; it can never happen through our own efforts to become holy. In the Judaism of that day one had to become holy to God through obeying the Torah. As Paul discovered this was utterly impossible. But the good news of the Gospel is that God's Spirit works in our life at conversion to consecrate us, i.e., make us holy, to God. Then out of that consecration comes obedience as the consequence of consecration, not as the requirement for consecration. Jesus reversed the process and made it successful, where men had miserably failed in their false notion of becoming acceptable to God.

In a Gentile culture where boundary lines between right and wrong were hardly drawn at all, and even when drawn tended to be horrible distortions of reality, the message of the Christian Gospel came promising people the opportunity to reach out to the true God who as Father sought a relationship with them, and through His Son had provided a way to establish a relationship with sinful humanity. To those with a synagogue heritage, the Gospel came to them with the positive message that relationship with the God of Abraham was indeed possible because of the salvation work of Jesus Christ. Once they committed themselves to Him, God would indeed make them His people in the new community of believers that was open to all humanity. Peter affirms this marvelous message to his readers, both Jewish and Gentile, at the outset of the letter. And later in the letter body these themes will be expanded with further details.

**To be obedient to Jesus Christ: εἰς ὑπακοήν.** The first objective of God's choosing and consecrating of us is to produce obedience. The full prepositional phrase reads εἰς ὑπακοήν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, thus making Jesus Christ as the 'object' of obedience and the 'subject' of sprinkling.<sup>20</sup> Very importantly, our obedience flows out of consecration by the Holy Spirit, not leads to and serves as the basis of. When our lives are set apart to God by the Holy Spirit, the most natural consequence of that is to hear and obey (**ὑπακοή**) our Lord who has saved us from our sins. He has taken over control of our life and we now stand ready to do His will.

**To be sprinkled with his blood: καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.** It is likely that Exodus 24:1-8<sup>21</sup> stands in the background here, especially vv. 7-8, although not completely certain. Clearly it is the blood<sup>22</sup> that comes from Jesus Christ that is 'sprinkled' on the people which brings about cleansing from sin. This blood was poured out as an offering to God on the cross, and now is applied to each individual coming to Christ in faith commitment.<sup>23</sup> A commitment to obey is linked to the sprinkling action



<sup>19</sup>“ἁγιασμός πνεύματος in the present passage (as in 2 Thess 2:13) is emphatically a divine act and an aspect of Christian initiation. It refers to that separation by which individuals who are strangers and exiles in their world are gathered into a new community of the chosen. The cognate verb ἁγιάζειν is used similarly in 1 Cor 6:11: ‘But you were washed, you were consecrated, you were justified by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.’ The consecration Peter has in mind takes place through the proclamation of “the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent from heaven” (1:12). Only in connection with this work of setting apart a holy people is the Spirit of God in I Peter designated as ‘holy’ (ἅγιον) or associated with ἁγιασμός.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, vol. 49 in the Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 11.]

<sup>20</sup>The use of the Genitive case noun with nouns of action either as object or subject. A very creative use here, combining both functions. Michaels in the WBC missed his grammar assessment on both accounts here.

<sup>21</sup>Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship at a distance. 2 Moses alone shall come near the LORD; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him.” 3 Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” 4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve pillars, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 He sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed oxen as offerings of well-being to the LORD. 6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he dashed against the altar. 7 Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” 8 Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, “See the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

<sup>22</sup>The sprinkling of blood, ῥαντισμός αἵματος, is found in the NT only here and in Heb. 12:24. Surprisingly the LXX speaks only of the sprinkling of water (ὕδωρ ῥαντισμοῦ; 5x; lit. ‘water for sprinkling’), not blood, in the ceremonial cleansing actions and only in Numbers 19:9-21.

<sup>23</sup>“Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, sprinkles those whom God selected with His own blood, as Moses sprinkled the children of Israel who had promised obedience with the blood of oxen (Exod. 24:7 f.; cf. Heb. 9:19). But references to other

so that both are essential aspects of the conversion moment.

From this elevated designation of the recipients of the letter we catch sight of the glorious work of God in salvation. Although the Father, Spirit, and Son are referenced here, we should avoid seeing this as full blown trinitarianism, which doesn't emerge in Christianity for some centuries to come. To be sure, the essence of a triune God are clearly present here, but it would take some time before this evolves into the Nicean trinitarian confession in 325 AD from which the Apostles' Creed eventually develops.<sup>24</sup>

These persecuted believers in ancient Anatolia Peter addresses as the very people of God who have been brought to the Father by divine selection, the blood of Jesus Christ, and consecration by the Holy Spirit. As this letter was read through the various congregations such affirming language at the very outset must have created eager expectation to hear what the revered apostle would say. He got their undivided attention from the beginning of his letter.

What can we take from the Adscriptio? Certainly we can find powerful affirmation about who we are before God as committed believers in Christ. We stand uniquely as the very people of God with Him as our Heavenly Father. He chose us long before we were born and committed Himself to make us His own. At the moment of faith commitment His Spirit set us apart to Him, using the sprinkling of the very blood of Jesus Christ and our commitment to obedience. To be clear, we stand in this world as foreigners, uprooted from our true spiritual home of Heaven. But we are headed home as we look toward death and / or the second coming of Christ. In either instance, we will be carried into the very presence of a holy, pure, and utterly righteous God and will find acceptance before Him through the blood of His Son covering us. Few words are more affirming than these!

### c. Bonds of Christian friendship are strengthened by prayer, v. 2b

May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖη.

#### Notes:

The *Salutatio* of ancient letters sought to establish positive connections between sender and receiver of the letter. They were expressed as a prayer wish in most ancient Greek letters. The most common form was the single word χαίρειν, as is found in James 1:1c. In the pattern of Paul's greetings to the readers of his letters, the wording centers on grace and peace,<sup>25</sup> as here, but usually without a stated verb expression and more toward the formula pattern of ancient letters. Sometimes Paul's 'howdy' was expanded with numerous qualifiers such as in Gal. 1:3-5, but most often with designation of the source of this grace and peace as from God and from Christ. In a few of his later writings, it is grace, mercy, and peace that he wishes upon his readers.

The background of this greeting reflects both the Greek and Hebrew ways of greeting one another verbally in the ancient world. The most common Greek verbal hello was χαίρειν, as 2 John 10-11 make clear.<sup>26</sup> Quick observation of χαίρειν and χάρις makes clear the spelling connection of these two words. Peter, following

sprinklings of the O.T., unconnected with obedience, must not be excluded. The word ῥαντισμός is appropriated, for example, to the water in which the ashes of the heifer were dissolved (Num. 19); and a less obvious explanation is supported by Barnabas, 'that by the remission of sins we might be purified, that is in the sprinkling of His blood for it stands written... by His bruise we were healed (Isa. 53:5)'. Indeed the best commentary is supplied by the Epistle to the Hebrews in which evidence of the O.T. is reviewed and the conclusion drawn that according to the law everything is cleansed by blood. All the types were summed up in the fulfilment (see especially Heb. 9.) whether they related to the Covenant or to the Worship." [J.H.A. Hart, "The First Epistle General of Peter" In , in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Volume V: Commentary (New York: George H. Doran Company), 40-41.]

<sup>24</sup>**Credo in Deum Patrem** omnipotentem, Creatorem caeli et terrae, **et in Iesum Christum**, Filium Eius unicum, Dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine, passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus, descendit ad inferos, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Patris omnipotentis, inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. **Credo in Spiritum Sanctum**, sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, vitam aeternam. Amen. [For background details see "Apostles' Creed," Wikipedia online.

<sup>25</sup>Compare the English language translations in my "Epistolary Divisions in Paul's Letters with Text," cranfordville.com: <http://cranfordville.com/letlstptxts.html>.

<sup>26</sup>NRSV: 10 Do not receive into the house or **welcome** anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; 11 for to **welcome** is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person.

GNT: 10 εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδασχὴν οὐ φέρει, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ **χαίρειν** αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε· 11 ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ **χαίρειν** κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.





## The First Letter of Peter Bible Study Session 02 1 Peter 1:3-9

### “Peter’s Prayer for His Readers”



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser’s back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material. All rights reserved © by C&L Publications Inc.

#### Greek NT

3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωσαν δι’ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν, 4 εἰς κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμόραντον, τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς 5 τοὺς ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ φρουρουμένους διὰ πίστεως εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ. 6 ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, 7 ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 8 ὃν οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπᾶτε, εἰς ὃν ἄρτι μὴ ὀρῶντες πιστεύοντες δὲ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξασμένῃ, 9 κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν.

#### Gute Nachricht Bibel

3 Gepriesen sei der Gott und Vater unseres Herrn Jesus Christus! In seinem großen Erbarmen hat er uns neu geboren und mit einer lebendigen Hoffnung erfüllt. Diese Hoffnung gründet sich darauf, dass Jesus Christus vom Tod auferstanden ist. 2 4 Sie richtet sich auf das neue Leben, das Gott schon jetzt im Himmel für euch bereithält als einen Besitz, der niemals vergeht oder verdirbt oder aufgezehrt wird. 5 Wenn ihr Gott fest vertraut, wird er euch durch seine Macht bewahren, sodass ihr die volle Rettung erlangt, die am Ende der Zeit offenbar wird. 6 Deshalb seid ihr voll Freude, auch wenn ihr jetzt - wenn Gott es so will - für kurze Zeit leiden müsst und auf die verschiedensten Proben gestellt werdet. 7 Das geschieht nur, damit euer Glaube sich bewähren kann, als festes Vertrauen auf das, was Gott euch geschenkt und noch versprochen hat. Wie das vergängliche Gold im Feuer auf seine Echtheit geprüft wird, so wird euer Glaube, der viel kostbarer ist als Gold, im Feuer des Leidens geprüft. Wenn er sich als echt erweist, wird Gott euch mit Ehre und Herrlichkeit belohnen an dem Tag, an dem Jesus Christus sich in seiner Herrlichkeit offenbart. 3 8 Ihn liebt ihr, obwohl ihr ihn nie gesehen habt. Auf ihn setzt ihr euer Vertrauen, obwohl ihr ihn jetzt noch nicht sehen könnt. Und darum jubelt ihr mit unaussprechlicher und herrlicher Freude. 9 Denn ihr wisst, dass euer Vertrauen, euer Glaube, euch die endgültige Rettung bringen wird.

#### NRSV

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7 so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

#### NLT

3 All honor to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is by his boundless mercy that God has given us the privilege of being born again. Now we live with a wonderful expectation because Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. 4 For God has reserved a priceless inheritance for his children. It is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. 5 And God, in his mighty power, will protect you until you receive this salvation, because you are trusting him. It will be revealed on the last day for all to see. 6 So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. 7 These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold -- and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 8 You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him, you trust him; and even now you are happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 9 Your reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

## Quick Links to the Study

### I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

### II. [Message](#)

- a. [Profound blessings, vv. 3-5](#)
- b. [Blessing through rejoicing, vv. 6-9](#)

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## Introduction to Study.

How do you begin your prayers? In the Model Prayer of Jesus (Matt. 6:9-13) we are taught to begin with a focus on God. Then we make our requests for personal needs known to the Heavenly Father. What should be the focus of the Invocational Prayer at the beginning of a worship service? Should it be different from the Pastoral Prayer, the Offertory Prayer, or the Benediction? If so, then in what way is it different?

The *Proem* of ancient letters offered a thanksgiving prayer to deity for divine blessing on the readers of the letter. Considerable evidence suggests that the *Proema* of ancient Christian letters simply mimicked the opening prayer of early communities of faith as they gathered for public worship. These prayers had their roots in the opening prayers of the Jewish synagogue Friday evening sabbath service, which provided the initial model for corporate worship at the beginning of the Christian movement. The expansion of Christianity into the non-Jewish world retained the form of a beginning prayer of thanksgiving but with new content that focused on Jesus. Early Christian worship began and concluded with prayer. Consequently most early Christian letters contain a Proem, roughly equivalent to the worship service Invocation, and a Benedictio,<sup>1</sup> following the worship service benediction.

Although the precise boundaries of the *Proem* in First Peter are not unquestionably clear,<sup>2</sup> the *Proem* of the letter is contained in 1:3-12. Verses 3-9 clearly focus on formal pronouncement of God's blessings upon the recipients of the letter. This single sentence in the Greek text calls upon the recipients of the letter to bless God for the indescribable outpouring of His mercy upon them in salvation. God is certainly worthy of all praise because of His gift of salvation.

Perhaps, more study needs to be done on the *Proema* of the New Testament letters<sup>3</sup> in order to gain insights into how to better begin a worship service with an opening prayer. We would certainly be following the pattern of early Christianity, were we to do this. Our study of the *Proem* of First Peter is a good first step in this direction.

## I. Context and Background<sup>4</sup>

As is true of biblical exegesis universally, consideration of the background issues to a passage under study is an essential part of the interpretive process. Such study sets boundaries of possible meanings of these text, and this help keep us from going on wild tangents that import ideas into the sacred scripture from our own mind and world.

### a. Historical

The historical background of any text has two basic aspects. **First**, the history of the transmission of the text, and how it has been treated down through the centuries is important. This constitutes the 'External History' of the text. **Second**, time and space markers inside the text signal aspects of the history of the situation being addressed by the letter sender. Given the occasional nature of ancient letters, identifying these markers form important considerations for the interpretive process. This is the 'Internal History' of the text. We will give attention to both historical aspects in our studies.

**External History.** In the history of the copying of this document through the middle ages, a number

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. 1 Peter 5:14b: εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πασιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ. (NRSV): Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

<sup>2</sup>The discussion centers over the stopping point, whether verse nine or verse twelve. Universal agreement understands the beginning point to be verse three. Sometimes inclusia (= boundary markers determining the limits of literary units) are not clearly defined in the text.

<sup>3</sup>For a listing of these in both Greek and English, see my "Proems in the Letters of the New Testament: Greek Text," at cranfordville.com.

<sup>4</sup>Serious 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.

of variations in the wording of verses three through nine surface.<sup>5</sup> Although a number of variations can be found, only those that have some impact upon translating the text<sup>6</sup> are listed in the text apparatus of the United Bible Societies fourth revised edition of The Greek New Testament, and also merit consideration for our study purposes.<sup>7</sup> In light of this, we will only consider two variants of readings in verses three through nine.

In verse seven a variation of words surfaces with the word τὸ δοκίμιον being replaced by τὸ δόκιμον in a few later copies. Precisely the difference is between the ‘testing’ of one’s faith, and the ‘proving’ of one’s faith.<sup>8</sup> But in the Koine Greek of the first century these two words did not vary much in meaning. Consequently, the meaning of the text is not altered, whichever of the two readings is original. Thus the variation has little impact on the text meaning.

In verse eight another variation occurs; ἰδόντες (‘having seen’) is replaced by εἰδότες (‘knowing’).<sup>9</sup> The latter reading shows up mostly in much later manuscripts, and is mostly likely due to a copying error, since εἰδότες doesn’t fit the thought flow of the text at all: “whom not knowing you love...”, while ἰδόντες makes good sense here: “whom not having seen you love...”. The text assumes that these second generation and beyond believers had not seen Jesus in person while He was on the earth. But in spite of this, unlike Peter himself who had been with Christ, they came to possess a deep love for the Lord. Their devotion is all the more commendable.

We can confidently say that the wording of verses three through nine of First Peter has been faithfully copied down through the centuries. Also, then we can be sure that what we have in front of us is the actual wording of the Greek text as it was originally written by Silas from Peter’s dictation.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The SBL *Greek New Testament* apparatus lists the following:

1.6 δέον WH Treg ] + ἐστίν NIV RP

7 πολυτιμότερον WH Treg NIV ] πολὺ τιμώτερον RP

• δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν WH Treg NIV ] τιμὴν καὶ εἰς δόξαν RP

8 ἰδόντες WH Treg NIV ] εἰδότες RP

• ἀγαλλιᾶσθε Treg NIV RP ] ἀγαλλιᾶτε WH

9 ὕμῶν Treg NIV RP ] – WH

For understanding more about this process see one of the following: step 1: Lorin L Cranford, “The History of the Bible: 3.0 Establishing a Christian Bible,” [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com); step 2: Lorin L Cranford, “Study in Textual Criticism,” [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com); step 3: Rich Elliott, *The Encyclopedia of New Testament Textual Criticism*. Each of these three steps will take you from a simple beginning to an increasingly detailed study of the procedure of analyzing the existing copies of the ancient text of the New Testament.

<sup>6</sup>Because of this guideline, the number of variations is extremely limited in comparison to the total that exist among the almost 6,000 ancient copies of portions or all of the Greek text of the New Testament. This limitation, on the other hand, makes the apparatus much easier to use and highlights only the significant variations of wording in the text.

<sup>7</sup>Closely related to the UBS 4th rev ed. is the newly available online Society of Biblical Literature edition of this *Greek New Testament* at [biblia.com](http://biblia.com). It contains via footnotes the text apparatus with references to the variations in the Greek text. Another web site with access to the text variations in First Peter is “Greek New Testament,” at [laparola.net](http://laparola.net).

<sup>8</sup>“A few MSS (e.g., P72 P74 and minuscules 23 36 69 206 429) read τὸ δόκιμον instead of τὸ δοκίμιον, and it is always possible that τὸ δοκίμιον is an assimilation to James 1:3. Either form is to be understood as the neuter singular of an adjective meaning ‘genuine’ (either δόκιμος or δοκίμιος) used as a noun with the meaning ‘genuineness’ (cf. BDF §263.2). The adjective δοκίμιος, although not attested in literary Greek, is found in the papyri (A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901] 259–62). Despite the parallel with James 1:3, δοκίμιον is the more difficult reading, and in view of the weight of manuscript evidence in its favor, is to be preferred.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 25-26.]

<sup>9</sup>“ἰδόντες (‘having seen’) is supported by the oldest uncial MSS (P72 & B) as well as other important Alexandrian and Western witnesses (C, a few minuscules, Lat and other versions and the earliest citations by the church fathers); εἰδότες (‘knowing’) is the reading of A K Ψ, the majority of later minuscules, and the later patristic citations. If ἰδόντες is the original reading (as the evidence indicates), the change to εἰδότες was probably the result of a mistake in dictation or hearing. It is doubtful that a scribe would have deliberately changed ἰδόντες to εἰδότες because οὐκ εἰδότες hardly makes sense with ἀγαπᾶτε (cf. Gal 4:81). Once the accidental change was made, however, εἰδότες (normally used as a present participle) may have been understood as a perfect—which in a formal sense it is (cf. BGD, 555)—with a past meaning: once you did not know Christ, but now you know and love him. In this case the more difficult reading (εἰδότες) is not the correct one.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 26.]

<sup>10</sup>One of the essential beginning principles of Biblical interpretation is “*Establish the text.*” One must be as certain as is humanly possible that the biblical text being interpreted is as close to the original wording of the text as possible. For more details see Lorin L. Cranford, “Guidelines of Exegeting a Text from the Greek New Testament,” [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com). Pre-Step 2 discusses this

**Internal History.** The time and place markers inside verses three through nine center on the spiritual experience of the first readers of this letter. The full range of past, present, and future aspects of God’s salvation are covered.

**Past conversion.** The conversion of the readers is referenced by ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς (“By his great mercy he has given us a new birth”). Out of God’s abundant mercy He ‘birthed’ us. This was a decisive moment at some point in the past. The verbal form ἀναγεννάω is only used by Peter in the New Testament, and only at 1:3 and 1:23.<sup>11</sup> In that moment of faith commitment to Christ, a spiritual birth took place. The sinner was changed from a rebel fighting God to a child of God devoted to his Heavenly Father. This took place among both Jews and non-Jews who made up the churches in the provinces listed in the Adscriptio of the letter in 1:1. Out of this foundational religious experience then comes the responsibilities and privileges of both the present and the future.



birth | 1 of 2  
 1 Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.  
 born | 1 of 2  
 1 Pe 1:23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

**Present suffering.** The present experiences of the readers are described both from the human and the divine angles. From the human side, they are (1) ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε (“In this you rejoice”), (2) ὃν οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπᾶτε (“Although you have not seen him, you love him”), and (3) ἀγαλλιᾶσθε χαρᾷ ἀνεκκλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξαμένῃ (“rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy”). These two postures of joy and love are taking place ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς (“even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials”). This suffering through trials is ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed”).

From the divine side, they have from God a κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς τοὺς ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ φρουρουμένους διὰ πίστεως (“an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”). Also from God they are κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν (“are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls”). Notice that no where does Peter claim that God is protecting believers **from** trials and suffering. Instead, what Peter claims is that God is protecting believers **through** their trials and suffering. There’s a big difference in this.

**Future deliverance.** What God will do at the end receives the primary emphasis here. Believers have been given εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωσαν δι’ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν (“a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”). This expectation centers on a κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς (“an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you”). This inheritance is further defined as σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ (“a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”). Additionally it is τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν (“the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls”). The present sufferings are getting us ready for final judgment where this testing of our faith εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed”).

Wow! What a precious experience these readers were having. And it centered on God and His blessings

procedure.  
<sup>11</sup> ἀναγεννάω 1 aor. ἀνεγέννησα; pass. ἀνεγεννήθην (Just., Tat.); pf. pass. ptc. ἀναγεγεννημένος (Philod., Ira p. 18 W.; Sir Prol. In. 28 v.l.) beget again, cause to be born again fig. of the spiritual rebirth of Christians.—Of God ὁ ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωσαν who has given us a new birth for a living hope 1 Pt 1:3. ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς born again not of perishable seed vs. 23 (in Herm. Wr. 13, 1 Sc. ἀγνοῶ, ᾧ τρισμέγιστε, ἐξ οἴας μήτρας ἄνθρωπος ἀναγεννηθεῖ ἄν, σπορᾶς δὲ ποίας the rdg. ἀναγ. is not certain, but Sallust. 4 p. 8, 24=FPhGr III, 33, col. 2, 6 uses the word in describing mysteries γάλακτος τροφή, ὡσπερ ἀναγεννωμένων).—Cp. RPerdelwitz, D. Mysterienreligion u. d. Problem des 1 Pt 1911, 37ff; HWindisch, Hdb. Exc. on 1 Pt 2:2 and the entry παλιγγενεσία.—DELG s.v. γίγνομαι 222. 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), 59-60.]

upon them, not upon any accomplishments they made religiously.

The key internal history issue here relates to the precise nature and extent of their sufferings. In verse six, Peter only alludes to them happening, but he gives no historical details. What they were experiencing is defined only as ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς (“various trials”)<sup>12</sup> and λυπηθέντες (“to suffer”).<sup>13</sup> Later in the letter<sup>14</sup> Peter goes into greater detail, but without giving a lot of specifics there either, such as Paul did in some of his letters.<sup>15</sup> Whether the source of this persecution was governmental or came from the synagogue -- or both -- can’t be determined with exactness. Whether this persecution enveloped all of the believing communities in these provinces, or only some of them is not entirely clear. Whether it was spotty with infrequent occurrence or systematically applied over an extended period of time can’t be determined with certainty. Whether some believers lost their lives, or whether they were just targeted for confiscation of possessions and possible prison time is not clear. These are questions that can only be answered with speculation and guess work, not with solid historical facts as a basis. But what is clear from the text is that believers in these provinces were experiencing persecution because of their Christian faith. Peter’s encouraging words do not indulge themselves into the gory details of what was happening to the believers. The recipients already knew these details. Instead, he frames their sufferings from the divine perspective of how they could be used for spiritual benefit and blessing. His words were designed to encourage believers to remain steadfast in the midst of sufferings through sensing God at work in them.

### b. Literary

Three key literary aspects of this text merit consideration. First, did the text follow an existing pattern of expression that would be familiar to the readers? Second, where does this text fit into the scheme of the entire document? Third, how are the ideas inside the text put together? Answering these questions is invaluable to proper understanding of the scripture.

**Literary Form (Genre).** Literary form can typically be found at multiple levels of patterns.<sup>16</sup> First, the

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<sup>12</sup>“ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, ‘in various ordeals.’ Virtually the same phrase (πειρασμοῖ ... ποικίλοις) occurs in James 1:2. The meaning of πειρασμοί—i.e., as ordeals, or experiences of testing, not ‘temptations’ in the sense of inducements to sin (cf. BGD, 640.1)—will be immediately explained by the lengthy purpose clause that comprises v 7. The ‘fiery ordeal ... to put you to the test’ is described as singular in 1 Pet 4:12 but plural here (cf. τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων, ‘the same kinds of suffering,’ in 5:9). 1 Peter and James could easily have chosen such a phrase independently of one another. Although their agreement does not in itself indicate a direct literary relationship between the two epistles, it must be carefully assessed along with the evidence of certain other parallels (cf. vv 7, 24; 5:5–6). Because Peter does not have direct knowledge of the particular ‘ordeals’ facing the churches to which he writes—any more than of the sufferings of the “brotherhood throughout the world” (5:9)—he uses vague terms such as τὰ αὐτὰ and ποικίλοι to encompass a whole range of possible troubles. The readers themselves could fill in the specifics, and Peter leaves it to them to do so (although he does venture to introduce hypothetical examples of denunciation or slander in 2:12 and 3:16). Selwyn (129) finds the diversity of the ordeals illustrated in Heb 11:35–40, as well as in Jewish descriptions of the tortures undergone by the Maccabean martyrs (e.g., 4 Macc 17:7; 18:21), but it is doubtful that Peter (or James) had anything so specific or so heroic in mind.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 29-30.]

<sup>13</sup>“λυπηθέντες refers not so much to grief, as when a person grieves for a lost friend, but to the actual pain or suffering of persecution (cf. again Origen’s comment on this text in *Exhortation to Martyrdom* 39, where he notes the use of the word λύπη for physical pain in Gen 3:16).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 29.]

<sup>14</sup>Especially see 3:13-22; 4:12-19; 5:6-11.

<sup>15</sup>See 1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 11:23-33; Phil. 3:8-11.

<sup>16</sup>Literary genre is traceable only when sufficient repetitive patterns of expression surface in a broad spectrum of writings. The repetition can be of words and phrases, but more often reflects repeated ideas of a similar nature. Signals of repetition sufficient to constitute a definable genre must be present and clearly identifiable in other writings as well. Once this has been concluded, the social and literary function of each particular genre must be determined. Were these patterns merely to facilitate quicker and easier memorization? Or, did the genre itself give off commonly understood meaning that provided a frame of reference for the ideas being presented by individual writers? These genre signals are important. For example we understand the words in a letter differently if the letter comes to us as a formal business letter, over against a love letter from someone very dear to us. This is especially true of the connotative level of meaning of words. At the cognitive level of meaning, the ideas can be similar or the same, but very different at the connotative level of meaning. For example, the sentence, “I care for you greatly,” has one meaning coming from a large business corporation trying to sell us a product. But it has an entirely different meaning when I comes from a wife who loves us dearly. Sorting out these kinds of issues for ancient writings is an important part of the interpretative process. Ignoring them can

broad genre needs to be addressed. And then the narrow genre issues present in the text need attention.

**Broad genre.** Our passage, 1:3-9, comes as a part of an ancient letter. As discussed in Study One on 1:1-2, this has importance. In a social world where face to face encounters were considered vital to relationships, the ancient letter served as the next best option when such direct interaction was not possible. One could send a trusted friend or servant to orally communicate ideas and view points, but there would always be uncertainty over how accurately one's ideas were communicated through another person. Writing a letter to the other person solved this dilemma because it provided a tangible, fixed expression of ideas. The friend or servant who carried the letter to its designation could serve the invaluable role of answering questions about the ideas in the letter when those ideas were not clearly expressed. The letter carrier could give his interpretation of the words in the letter, based upon his close association with the letter sender. And often further based upon the fact that he actually wrote the letter from the dictation of the letter sender. This would provide a more authoritative interpretation of what was contained inside the letter itself.

The other significant aspect of the letter was its 'occasional' nature. That is, the writing of the letter was prompted by some particular situation among the targeted readers. They were having problems, questions, needs etc. that the letter sender discovered and wanted to address. Circumstances prevented him from making a trip to where the readers lived. So he did the next best thing, he wrote them a letter. Thus the letter is attempting to address issues existing in one historical situation in the ancient world. No document in the New Testament was ever composed simply by a writer arbitrarily deciding himself to write an authoritative scripture! No writer had any sense of how his writings would be used in the church either initially or certainly over subsequent centuries. Rather, the writers sensed a need present in their targeted readership and they sought to meet that need with a writing. God's motivating presence behind this process was present, but not consciously understood by the writers. Understanding of this came much later as subsequent generations of Christians recognized the divine presence saturating these words from the first century apostles. Only then did these words come to be regarded as scripture.

This occasional nature of the ancient letter emphasizes greatly the importance of historical understanding. The more we can discover about the circumstance that prompted the writing of the letter the more accurate our understanding of the text will be. And it is this historical understanding that imposes strict boundaries of meaning for contemporary application of the text to our day. Supposed meanings standing in contradiction to the historical meaning are to be immediately rejected as false and spurious.

When Peter lifts his voice in a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving to God in these verses, he gives thanksgiving to God for what he has learned about his readers. He has come to recognize a sincere faith commitment by these people. He knows they are paying a steep price for that commitment with persecution. But he also knows the grand picture of what all this means theologically, for his spiritual wisdom opens the door to see his readers' situation the way God sees it. And that changes the perspective dramatically!

**Narrow genre.** Our passage, and probably also 1:10-12, stands as the Proem of the letter. This prayer typically followed the Praescriptio, and occasionally was blended into the Salutatio as a health wish from the letter sender to the recipients. So sometimes the boundary line between the Salutatio and the Proem was blurred. But in the letters of the apostle Paul, this is not the case, in large part because of his tendency to expand the length of both sections significantly.<sup>17</sup> First Peter, under the influence of Silas as the writer, follows the Pauline pattern.

First Peter 1:3-12 is most likely to be considered as one long sentence in the Greek.<sup>18</sup> For this reason the text is often compared to the lengthy Proem in Ephesian 1:3-14.<sup>19</sup> But this comparison only has limited

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quickly lead to highly distorted understanding.

<sup>17</sup>For details see Lorin L. Cranford, "Epistolary Divisions in Paul's Letters with Text," cranfordville.com. The inclusion or omission of the Proem is an issue for the so-called General Letters. Of those containing a Proem (2 John, 3 John, 1 Peter) the Proem is clearly distinct from the Salutatio in 2 John and 1 Peter. And 3 John omits the Salutatio and only contains a Proem.

<sup>18</sup>Variations of understanding are present because in the original Uncial style of writing ancient Greek no punctuation marks existed. Thus the text was line after line of unbroken capital letters with no spacing or punctuation divisions. Modern printed Greek texts seek to balance the much later (middle ages onward) varying patterns of punctuation and spacing with modern western language patterns of punctuation and spacing divisions of words, clauses, and sentences. These divisions are based upon linguistic assessment of 'colons' (units of natural thought expression) present in the words of the Greek text.

<sup>19</sup>This often is based upon a common proto-trinitarian assumption between the two letters. The improbability of this is effectively demonstrated by Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp in the Hermeneia commentary: "A different division into three segments

## 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**

similarities and must be made with great caution.<sup>20</sup> A few modern commentators ignore the Proem nature of the text, and instead label it as a Prooemium.<sup>21</sup> But this introduces a very questionable and unnecessary label into the mixture that ignores the patterns of ancient letters,<sup>22</sup> and especially the enhancements of that pattern in the Pauline letters of the New Testament. The role of the letter Proem satisfactorily accounts for what Peter did at this point in the letter, especially when understood with the influence from the example of Paul's letters.

**Literary Context.** As a letter Proem, the passage naturally comes after the introductory Praescriptio and the beginning of the letter body. In ancient letters the health wish expression was intended as a positive affirmation of the readers by the letter sender. He sought to communicate to them his desire for divine blessing and reward to be upon them. This continued the 'bridge building' role of the Salutatio between sender and recipient of the letter. Additionally, the Proem sought to invoke the presence of deity into the life of the recipient of the letter. This affirmation of the critical role of the divine in human life permeated ancient society much more than is true in modern society. For early Christians this universal pattern of society became particularized into a faith expression in the Heavenly Father, and in Jesus Christ. They sought to affirm the distinctive role of God through Jesus Christ in their lives and in their world.

Beyond the core expression in the Proem, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" the subsequent expansion elements in vv. 3b-12 develop theme expressions that will provide the basis for the details in the letter body. Added to these are the expansion elements we encountered in the Praescriptio, mainly "who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be comprising vv. 3-7\*, 8-9\*, 10-12\*,<sup>5</sup> sometimes on the basis of a content that then reflects respectively Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, has also been proposed,<sup>6</sup> but such a division is weakened by the mention of Jesus three times in the first section (vv. 3\* [bis], 7\*) and twice in the third (v. 11\*), thus indicating that the author did not have such a division of subject matter foremost in his mind as he wrote this material. While such a division based on content thus has less to recommend it, there is little question that the triadic reference to God found in v. 2\* is also present here, thus linking the epistolary opening to this first sentence.<sup>7</sup> [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), 90.]

<sup>20</sup>Eph 1:3-14 (GNT): 3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, 4 καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, 5 προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, 6 εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, 7 ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ 8 ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει 9 γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ 10 εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· ἐν αὐτῷ, 11 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργοῦντος κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, 12 εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλπικότες ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ· 13 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, 14 ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιουσίσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

<sup>21</sup>In ancient Greek and Latin rhetoric, the Prooemium, different from the Exordium, served to introduce a synopsis of the speakers coming arguments. At the outset he in essence told his audience, here are the issues and this is how I am going to argue my points. Then he would proceed to develop the details of what he had put on the table in the Prooemium.

<sup>22</sup>Typically among commentators the shift from Proem to Prooemium or Exordium labeling opens the door for the assumption that Peter was making heavy use of an ancient hymn or confession of faith in these verses. And the corollary assumption is that this came from early Christian baptismal practices. Although quite popular through the 1980s, most recent commentators have come to recognize the high improbability of this theory, and have thus rejected it. In reality it became a convenient way to read modern liturgical practice back into the ancient text as a means of legitimizing the modern practice. Usually as well, an anonymous authorship view denying the letter to Peter goes hand in hand with these assumptions. By placing the letter in the second century the liturgical assumptions are easier to make.



and  
glory  
and  
honor  
at the revelation  
of Jesus Christ.

1.8 |-----|  
 |  
 |                   not seeing  
 | whom...you love  
 |                   not seeing  
 | in whom now...you are rejoicing  
 |                   but  
 |                   believing  
 |                   with joy  
 |                   indescribable  
 |                   and  
 |                   glorious  
 1.9 |  
 |                   receiving for yourselves the outcome of your faith  
 |                   salvation  
 |                   of your souls,

Such a long, rambling sentence as the one above (vv. 3-12) would not be allowed in correct English, and wouldn't be considered very appropriate in contemporary German writing styles. But in ancient Greek such dictation driven sentences were common place, and considered entirely appropriate. The thought pattern is relatively easy to understand. The speaker dictates first the core idea, Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Then he begins adding qualifications to specific elements in the core declaration; here the qualifications focus on God. An endless number of qualifications could be piled up on top of one another, with some ancient Greek sentences extending into multiple pages for one sentence. Modern western languages do not work this way; sentences have to be much shorter and connections inserted to link up separate sentences indirectly.

In this Greek sentence, relative clauses serve critical roles for introducing new ideas. Note 'who...' and 'whom...' in the translation above. This is the primary device used to extend the ideas forward. First the expansion highlights actions of God the Father (vv. 3-7) and second they emphasize Jesus as the object of love and rejoicing (vv. 8-9). This pattern will continue in verses ten through twelve in the next study.

The sub-surface idea expression, however, moves from what God has done (vv. 3-5) to what believers are to be doing (vv. 6-9). This difference between surface grammar structure meaning and sub-surface thought structure meaning is known as literary cognitive dissonance, and is a mark of effective writing in that it tends to keep the reader / listener more engaged in trying to understand what is being said. The presence of conflicting tension impedes the mind from superficially assuming meaning.<sup>23</sup>

We will focus on the sub-surface thought flow while trying to give adequate attention to the surface level grammar thought structure in the study below.

## II. Message

The entire Proem is built around the core, [Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!](#) This call to praise God grows out of what He has done for believers, vv. 3-5, and such praise should flow through rejoicing and devotion to Him, vv. 6-9. The role of Christ Jesus in all of this is central.

### a. God's blessings to believers are profound, vv. 3-5.

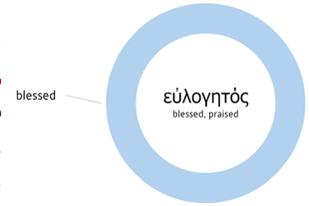
[3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.](#)

<sup>23</sup>Interestingly many commentators fail to recognize this dynamic that is present in the text, and thus struggle over a proper division of thought in the text. The consequence is substantial variation of outlining of these verses.

3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωῆς δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν, 4 εἰς κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς 5 τοὺς ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ φρουρουμένους διὰ πίστεως εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμῆν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ.

#### Notes:

**God be blessed, Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, begins Peter.** The language of Peter here matches that of Paul in 2 Cor. 1:3 (*Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως*<sup>24</sup>) and Eph. 1:3 (*Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογία πνευματικῆς ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ*<sup>25</sup>).<sup>26</sup> The further extensions of the core phrase move in distinct directions appropriate to the theme of each letter. Whether or not Peter -- through the influence of Silas -- borrowed this from Paul is not certain. Perhaps both drew upon common early Christian prayer language that clearly has roots in ancient Jewish belief and prayer language.<sup>27</sup> The prayer is an expression of praise to God. The especially Christian slant is that God is known through the Son Jesus Christ. 'Eulogies', i.e., praises, to God need to be expressed by His people.



Coming as the opening words of the Proem, which imitated the opening prayer of early Christian worship, the expression reminds us that worship begins with praise of God. We don't gather to praise ourselves, even in the subtle tones of the Pharisee's prayer, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector" (Lk. 18:11).<sup>28</sup> Worship that is egocentric rather than theocentric is not Christian worship. Peter calls upon his readers to focus on God for this is the only way to stay firm under persecution. Were they to have focused upon themselves and their struggles, they would have lost sight of the one source of spiritual help essential for successful coping with struggles. This is a lesson that modern Christianity needs to re-learn. In the western society me-culture that centers on what makes me feel good, these words of scripture sound strange. But they are vitally relevant to modern culture that has sunk into the abyss of self-centered gratification and wonders often why life feels so empty and void of meaning. God centered worship pulls us to see beyond the tips of our own nose in order to discover the greatness and splendor of our God who calls us to ministry to others.

**Why is the logical question.** What has God done that makes Him so worthy of praise? Verses 3b-5 put a splendid menu of divine actions on the table in front of us that remind of past, present, and future actions in behalf of those whom God considers His own children.

**First, God has birthed us,** ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωῆς δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν. The central idea of new birth is qualified by 1) according to His abundant mercy, 2) for a living hope, and 3) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. All very rich and profound spiritual realities connected to being born again.

The language of new birth is not extensive in the New Testament. The verb used here, ἀναγεννάω, only occurs here and in v. 23 in the entire NT. The word was not widely used in ancient Greek and not at all in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible. But it does show up a few times in Josephus and some of the Mystery Religions writings (but these writings are after those of the NT). The etymological meaning is simply

<sup>24</sup>"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort..."  
<sup>25</sup>"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ..."

<sup>26</sup>The dominate pattern in Paul's letters is *Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου* or *Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι*. He begins with "I / we give thanks to God...". Only in 1 and 2 Timothy does the pattern shift to *Χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ...* (I have praise to ...).

<sup>27</sup>For a detailed examination of this material, including examples from the OT (e.g., Exod 18:10; 1 Kings 25:32), Apocrypha (e.g., Tob 13:1; 1 Macc 4:30), Pseudepigrapha (e.g., 1 Enoch 22.14; 39.13), Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., 1QS 11.15; 1QM 13.1; 1QH 5.20), and rabbinic traditions, including the Shemoneh-Esreh (esp. the first petition), see Shimada, *Formulary Material*, 141-44; or Furnish, 'Elect Sojourners,' 6; see also Dellling, 'Der Bezug,' 95; Selwyn, 122. Somewhat forced are the attempts by Jonsen ('Moral Theology,' 96) to derive it from the Shema, and by Bornemann ('Taufrede,' 147) from Ps 34:2 (part of his equally forced attempt to understand the whole of 1 Peter as a kind of midrash on that psalm)." [fn 15 in 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), 93.]

<sup>28</sup>ὁ θεός, *εὐχαριστῶ σοι* ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὡσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἄρπαγες, ἄδικοι, μοιχοί, ἢ καὶ ὡς οὗτος ὁ τελώνης·  
**Bible Study: Page 27**

to be born again or anew since the prepositional prefix ἀνα- can mean either. In the literature outside the NT, it typically had the sense of rejuvenation, in the sense of a renewed life. Out of this background Peter was able to describe Christian conversion as being born again/anew. The qualifiers to this term in verse twenty-three make it clear what he meant: **ἀναγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σποράς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου, διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος** (“You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.”). What God has granted believers is a brand new life, and a life that has eternal character.

In verse three this new birth depends upon God’s abundant mercy. It is not achieved by human effort. Rather it happens because God pours out His mercy upon the sinner to give him this new life. The objective of this new birth is to give us a ‘living hope.’ The ancient idea of hope is dynamic, rather than static or passive. ἔλπις is a confident expectancy of something to be gained in the future. That expected something here is an inheritance that we receive at our own death! The qualifier ‘living’ (ζῶσαν) stresses the dynamic nature of hope. This hope is a living, active influence in one’s life. What spiritual dynamic enables this new birth to happen? Peter says it takes place through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **δι’ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν**. The same spiritual power that brought Jesus back to life after dying on the cross is what gives us new birth!

This is an exceedingly wonderful thing that our God has done for us as believers! Certainly He deserves to be praised and lifted up in our worship of Him. But this is not all; there’s much more yet to come.

**Second, God has, through this new birth, given us an inheritance, εἰς κληρονομίαν ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς.** Out of the past action of ‘birthing’ us God has granted to us the expectancy of a future inheritance.<sup>29</sup> The experience of Heaven is cast as an ‘inheritance.’ This is not something we earn, or even deserve. Rather, it is a gift granted to us out of the generosity of our Heavenly Father. This inheritance is firm and sure. The first three qualifiers define the inherent character of this inheritance as **ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον** (imperishable, undefiled, and unfading). These qualities stand in contrast to the temporal things that could be inherited. This inheritance has an eternal quality that remains continuously attractive and desirable forever. The fourth qualifier, **τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς** (kept in heaven for you), **underscores the certainty of our gaining this inheritance.**<sup>30</sup> As a senior adult I have given considerable atten-

<sup>29</sup>“The noun κληρονομία occurs almost two hundred times in the LXX, not necessarily in the strict sense of an inheritance handed down in a family but with the meaning of a ‘sanctioned and settled possession’ (Hort, 35), however acquired or assigned. Often it refers to the land of Canaan, promised and given to the Israelites as their home and property, or to particular portions of the land given to particular tribes. Peter’s use of the term, however, is most closely related to NT passages that speak of ‘inheriting’ (κληρονομεῖν) either ‘the kingdom’ (Matt 25:34; 1 Cor 6:9–10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; cf. κληρονομία in Eph 5:5 and κληρονόμοι in James 2:5) or ‘eternal life’ (Matt 19:29; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18) or an equivalent (e.g., ‘the earth’ [Matt 5:5], ‘incorruption’ [1 Cor 15:50], ‘salvation’ [Heb 1:14], ‘the promise’ [Heb 6:12], ‘blessing’ [1 Pet 3:9], ‘these things’ [Rev 21:7]). It is likely that Peter’s thought is still being shaped by the traditional saying of Jesus about rebirth that seems to underlie v 3: ‘Unless you are born again, you will not inherit the kingdom of heaven’ — i.e., a saying similar in form to Justin Martyr’s citation in Justin, *Apol.* 1.61.3, except that the characteristically Pauline notion of ‘inheriting’ the kingdom replaces that of ‘entering’ it.

“κληρονομία thus refers to the future inheritance itself, not to a status enjoyed already as God’s children and heirs (cf. 3:7; Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7). As an eschatological gift from God, it stands beyond all the uncertainties of the present age. It is ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, ‘indestructible, incorruptible, and unfading.’ The three adjectives with the negating prefix α represent a classic negative way of characterizing persons or things that strain one’s descriptive powers (cf., e.g., the characterization of Melchizedek in Heb 7:3, of Jesus as High Priest in Heb 7:26 or as the sacrificial lamb in 1 Pet 1:19, or of God as king in 1 Tim 1:17). These particular adjectives are at times used singly to refer to rewards awaiting the righteous: e.g., a ‘crown’ (with ἀφθαρτον [1 Cor 9:25]; with ἀμάραντινον [1 Pet 5:4]) and ‘prizes’ (with ἀμιάτων [*Wisdom Sol* 4:2]). The rare ἀμάραντος is found in early Christian apocalyptic descriptions of the end time in *Sib. Or.* 8.409–12 (‘that I one day may give thee immortal fruits, and thou shalt have light eternal and life unfading, when I bring all men to proof by fire. For I shall smelt all things, and separate them into purity’ [Hennecke-Schneemelcher, 2:738]) and *Apoc. Pet.* 15 (‘and the earth itself budding with flowers which fade not [ἀμάραντοις ἄνθεσιν] and full of spices and plants which blossom gloriously and fade not and bear blessed fruit’ [Hennecke-Schneemelcher, 2:681–82]).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 20–21.]

<sup>30</sup>**τηρέω** impf. ἐτήρουν, 3 pl. ἐτήρουν and ἐτήρουσαν AcPl Ha 8, 11 and 13; fut. τηρήσω; 1 aor. ἐτήρησα; pf. τετήρηκα, 3 pl. τετήρηκαν J 17:6 (B-D-F §83, 1; W-S. §13, 15; Mlt. 52f; Mlt-H. 221). Pass.: impf. ἐτηρούμην; 1 aor. ἐτηρήθην; pf. τετήρημαι (Pind., Thu.+)

**1. to retain in custody, keep watch over, guard τινά, τὶ someone, someth. a prisoner** (Thu. 4, 30, 4) Mt 27:36, 54; Ac 16:23; a building (s. PPetr II, 37, 1, 19 [III B.C.] τηρεῖν τὸ χῶμα; PFlor 388, 32; 1 Macc 4:61; 6:50) Hs 9, 6, 2; 9, 7, 3. Pass. (Jos., Ant. 14, 366) Πέτρος ἐτηρεῖτο ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ Ac 12:5. Cp. 24:23; 25:4, 21b. τηρεῖν τὴν φυλακὴν guard the jail 12:6. ὅπου οἱ κεκλεισμένοι

tion to what kind of inheritance my wife and I will leave our children. What we thought we might be able to do twenty years ago has changed over time and circumstance. Their material inheritance from us is not certain, and actually is much less today than it was earlier. In contrast, our spiritual inheritance from the Heavenly Father has been placed in safe keeping (τετηρημένην) for us until the day we receive it. We are certain to receive all of it on that day.

**Third, God protects us through our struggles, τούς ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ φρουρουμένους διὰ πίστεως εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμῆν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ.** The marvelous thing here is not only is our inheritance under divine protection against the day of granting, but we recipients of that inheritance are being guarded against that same day. The verbal expression φρουρουμένους stresses the continual guarding of believers.<sup>31</sup> The vehicles

τηροῦνται AcPl Ha 3, 20. Abs. (keep) watch (PSI 165, 4; 168, 9; 1 Esdr 4:11; 2 Esdr 8:29) MPol 17:2. οἱ τηροῦντες the guards (SSol 3:3) Mt 28:4.

**2. to cause a state, condition, or activity to continue, keep, hold, reserve, preserve someone or someth.** (Aristoph., Pax 201; τὴν ἁρμονίαν τ. τοῦ πατρός Iren. 2, 33, 5 [Harv. I 380, 13])

**a. for a definite purpose or a suitable time** (Jos., Ant. 1, 97) τετήρηκας τὸν καλὸν οἶνον ἕως ἄρτι J 2:10 (POxy 1757, 23 τήρησόν μοι αὐτά, ἕως ἀναβῶ). Cp. 12:7 (WKühne, StKr 98/99, 1926, 476f; s. CBarrett, The Gospel According to St. John '60, 346 on the problem of interp.). τηρηθῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διάγνωσιν Ac 25:21a. κληρονομίαν τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς (εἰς 4g) 1 Pt 1:4.—2 Pt 2:4 (cp. TestReub 5:5 εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον τετήρηται), 9, 17; 3:7 (cp. Jos., Ant. 1, 97 τηρεῖσθαι κατακλισμῷ); Jd 6b, 13; MPol 2:3; 11:2; 15:1.

**b. keep, etc., unharmed or undisturbed** (Polyb. 6, 56, 13 one's word; Herodian 7, 9, 3) ὁ δὲ ἀγαπῶν με τηρηθήσεται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου J 14:21 P75. τὴν σφραγίδα 2 Cl 7:6. τὴν ἐκκλησίαν 14:3a (opp. φθείρειν). τὴν σάρκα 14:3b. τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν 1J 5:18 v.1. τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον keep his virgin inviolate as such 1 Cor 7:37 (Heraclit. Sto. 19 p. 30, 3; Achilles Tat. 8, 18, 2 παρθένον τὴν κόρην τετήρηκα. SBelkin, JBL 54, '35, 52 takes τηρ. here to mean support one's fiancée, without having marital relations.—On this subj. s. the lit. s.v. γαμίζω 1).—W. a second acc. (of the predicate, to denote the condition that is to remain unharmed; cp. M. Ant. 6, 30 τήρησαι σεαυτὸν ἀπλοῦν; BGU 1141, 25 [13 B.C.] ἄμμεπτον ἑμαυτὸν ἐτήρησα; Wsd 10:5; Just., D. 88, 5 ἀτιμωρήτους αὐτοὺς τηρήσαι) τὴν ἐντολὴν ἄσπιλον 1 Ti 6:14. τὸ βάπτισμα ἄγνόν 2 Cl 6:9. τὴν σφραγίδα ὑγιῆ Hs 8, 6, 3. τὴν σάρκα ἄγνην 2 Cl 8:4, 6. τὴν σάρκα ὡς ναὸν θεοῦ IPhld 7:2. σεαυτὸν ἄγνόν 1 Ti 5:22.—2 Cor 11:9; Js 1:27. Pass. ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα τηρηθεῖ 1 Th 5:23. τηρεῖν τινα ἐν τινι keep someone (unharmed) by or through someth. J 17:11f. ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε keep yourselves from harm by making it possible for God to show his love for you in the future also Jd 21. τοῖς Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις κλητοῖς to those who have been called and who have been kept unharmed for Christ, or, in case the ἐν before θεῷ is to be repeated, through Christ Jd 1.

**c. of holding on to someth. so as not to give it up or lose it** (Diod S 17, 43, 9 τὰ ὄπλα, the shields; τὴν ἀρετὴν Did., Gen. 87, 4. Cp. τ. τὰ μυστήρια ... καὶ ἐξεπεῖν μηδενί Hippol., Ref. 5, 27, 2) τὴν ἀγνείαν Hm 4, 4, 3. τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος Eph 4:3. τὴν πίστιν 2 Ti 4:7 (cp. Diod S 19, 42, 5 τηρεῖν τὴν πίστιν; IBM III, 587b, 5 ὅτι τὴν πίστιν ἐτήρησα; Jos., Bell. 2, 121, Ant. 15, 134). τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ Rv 16:15 (or else he will have to go naked). αὐτὸν (=τὸν θεόν) 1J 5:18. W. a neg.: fail to hold fast = lose through carelessness or give up through frivolity or a deficient understanding of the value of what one has τὶ someth. τὸ μικρόν 2 Cl 8:5 (a dominical saying whose literary source is unknown). τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν (s. ἀρχή 7) Jd 6a.

**d. of being protective (Pind. et al.; En 100:5) keep τινὰ ἔκ τινος someone from someone or someth.** J 17:15; Rv 3:10b (cp. Pr 7:5 τηρεῖν τινα ἀπὸ τινος).

**3. to persist in obedience, keep, observe, fulfill, pay attention to, esp. of law and teaching (LXX) τὶ someth.** (Polyb. 1, 83, 5 legal customs; Herodian 6, 6, 1; Just., A I, 49, 3 τὰ παλαιὰ ἔθη) Mt 23:3; Ac 21:25 v.1.; Hs 5, 3, 9. τὸν νόμον (Achilles Tat. 8, 13, 4; Tob 14:9; TestDan 5:1.—τ. νόμους Jos., C. Ap. 2, 273; Orig., C. Cels. 8, 10, 11; Theoph. Ant. 2, 16 [p. 140, 15]) 15:5; Js 2:10; Hs 8, 3, 3—5. τὰ νόμιμα τοῦ θεοῦ Hv 1, 3, 4 (τηρ. τὰ νόμιμα as Jos., Ant. 8, 395; 9, 222). δικαιώματα κυρίου B 10:11. τὰ πρὸς τὸν κύριον AcPl Ha 8, 11; 13. πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν Mt 28:20. τὰς ἐντολάς (CB I/2, 566f, nos. 467—69, side A of an altar [313/14 A.D.] τηρῶν ἐντολάς ἀθανάτων, i.e. θεῶν; Sir 29:1; Jos., Ant. 8, 120; Just., D. 10, 3; Iren. 1, 10, 1 [Harv. I 91, 14]) 19:17; J 14:15, 21; 15:10ab; 1J 2:3f; 3:22, 24; 5:3; Rv 12:17; 14:12; Hm 7:5; 12, 3, 4; 12, 6, 3; Hs 5, 1, 5; 5, 3, 2; 6, 1, 4; 8, 7, 6; 10, 3, 4 (Oxy 404, 17 restoration on basis of Lat. and Ethiopic versions); cp. 5, 3, 3. Pass. 5, 3, 5a. τὸ σάββατον observe the Sabbath J 9:16. τὴν νηστείαν keep the fast Hs 5, 3, 5b v.1.; cp. 5, 3, 9. τὴν παράδοσιν (Jos., Vi. 361b) Mk 7:9 v.1. τὸν λόγον J 8:51f, 55; 14:23; 15:20ab; 17:6; 1J 2:5; Rv 3:8. τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου vs. 10a. τοὺς λόγους (1 Km 15:11) J 14:24. ἃ παρελάβαμεν AcPlCor 1:5. τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας Rv 22:7, τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου vs. 9. τὰ ἐν τῇ προφητεῖα γεγραμμένα 1:3. ὁ τηρῶν τὰ ἔργα μου the one who takes my deeds to heart Rv 2:26. Abs., but w. the obj. easily supplied fr. the context τήρει pay attention to it 3:3 (cp. Philo, Leg. All. 3, 184).—DELG. 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), 1002.]

<sup>31</sup>**φρουρέω** (φρουρός 'a guard') impf. ἐφρούρουν; fut. φρουρήσω; aor. 3 sg. ἐφρούρησε Jdth 3:6. Pass.: impf. ἐφρουρούμην (Aeschyl., Hdt.+ in our lit. only trans.

**1. to maintain a watch, guard, lit. τὶ someth.** (cp. Jdth 3: 6 φρ. τ. πόλεις=put garrisons in the cities; Jos., Bell. 3, 12) τὴν πόλιν

of that protection of us are twofold: 1) God's power (ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ), and 2) our faith (διὰ πίστεως). No power is superior to that of God, and thus could overwhelm God's protection of us. But our faith commitment to Christ plays a critical role in this. In the uniquely Greek way of setting up the idea, God's protecting power flows into our life through our faith. Thus in deepening faith comes greater power from God to protect us against all struggles and challenges.

This protection of us is against the day of deliverance that is ready already to be disclosed in the last day: εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμῆν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ. The moment of receiving the inheritance (ἀποκαλυφθῆναι) is here defined as 'salvation.' The core idea is of deliverance. This deliverance from evil is already in place and ready for implementation.

If these spiritual realities aren't enough to motivate you to praise God, then nothing will!

### **b. God deserves to be blessed through rejoicing and devotion, vv. 6-9.**

6 In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7 so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

6 ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, 7 ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 8 ὃν οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπᾶτε, εἰς ὃν ἄρτι μὴ ὁρῶντες πιστεύοντες δὲ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε χαρᾷ ἀνεκκλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξασμένῃ, 9 κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν.

#### **Notes:**

In this second unit of material in the Proem, Peter applauds the faith of his readers. They indeed have found motivation for praising God, and that praise is being expressed two ways: 1) in rejoicing, and 2) in loving.

One important note about the beginning phrase ἐν ᾧ.<sup>32</sup> Should this be translated 'in which' or 'in whom'? Either is possible, and although many prefer the former translation, I'm convinced the latter is the appropriate translation. The Block Diagram above (page 8) illustrates the reasons for this preference. The rejoicing being done by the readers is not due to circumstance, but is focused on the God who has created the marvelous inheritance granted to them.

**Rejoicing, vv. 6-7, 8b-9.** In light of God's actions of giving them new birth that provides an inheritance, Peter acknowledges that his readers are rejoicing in praise to God: ἀγαλλιᾶσθε.<sup>33</sup> The idea of the verb is not

Δαμασκηνῶν 2 Cor 11:32. In this case the ref. is surely to the guarding of the city gates fr. within, as a control on all who went out (Jos., Vi. 53 τὰς ἐξόδους δὲ πάσας ἐφρούρει; cp. Nicol. Dam.: 90 Fgm. 130, 51 p. 400, 22 Jac.) rather than fr. the outside as was sometimes done, e.g. in sieges (Plut., Crassus 548 [9, 2]; Jos., Vi. 240); Zahn, NKZ 15, 1904, 34ff.

**2. to hold in custody, detain, confine** (Plut., Ant. 954 [84, 4], Mor. 205f; Wsd 17:15; PGM 4, 2905; 3093) fig., pass.: of humankind before the coming of Jesus ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα we were held under custody by the law Gal 3:23. The terminology is consistent w. the Roman use of prisons principally for holding of prisoners until disposition of their cases.—In transf. sense ἡ ψυχὴ φρουρεῖται τῷ σώματι Dg 6:4.

**3. gener. to provide security, guard, protect, keep** (Soph., Oed. R. 1479 δαίμων σε φρουρήσας τύχοι; Tat. 15, 3 τοῖς πνεύματι θεοῦ φρουρουμένοις Mel., P. 30, 205) the peace of God φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν Phil 4:7 (w. weakened imagery of guarding, Straub 30). Pass. 1 Pt 1:5.—DELG s.v. φρουρός. Frisk s.v. φρουρά. 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), 1066-67.]

<sup>32</sup>The antecedent of "which" is not at all clear in the text. There are three possibilities.

1. It could refer back to God or to Jesus Christ in verse 3.
2. It could refer to the end of time in verse 5.
3. Finally, it could refer to everything mentioned in verses 3–5.

All three are possible, although most commentaries prefer the third alternative: the Christian's joy is grounded in the fact that God has given him new life, a living hope, a certainty of receiving God's rich blessings, and of possession of salvation at the end of time. Most translations are ambiguous at this point.

[Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 21.]

<sup>33</sup>The mood of the verb *agalliasthe* is also ambiguous. Its form permits it to be taken as (1) present indicative (you rejoice), (2) present imperative (rejoice, or keep on rejoicing), or (3) present indicative in form with future force (you will rejoice). Du Toit

only to feel but to express it as well.<sup>34</sup> This joy in God's blessings was being expressed in praise and adoration of the Lord.

Two areas of qualification of this verbal action in its first expression in v. 6 are given by Peter. **First** he alludes to their experiencing suffering for their faith: “even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials” (ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς).<sup>35</sup> Following Christ brought a price to pay, but even in the midst of this these first century believers were rejoicing in God and His blessings. **Second**, the intended outcome of this suffering was a ‘proving’ of the genuineness of their faith commitment to Christ: “so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire” (ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου. The spiritual reality of persecution is that persecution -- for whatever reason (ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς) -- of believers has a purpose. It demonstrates that faith is real and not fake. The eschatological exposure of this is declared by Peter: “the genuineness of your faith...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως... εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). Notice a couple of important emphases here. It's not the believer's faith that is more precious than gold; rather it is the genuineness of the believer's faith that is more precious than gold. The proving of the genuineness of faith through persecution stands as pure gold in the eyes of God. Second, the discovery of that genuineness of faith on judgement day will not bring praise and honor to the believer; rather it will exalt the Lord Jesus Christ who has sustained the believer during the times of testing.

In the second expression of the same verb in v. 8b-9, Peter lays out additional qualifications: εἰς ὃν ἄρτι μὴ ὀρώντες πιστεύοντες δὲ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξασμένη, κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν. These believers in ancient Anatolia had not personally seen Jesus in the flesh, but they had put their faith in Him. Thus through faith they came to rejoice in the blessings of God. And this rejoicing was “with an indescribable and glorious joy”. Joy is usually prompted by some circumstance and even

(1974: 70–71) has argued for the imperative mood on the basis of a shift to second person and because, of the nine times the verb occurs in the LXX in the second person, eight are “intended” as imperatives. Recent rhetorical analysis of 1 Peter suggests that an imperative is unlikely to be found in a paraenetic letter's opening section, which states the context in which the letter is to be read and prepares the reader for the imperatives that will indeed follow later (T. Martin 1992b).” [Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 92-93.]

<sup>34</sup>**ἀγαλλιᾶω** (new formation in H. Gk. from ἀγάλλω, found only in Bibl. and eccl. wr.) seldom act. (B-D-F §101; Mlt-H. 225f): ἀγαλλιᾶτε 1 Pt 1:8 v.l. (for ἀγαλλιᾶσθε); Rv 19:7 ἀγαλλιῶμεν (v.l. ἀγαλλιώμεθα); ἀγαλλιώντα GJs 17:2; ἀγαλλιώντες ApcPt Rainer. 1 aor. (as POxy 1592, 4 [IV A.D.]) ἠγαλλίασεν Lk 1:47 (ἐπὶ τ. θεῷ, cp. Hab 3:18 v.l.); usu. dep. ἀγαλλιάομαι (Syntipas p. 75, 28); fut. ἀγαλλιάσομαι (LXX); 1 aor. mid. ἠγαλλιάσασθην or pass. ἠγαλλιάσθη (v.l. ἠγαλλιάσθη; B-D-F §78; Mlt-H. 225) **to be exceedingly joyful, exult, be glad, overjoyed** (LXX; En 104:13; TestSol 19:1 P; TestAbr A 7 p. 84, 2f [Stone p. 16]; TestJob; ParJer 6:20; ApcrEzk P 1 recto 1; Test12Patr; Mel., P. 80, 586) abs. **1 Pt 1:6** (ἀγαλλιάσαντες P72); 1 Cl 18:8 (Ps 50:10); IMg 1:1; Hm 5, 1, 2; 5, 2, 3; Hs 1:6; MPol 19:2; GJs 17:2; ApcPt Rainer; my tongue exults Ac 2:26 (Ps 15:9); as here w. εὐφραίνεσθαι (Ps 30:8; 31:11; Is 25:9) Hm 5, 1, 2; Hs 9, 18, 4; χαίρειν καὶ ἅ. (Tob 13:15 BA; TestJob 43:15) Mt 5:12; Rv 19:7; cp. ἵνα χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι that you might shout for joy 1 Pt 4:13; ἀγαλλιώμενοι προσηύχοντο AcPl Ha 1, 32; ἀγαλλιώμενος ἐσκήρτησεν 3, 17; ἅ. ... καὶ κλαίειν weep for joy 6, 2. W. complementary ptc. (B-D-F §415) ἠγαλλιάσατο πεπιστευκῶς he was overjoyed because he had become a believer Ac 16:34. ἠγαλλιάσαντο μεγάλως μηνύ[οντες] AcPl Ha 8, 5 (ἠγαλλι[ᾶτο] μηνύων BMM recto 3f). W. ἵνα foll. (s. ἵνα 2a): ἅ., ἵνα ἴδῃ he was overjoyed that he was to see J 8:56 (B-D-F §392, 1). The one who causes the joy is given in the dat. ἅ. τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ Lk 10:21 v.l.; w. ἐν and dat. ibid.—W. dat. of cause ἅ. χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ exult w. unspeakable joy **1 Pt 1:8**. οἷς ἀγαλλιώμαι I rejoice in this IEph 9:2 (cp. Quint. Smyrn. 9, 118 πασιβ ἀγαλλόμενος=rejoicing aloud over his sons). The object of the joy is indicated by ἐπὶ τινι (Ps 9:15; 20:2; Sir 30:3 al.; B-D-F §196): 1Cl 33:2; Hs 8, 1, 18; 9, 24, 2. Also ἐν τινι (Ps 88:17) J 5:35; ἅ. ἐν τῷ πάθει rejoice in the Passion IPHld ins; the acc. occurs once ἅ. τὴν δικαιοσύνην rejoice in righteousness 1 Cl 18:15 (Ps 50:16).—[ἀγαλ]λ[ι]ῶσιν a prob. restoration AcPl BMM verso 20f.—Goodsp., Probs. 192–94; WNauck, Freude im Leiden, ZNW 46, '55, 68–80.—DELG s.v. ἀγάλλομαι. 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), 4.]

<sup>35</sup>“Peter added the interesting phrase ‘if necessary’ (NASB, ei deon), translated by the NIV ‘had to.’ The idea is that the sufferings believers experience are not the result of fate or impersonal forces of nature. They are the will of God for believers (cf. 1 Pet 4:19).<sup>36</sup> The New Testament regularly sees sufferings as the road believers must travel to enter into God's kingdom (cf. Acts 14:22; Rom 5:3–5; Jas 1:2–4).<sup>37</sup> We should not deduce from this that sufferings are somehow enjoyable or that a specific reason should be assigned to each suffering; nor should we minimize the evil actions of others in inflicting suffering (Acts 2:23). Peter assured his readers, however, that God is working out his plan even in their anguish.” [Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 37, *1, 2 Peter; Jude*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2007), 67.]

thought it may be intense joy we can usually find adequate words to describe what we are experiencing. But these believers had entered into a level of joy through their faith commitment that went beyond words to describe.<sup>36</sup>

This eschatological oriented rejoicing comes while believers are κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν.<sup>37</sup> As believers endure persecution they are receiving the end objective of their faith, the very deliverance of their existence from harm. And this deliverance now anticipates the full deliverance on the day of judgment when they will be ushered into the eternal bliss of Heaven by the Lord Himself. Peter's words here have an echo in Paul's words in Romans 6:21-22.<sup>38</sup>

In pleasure seeking and pain fearing western society such words as Peter's sound strange and foreboding. But believers in many parts of our world today fully grasp what Peter was talking about, and they find enormous encouragement from his words. We would do well to ponder seriously the ideas of the apostle Peter here.

**Loving, vv. 8-9.** The second key verbal expression in this section is ἀγαπᾶτε ('you are loving'). Not only were the believers rejoicing in God but they were expressing devoted love to Christ in their self-sacrificing commitment to Him. Love always focuses on commitment to others, and these believers were exhibiting this. For Peter the remarkable aspect of this was laid out in the qualification: ὃν οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπᾶτε. Peter pays special tribute to these believers who stood in a different situation than he had. He had the privilege of walking with Jesus all over Palestine while listening personally to Jesus teach and watching Him minister directly to people in need. These later believers did not have such an opportunity. Thus their faith commitment was truly based on faith and not sight. Faith became knowledge and relationship with Christ.

This 'not having seen' (ὃν οὐκ ἰδόντες) is repeated with the second use of ἀγαλλιᾶσθε in verse 9, but with different words: εἰς ὃν ἄρτι μὴ ὁρῶντες πιστεύοντες δὲ.<sup>39</sup> The first is 'whom not having seen...' while the second is 'in whom now not seeing but believing...'. The Christ who is delivering them in the midst of their trials is not visible physically to these believers, but none the less is real to them. This continues from the fact that they had not physically seen Jesus what He was in the flesh on earth either. Together Peter underscores *the faith commitment and walk of followers of Jesus*, as Paul had said to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:7): "for we walk by

<sup>36</sup>“The point of ἀνεκκλαλήτω in our passage is that whether present or future, the joy (and the revelation on which it is based) defies all human efforts at understanding or explanation. δεδοξασμένη further characterizes this joy as ‘glorious’ (lit. ‘glorified’). The other four uses of δοξάζειν in 1 Peter refer to human beings ‘glorifying God’ by their words or by their conduct (2:12; 4:11, 14b, 16), but δεδοξασμένη here is more closely related to several uses of the noun δόξα with reference to the splendor of God himself, conferred by grace on those he loves (e.g., v 7; 1:21; 4:13–14; 5:1,4,10). The ‘glorious delight’ of which Peter speaks is the joy that inevitably follows when faith is ‘found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the time when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (v 7), or (according to 4:13) ‘the time when his glory is revealed.’ It is an overwhelming joy, radiant with the glory of that day.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 34-35.]

<sup>37</sup>“τὸ τέλος should be given its more normal sense of end, outcome, or result. The faithfulness of Christian believers has as its proper end the ‘salvation about to be revealed at the last day’ (v 5). In this, its τέλος, genuine faith comes to fruition as ‘praise, glory, and honor at the time when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (the single word τέλος fulfills much the same function as the expression εὐρεθῆ εἰς in v 7b).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 35.]

<sup>38</sup>Rom. 6:21-22 NRSV: 21 So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life.

<sup>39</sup>“The notion that faith outweighs sight as a way of knowing and a basis for living is a fairly common NT theme (e.g., John 20:29; 2 Cor 4:18; 5:7; Heb 11:1, 3), but why the repetition of the theme of not seeing Jesus? Does ἄρτι μὴ ὁρῶντες merely repeat and reinforce οὐκ ἰδόντες, or does it carry the thought further? The ἄρτι calls attention to a shift from aorist to present participle; it is also to be noted that while ὁρῶντες is negated (as a participle normally is) by μὴ, the negative with ἰδόντες is οὐκ (which regularly negates only indicatives in NT Greek, BDF §426). The shift of negatives further accents the shift in the time reference. The real distinction in the two participles is perhaps that οὐκ ἰδόντες (like ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν in 1 Cor 2:9) points to what is necessarily and universally the case — i.e., that Christ and the salvation he brings are hidden from human view until the moment of his revelation — while ἄρτι μὴ ὁρῶντες focuses more specifically on the ‘various ordeals’ (v 6) now confronting Peter and his readers. The phrase ἄρτι μὴ ὁρῶντες recalls the οἰγὼν ἄρτι ... λυπησέντες of v 6: the trials facing the Christian community are as burdensome as they are because Christ the Deliverer is not yet in sight. The adverb ἄρτι looks both backward and forward. Even now (as in the past, but in contrast to the future) Christian believers cannot see Jesus. When they finally see him revealed, their grief will turn to joy (cf. John 16:19–22).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 33-34.]

faith, not by sight.”

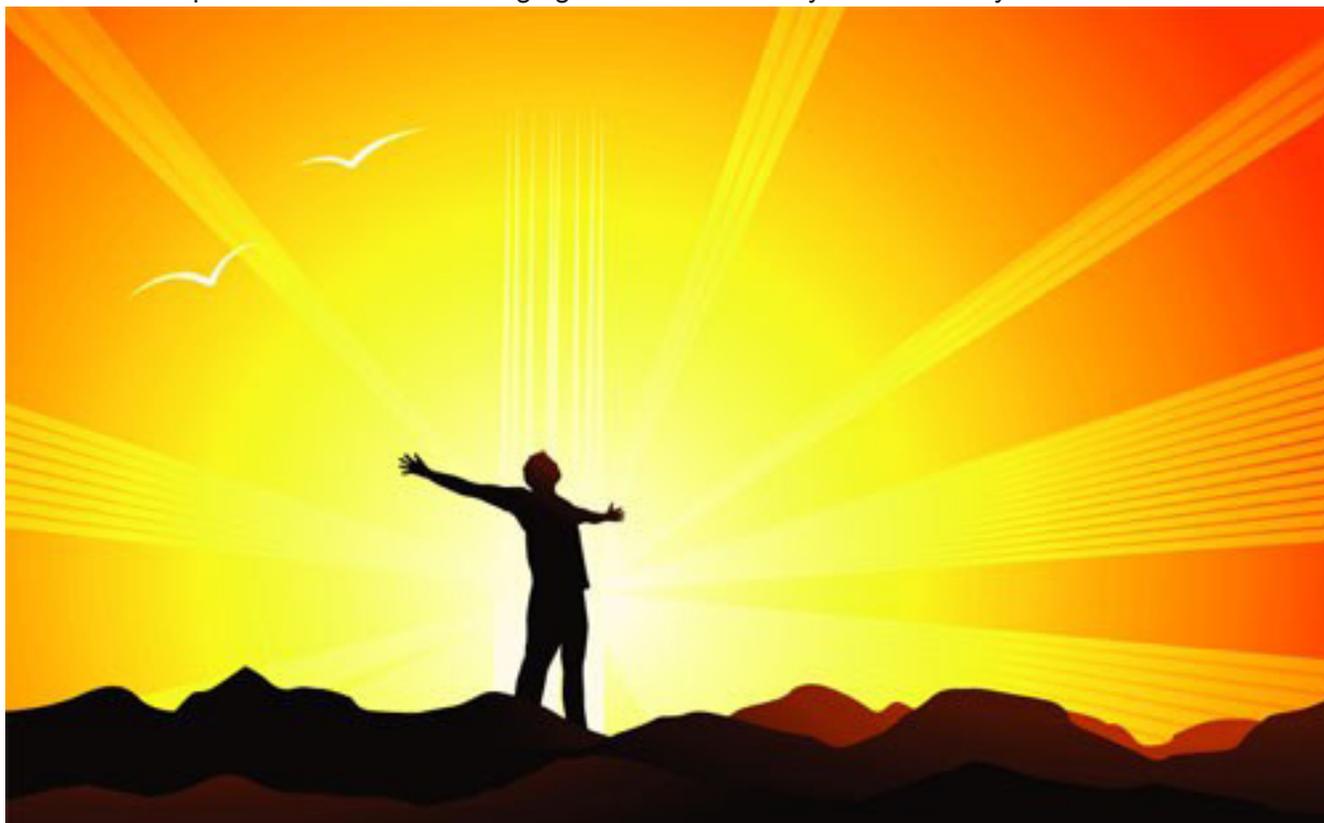
In these first two sections of the letter Proem we catch a glimpse of the richness of Peter’s understanding of the religious experience of believers in Jesus Christ. And we also glimpse into the faith commitment of these second generation believers in ancient Anatolia that the letter is addressed to. They had come to a deep commitment to Christ that was sustaining them in times of suffering from persecution because of their religious commitment. More than just keeping them going, this deep faith had become the source of ongoing rejoicing and loving devotion to God through Christ. Thus Peter opens the letter with a prayer invoking praise to God for what He had done and was continuing to do in the lives of the believers.

With the Proem expansion elements laying out in general detail the agenda to be treated in the letter body, we can only look forward to seeing how some of these themes will be ‘fleshed out’ in greater explanation in 1:13 through 5:11.

How does this passage, 1:3-9, challenge you? For me, I find both affirmation and encouragement. The language of conversion in these verses gives me profound insight into many aspects of what God has done in Christ for believers in Jesus. The images of new birth, inheritance, salvation, loving, rejoicing with all of the modifications of each of these is wonderfully rich depiction of our religious experience in Christ. Just from this treasure house description we certainly find more than enough reason to lift our voices in an eloquent ‘eulogy’ (Εὐλογητὸς..., v. 3) to God praising Him for such a marvelous work in our lives.

And yet as Peter has crafted this one long sentence (vv. 3-12) that praise of God is best expressed through rejoicing in Him and through loving Christ. Joy and love are to be two major vehicles of praise. We sometimes make a lot of noise in worship, but do little to actually praise our God. We sing without joy or love, and little praise actually goes to God. We sometimes pray eloquent words but these words have the tone of the Pharisee’s prayer that Jesus described in Luke 18:11-12: “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.” And no praise goes up to God. Peter calls upon us believers in his words to truly praise God by infusing a spirit of joy and love into every expression of our life and ministry. The Christian faith becomes attractive to outsiders when they see loving and happy believers approaching life in such a positive way, and especially with circumstance would suggest grumbling and complaining as the natural human reaction.

Here is my challenge: to infuse joy and loving devotion to Christ into every action of my life. Then will true praise will flow up to the God who is changing me so dramatically. What about you?





The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 3**  
**1 Peter 1:10-12**  
**“Longed For Salvation”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

10 Περί ἧς σωτηρίας ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν προφηταὶ οἱ περὶ τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος προφητεύσαντες, 11 ἐραυνῶντες εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν ἐδήλου τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ προμαρτυρόμενον τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας· 12 οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτά, ἀ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ, εἰς ᾧ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

10 Nach dieser Rettung schauten schon die Propheten aus. Sie haben euch angekündigt, welches Gnadengeschenk Gott euch zugedacht hat, 11 und sie haben eifrig gesucht und geforscht, um herauszufinden, wann und wie dies alles eintreffen sollte. Der Geist, den wir durch Christus empfangen haben, war schon in ihnen wirksam und zeigte ihnen im Voraus die Leiden, die Christus erdulden musste, und die Herrlichkeit, die ihm daraufhin zuteil wurde. 12 Gott ließ sie erkennen, dass sie ihre Offenbarungen nicht für sich selbst empfangen hatten, sondern für euch, denen dies alles jetzt verkündet worden ist. Die Boten der Guten Nachricht haben es euch bekannt gemacht, ausgerüstet mit dem Heiligen Geist, den Gott ihnen vom Himmel gesandt hat. Sogar die Engel brennen darauf, etwas davon zu erfahren.

**NRSV**

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, 11 inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

**NLT**

10 This salvation was something the prophets wanted to know more about. They prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you, even though they had many questions as to what it all could mean. 11 They wondered what the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ’s suffering and his great glory afterward. They wondered when and to whom all this would happen. 12 They were told that these things would not happen during their lifetime, but many years later, during yours. And now this Good News has been announced by those who preached to you in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [The Prophets’ desire to know, vv. 10-11](#)
  - b. [What God showed to them, v. 12](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

This passage has numerous issues connected to it. What is its literary role? Perhaps this is the most important issue, since the answer to this question impacts the answers to the other questions. The literary function of 1:10-12 most likely is that of the conclusion to the Proem of the letter begun in 1:3. Grammatically it does stand as a continuation of the sentence begun in 1:3.<sup>1</sup> The doctrinal theme in 1:3-12 moves from new birth to inheritance to

<sup>1</sup>This is in spite of the punctuation of both the Nestle-Aland 27th edition and the UBS 4th rev ed Greek New Testaments, which arbitrarily insert periods after verses nine and eleven. This is done more as a reflection of modern sentence structure in German and English, than as a reflection of the natural colon thought structure of the Greek text.

salvation. Salvation, σωτηρία, is introduced in verse 5, repeated in verse 9, and made the central topic of vv. 10-12.<sup>2</sup> The series of Greek relative clauses link all these together. In addition, however, these verses carry the reader from the prayer of blessing to opening the body of the letter. Thus, these have an important transition role to play in the letter. In this role they function similar to Roman 1:16-17 in this letter of Paul, by laying a conceptual foundation for the letter body.



The theme of the preciousness of salvation as a topic of prophetic inquiry is unique. The connection of the Old Testament prophets to God's salvation in Christ is not explored in the letter body. To be sure, imagery of the children of Israel found in the Hebrew Bible is reapplied to the believing community as the new people of God. The insights of Psalm 118, Isaiah 28 and 53 serve as the main connections to the Old Testament.

Consequently the passage sparks our interest and encourages us forward in understanding what it has to say.

## I. Context and Background<sup>3</sup>

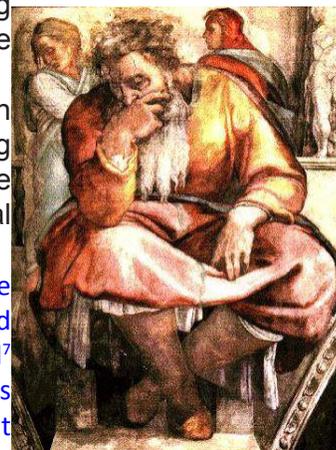
As mentioned above, background issues play an important role in understanding this text, especially the literary background.

### a. Historical

The historical issues in this text are not as pivotal in shaping the meaning of the passage as are some of the other issues. But it is important to give some attention to these matters.

**External History.** The history of the copying of the text provides indication of a very stable text for these verses. Four variations in wording surface among the various manuscripts, and non of them shift any meaning in the text. Note the observations of J. Ramsey Michaels here with the notes attached to his personal translation of the passage:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, prophets — those who prophesied of the grace to be given you — made diligent and careful inquiry. <sup>11</sup>They inquired<sup>5</sup> into the time and circumstances which the spirit of Christ<sup>6</sup> among them was indicating as he predicted<sup>7</sup> the sufferings intended for Christ and the glorious events that would follow. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that their ministry in regard to all this was not for their own benefit but for yours. And now it has been announced to you through those who brought you the gospel with<sup>8</sup>d the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. On these things angels desire to look.



<sup>2</sup>In verse 5, σωτηρία is 'ready to be revealed;' in verse 9, it is the goal of faith that brings deliverance to one's very life; and in verses 10-12 this salvation was the object an prophetic inquiry.

<sup>3</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>4</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 38.

<sup>5</sup>ἔραυνῶντες here and ἐξηραύνησαν in v 10 are late spellings of ἐρευνῶντες and ἐξηρεύνησαν respectively (BAGD, 274, 306; cf. BDF §30.4).

<sup>6</sup>The omission of Χριστοῦ by B ("the Spirit that was among them") probably represents the effort of a single scribe to avoid the questions raised by the apparent abrupt reference to the preexistent Christ.

<sup>7</sup>The verb προμαρτύρεσθαι is found only here in the NT and is not attested either in the LXX or in classical Greek. The same is true of the verb προμαρτυρεῖν, reflected in προμαρτυροῦμενον, a variant reading found in P72 A P and some other witnesses. BGD (708) cites one occurrence of each in very late (eighth century A.D.) papyri. It is doubtful that there is any real difference in meaning between the two. Hort's attempt (53-54) to assign to προμαρτυροῦμενον a more subtle meaning than "predict" or "foretell" (i.e., on the analogy of μαρτύρεσθαι, which he interprets as calling God to witness) cannot be judged successful.

<sup>8</sup>The preposition ἐν with "Holy Spirit" is missing in some important MSS (e.g., P72 A B Ψ 33 and others). The omission is in agreement with Peter's style (cf. 3:18; 4:6), but there is little difference in meaning; in either case the Spirit is being designated as the

The variations reflect both changing patterns of spellings of Greek words over time, as well as spelling differences among differing dialects of ancient Greek. As such these kinds of variations are common not only with ancient texts that were copied and re-copied over a period of centuries, but also one can note the same thing with subsequent editions of various translations of the Bible. The wording of the two original editions of the King James Version of the English Bible published in 1611 were not only different from one another, but that form of English is barely readable to a modern English speaking person. Presently over a dozen different versions of the KJV are in circulation in the English speaking world, and no two of them have the exact same wording.

The conclusion: we have a confident text in verses 10-12 from which to derive a solid interpretation.

**Internal History.** The time and place markers inside vv. 10-12 revolve around the efforts of the prophets (in the past) to understand the (yet to come) salvation provided by God. One of the intriguing phrases is “the Spirit of Christ within them” (τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ) because it alludes to Christ’s Spirit being in the prophets centuries before Christ was born in the flesh, and thus raises the question of the pre-existence of Christ. But this is more a theological question than a historical one, and thus will be treated in the exegesis below. And this is the case for most of the historical issues here, since they have a heavy theological tone and are not pure history concerns.

**b. Literary**

What kind of a text are we looking at here? Literary analysis is important to our understanding.

**Literary Form (Genre).** Verses 10-12 are made up of some inter connected Greek relative clauses, as the Block Diagram below illustrates. Together these do not comprise an independent sentence, but instead are modifiers of the word ‘salvation, in verse 9. Consequently verses 3-12 together form a single sentence in the original Greek text. In light of this, verses 10-12 are best considered as a part of the Proem in the letter. As the final sub-unit of the Proem, the text also serves as a transition to the letter body by calling attention to the importance of the salvation provided by God in Christ. This will set up much of the discussion in the letter body in 1:13-5:14.

The tendency of some commentators to label this as an *Exordium* in the pattern of ancient Greek and Latin rhetoric is mistaken, and ignores the epistolary nature of First Peter.<sup>9</sup> The letter is not an ancient speech of persuasion, nor a baptismal tractate, as many of those using this label claim.

**Literary Context.** As is charted on the right, the Proem in an ancient letter followed the Praescriptio and preceded the letter body. Given the prayer nature of the Proem it traditionally took the tone of a positive affirmation of the letter recipients by the sender through invoking the blessings of deity upon the recipients.

This is certainly the case here where Peter lifts his voice in praise to God for the blessings of salvation given to his readers by God.

**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*

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power that makes the proclamation effective. The simple dative is probably original, with the ἐν added by later scribes to conform to common NT usage (BDF §195).

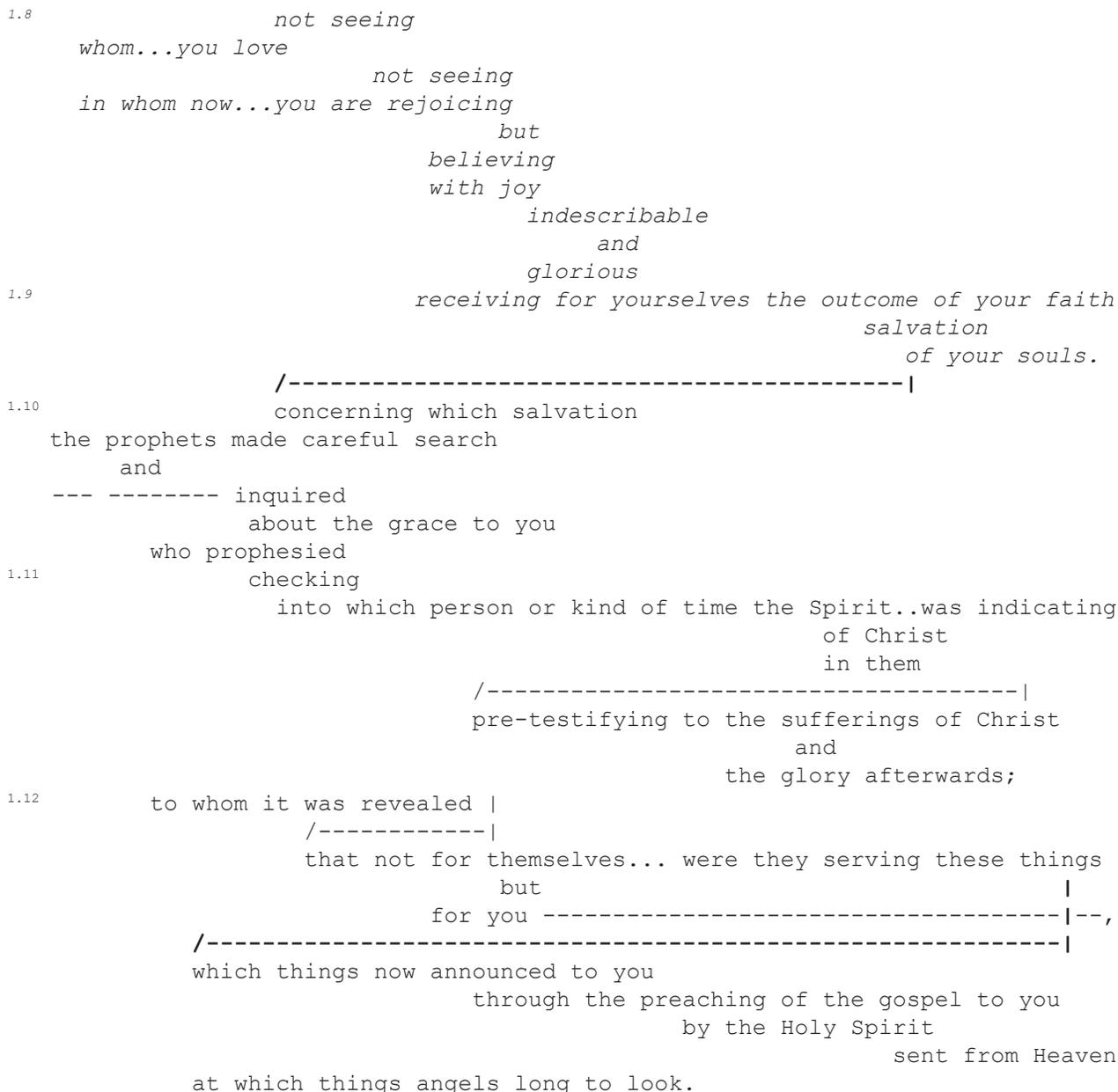
<sup>9</sup>Reflective further of the absence of understanding of writing patterns of letters in the ancient world are the comments of John H. Elliott “The body of the letter opens (1:3–12), as it closes (5:10–11), on a worshipful note of blessing and praise.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 329.] At least Elliott picked up on the prayer nature of the text in 1:3-12, but by failing to grasp the role of the letter Proem he missed important points being made by Peter.

Peter Davids, who works in literary analysis of ancient texts, reflects a better appraisal in his observations: “Peter begins his letter with the customary thanks to God (which in pagan letters would be thanks to the gods) for the well-being of the recipients, but, like that of Paul, who uses the identical wording in 2 Cor. 1:3 and Eph. 1:3, his content is distinctively Jewish and Christian.” [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), 50-51.]

And by his praise he calls upon his readers to praise God as well, and indeed affirms that they are already doing just that.

The expansion elements, vv. 3b-12, elaborate details of the salvation provided by God in terms of new birth, inheritance, and salvation. Verses 10-12 come as the third segment and contain the dominate focus on salvation.<sup>10</sup>

**Literary Structure.** The block diagram below highlights the internal structure of the ideas contained in these verses. Verses 10-12 flow out of a relative clause connection to ‘salvation’ in verse 9.



<sup>10</sup>These three verses constitute the last of the three parts (vv. 3–5, 6–9, 10–12) into which the opening section of the letter is divided. These verses now focus directly on the salvation that was mentioned at the end of each of the two earlier sections (vv. 5b, 9), thus serving as both conclusion and climax to this portion of the letter.<sup>4</sup> If the first part had major emphasis on the future results of God’s act of begetting believers anew (especially inheritance and salvation), and the second part put emphasis on the present results (suffering, love, and joy), this part lays the emphasis on the past, in which the rudiments of this salvation were discerned, specifically through the intervention of the divine Spirit (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ, v. 11; πνεῦμα ἁγίου, v. 12).<sup>5</sup> In that way, the readers are comforted by the assurance that their salvation is surely in the hands of God, since it is part of the divine plan that had long ago been set (e.g., 1:20), and that is now at the point of its fulfillment.” [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), 105.]

Careful analysis of the series of relative clauses in these verses will reveal a twofold emphasis.<sup>11</sup> First, verses ten and eleven focus on what the prophets did. Then verse twelve centers on what God did for the prophets. The clue here is the shift from active voice verbs ('made careful search'; 'inquired'; 'prophesied' to the passive voice verb 'it was revealed.' Thus the thought structure is built on prophets seeking God and His response to them.

## II. Message

The outline of the passage is built around the above twofold pattern of thought flow in these statements. At the heart lies the principle of seeking to know God's will and then being given revelation of that divine will.

### a. The prophets deeply wanted to know God's plan, vv. 10-11

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, 11 inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory.

10 Περὶ ἧς σωτηρίας ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν προφηταὶ οἱ περὶ τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος προφητεύσαντες, 11 ἐραυνῶντες εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν ἐδήλου τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ προμαρτυρούμενον τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας·

## Notes:

**The salvation searched for.** What was it that the prophets<sup>12</sup> sought? ἧς σωτηρίας was the object of their quest. The relative pronoun ἧς (*hēs*) links σωτηρίας back to σωτηρίαν in verse nine: ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν ("the salvation of your souls"), which is seen as τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ("the outcome of your faith").<sup>13</sup> In verse nine this salvation is seen as ultimate deliverance from eternal damnation as the result of one's faith commitment to Christ.

Now in verses 10-11 additional descriptors are added to the term σωτηρία. *First*, this salvation is the grace of God prophesied by the prophets: οἱ περὶ τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος προφητεύσαντες. God's grace is His mercy and compassion expressed in concrete action in behalf of believers. That this grace was for the benefit of these later Jewish and non-Jewish believers is made clear by the prepositional phrase εἰς ὑμᾶς set up clearly as an adjective modifier of τῆς... χάριτος (this grace). The repetition of the preposition περὶ here with χάριτος (grace) and also with σωτηρία (salvation) in v. 9 make it clear that God's grace and God's salvation are inseparably linked. The reference to God's grace -- τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ -- in v. 13 that is being brought to the believers at the revelation of Jesus Christ underscores the action of God in providing and implementing salvation for believers. The emphasis here then is on the eschatological realization of this salvation at the Second Coming of Jesus. Believers will experience this salvation, not by

<sup>11</sup>This plays off of an informal chiasmus structure built into these statements, as outlined by J. Ramsey Michaels [vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 39]:

- a. Inquiries of prophets *in the past*  
(ἐξεμήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν ... ἐραυνῶντες, vv 10–11).
- b. Divine revelation to prophets *in the past*  
(οἱ ἀπεκαλύφθη, v 12a).
- b'. Divine announcement to Christians *in the present*  
(ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν v 12b).
- a'. Inquiries of angels *in the present*  
(ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, v12c).

<sup>12</sup>"The 'prophets' (*prophētai*) mentioned here are the spokespersons of God of the OT. However, their 'prophesying' (*prophēteusantes*) is characterized here not as addressing the critical word of God to Israel's present circumstances, as was the prophets' primary function. Rather, it is claimed that they diligently 'searched' ('sought out,' *exezētēsan*) and 'investigated' (*exēraunēsān*, occurring only here in the NT) 'concerning' (*peri*) something yet to occur in the future. The verb *exeraunaō* occurs only here in the NT and combined with *exezētēsan* illustrates the author's rhetorical sensitivity for assonance; see also 5:2–3 and 5:10. The combination of both compound verbs also occurs in 1 Macc 9:26 regarding foreign authorities who tracked down the friends of Judas Maccabeus." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 345.]

<sup>13</sup>"For relative pronouns, see 1:5a, 6a, 8a, 12a, 12c, 21; 2:4a, 22a, 23a, 24a, 24d; 3:2, 4b, 6b, 19a, 20d, 21a, 22a; 4:4a, 5a, 11d; 5:9b, 11a; for link-words, see the GENERAL INTRODUCTION, 3.2. Style." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 345.]

their goodness or accomplishments, but rather solely by God's grace.

*Additionally*, this salvation centers on revealing (ἐδήλου) by the Spirit of Christ (τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ) -- by means of pre-testimony (προμαρτυρόμενον) -- the sufferings of Christ (τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα) and also the subsequent glory (καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας<sup>14</sup>). The reason God will show mercy to believers in final judgment is based upon what Christ accomplished in His sufferings and subsequent triumphs climaxed in the ascension.

The working of the divine Spirit in the ministries of the Old Testament prophets is not unusual, but the identification of that Spirit as the Spirit of Christ in the prophets (τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ) is unusual. One should note that the reference Χριστοῦ can be taken as the Spirit 'belonging to Christ' or the Spirit 'giving information about Christ.' Also as 1 Cor. 10:4 and Heb. 11:26 suggest, the distinction between 'Spirit of Christ' and Christ Himself is virtually non-existent. God was working through His Spirit to reveal His plan to these prophets.

One should also note that the Imperfect tense of the Greek verb ἐδήλου ('showing') underscores that this revelation was an ongoing process that was not completed in the lifetime of these prophets. What was revealed (ἀπεκαλύφθη) is defined in verse 12 and was only partial disclosure rather than complete.

One of the challenges from these statements that leaps out at me is the concern of the prophets to understand what God was up to in their world and in the coming days. In their devotion to God, they passionately sought to understand His will and to learn as much as possible about it. Our modern world lives mostly in complete disinterest in God or His desires for people. Added to that is the uncomfortable levels of disinterest by people calling themselves Christian. Large masses of so-called Christians possess a scary ignorance of the Bible and of the things of God. It's no wonder that our world is full of religious charlatans who deceive people and pervert the message of the Gospel. The example of the prophets in their quest to understand God's salvation is challenging to us who possess the full revelation of God in scripture.

**The search.** The verbal expressions describing the actions of the prophets is interesting. Regarding this salvation they ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν ("made careful search and inquiry") while they were ἐραυνῶντες εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν ("inquiring about the person or time that...").<sup>15</sup> The cumulative effect of these verbs is to emphasize an intensive search by the prophets.

Peter does not give specific examples of individual prophets and how they made their search. Very likely this was done intentionally in order to make the point of the spiritual principle, rather than to stress Jewish prophetic history.<sup>16</sup> This principle of the unitary nature of God's people across time and race is more impor-

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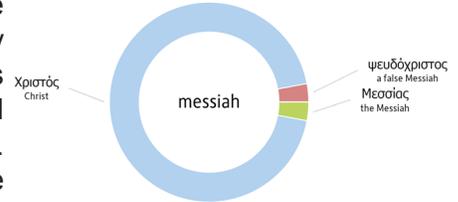
<sup>14</sup>“δόξας here are ‘triumphs’ or ‘glorious deeds’ (the plural concretizes an abstract noun, BDF §142). In particular they are the glorious deeds of Jesus Christ or of God on his behalf — in either case ‘glorious events’ associated with Jesus (cf. Exod 15:11 LXX; Wisd Sol 18:24; a different concretizing usage is found in Jude 8 and 2 Pet 2:10, where δόξαι refers to ‘glorious beings’ or angels). The closest parallel to τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας in 1 Peter is probably τὰς ἀρετὰς, the ‘praises’ or ‘mighty deeds’ of God as the ‘one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light’ (1 Pet 2:9; cf. the linking of δόξα and ἀρετή in relation to the ‘one who called us’ in 2 Pet 1:3). The ‘glorious events’ that followed Christ’s sufferings can perhaps be identified as his resurrection from the dead (1:3; 3:21; cf. 1:21, ‘gave him glory’), his journey to heaven (3:22) in the course of which he ‘made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits who were disobedient long ago’ (3:19), and his enthronement ‘at the right hand of God ... with angels and authorities and powers in submission to him’ (3:22). One way of regarding 3:18–22, in fact, is as a recital of some of the ‘glorious events’ to which v 11 alludes.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 45.]

<sup>15</sup>“That the two compound verbs, similar in form and meaning, are used for their rhetorical effect and are not clearly distinguishable in meaning is shown by the fact that the single verb ἐραυνῶντες in v 11 serves to recapitulate them both. The same two verbs are linked in Ps 118[119]:2 LXX with reference to ‘searching out’ the testimonies of the Lord and ‘seeking out’ the Lord himself with one’s whole heart; at several other points in that psalm (although not elsewhere in the LXX) they seem to be used interchangeably by the translator to render the Hebrew verb נָצַר.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 39–40.]

<sup>16</sup>“Why is he [Peter] so vague about something of which he could easily have spoken more concretely? The literary technique of using deliberately vague language to refer to something quite specific can be found in the midrashic summary of biblical history from Adam to Moses in the book of Wisdom; see especially Wisd Sol 10:1–11:1, with references to ‘an unrighteous man’ (Cain), ‘a righteous man’ (e.g., Lot, Jacob, Joseph), ‘a holy people’ (Israel), ‘a nation of oppressors’ (Egypt), ‘a servant of the Lord’ or ‘a holy prophet’ (Moses). The same technique is found occasionally in the NT: e.g., Heb 11:35–38 (women ... others ... still others); 1 Pet 3:20 (‘a few—eight souls in all’); 4:6 (‘some who are dead’); 2 Pet 1:21 (‘people spoke from God’); 2:4 (‘angels who sinned’). Sometimes what is left indefinite is defined in the context or associated with figures who are named, sometimes not. The effect of

tant.

The details these prophets looked for are described as εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν (“inquiring about the person or time that...”). This Greek phrase τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν can be understood in more than one way.<sup>17</sup> As Archeia and Nida point out, “translated literally, the Greek is: They inquired into which (or into whom) and what kind of time was indicated by the spirit of Christ in them when they were predicting the sufferings of (or into) Christ and the glories afterward. The Greek expression *eis tina* may be understood either as referring to a time (with *tina* understood as a neuter pronoun) or as referring to a person (with *tina* understood as a masculine pronoun).”<sup>18</sup> Translations and commentators remain divided over the gender of the Greek pronoun τίνα. The essential meaning is similar either way: the prophets were trying to identify the person the Spirit was showing to them as well as the circumstances of his suffering, or else they were trying to identify exactly when (τίνα) and under what circumstances (ποῖον) the Messiah (Χριστὸν) would suffer. Their focus was on God’s anointed deliverer, the Messiah,<sup>19</sup> and that He would have to suffer before gaining triumph over the enemies of God.



These prophets sought answers to their questions about how God was going to provide ‘salvation’, i.e., deliverance, to His people. They were certain that He was going to do so, but exactly how and when remained a mystery to them. But as the Spirit provided them details they continued seeking all the information they could gain. So intense was their concern to know God’s will. Oh that we might be that interested today!

The point of Peter in these words is summed up well by Michaels:<sup>20</sup>

Although Peter centers his attention on present-day believers only in β´ (ὑμῖν, v 12b), his use of εἰς ὑμᾶς in v 10 and the οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς δέ of v 12a indicate that his concern throughout is to assure his readers that they belong to the age of fulfillment even though they are still waiting for their salvation. Ancient Jewish prophets and contemporary Gentile believers are coparticipants in one great redemptive plan.

## **b. God revealed some parts of His plan to them, v. 12**

12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

12 οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτά, ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς<sup>21</sup> πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ, εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακῦψαι.

In response to their quest, God provided some answers to the prophets. Through their passionate inquiries the prophets learned primarily that the revelation from God through the Holy Spirit was not for their benefit but for later believers in Christ Jesus. The details of the Gospel message (αὐτά, ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν) were announced to these believers through Christian preachers (διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς) in ancient Anatolia where the readers of this letter lived. The prophets were not privileged to receive these details. The such a style is to allow full scope either to the reader’s knowledge of biblical and postbiblical history or to their imaginations. To Peter in the present context it scarcely matters whether or not his readers are familiar with particular examples of the ‘diligent and careful inquiry’ of which he speaks. They know what prophets are, and all they need beyond this is to understand that these prophets ‘prophesied of the grace to be given you.’ The fact that the prophets were Jewish while Peter’s readers are Gentiles is irrelevant. The biblical Jewish past is the readers’ past; the Jewish prophets ministered to them no less than to the people of their own time. All are members together of one community of faith, spanning many centuries.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 40.]

<sup>17</sup>Compare the following translations: TEV: when the time would be and how it would come; LBA: qué persona o tiempo; NLT: when and to whom all this would happen; NRSV: the person or time; RSV, ESV, NASB: what person or time; KJV, NKJV: what, or what manner of time; ASV: what [time] or what manner of time; BBE: what sort of time; HCSB: what time or what circumstances; NIV: when; Wey: the time; Message: who and when; TNIV: the time and circumstances.

<sup>18</sup>Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 28.

<sup>19</sup>Remember that in Greek ‘Christ’ means ‘Messiah’ through the common base meaning of ‘the anointed one.’

<sup>20</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 39.

<sup>21</sup>ὑμᾶς WH Treg ] + ἐν NIV RP. The text variation centers around the presence or absence of the preposition ἐν (by) with πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (Holy Spirit). The meaning remains the same; the internal issue is stylistic. The external weight of mss evidence favors omitting it. Later copyists sought to make the phrase conform to the more common pattern of the preposition used with the reference to the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit made this preaching possible (πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ). This Gospel message was of such interest that the angels of God long to get a look at it (εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι). Quite interesting!

**God's limited revelation to the prophets:** οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτά. God's response to the intensive searching for details centered in letting the prophets know that God's full revelation of salvation would benefit subsequent generations of believers in Jesus Christ.<sup>22</sup> The key concept here is διηκόνου. <sup>23</sup> The 'these things' (αὐτά) was not to be serving (imperfect Gk. tense verb) the prophets personally. Peter declares instead that they would be serving 'you' (ὑμῖν), his readers in the first century.

The challenge to us today from this is to realize that God's call to ministry upon even believers will often

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<sup>22</sup>“They did know, however, that their prophecy would be fulfilled in a distant age (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17; Deut. 18:15; Dan. 9:24–27; Joel 2:28; Hab. 2:1–3); that is, says Peter, they realized that they ministered to you, those on whom that age of fulfillment has dawned.” [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), 64.]

<sup>23</sup>διακονέω (s. two next entries) impf. διηκόνουν; fut. διακονήσω; 1 aor. διηκόνησα; pf. inf. δεδηκονηκέναι (AssMos Fgm. k, Denis p. 67); aor. pass. διηκονήθη, for augm. s. B-D-F §69, 4; W-S. §12, 6; Mlt-H. 192 (Soph., Hdt. et al.; rare in ins, pap; never in LXX, but in Philo, Joseph.) gener. to render service in a variety of ways either at someone's behest or voluntarily and freq. with suggestion of movement.

**1. to function as an intermediary, act as go-between/agent, be at one's service w. intermediary function either expressed or implied** (lead tablet Sb 4947, 2 διακόνησόν μοι; in lover's petition 'serve as intermediary [medium] for me' PWarr 21, 4; 8; Lucian, Cont. 1 of Hermes as messenger for Zeus; Theophr. Char. 2, 9 fetch things; Just., D. 79, 2; cp. the role of Repentance JosAs 15:7) *w. dat. of pers. and acc. of thing οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτά they were not acting as agents in their own behalf but for yours in the things 1 Pt 1:12 (for a service consisting in the delivery of a message cp. Jos., Ant. 6, 298)*. For a similar contrast, and with suggestion of an intermediary's mission: οὐκ ἤλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι came not to be served, but to serve Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45 (i.e. the Human One [Son of Man] came to carry out an assignment not to benefit himself but others [by giving his life in ransom]; cp. Mt 4:11; par. Mk 1:13 [service rendered by divine messengers]). Of Jesus carrying out his mission [ἀ]νῆλθε[ν δια]κονῶν AcPI BMM verso 13f.—Phlm 13 suggests that Onesimus can be used by Paul on assignment in behalf of the gospel. πορεύομαι ... διακονῶν τοῖς ἀγίοις on an errand to God's people (REB) Ro 15:25 (s. 3).—Of delivery of an object: χάρις διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν gift that we are transmitting (a ref. to the collection for whose delivery they have accepted responsibility) 2 Cor 8:19; cp. vs. 20. In imagery, ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν a letter of Christ, delivered by us 2 Cor 3:3 (WBaird, Letters of Recommendation: JBL 80, '61, 190).

**2. to perform obligations, without focus on intermediary function**

*a. of unspecified services perform duties, render assistance, serve τινί someone* (Demosth. 9, 43; UPZ 18, 23 [163 B.C.]; δαίμοσι δ. Orig., C. Cels. 2, 51, 38) Mt 8:15; Mk 1:31; Lk 4:39; GJs 6:3; διακονοῦσαι αὐτῷ being at his service Mt 27:55; cp. Mk 15:41. διακόνει μοι serve me Hs 8, 4, 1, cp. 2; J 12:26; Ac 19:22. Also εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ δ. serve one another w. it 1 Pt 4:10. W. acc. of thing ὅσα διηκόνησεν what services he rendered 2 Ti 1:18; cp. Hs 2:10. Abs. (POxy 275, 10 [I A.D.]) 1 Pt 4:11. Pass. (Jos., Ant. 10, 242); ἀπλῶς δ. complete a service in simplicity of heart Hm 2:6.

*b. of attention at meals wait on someone (τινί) at table* (Menand., Fgm. 272; Pyrgion [Hellenistic times]: 467 Fgm. 1 Jac. [a communal meal in Crete]; Diod S 4, 36, 2; 5, 28, 4; Philo, Vi. Cont. 70; TestJob 12:1 al.; Jos., Ant. 11, 163; 166) Lk 12:37; 17:8. Abs. 10:40; J 12:2; GJs 6:3. In imagery ὡς ὁ διακονῶν waiter Lk 22:26f.

**3. to meet an immediate need, help w. dat.** (Iren. 1, pr. 3 [Harv. I 7, 1]) πότε οὐ διηκονήσαμέν σοι; when did we not help you? Mt 25:44 (but s. 4, Collins). ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων helped to support them w. their means Lk 8:3 (KTorjesen, When Women Were Priests '93, 53ff); the saints Ro 15:25 (JO'Rourke, CBQ 29, '67, 116–18; but s. 1); Hb 6:10.

**4. to carry out official duties, minister, in cultic context** (of holy service at the altar Jos., Ant. 3, 155; cp. PGM 36, 304 and 335 παρὰ θεοῖς δ.) of διάκονοι 1 Ti 3:10; καλῶς δ. vs. 13. ἀγνῶς καὶ σεμνῶς Hv 3, 5, 1. Opp. κακῶς Hs 9, 26, 2. Collins (s. below) p. 65 argues for placement of Mt 25:44 in this classification: those consigned to perdition plead their total dedication to the Lord's interests.

**5. Ac 6:2 poses a special problem: care for, take care of** w. dat. of thing τραπέζαις look after tables can be understood of serving food at tables (cp. βούλομαι ... διακονῆσαι τοῖς πτωχοῖς σήμερον ἐν τῇ σῆ τραπέζῃ TestJob 12:1), but it is improbable that some widows would be deprived of food at a communal meal. The term διακονία vs. 1 more probably refers to administrative responsibility (s. διακονία 5), one of whose aspects is concern for widows without specifying the kind of assistance that is allotted. Vs. 2 may contain wordplay involving the phrase τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, w. λόγος designating a ledger entry, in which case τράπεζα, which is also a banker's term (s. L-S-J-M s.v. II), may here denote accounts (s. τράπεζα 1c).—WBrandt, Dienst u. Dienen im NT '31; ESchweizer, D. Leben des Herrn in d. Gemeinde u. ihren Diensten '46; PBoulton, Διακονέω and Its Cognates in the 4 Gospels: TU 73, '59, 415–22. JCollins, Diakonia '90.—DELG s.v. διάκονος. 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), 229-30.]

serve the benefit of others more than that of believers themselves. With the modern western mind set of “what’s in it for me?” this calling of God to sacrificial service to bring spiritual benefit to other people is challenging. And for the prophets those who would benefit from their prophecies of a future deliverance of God were not people these prophets knew, and included were non-Jews as well as covenant Israel. Yet the ancient men of God faithfully carried out their mission of proclaiming God’s deliverance in a distant future.

What Peter emphasizes here is but one aspect of the ministry of the prophets in ancient Israel. The revelation given to them by God did include details of God’s plan to both punish (e.g., the ‘Day of the Lord’ theme<sup>24</sup>) and redeem (e.g., the ‘remnant’ concept<sup>25</sup>) the Israelites during the time of the Old Testament. They were called up to prepare ancient Israel for God’s demands upon His covenant people.

**God’s full revelation to the believers:** αὐτά, ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ. Peter now spells out what ‘these things’ (αὐτά) meant. Clearly he understood the fuller revelation of God to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This fuller revelation was brought to the readers of this letter by Christian preachers under the leadership of the Holy Spirit sent by God from Heaven.

The leadership of the Holy Spirit in the ministries of both the prophets (cf. v. 11) and the Christian preachers (cf. v. 12) becomes the common source of divine origin for what both proclaimers of God’s revelation were doing, even though separated in time by several centuries. As such this common source insures continuity of message and the divine origin of the message.

The identity of the Christian preachers (τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς) who initially brought<sup>26</sup> the message of salvation in Christ to these readers is not given. It does allude to the Christian missionaries who evangelized this region at the beginning. We are not privileged to know the names of those who carried out this important ministry. In typical fashion, Peter did not consider it important to give specific historical details. Instead, he stressed what ultimately matters the most: that these individuals carried out their evangelization faithfully following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Thus the result was the conversion of numbers of Jews and Gentiles in the northeastern Mediterranean world to Christ. And this was done through proclamation of the apostolic gospel message that had originated at Jerusalem from the Twelve.

Again, another challenge emerges from these words. These unknown Christian missionaries faithfully carried out their responsibility without fame or recognition by others. Their important work is what we remember today about them, not their names and background. In a day of egotistical TV preachers more interested in viewer ratings than in the Gospel, the example of the ancient missionaries challenges us. Assuming that many, if not most of them, were still living when Peter sent this letter to Asia Minor, many of them probably were able to read this tribute to their ministry. The satisfaction to them from Peter’s words was a reminder that they stood in a centuries old line of faithful servants of Almighty God who carried out their calling under the leadership of the Spirit of God. This provided them affirmation that any sacrifices in that ministry were worth while. And that on the Day of Final Judgment God would acknowledge their work as they witnessed the passage into Heaven of those won to Christ. May we be willing to serve without ‘fame and fortune’ just as these did!

**The angels longing to know this revelation:** εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι. The final relative clause again goes back to ‘these things’ via the relative pronoun ἃ.<sup>27</sup> The believers who have heard and

<sup>24</sup>For details see the online “Day of the Lord, God, Christ, the,” article in the *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* online.

<sup>25</sup>For details see the online “Remnant,” article in the *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* online.

<sup>26</sup>Note the Aorist tense of the Greek participle εὐαγγελισαμένων, denoting completed action.

<sup>27</sup>Finally Peter adds that these facts about Christ’s suffering and the subsequent glories of his kingdom are things into which angels long to look. The word long (*epithymeō*) is used in the New Testament to speak of very strong desires, both good and evil. Here (as in Matt. 13:17; Luke 17:22; 22:15; etc.) it refers to the positive desire of sinless angels. The verb is in the present tense and cannot be restricted to a longing which the angels had before Christ came, or before the first sermon at Pentecost allowed them to hear the full Christian gospel. Peter rather says that even as he writes angels are still longing to look into these things and learn more about them. The longing must therefore include a holy curiosity to watch and delight in the glories of Christ’s kingdom as they find ever fuller realization in the lives of individual Christians throughout the history of the church (cf. Eph. 3:8–10).

The word *parakypō*, ‘to look’, is very appropriate here, for it means to peek or peep into a situation from the vantage point of an outsider, usually one who is not seen by those being watched (see Gen. 26:8, Abimelech looking out of his window; 1 Chr. 15:29, Michal watching David out of the window; the word is used of angels peering from heaven in 1 Enoch 9:1). These verses show that the word has no necessary nuance of ‘stooping’ to look at something (although it can be used that way) or of stealing just a quick glance, as some have assumed by looking at only one or two instances of its usage (see also Prov. 7:6; Song 2:9).

responded to the preaching of the Gospel are privileged beyond even the angels in Heaven.<sup>28</sup> The continuing passion of the angels to understand what God is doing through the message of salvation highlights the indescribable importance of this message. Believers experience its dynamic in life changing ways. But angels must watch as outside spectators (παράκῳψαι) to what is happening.

Finally, we sense privilege here for us as believers. Typically the life of angels is held up as the ideal to strive for by humans. But Peter turns that thinking on its head by asserting privileges to believers that make angels envious.

In 1:3-12, we encounter Peter's prayer for the believers in Asia Minor in the middle of the first century AD. What a prayer! With the expanding theme of new birth, inheritance, and salvation rolled into one experience that has been made available to believers in Christ, we can easily understand Peter's 'blessing' God in eloquent praise and thanksgiving.

Now Peter is ready to begin elaborating on the implications of this majestic theme of divine deliverance in the body proper of the letter starting in 1:13 and continuing down through 5:11. Studying this material will indeed be rich and rewarding!

Here are some questions to reflect upon in light of this passage:

1. How often do I praise God for His deliverance of me from sin and death?
2. Do I really understand just what God has done for me in Christ Jesus?
3. How are new birth, inheritance, and salvation linked together as one central idea?
4. How do these above concepts of God's deliverance relate to Jesus Christ?
5. Am I willing to carry out ministry with the same anonymity as those who preached the gospel to these first readers of this letter?
6. How are angels involved in God's deliverance?

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[Wayne A. Grudem, vol. 17, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 77-78.]

<sup>28</sup>“There are two possible ways to interpret this. One is to assume that the angels are ignorant of what the prophets are talking about, and would very much like to acquire some understanding of it; their ignorance is then contrasted with the knowledge of the Christians to whom this message is already made known. Another way is to put emphasis on the angels' intense, perhaps envious, interest in God's plan for his people. Either way, the message comes out clear that the angels are in some ways inferior to the Christian, and that what God is doing for his people is so great that even angels wonder in awe and amazement.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 31.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 4**  
**1 Peter 1:13-16**  
**“Living in Holiness”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser’s back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material. All rights reserved © by C&L Publications Inc.

**Greek NT**

13 Διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὁσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν, νήφοντες τελείως, ἐλπίσατε ἐπὶ τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 14 ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς, μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις, 15 ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε, 16 διότι γέγραπται ὅτι Ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

13 Darum seid wach und haltet euch bereit! Bleibt nüchtern und setzt eure ganze Hoffnung auf die Gnade, die Gott euch schenken wird, wenn Jesus Christus in seiner Herrlichkeit erscheint. 14 Lebt als gehorsame Kinder Gottes und nicht mehr nach euren selbstsüchtigen Wünschen wie damals, als ihr die Wahrheit noch nicht kanntet. 15 Euer ganzes Tun soll ausgerichtet sein an dem heiligen Gott, der euch berufen hat. 16 In den Heiligen Schriften heißt es ja: »Ihr sollt heilig sein, denn ich bin heilig.«

**NRSV**

13 Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. 14 Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. 15 Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

**NLT**

13 So think clearly and exercise self-control. Look forward to the special blessings that will come to you at the return of Jesus Christ. 14 Obey God because you are his children. Don’t slip back into your old ways of doing evil; you didn’t know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God -- who chose you to be his children -- is holy. 16 For he himself has said, “You must be holy because I am holy.”

**Quick Links to the Study**

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

II. [Message](#)

- a. Focus your hope, v. 13
- b. Become holy in your living, vv. 14-16

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**Introduction to Study.**

With the key motifs established in the Proem of the letter, 1:3-12, Peter begins with admonitions to Christian living in verses 13-16, the first segment of the letter body (Διὸ). Two foundational admonitions -- ‘set your hope’ and ‘become holy’ -- form the core structure of these two Greek sentences, vv. 13, 14-16. These admonitions are modified heavily with rich concepts that expand the ideas of each core. Most English translations can’t pack this much idea into relatively short sentences, and thus the translations break the material into multiple sentences, and especially as the NLT above illustrates, rearranges participle modifiers into full verb expressions. Although somewhat necessary because of the limitation of English grammar, the net impact is to blur the arrangement of ideas in the original text. The block diagram of the text below will highlight this inner connection of primary and secondary ideas in visual expression. The implications of setting up a firm hope and the commitment to holiness require a set of complimentary commitments, or else these two basic demands will not be met adequately. Only with understanding of the richness of these ideas can we correctly understand what Peter demanded, and even more importantly, can we implement these ideas into our living successfully.

**I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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

Because of the particular genre of these verses, the literary aspect is going to play a greater role than the historical aspect in the understanding of the ideas contained in the passage.

### a. Historical

**External History.** That the copying of this passage by scribes over the first seven or eight centuries was fairly consistent is evidenced by the fact that the editors of the USB 4th revised edition Greek New Testament didn't consider any of the variances in copying to be significant enough to impact the meaning of the text, and thus needed to be included in the text apparatus of their edition of the Greek New Testament. Only two issues merit notation in the UBS Greek text, and they have to do with style issues connected to the quote from the Old Testament in verse sixteen.

First, later copyists were bothered by the seeming redundant use of the conjunctions in the introduction of the OT quote: διότι γέγραπται [ὅτι]. Consequently some of the later manuscripts especially omit the second conjunction ὅτι.<sup>2</sup> Enough manuscript evidence exists to warrant retaining the ὅτι, but it doesn't impact the translation of the text. This ὅτι is the so-called 'recitative ὅτι' that was used in the ancient world to introduce direct discourse. That is, it served as ancient quotation marks, and thus carried no cognitive meaning.

Second, some copyists, mainly because of shifts in the writing of Greek over time, were sometimes bothered by the absence of a stated verb in ἐγὼ ἅγιος (I holy) at the end of verse sixteen. Consequently some manuscripts insert the implied verb into the clause: ἐγὼ ἅγιος εἰμι (I am holy).<sup>3</sup> The English translation remains the same whether or not the Greek verb εἰμι was directly stated or merely implied.

One or two other variations in the wording of the text are present, but have less impact than the two listed above. Thus the stability of this passage over the centuries of being copied by countless numbers of scribes is very strong indeed.

**Internal History.** Because of the specific genre of this text, it would not tend to have many time or place references, and such is the case. The forward look in the concept of 'hope' centers on final judgment and eternity at the end of human history. Eschatological expectation in First Peter is a significant doctrinal theme, and will be explored when it surfaces from passage to passage in the text studies. In vv. 13-16 the emphasis is not primarily spatial but conceptional ideas. Our hope centers on the grace of God to be expressed at the time of Jesus' return to earth. The focus on the present contained in the passage is geared to actions that will prepare believers for that future moment of time.

### b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** At the broad level of genre, this passage stands as the opening section of the letter body. As such it builds off of the themes placed on the table for discussion in the Praescriptio and the Proem sections of the letter in the first twelve verses of the letter.<sup>4</sup> In verse three, a living hope was mentioned. It was forward pointing to the future inheritance promised believers. In verses six to eight, the experience of suffering persecution is seen as preparing us for final judgment that will bring praise to Christ because the suffering validates the genuineness of our faith commitment. Thus standing before God with a life of holy living because of our faith becomes vital to that day in the future.

of both the historical and literary background of every passage will be presented in summary form with each of the studies.

<sup>2</sup>"The formula introducing the scriptural quotation varies somewhat in the manuscript tradition, probably because the words διότι γέγραπται ὅτι (as in B ὅτι and a few other MSS) seemed redundant to later scribes, especially in light of a second ὅτι in the following clause. Consequently, the ὅτι ("that") was omitted in the majority of MSS (including p72 & A C and P), while διότι γέγραπται was omitted in two later minuscules (33 and 1243). The ὅτι should probably be retained but left untranslated (the imperative with which the quotation begins makes it virtually untranslatable in English)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 51.]

<sup>3</sup>"The manuscript tradition is closely divided over whether or not the verb "to be" is expressed: ἐγὼ ἅγιος (& A\* B and a few others) or ἐγὼ ἅγιος εἰμι (p72 Ac C P Ψ and the majority of later witnesses). The shorter reading agrees exactly with the LXX of Lev 19:2, while the εἰμι is found in Lev 11:44 and in some MSS of Lev 20:7, 26. It is likely that ἅγιος is original here, and that the εἰμι was added at the end to correspond to the preceding ἄγνοι ἔσεσθε, although it is also possible that an original εἰμι was dropped to conform the quotation exactly to Lev 19:2. The difference in meaning is inconsequential." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 52.]

<sup>4</sup>"The key to the section as a whole is the 'living hope' mentioned first in v 3 and designated in a variety of ways throughout vv 3-12: as an 'inheritance' (v 4), as 'salvation' (vv 5, 9, 10), as 'the outcome of your faith' (v 9), as 'the grace to be given you' (v 10), and as 'praise, honor, and glory at the time when Jesus Christ is revealed' (v 8)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 52.]

**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*

At the smaller genre level, this passage functions as *paraenesis*, i.e., moral admonition.<sup>5</sup> With the centering of our focus on hope for God's coming grace, Peter calls believers to develop a behavior consistent with this anticipation of divine grace. The demand for holy living might seem to some as not fitting naturally with the promise of God's grace at final judgment. But to conclude this is to fail to understand the dynamical quality of divine grace, and how it impacts a person's life both now and in final judgment.

**Literary Context.** The outline of First Peter on the right highlights the literary setting of 1:13-16. It stands as the beginning of the body proper of the letter. Additionally it is the first of three units of material in vv. 13-25, that stress levels of idealized living. These demands for high standards of behavior (1:13-25) are complemented by the great privileges given to believers as the new people of God (2:1-10). How we are to live grows out of who we are as God's people. At the heart of this is the conversion relationship with the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. His character of holiness then is to be replicated in us as His children. This theme of holy living stands as the dominate motif in 1:13-2:10. This is Peter's beginning word to his readers in the first Christian century. And it remains an important word to believers of all times.

**Literary Structure.**

Note the block diagram below that highlights the two core admonitions with their extensive expansion elements.

```

1.13      Wherefore
           having girded up the loins of your thinking,
           being sober
           completely
2  set (your) hope
           upon the grace being brought to you
                                   at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1.14      As children of obedience
           not conforming yourselves
                                   in your ignorance
           to the former...passions
           but
1.15      according as the one having called you is holy
           also
           in all your living
3  become holy yourselves,
1.16      because it stands written,
                                   "You shall be holy,
                                   because I am holy."
    
```

Both core admonitions are cast in the Aorist Greek imperative verb form. The significance of this is an intense call for a decisive commitment to carry out the admonition. Believers must take this action deliberately

<sup>5</sup>Paraenesis comes from the Greek noun *παραινεσις*, and means 'exhortation' or 'advice.' Among the moral philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome it played a significant role in their teaching. In the Hebrew - Jewish tradition the moral aspect of religion was critical. Consequently, admonitions to specific patterns of behavior are common place in ancient Jewish writings. It is mainly out of that Jewish heritage that Peter speaks in this letter. But his non-Jewish readers, even with very little grasp of the Jewish religious tradition, would have understood the principle of moral demands being made upon them. In the ancient world 'religion' was considered a branch of 'philosophy' since it offered a distinctive way of viewing the world and reality.

and intentionally as a firm decision. The series of Greek participles that modify each imperative verb are cast either in the Aorist tense or the present tense. The importance of this is to demand completed actions (Aorist ptcs.) in preparation for the admonition, or to demand on going actions (present ptcs.) as complimentary to the action in the core admonition.

In the case of the first admonition, to set our hope means prior to that we must ‘gird up the loins of our thinking,’ we must be continually ‘sober’, and God’s grace is being brought to us as we move toward the revelation of Christ.

In the case of the second admonition, to become holy means an ongoing pattern of non-compliance with our passions, and an already holy God has called us to holiness, which is supported by the OT scripture cited.

## II. Message

The study of the text naturally grows out of the twofold structure present in the original Greek text.

### a. Focus your hope, v. 13

13 Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.

13 Διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν, νήφοντες τελείως, ἐλπίσσατε ἐπὶ τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

#### Notes:

The conjunctory connector Διὸ links this sentence back to vv. 3-12 by drawing out something implicit in the previous statements and making it explicit here.<sup>6</sup> Given the wonderfully rich experience given to believers by God in Christ Jesus, certain obligations are inherent to that divine gift. Verse 13 puts the first of several such obligations on the table.

**Set your hope.** As is illustrated in the diagram above, the core expression is ἐλπίσσατε. Everything else builds off this one admonition. ἐλπίσσατε admonishes the readers to firmly establish hope in their lives.<sup>7</sup> The Aorist imperative form of the Greek verb calls for a deliberate, intensive action of setting one’s expectation on something anticipated to come. One should remember that hope in the ancient Jewish world was much more than a wish, as it often is in the modern world. The biblical words ἐλπίζω and ἡ ἐλπίς expressed high levels of certainty so that the more accurate English word is ‘expectation’ rather than ‘hope.’ Confidence in the realization of what is ‘hoped for’ is a significant part of the Greek words. The verb used here ἐλπίζω is found here and in 3:5, two of the thirty one uses in the New Testament; the noun ἐλπίς shows up 52 times in the New Testament with three of them in First Peter. Chapters one and three are where both noun and verb surface in the letter.<sup>8</sup> The earlier phrase in 1:3 ἐλπίδα ζώσαν set the stage for understanding hope as a living dynamic, providing sources of influence and power to the believer.

**God’s coming grace.** What is it that believers should hope for? The object of hope is specified mostly as God (1:21, 3:5) and here as “the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.”<sup>9</sup> Peter calls upon believers to focus their expectation on the expression of divine grace connected to the disclosure of Christ at the end of human history. In the background lies the anticipation of God’s judgment, and the realization that successful final judgment depends on God’s favor and grace, not on our human achievements. But this eschatological grace is not a loophole for getting around that divine scrutiny of our life. To the contrary, this grace is a powerful spiritual dynamic pulling us into a lifestyle of holy behavior in anticipation of that coming day. The realization that our eternal destiny lies in the grace of God should motivate us to the highest possible levels of righteous living.

<sup>6</sup>“While this verse is imperatival in force, the consecutive conjunction διό (‘Therefore’) indicates that the command grows directly out of the announcement of the new reality, given by God in Christ, which was described in 1:3–12.” [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), 118.]

<sup>7</sup>“Hope as an imperative (ἐλπίσσατε) is characterized in v 13 by mental alertness and readiness for action and is focused precisely on what was assumed to be its object in vv 3–9, ‘the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (v 13b). The ethical content of the hope of which Peter speaks becomes explicit in what immediately follows: a requirement of holiness (vv 14–16), and of the reverent fear of God (v 17).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 52.]

<sup>8</sup>ἐλπίς in 1:3, 21, 3:15; ἐλπίζω in 1:13 and 3:5.

<sup>9</sup>In 1:3 and 3:15 hope is mentioned without a specified object.

**Preparing your minds.** Before the admonition to focus our hope Peter speaks of believers ‘having girded up the loins of their minds’ as a necessary preparation for being able to focus attention on hope. This is an ancient figure of speech describing mental preparation for action.<sup>10</sup> To be able to intensely focus attention on hope requires mental discipline and action; it doesn’t happen accidentally. Comprehension of the content of hope is a part of that mental preparation, and Peter in both chapters one and three develops extensive detail on what it is that we hope for and that provides excellent understanding of what we can expect from God at the end of time. The Aorist participle ἀναζωσάμενοι (‘having girded up...’) clearly defines this as preparatory action to being able to focus our hope.

What we are to ‘tidy up’ is our τῆς διανοίας. Although usually translated as ‘mind’ the Greek word stresses the process of thinking more than anything else, even to the level of ‘reasoning.’ The idea is dynamic, not static, and emphasizes clearing up our thinking processes to make them efficient and accurate.

**Being completely sober.** The second preparation activity to focusing our hope is ‘being sober,’ νήφοντες τελείως. Although the Greek word νήφω sometimes means ‘not drunk’ in secular Greek, the six uses in the New Testament stress mental alertness and clarity of thinking.<sup>11</sup> A part of getting our minds ‘in shape’ to think clearly is to clear out clutter and irrational thinking that confuses and blocks mental preparation for action. Thus this word is often translated as ‘discipline’ yourself. But the emphasis of the word is not on behavior; rather, it is mental. Our thinking must be clear and under control if we are to be able to focus on hope.

Unclear is the modifying role of the Greek adverb τελείως, ‘perfectly.’ Does it go with ‘set your hope’ or with ‘being sober’? If it is the verb that follows it, ἐλπίσσατε, then Peter calls upon believers to achieve a level of focus on hope that is complete and maximum. This is how many take the adverb. The other alternative that is reflected in the punctuation of the N-A 27th ed. Greek New Testament which is to see it modifying ‘being sober,’ νήφοντες. In this connection, then Peter is demanding the highest level of self-control and disciplining of our minds to be able to function with complete clarity. One can’t be dogmatic in either modification direction. And it could be that Peter intentionally had Silas place the adverb between the participle and the verb in order to impact both -- something often done stylistically in ancient Greek.

What we sense here is that hope plays a vitally important role in the believer’s life. It clearly is a dynamic power that can become a channel of divine strength in times of struggle. It is here defined as expectation of receiving God’s mercy at final judgment because of the work of Christ Jesus. With the indescribable horrors of eternal damnation looming over the heads of all humanity, believers in Christ can look forward to the coming of Christ with divine judgment as a day when God’s grace will make an eternal difference in their lives. But to be able to achieve such a focus on hope we must prepare our minds by clearing out confusing thinking. We need to clearly grasp what it is that we are hoping for; we must realize the dynamical power that hope infuses into our lives and living. This mental preparation then gets us ready to let hope turn into concrete actions of

<sup>10</sup>“To ‘gird the loin’ was an appropriate metaphor for people in the Middle East at that time. These people normally wore long gowns, and when someone prepared for any strenuous activity, he ‘girded’ his robe, that is, he tied his robe securely (by using a belt, for example), to make sure that his robe would not be in the way. The metaphor therefore came to mean ‘be ready for action.’ The area of readiness in this verse is the mind, and the full meaning of the metaphor is therefore to prepare oneself mentally (compare NIV ‘prepare your minds for action’; SPCL ‘Think well what you are about to do’; GECL ‘Keep that goal in mind with strong determination’). A literal translation (for example, NAB, RSV) would produce a very unnatural expression without making the meaning clear.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 33-34.]

<sup>11</sup>“νήφω 1 aor. ἔνηψα (Soph., Pla., X. et al.; ins, pap) prim. ‘be sober’; in the NT only fig. = **be free fr. every form of mental and spiritual ‘drunkenness’, fr. excess, passion, rashness, confusion, etc. be well-balanced, self-controlled** (Aristot. et al.; Epicurus in Diog. L. 10, 132 νήφων λογισμός=sober reasonableness; Περὶ ὕψους 16, 4; Lucian, Hermot. 47 νήφε; Herodian 2, 15, 1; Achilles Tat. 1, 13 v. ἐκ τοῦ κακοῦ; Herm. Wr. 7, 1; BGU 1011 III, 9 [II B.C.]; POxy 1062, 13 ἵνα αὐτὴν [sc. τ. ἐπιστολὴν] ἀναγνοῖς νήφων κ. σαυτοῦ καταγοῖς; EpArist 209; Philo; Jos., Bell. 2, 225; 4, 42; SibOr 1, 154) **1 Th 5:8; 1 Pt 1:13.** [Γερώνυμος ἡδ]η νήψας νυκτὸς | ἐν ὀδύνῃ[ι] Hieronymus, in pain (because of an injury to his ear during a violent storm) now came to his senses (concerning his animosity toward Paul) during the night AcPl Ha 5, 29f. v. ἐν πᾶσιν be self-possessed under all circumstances (M. Ant. 1, 16, 15) **2 Ti 4:5.** W. γρηγορεῖν (cp. Plut., Mor. 800b ἀγρυπνῶν κ. νήφων κ. πεφροντικῶς) **1 Th 5:6; 1 Pt 5:8.** W. σωφρονεῖν (Lucian, Nigrin. 5f): v. εἰς προσευχάς exercise self-restraint, to help you pray **1 Pt 4:7;** Pol 7:2 has v. πρὸς τὰς εὐχάς. v. ἐπὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν exercise self-control for (your own) good 2 Cl 13:1. W. allusion to the self-control practiced by athletes: νήφε ὡς θεοῦ ἀθλητῆς IPol 2:3.—HLevy, *Sobria ebrietas* 1929.—DELG. 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), 672.]

holiness.

**b. Become holy in your living, vv. 14-16**

14 Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. 15 Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

14 ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς, μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις, 15 ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε, 16 διότι γέγραπται ὅτι Ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος.

**Notes:**

The second sentence in vv. 14-16 moves the issue to concrete actions of behavior. The packing of high volume ideas into a short sentence causes headaches to Bible translators. Thus, this one sentence is typically broken up into multiple shorter English sentences, as the NRSV above illustrates. The unfortunate by-product is the distorting of the proper connections between the primary and secondary ideas in the sentence. The core admonition is ‘be holy,’ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι...γενήθητε. Five separate expansions, each with significant impact on the core, are attached to this admonition. Thus one primary and five secondary ideas are stitched together here in a powerful expression of Christian living.

**Be holy:** αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι...γενήθητε. Some people in our day shy away from the idea of ‘holiness.’ This in large part because the idea has frequently been identified with a certain style of worship and brand of Christianity that often is characterized by feelings of religious superiority and arrogance. Folks who wear a ‘religious halo’ over their heads do not invite others to want to become Christians. But what Peter is talking about in our text has nothing to do with this false definition of ‘holiness.’

Instead, becoming holy in Peter’s terms ἅγιοι...γενήθητε underscores the idea of holiness with its roots in the Old Testament. In short, being holy means to carefully follow God’s rules for daily living. This has to do with morality and behavior, not with religious achievement making the individual superior to others not so obedient. For believers in Christ, this will be closely connected to ‘walking in the footsteps of Jesus,’ as Peter will define in 2:21. Being holy, ἅγιοι, fundamentally means to be dedicated to God through Christ. It was out of our conversion that the righteousness of Christ was applied to our life, and became the dynamic of life changing transformation. In the power of and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, believers then are able to live lives dedicated to Christ in a way that follows the example of Jesus. Holiness has nothing to do with styles of worship, certainly nothing to do with individual religious achievement. Instead, it has everything to do with obedience and consistent Christian behavior modeled after Christ’s example.

In expanding the idea of living holy lives, Peter adds several qualifiers to this core admonition, that we will now examine.

**Like obedient children:** ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς. The first modifier of the admonition makes a huge assumption about believers: we are ‘children of obedience.’ The Semitic nature of this expression underscores the assertion that believers are inherently obedient individuals.<sup>12</sup> As God’s children, our new nature is to obey our Heavenly Father. We have ‘inherited’ this nature from God in conversion that made us a child of God. Thus living holy lives is the expected consequence of our new spiritual nature as believers.

**Resisting conformity to fleshly passions:** μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις. The second modifier of the admonition calls upon believers to continually renounce the tendency of our fleshly passions to pull us back in the pre-Christian lifestyle of ungodly living.<sup>13</sup> The ‘former passions’

<sup>12</sup>“This Semitic idiom (lit. ‘children of obedience’; cf. Matt. 9:15; Eph. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:14 for similar expressions) for children characterized by obedience indicates in the first place their belonging to a family, God’s family, as dependent members, and thus implies God’s warmth and care, 4 and in the second place their living out their family relationship by obedience to the paterfamilias, God. Obedience is a characteristic Pauline term for how a Christian lives (e.g., Rom. 6:12–17), and is the sure evidence of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26) and the goal of Paul’s preaching (Rom. 15:18; 2 Cor. 10:5). The gospel is an imperative to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord; any commitment (or faith) that does not result in concrete obedience is a misunderstanding of the message and less than Christian faith (cf. Jas. 2:14–26). ‘Obedient children,’ then, could be another name for genuine believers.” [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), 67.]

<sup>13</sup>“This former way of life is described as being conformed to their ‘desires.’ While the term ‘desire’ can occasionally be positive (Luke 22:15; Phil. 1:23), it normally indicates the unsanctified longings of fallen humanity, is synonymous with ‘the world’ (Rom. 1:24; 6:12; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:3; Tit. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:11; 4:2–3; 1 John 2:16–17), and is rooted in the Jewish concept of the evil

refer to the longings in the pre-conversion life. Interestingly, Peter locates these passions ‘in your not knowing,’ ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν. Before coming to Christ there was lack of understanding about the demands for holy living, and especially how it was to be achieved through Christ. But in conversion a process of gaining understanding began. Now Peter calls upon his readers to not allow their present lifestyle to conform to the living patterns of their pre-Christian life. Such is utterly inconsistent with their commitment to Christ as believers. Allowing their behavior to drift back into the pre-conversion patterns would absolutely prevent living holy lives now. The admonition to holiness then demands a rejection of this previous lifestyle.

**Holy measured by the One who called you:** κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον. What then is holy living? How do we identify it? This third modifier of the core admonition answers these questions.<sup>14</sup> The comparative preposition κατὰ sets up the evaluative standard for defining ‘holy.’ And holy is defined by the God who called believers into faith commitment to Christ. Emphasized here is the idea of being different from the world. Believers have different values, different ways of living, different commitments than their unbelieving neighbors. And this different pattern of living is defined by the character and behavior of Almighty God. As our Heavenly Father, He sets the agenda and the example for His people to follow. Thus, in order to know how to live holy lives, we must study God in scripture. What has He revealed to us in sacred scripture about Himself? His character? His way of doing things? How we answer these questions from scripture will give us concrete ideas about holy living.

It is important to note that the source of this understanding must be scripture alone. Human speculation about God is worthless, and potentially dangerous! When we move away from what God alone has revealed to us, we inevitably begin ‘re-creating’ God into our own image, in order to reduce Him and His demands down to a level that satisfies our sinful nature. Such actions constitute idolatry! And in the process we create a non-existing god who makes few demands and possesses zero power to help us.

**Holy in every aspect of behavior:** ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ. The fourth modifier specifies the scope of our holy living: every aspect of our behavior. The Greek noun ἀναστροφή specifies way of living and is close to the English word ‘lifestyle.’<sup>15</sup> Thus the admonition to live in holiness covers absolutely every aspect of our

impulse in humans and similar to the Freudian concept of the id. The problem with desire is not that one enjoys or needs things in the material world — Scripture is neither ascetic nor Platonic, for it does not believe that the physical world or pleasure is evil in itself or a lower level of existence — but that the goods of this age become the goals one seeks rather than means to the goal of serving God. Desire in the biblical view is also totally undifferentiating, for it makes no difference to desire whether the property belongs to you or to a neighbor or the man or woman is the one bound to you by covenant love or not. Desire goes after anything that satisfies the drive. It is indeed these proximate desires (tempered by the wish to avoid undesirable consequences of certain behavior) that control most people, and to conform to these desires is to slip right back into the lifestyle that the Christian should have abandoned at conversion.<sup>37</sup> [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), 68.]

<sup>14</sup>“Their holiness is to correspond (κατά, kata) to the holiness of the one who has called them, whom Peter has already identified as God himself (see additional note on 1:15). To be holy means that Christians must conform their thinking and behavior to God’s character. The character of God was first revealed through the covenant God made with the people he had chosen for himself. The moral aspect of that covenant was summarized in what we commonly call the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1–17; Deut. 5:1–22). Living in right relationship to God demanded obedience to these commandments. By living in covenant with God, ancient Israel would be set apart from the ways of the world. For God’s ways are distinct from the ways of a fallen world, and he does not deal with the world on its own terms (e.g., ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways’ [Isa. 55:8 NRSV]). Therefore, his people are to identify with him by being set apart and by relating to the world on the terms that God prescribes.

“God’s revelation of his character in the old covenant paled in comparison with the revelation of his character as a living human being in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Peter’s command in 1:15 that his Christian readers be holy was a call to live in obedient relationship to Christ that by definition would set them apart from the customs and values of unbelieving, pagan society. The Christian’s morality would be defined by, and derived from, the character of God their Father as first revealed in Scripture and then ultimately in the life of Jesus Christ. In these verses, Peter initially defines the call to be holy by specifying the opposite of what he means: ‘Do not be conformed as previously to the desires of your ignorance’ (1:14). In other words, to be holy requires a change in one’s way of life from before, when one’s behavior was determined by unrestrained impulses to sin, even in ways accepted by society. God’s call that has brought Christians to Christ is also a call to deny those sinful impulses and abstain from certain social customs and practices, making one a stranger within one’s own society.” [Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 112-13.]

<sup>15</sup>“ἀναστροφῆ, ἡς, ἡ (in var. mgs. since Aeschyl., Pre-Socr. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; Jos., Ant. 18, 359 al.; Just., A I, 10, 2) **conduct expressed according to certain principles way of life, conduct, behavior** (Polyb. 4, 82, 1 [FKälker, Quaest. de elocut. Polyb.=Leipz. Stud. III/2, 1880, 301]; Teles p. 41, 2; Diog. L.; Epict. 1, 9, 24; 1, 22, 13; ins: SIG index; IG XII/1, 1032, 6 [II B.C.]);

life. There are no sections that we can separate out to say, “Holiness doesn’t belong here.” Peter underscores that the commitment to holy living must cover everything.

**Holy because of scripture injunction:** διότι γέγραπται ὅτι Ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος. The fifth modifier of the admonition comes after the core expression in contrast to the first four above that stand in front of the main verb clause. It is anticipated by the ‘as the one having called you is holy’ phrase, but now is stated directly as a quote from the Old Testament: διότι γέγραπται. The subordinate conjunction διότι has several meanings, but here it is causal in nature.<sup>16</sup> It states, by way of OT scriptural authority, why believers must live holy lives.<sup>17</sup> The reference is taken directly from the LXX version of Lev. 19:2.<sup>18</sup> Put simply, believers are to be holy because their God is holy. For the non-Jewish believers this represented new understanding. The pagan gods did not behave in a holy manner and made no demands on their worshippers to live holy lives. But for centuries the Jewish religion had taught that out of God’s holiness came the obligation of holy living by His people. Now, in Christ this demand found new meaning and authority because of Christ standing as the foundation of the believer’s relationship with God.

Wow! Peter launches the letter body with a bang. He calls upon us to fix our expectation squarely upon God’s grace, and out of that commitment then comes the obligation to implement that grace into our daily living through holy behavior. But this holiness must be biblically defined because modern tendencies are to distort it and to water it down. Peter provides clear definition of holy living here so that we can understand exactly what God requires of us.

IMagnMai 91b, 6; IPergamon 86; PTebt 703, 270 [IIIB.C.] Tob 4:14; 2 Macc 6:23; EpArist 130; 216) ἠκούσατε τ. ἐμὴν ἄ. ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ *you have heard of my conduct when I was still in Judaism Gal 1:13.* κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἄ. *according to your former* (i.e. pre-Christian) *way of life Eph 4:22* (GDI 4320, 5f κατὰ τὰν ἄλλαν ἀναστροφάν [Rhodes]). ἡ ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνῆ ἄ. **1 Pt 3:2**; cp. vs. 1. ἡ ἀγαθὴ ἐν Χριστῷ ἄ. vs. 16. ἡ καλὴ ἄ. **Js 3:13**; **1 Pt 2:12**. ἡ ματαία ἄ. *πατροπαράδοτος the futile* (i.e. directed toward futile ends) *way of life handed down by your fathers 1:18.* ἡ ἐν ἀσελείᾳ ἄ. **2 Pt 2:7**. ἡ ἔκβασις τῆς ἄ. **Hb 13:7**. ἅγιον ἐν πάσῃ ἄ. *γίνεσθαι be holy in all your conduct 1 Pt 1:15.* W. λόγος, ἀγάπη κτλ. **1 Ti 4:12**. Pl. ἅγια ἄ. καὶ εὐσέβεια *holy conduct and piety* (pl. to include all varieties; cp. EpArist 130) **2 Pt 3:11**.—DDaube, *Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis: Festschr. HLewald* ’53, 27–44.—DELG s.v. στρέφω. 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), 73.]

<sup>16</sup>**διότι conj.** (Hdt.+ ) (B-D-F §294, 4; 456, 1; Rob. ind.; Meisterhans3-Schw. 252f; Mayser 161; Thackeray 138f; FKalker, Quaest. de Eloc. Polyb. 1880, 243f; 300) a marker used to establish an intimate connection between two statements.

**1. marker of a causal connection between two statements, because** (=διὰ τοῦτο ὅτι ‘for the reason that, in view of the fact that’) in causal clauses **Lk 2:7; 21:28; Ac 17:31 v.l.; Ro 8:21 v.l.** (but s. 4); **1 Cor 15:9; Phil 2:26; 1 Th 2:8; 4:6; Hb 11:5** (Gen 5:24), 23; **Js 4:3**; Dg 6:5; Hv 3, 5, 4; m 12, 3, 4; Hs 9, 14, 4.

**2. marker used to introduce an inference, therefore** (=διὰ τοῦτο) **Ac 13:35; 20:26.**

**3. marker used to indicate why someth. just stated can reasonably be considered valid, used in place of ὅτι** (TestAbr A 11 p. 90, 6 [Stone p. 28]; TestJob 49:3): for **Lk 1:13; Ac 10:20 v.l.; 18:10; 22:18; Ro 1:19–21; 3:20; 8:7; Gal 2:16 v.l.; 1 Th 2:18; 1 Pt 1:16ab** (v.l.), 24 (ὅτι P72); **2:6.**

**4. marker of discourse content, that** (Teles p. 46, 4; 47, 12; 48, 11; Antig. Car. 149; 152; Diod S 4, 10, 7; 4, 23, 2 al.; Epict. 4, 7, 8; Dio Chrys. 21 [38], 14; Celsus 2, 49; SIG 1169, 24f; Sb 7638, 8 [257 B.C.]; UPZ 15, 24 [156 B.C.] ἐπίγνωσιν διότι=ὅτι; UPZ 16, 15 in a parallel concept of the same petition]; EpArist 151; Jos., Bell. 3, 475, Ant. 15, 142) **Ro 8:21 v.l.** (s. 1 above).—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), 251.]

<sup>17</sup>“*Since (dioti, meaning ‘because’ or ‘for’)* introduces the reason or ground which supports the preceding statement. Why should Christians be holy? *Because it is written* (that is, it stands written in Scripture and remains valid today), *You shall be holy, for I am holy* (Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7 [LXX]; and 20:26). The holiness of God is thus in both Testaments the ground of his requirement that his people should be holy.” [Wayne A. Grudem, vol. 17, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 84-85.]

<sup>18</sup>“The quotation agrees exactly with the LXX of Lev 19:2 (see Note d; cf. also Lev 11:44; 20:7, 26). The so-called Holiness Code consisting of Lev 17–26 was directed, through Moses, to ‘Aaron and his sons, and to all the people of Israel’ (17:2), while the command in question was for Moses to deliver to ‘all the congregation of the people of Israel.’ Selwyn (following Philip Carrington) writes of a Christian Holiness Code underlying 1-2 Thessalonians as well as 1 Peter and of an understanding of the church ‘as a neo-Levitical community, at once sacerdotal and sacrificial’ (459–60; cf. 369–72). There is no doubt that, beginning with the command to ‘Be holy because I am holy,’ Peter is addressing his readers in distinctly priestly terms. They are, however, the priestly terms once used for ‘all the congregation of the people of Israel.’ The priestly character of the church for Peter is simply an aspect of its identification in his mind with Israel and the Jewish people as ‘a chosen race, the king’s priesthood, a holy nation, a people destined for vindication—all to sound the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light’ (2:9).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 59-60.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 5**  
**1 Peter 1:17-21**  
**“Living Smart”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

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

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

17 Ihr ruft Gott im Gebet als »Vater« an – ihn, der jeden Menschen als unbestechlicher Richter für seine Taten zur Rechenschaft ziehen wird. Führt darum, solange ihr noch hier in der Fremde seid, ein Leben, mit dem ihr vor ihm bestehen könnt!  
 18 Ihr wisst, um welchen Preis ihr freigekauft worden seid, damit ihr nun nicht mehr ein so sinn- und nutzloses Leben führen müsst, wie ihr es von euren Vorfahren übernommen habt. Nicht mit Silber und Gold seid ihr freigekauft worden – sie verlieren ihren Wert –, 19 sondern mit dem kostbaren Blut eines reinen und fehlerlosen Opferlammes, dem Blut von Christus. 20 Ihn hatte Gott schon zu diesem Opfer bestimmt, bevor er die Welt schuf. Jetzt aber, am Ende der Zeit, hat er ihn euren Weg in die Welt gesandt. 21 Durch ihn habt ihr zum Glauben gefunden an Gott, der ihn von den Toten auferweckt und ihm göttliche Herrlichkeit gegeben hat. Darum setzt ihr nun euer Vertrauen und eure Hoffnung auf Gott.

**NRSV**

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

**NLT**

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

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Live out your life, v. 17b](#)
  - b. [Calling upon God, v. 17a](#)
  - c. [Knowing how you were ransomed, vv. 18-21](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

Quite interesting is the variation in wording among the above three translations of the single Greek sentence in vv. 17-21. The German *Die Gute Nachricht Bibel* breaks the one Greek sentence into eight German sentences, while the two English translations use either four sentences (*New Revised Standard Version*) or ten sentences (*New Living Translation*). What this signals is a Greek sentence packed full of ideas that are tightly knitted together

in a complex manner in the original language text, as the Block Diagram below visually illustrates. These kinds of Greek sentences are ones that professional Bible translators dread because of the difficulty of bringing the ideas over from Greek into the receptor language correctly and without substantial loss of meaning.

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

## I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>

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

### a. Historical

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

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

### b. Literary

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

**Literary Form (Genre).** At the broad genre level, vv. 17-21 are a part of the letter body, and contribute

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

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

The best ancient MSS (κ<sup>2</sup> A C and others) have "last" (singular: ἐσχάτου) and "ages" (plural: τῶν χρόνων). The majority (including p72 and P) make both plural, while κ\* and Ψ make both singular. Scribes who overlooked the substantival use of ἐσχάτου here (BDF §264.5) would tend to make the noun and its apparent adjective modifier agree. The consistently plural rendering had been an option to LXX translators (e.g., Gen 49:1; Hos 3:5) for the Hebrew תְּיָהָרֵץ בְּיָמֶיךָ, and for the consistently singular rendering, cf. Jude 18.

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

to the idea expression of Peter to his ancient readers as a substitute visit.

At the narrow genre level the issues become more complex. Clearly the sentence with the core admonition stand as *paraenesis*, i.e., moral admonition for the readers to adopt a distinctive lifestyle. The uncertainty surfaces with vv. 18-21, which seem to incorporate elements of pre-formed Christian tradition into the expression. Some scholars assume that Peter has incorporated elements of an early Christian hymn,<sup>3</sup> but certainty at this point is not present. While this is possible, more likely Peter simply uses familiar language to his readers in order to flesh out his ideas. Phrases such as “the precious blood of Christ,” “a lamb without defect or blemish,” “destined before the foundation of the world,” “who raised Him from the dead,” and “gave Him glory” can clearly be found often elsewhere in the New Testament. This argues more for the use of commonly found Christian expressions in the early church here, rather than an assumed well-constructed Christian hymn with pieces lifted from it and used here. Thus the listing of these verses in poetic structure as found in the N-A 27th revised edition of the Greek New Testament is questionable at best.

**Literary Context.** As reflected in the outline on the right, 1:17-21 falls in the larger section of vv. 13-25, which in turn is a part of 1:13-2:10. The smaller unit of vv. 13-25 is made up of three sub-units: vv. 13-16, 17-21, and 22-25. All three pericopes admonish the readers to live in hope (vv. 13-16), in fear (vv. 17-21), and in love (vv. 22-25). Verses 13-25 are followed by 2:1-10 that underscore privileges of being a part of the new people of God in Christ. Thus vv. 17-21 should be interpreted in light of this contextual background.

**Literary Structure.** The English translation below of the block diagram of the Greek text illustrates clearly and visually the complexity of this single Greek sentence in vv. 17-21.

1.17	And	since you call upon the Father
		who judges
		/-----
		without partiality
		according to each one's work,
		in fear
4	<b>the time of your sojourn live out,</b>	not with corruptible things,
		silver or gold,
		-----
1.18		knowing that...you were not ransomed
		/-----
		from your worthless behavior
		of your ancestors
1.19		but
		-----=(you were ransomed)
		with precious blood
		-----
		as a lamb
		blameless and spotless
		of Christ,
		-----

**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*

<sup>3</sup>R. Bultmann (293, 297) identifies this couplet as a fragment (along with 3:18–19, 22) of a once-unified early Christian hymn (cf. also Deichgräber, 169–70). Others (e.g., Le Déaut RSR 49 [1961] 104–5) see it as the extension of a midrashic reflection on Gen 22:8 that began in vv 18–19.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 53.]

1.20

indeed  
 who was foreknown  
 | before the foundation of the world,  
 | but  
 --- was manifested  
 in the last of times  
 for your sakes,

1.21

| through Him  
 you who are believers  
 in God,  
 |-----|  
 who raised Him  
 | from the dead  
 | and  
 --- gave Him glory,  
 so that your faith and hope might be  
 in God.

This relatively long Greek sentence packs high volume profound ideas around the core admonition to live out one's life journey on this earth. Two primary qualifiers of the core admonition are set up. The first, a first class conditional dependent clause in the Greek in the sentence pre-field before the admonition assumes that the readers 'call upon' God, that is, the God of impartial judgment of all humanity. This provides motivation to live out one's life in a distinct manner, since accountability before God will take place at the end of this journey through life. The second modifier, a Greek participle in modal or causal function, provides an additional motivation as the basis of knowing certain things for living out one's life in a distinct manner.

What one knows as motivation for living centers on how believers were redeemed. The negative means of this redemption are stated first, and then followed by the positive means, the blood of Christ. This Christ was known by God before creation but revealed to the world in these last days for the sake of believers in God through Christ. This is the God who resurrected Christ and glorified Him in His ascension with the divine intent of focusing believers' faith and hope in this same God.

Not only is the core admonition significant, but each expansion element reflects profound spiritual insight about God, Christ, redemption, and believers in Christ.

## II. Message

Our study of the text is organized around the core admonition, followed by the two primary expansion elements, the first of which precedes the core admonition, and the second follows it. By this method, hopefully a more accurate wholistic picture of the passage can emerge.

### a. Live out your life, v. 17b.

live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.

ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε

#### Notes:

The foundational admonition is rich within itself and contains several important implications for Christian living. We will take a closer look at the verb, its direct object, and the adverbial prepositional phrase defining the manner of living.

**ἀναστράφητε.** The Greek verb ἀναστρέφω refers to living out life with strong emphasis on the ethical behavioral side.<sup>4</sup> The specific principles to live by are spelled out with adverbial modifiers in a variety of ways.

<sup>4</sup>Meaning 3. **to conduct oneself in terms of certain principles, act, behave, conduct oneself, live**, pass. in act. but non literal sense, ext. of 2 ('to turn back and forth') (X. et al.; Polyb. 1, 9, 7; 1, 74, 13 al.; Chion, Ep. 7, 1; Crates, Ep. 35, 2 p. 216 H.; Vett. Val. index; ins, pap; Dssm. B 83, NB 22 [BS 88; 194], LO 264f [LAE 315]; Nägeli 38; Thieme 14; Hatch 136; Pr 20:7; Ezk 22:30; Jos., Ant. 15, 190; Just., A I, 53, 3); always with the kind of behavior more exactly described

a. *by an adv.* (Ael. Dion. σ, 41 ἀμαθῶς ἀναστρέφεσθαι; SIG and OGI indices; Jos., Ant. 19, 72 εὐπρεπῶς) ἀγνῶς (Hatch, op. cit. III 73 Cilic. ins) Hs 9, 27, 2. ἰσχυρῶς καὶ ἀνδρείως ἄ. conduct oneself w. strength and courage 5, 6, 6. καλῶς ἄ. (SIG 717, 95, OGI 322, 8) Hb 13:18. ἀμέμπτως (OGI 323, 5) 1 Cl 63:3; ἄ. ... ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως (SIG 800, 20f) 2 Cl 5:6.

b. *by prep. phrases* (X., Ages. 9, 4 ἄ. ἐν μέσαις εὐφροσύναις; EpArist 252; Just., A I, 53, 3 τὰ παλαιά, ἐν οἷς ... ἀνεστράφησαν) ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκός live in the passions of the flesh=be a slave to physical passion Eph 2:3. ἐν παλαιοῖς πράγμασιν according to ancient (i.e. Israelite) customs IMg 9:1. ἐν τρυφαῖς πολλαῖς Hm 11:12. ἐν πλάνῃ 2 Pt 2:18. ἄ. ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ conduct oneself in the household of God 1 Ti 3:15. **ἐν φόβῳ ἄ. live in fear 1 Pt 1:17.**

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

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

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

ἐν φόβῳ. To behave ourselves ‘in fear’ has several implications. It doesn’t mean to live in apprehension about life and its uncertainties. Rather, to live ἐν φόβῳ means living in overwhelming awe of the power and total authority of God in our world. This picture of God as Judge should motivate fear in the hearts of every person. The images of God as Father and impartial Judge serve to remind us to not take God for granted,

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*c. w. adv. and prep. phrase* (Simplicius in Epict. p. 24, 16 ἀλύτως ἐν τούτοις ἀναστρεφόμεθα; Jos., Vi. 273) ὁσίως ἂ. ἐν καθαρᾷ διανοίᾳ live in holiness w. a pure mind 1 Cl 21:8.

*d. w. more than one ἐν in var. mngs.* ἐν ἀπλότῃ ... τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ ἀλλ’ ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ we have conducted ourselves in the world in sincerity before God, not w. earthly wisdom, but in the grace of God 2 Cor 1:12.—Somewhat as the phrase ἂ. ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ above—i.e. not in the active sense of practicing something—οὕτως ἂ. Hb 10:33 to live in such a way (i.e. amid reproach and affliction) means to be treated in such a way.

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

<sup>5</sup>1. **the state of being in a strange locality without citizenship, sojourn, stay**, also in transf. sense of the foreign country itself.

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

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

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

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

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

nor to treat Him lightly. Accountability to God is inescapable and His fatherly love for us will not hesitate to impose severe discipline in order to motivate us to clean up our living. Realizing that a day of final accounting of our life to this divine Judge is coming should be considerable motive to live in fear and awe of His power and authority.

**b. Calling upon God, v. 17a.**

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds,

Καὶ εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν ἀπροσωπολήμπτως κρίνοντα κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον

**Notes:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>10</sup>Different cultures picture ‘father’ differently, and thus the image may carry different meanings, as is reflected in this African based commentary: “References to God as a father can present some problems, for African Traditional Religions do not think of the Supreme Being as either male or female. It is therefore important to present the notion of fatherhood carefully, recognizing that it is

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

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

Peter stresses two qualities of this judging action of God. First, it is ἀπροσωπολήμπτως.<sup>12</sup> No favorites, no loopholes, equal treatment for all -- all these traits and more are captured by this word. Believers receive no special consideration or exemption from the requirements of God. The divine requirements will be equally applied to all. Second, it is κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον. The focus of divine judgment is upon each individual’s actions, not his profession or verbal claims, just as Jesus declared in Matthew 7:16-23.<sup>13</sup> In other words, our actions reflect the true condition of our heart before God and these will be used to evaluate us.

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



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

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

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

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

#### **Notes:**

a metaphor that God has given us to help us understand him better. We also need to make it clear that while God is the creator, and is in this sense the father of all, believers have the special honour of being adopted into his close family, and so can call him Father in a more intimate sense. Yet while believers are adopted children, Jesus Christ has always been God’s Son, in a unique and eternal relationship with God the Father. We also need to be aware that not all images of fatherhood are positive. Children of single mothers may never have known a caring father. Others may have suffered violence at the hand of their fathers or have seen their mothers molested by father figures. We must help people understand what the term ‘father’ means when used to describe the relationship between God and believers.” [Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya; Grand Rapids, MI.: Word Alive Publishers; Zondervan, 2006), 1545.]

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

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

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

The second expansion element to the admonition to live properly as believers is more detailed and incorporates substantial traditional Christian expression in circulation by the middle of the first Christian century. It was something Peter assumed his readers already knew, and needed reminding of. The heart of this knowledge was ἐλυτρώθητε, i.e., their redemption.<sup>14</sup> In beautifully eloquent words, Peter elaborates on this spiritual liberation of believers, as a major motivation for living properly.<sup>15</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

**1. to free by paying a ransom, redeem**

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

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

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

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

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

lifestyle of the past, and placed in a brand new lifestyle.<sup>17</sup> Note the use of ἀναστροφή (lifestyle) here and the verb ἀναστρέφω with identical meaning in the core admonition. Redemption has dramatically changed lifestyles, and placed upon us the responsibility for living our lives by the new lifestyle. This old lifestyle is both ματαίας and πατροπαραδότου.<sup>18</sup> This is, it is empty and worthless first of all. Then it is inherited. This could allude to Judaism for the Jewish Christian readers, but for the non-Jewish readers in these churches it stood as an allusion to the paganism inherited from their parents. Peter includes both in this inclusive reference.

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

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



προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. This phrase, along with the subsequent ones, focus on

<sup>17c</sup>The realm from which the readers were ransomed is from the futile ways inherited from your fathers. From (ek) is not simply 'away from' but 'out of', giving the vivid image of people being physically removed from one 'place' (the sphere of sinful patterns of life) to another (the sphere of obedience to God). Ways is once again anastrophē, 'pattern of life' (see notes at v. 15). This pattern of life was futile—empty, worthless, having no meaningful or lasting results (compare this word in 1 Cor. 15:17; Titus 3:9; and the cognate noun thirteen times in the LXX of Eccl. 1–2). The remarkable change brought about by conversion to Christ is seen in the fact that these abandoned sinful patterns of life had been inherited from your fathers, an influence made weighty by the accumulation of generations of tradition in a society that valued such ancestral wisdom. The ancient tradition of home and nation is broken ... because of the work of Jesus Christ who had set them free.<sup>26</sup> A similar purpose for redemption is affirmed in Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14. The hereditary chain of sin is broken by Christ (cf. Exod. 20:5, 6)." [Wayne A. Grudem, vol. 17, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 88-89.]

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

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

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

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

Christ, and how He was superior to the sacrificial lambs in the Jerusalem temple system.

First, Christ was predestined to this sacrifice before God created the world.<sup>20</sup> The redeeming work of Christ was not some after thought of God. To the contrary, before He even created the world, He already knew that His Son would have to pour out His life on the cross as a sacrifice for sinful humanity. And already understanding this, God went ahead and created the world! This is truly amazing, and goes beyond human wisdom.

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

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

The time of this subsequent ‘revelation’ is ἐπ’ ἑσχάτου τῶν χρόνων.<sup>22</sup> In ancient apocalyptic Jewish understanding of time, human history divided itself into periods of time. The time of the Messiah’s appearance

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<sup>20</sup>“προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, ‘who was foreknown before the creation of the world.’ The μὲν ... δὲ construction sets off this clause and the following one as a contrasting pair: ‘foreknown’ in contrast to ‘appeared,’ and ‘before the world was made’ in contrast to ‘in the last of the ages.’ προεγνωσμένου recalls the κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός of v 2, except that here the foreknowledge (i.e., election, or ‘previous designation to a position or function’ [Hort, 80]; see on v 2) refers to Christ rather than Christian believers (cf. ἐκλεκτόν in 2:4, 6). The perfect passive participle προεγνωσμένου, like the τετηρημένον of v 4, points to the action of God on behalf of his people, in this case the designation of one to be their redeemer. What is decided from all eternity is not simply that Jesus Christ should come into the world, but that he should fulfill a certain role, the role intimated already in v 19.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 66-67.]

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

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

would come in the last of those periods. Peter shares that perspective and sees the coming of Christ to the world as the beginning of that last era of time. Christ's coming and death has moved the world one step closer to the gigantic climax of the end of time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 6**  
**1 Peter 1:22-25**  
**“Living in God’s Truth”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

22 Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐκ καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς, 23 ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σποραῖς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου, διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος· 24 διότι πᾶσα σὰρξ ὡς χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῆς ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν· 25 τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

22 Habt ihr eure Seelen gereinigt im Gehorsam der Wahrheit zu ungefärbter Bruderliebe, so habt euch untereinander beständig lieb aus reinem Herzen. 23 Denn ihr seid wiedergeboren nicht aus vergänglichem, sondern aus unvergänglichem Samen, nämlich aus dem lebendigen Wort Gottes, das da bleibt. 24 Denn »alles Fleisch ist wie Gras und alle seine Herrlichkeit wie des Grases Blume. Das Gras ist verdorrt und die Blume abgefallen; 25 aber des Herrn Wort bleibt in Ewigkeit«. <sup>1</sup> Das ist aber das Wort, welches unter euch verkündigt ist.

**NRSV**

22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. 23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.” That word is the good news that was announced to you.

**NLT**

22 Now you can have sincere love for each other as brothers and sisters because you were cleansed from your sins when you accepted the truth of the Good News. So see to it that you really do love each other intensely with all your hearts. 23 For you have been born again. Your new life did not come from your earthly parents because the life they gave you will end in death. But this new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. 24 As the prophet says, “People are like grass that dies away; their beauty fades as quickly as the beauty of wildflowers. The grass withers, and the flowers fall away. 25 But the word of the Lord will last forever.” And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.

<sup>1</sup>(Jesaja 40,6-8)

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Love one another, vv. 22-23](#)
  - b. [The foundation of the Word, vv. 24-25a](#)
  - c. [This applies to that, v. 25b](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

In this third unit of the opening set of admonitions in the letter body (vv. 13-25), Peter focuses on brotherly love inside the community of faith. The text is understood either as three separate sentences (UBS 3rd rev. edition) or as a single compound sentence (N-A 27th rev. edition & the SBL-Greek New Testament). In either understanding the basic units of text are perceived largely the same way: the admonition (vv. 22-23); the scripture proof (vv. 24-25a); the linking of the two (v. 25b). The text clearly builds on the preceding concepts and advances the idea of brotherly love beyond the previous allusions.<sup>1</sup> The expansion elements provide a rich and profound understand-

<sup>1</sup>“The section is full of echoes; compare ἡγνικότες with ἄγιοι (15), ἐν ἀγιασμῶ (2), τῇ ὑπακοῇ with τέκνα ὑ. (14), ἀναγεγεννημένοι with ἀναγεννήσας (3), φθαρτῆς with φθαρτοῖς (18), εὐαγγελισθὲν with τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων (12). It should be compared throughout  
**Bible Study: Page 63**

ing of the nature of this responsibility. In the fragmented society of today's world, such an admonition possesses vital importance for believers learning how to work together for the common cause of Christ.

## I. Context and Background<sup>2</sup>

Both the historical and especially the literary background play important roles in correct understanding of this text.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The stability of these verses over the first eight or nine centuries of being copied by scribes is relatively strong. Two places in the text have word variations that extend the meaning of the text more than anything else. In verse 22, most ancient manuscripts read “obedience to the truth through the Spirit” (ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας διὰ πνεύματος). But the most important and the earliest manuscripts omit διὰ πνεύματος.<sup>3</sup> The more likely principle of mss copying is that this phrase was added later rather than being dropped, since there is no reason to drop it, but clear reason to add it for clarity's sake. The addition doesn't change the meaning of the text, just expands it.

Also in verse 22, again most ancient manuscripts read “out of a clean heart” (ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας).<sup>4</sup> Again good manuscript evaluation principles suggest that the shorter text is usually preferable over the longer text, simply because the copyist scribes had a well documented tendency to add words in an effort to try to make the text clearer to their readers.<sup>5</sup> The weight of external manuscript evidence is more equally divided here making it less clear whether καθαρᾶς was in the original copy of First Peter. The idea of a sincere motivation for action, which both readings express, the longer one more directly than the shorter one, is present which ever reading of the text is adopted as the original.

As is evident from the above the variations of wording in the text do not alter the meaning of the text at all. Thus we can confidently interpret the text before us as the original wording of Peter's writing through Silas.

**Internal History.** The time / place markers in this text are more indirect than direct, and are derived from the connections of the verbal expressions to one another. The admonition is expressed as emphatic present time duty through the use of the Aorist imperative verb. The two perfect tense participle modifiers, ἡγνικότες (have purified) and ἀναγεγεννημένοι (have been born again), assume a prior conversion commitment that stands as the basis for the admonition. This past / present time sequence plays an important theological role in understanding the passage. The use of the Greek perfect tense is significant because it asserts a decisive action that has ongoing consequence. In other words, this prior conversion was life-changing and

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with Eph. 4:18–24.—τὰς ... ἡγνικότες from Jer. 6:16, “see what is the good way and walk in it and you shall find purification (ἀγνισμὸν LXX) to your souls. ἅ. usually of ceremonial purification in LXX. Compare Jas. 4:8, ἀγνίσατε καρδίας δίψυχοι (cf. ἀνυπόκριτον).” [J.H.A. Hart, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Volume V: Commentary (New York: George H. Doran Company), 52.]

<sup>2</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>3</sup>“The majority of MSS add here the words ‘through the Spirit’ (διὰ πνεύματος), but the most important early MSS (p<sup>72</sup> & A B C Ψ) and the most ancient versions omit them. There is no reason why they would have been dropped if they were original; more likely they were added by scribes to accent the role of the Spirit in conversion (cf. ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος in v 2).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 72.]

<sup>4</sup>“On the strength of P72 & C 81 614, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας, but, in view of the absence of the adjective from A B vg, thought it best to enclose καθαρᾶς within square brackets. The singular reading καρδίας ἀληθινῆς (nc) may have arisen through confusion with the following ἀλλήλους.” [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), 618.]

<sup>5</sup>“The tendency toward expansion can be seen in one MS of Rom 6:17 (A, which preserves, ironically, the shorter reading in our passage) where ἐκ καρδίας becomes ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας. It is likely that the latter, an early expression of Christian piety found in 1 Tim 1:5 (with ἀγάπη) and 2 Tim 2:22 (cf. also Ps 23[24]:4; Matt 5:8; Herm. Vis. 4.2.5, 5.7; Sentences of Sextus 46b), has influenced the manuscript tradition here on a fairly wide scale. On the other hand, if ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας is original, the shortening of the text was probably accidental, triggered by the similar κα- beginning of the two words.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 72.]

altered the way of living for these believers.

The content of this passage has faint echoes in forms of Judaism current in the first Christian century. One of those groups is the Qumran community, as Michaels notes:<sup>6</sup>

The strong and repeated emphasis on initiation into the Christian community coupled with the requirement of brotherly love among believers recalls the Qumran *Manual of Discipline (Community Rule)*, with its stipulation that those who enter the community must “love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God’s design, and hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in God’s vengeance” and must “purify their knowledge in the truth of God’s precepts and order their powers according to His ways of perfection” (1QS 1.9–11, 12–13 [tr. G. Vermes, 72]).

This historical backdrop can throw additional light on Peter’s meaning, mostly by way of contrast in approach to brotherly love.<sup>7</sup> The most obvious contrast to Qumran is their command to both love and hate, while Peter’s admonition is only to love. Their acquiring of greater knowledge of divine truth is by their efforts, while the role of the Holy Spirit is significant in believers. Knowing whom to love and whom to hate builds off spiritual arrogance, something abhorred in Christian tradition.

## b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** From the broad genre aspect, this text is a part of three admonitions in the beginning of the letter body. Considering the text from a narrow genre aspect, only verses 24-25a take on an identifiable literary form as a scripture quote from Isaiah 40:6-8.<sup>8</sup> This same OT text surfaces also in James 1:10-11 in somewhat similar usage.<sup>9</sup>

**Literary Context.** The literary setting of 1:22-25 is suggested in the chart on the right. As mentioned in the Introduction, this text stands as the third sub-unit stressing the ideals (vv. 13-25) of holy living (1:13-2:10). Believers were first called to hope and holiness (vv. 13-16), then to fear (vv. 17-21), and now to brotherly love (vv. 22-25). These admonitions will be summarized and grounded in the language of the new people of God in 2:1-10, as Peter sets forth the Christian concept of holy living, in contrast to the conceptualization of this in contemporary Judaism of that time.<sup>10</sup> All of these provide deep insight into living as a believer in the community of faith while surrounded by paganism of many different varieties.

The connection of hope/holiness/fear to love is basic to the Christian faith that is built off the vertical / horizon relationships concept central to the Hebrew religious expression of the Old Testament. In order to be properly related to God, one must be properly related to others around him/her. Without the latter, the former doesn’t exist. This understanding is desperately needed in modern Christianity today. Christians today all too often see their religion purely in the false thinking found

<sup>6</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 73.

<sup>7</sup>As Michaels rightly points out in his commentary, this does not, however, provide a basis for the theory of First Peter being constructed from a supposed baptismal liturgy. Such is simply not possible to conclude.

<sup>8</sup>NRSV: 6 A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>NRSV: 10 and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

<sup>10</sup>“If the emphasis in the earlier verses of this unit dealt primarily with the conduct of the individual growing out of his or her redemption, the emphasis in these verses shifts toward the community, and the responsibility of the individuals to their fellow Christians, in anticipation of the further development of this theme at the conclusion of the body opening (2:4–10\*). In that way it serves as conclusion for the first half of the body opening, and as anticipatory introduction to the theme of the second half.” [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), 136.]

## 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*

in ancient Greco-Roman paganism: all one needs to do are a few religious actions occasionally in order to pacify deity so that he/she will leave us alone. Just as the religion of the Old Testament and apostolic Christianity repudiated such thinking, biblical faith today still rejects such reasoning as heresy, and as a sure fire path straight into eternal damnation.

### Literary Structure.

The block diagram of the text, as reflected in the English translation below, visually highlights the inner connectedness of the ideas and the movement from one idea to another.

1.22 Having purified your lives  
in obedience to the Truth  
in unhypocritical brotherly love  
from your hearts

5 **love one another**  
eagerly

1.23 having been born again  
not out of corruptible seeds  
but out of incorruptible  
through the living and abiding word of God;

1.24 wherefore **all flesh is**  
as grass  
and  
**all its glory is**  
as the flower of grass;  
**the grass withers**  
and  
**its flower falls off;**

1.25 but  
**the Word of God remains**  
forever.

And

6 **this is the word**  
which was preached to you.

The structural design of these verses is relatively clear. The beginning admonition to brotherly love (# 5, vv. 22-23), is re-enforced by a scriptural proof taken from Isaiah 40:6-8 in statements 6-10 (vv. 24-25a). The final declaration in statement 11 (v. 25b) applies more directly the scripture proof to the admonition with a reminder to the readers that this message had already been proclaimed to them.

This organizing structure frames our study of the passage below.

## II. Message

If believers claim to love God, they must love one another for their claim to have legitimacy. This core principle forms the theological foundation for this passage. The OT vertical / horizontal religious principle is critical here.

### a. Love one another, vv. 22-23

22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, **love one another** deeply from the heart. 23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

22 Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐκ καρδίας **ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε** ἐκτενῶς, 23 ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου, διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος·

### Notes:

Study of these verses begins with examining the core admonition and then the expansion elements.

**Core: ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε.** The Aorist imperative verb form stresses emphatically the importance of this admonition. The verb itself stresses self-sacrificing commitment to others, not just a positive feeling. “One another” focuses on the Christian community that the individual believers belonged to.

Against the backdrop of various ancient Jewish sects stressing the importance of communal devotion to one another,<sup>11</sup> what was going on among the churches that Peter wrote to? Clearly the Old Testament heritage of Lev. 19:17-18<sup>12</sup> and related texts on loving one’s neighbor lay in the background. Jewish members of these congregations would have clearly understood the importance of serious commitment to one another in a religious community. The non-Jewish members could possibly have grasped some of this from membership in trade unions etc. that stressed group loyalty. Does the emphasis here imply disunity in these churches? Hardly, since nowhere in the letter does the theme of disunity surface. Peter did not feel compelled to place high emphasis on brotherly love, since this theme is present only here and in 2:17.

The Bible student need not resort to an assumed problem in order to account for this theme in the letter. Much more likely this emphasis is a logical climax of this unit in vv. 13-25 that found relevance in congregations made up of Jews and non-Jews, slaves and freedmen, rich and poor, reflecting a very diverse background. Their new Christian faith had brought a highly diverse group of people together in a single community of people. Loyalties would tend to naturally reach back into their non-Christian heritage, rather than focusing on their new spiritual family. The formation of a new community framed by sacrificial commitment to one another required serious effort and commitment.<sup>13</sup> Peter was deeply aware of this and felt it important to stress this theme early on in his letter to them. Peter’s theme is also grounded in the teaching of Jesus on brotherly love.<sup>14</sup> Remarkably it was this very commitment to love one another that gave early Christianity its greatest witness to the outside world, and made it attractive even in times of intense persecution.

Peter qualifies this core admonition with five sets of modifiers that add profound richness to the idea of loving one another.

**Expansion 1: Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον.** This lengthy participle phrase centers on the conversion experience of purification, ἡγνικότες.<sup>15</sup> In the Jewish temple, rituals of purification were central to worshipping God, but these focused on the outward, external aspect of life. Peter underscores that in conversion God cleaned up not just the outward life, but more importantly the very core of existence of believers, τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν. This purification was thorough and complete, unlike that done in the temple.<sup>16</sup>

The means of this profound purification was their obedience to the truth<sup>17</sup> of the gospel, ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς

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<sup>11</sup>“The emphasis in Qumran on the loyalty among community members based on communal love has also been proposed as the background for the sentiment expressed in this verse.<sup>34</sup> It has even been suggested that a sayings schema of Essene tradition was taken up here into the Christian tradition and given a new content to adapt it to the situation of the Christian communities.<sup>35</sup>” [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), 138.]

<sup>12</sup>**NRSV:** 17 You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

<sup>13</sup>Anyone involved in church life for any length of time understands the challenge of a basic sociological principle: *the greater the diversity of the group, the harder it is to develop group loyalty*, and the converse is also true. When a church is made up of folks from similar backgrounds, that church finds building unity much easier. For those ministering to internationally based congregations, the challenges are enormous at times. The wide diversity of background in such a congregation presents substantial challenges to developing unity and group loyalty. Theologically, such becomes possible only in a willingness of the members to sacrificially give themselves to others in ministry and service.

<sup>14</sup>Compare John 13:34-35 and 15:12-17. Through Silas’ influence Peter could possibly have picked up aspects of this from the strong emphasis on brotherly love in Paul’s writings, cf. Rom. 12:10, 13:8; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; and 1 Thess. 3:12, all documents written most likely before First Peter.

<sup>15</sup>ἡγνίζω...**2. to cause to be morally pure, purify**, fig. ext. of 1: καρδίας Js 4:8; ψυχὰς 1 Pt 1:22; ἑαυτὸν 1J 3:3. Pass. ἁ. τῇ ἀφέσει τ. ἁμαρτιῶν become pure through forgiveness of sins B 5:1. Also ἁ. ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν 8:1. [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), 12.]

<sup>16</sup>For NT references to temple purification, see Acts 21:24 and 24:18.

<sup>17</sup>“The term ‘truth’ (alētheia) occurs only here in 1 Peter, but in 5:12 its adjective, alēthēs, is used to accentuate ‘the grace of God’ as ‘true.’ ‘Truth,’ in contrast to lie or falsehood, is that which corresponds exactly to reality. In Christian conceptualization,

ἀληθείας.<sup>18</sup> Obeying the requirements of the Torah was key to Jewish purification, but for believers the Gospel as the expression of divine truth is critical for this deeper, life-changing purification. The objective of this purification and obedience is εἰς φιλαδελφίαν<sup>19</sup> ἀνυπόκριτον, ‘for unhyprocritical brotherly love.’<sup>20</sup> What God had in mind when He cleaned us up in conversion was to enable us to genuinely love fellow believers.<sup>21</sup> This overcomes all the cultural, language, social etc. barriers that would divide us and make us suspicious of one another.

This purification has an enabling power from God linked to it to help believers achieve this goal. Without such prior purification, efforts toward brotherly love are doomed to be superficial at best and can never successfully overcome the many barriers that culture and heritage throw up against loving someone very different than we are. Peter’s point is that God set up this goal in our salvation and enables us to love one another; now the challenge simply is, “Do it!”

**Expansion 2: ἐκ καρδίας.** The second qualifier of the admonition stresses deliberate decision as essential to loving one’s brother. The phrase literally means ‘out of the heart’ and given the figurative meaning of ‘heart’ in the ancient world as the source of choice and decision, the resulting image stresses deliberate and intentional decision to love one another.<sup>22</sup> Their decision to love one another then must originate from deep

God is the ‘father of truth’ (2 Clem. 3:1; 20:5), whose word is truth (John 17:1) and who has spoken ‘the word of truth’ in Jesus Christ and the gospel (Col 1:5; Eph 1:13; 4:20). Thus, to become a Christian is to be ‘brought forth by the word of truth’ (Jas 1:18) or ‘to come to the knowledge of the truth’ (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 3:7; Heb 10:26; cf. 1 Tim 4:3; 2 John 1) and to be given the responsibility of ‘obeying the truth’ (Gal 5:7; cf. Pfizner 1970). In 1 Peter, ‘truth,’ like ‘grace’ (cf. 5:12), summarizes in a single term that to which Christian believers have been introduced as a result of their rebirth and that reality by which their actions are controlled. For children born of God and the word of good news, truth has replaced ‘former ignorance’ (1:14; cf. 2:15), and believers, now grounded in the truth, are henceforth to love one another with sincerity (v 22a) and purity of heart (v 22b) and to rid themselves of insincerity or hypocrisy (2:1). Thus, ‘truth’ in this context is synonymous with the ‘word of God’ (vv 23–25). ‘Obeying the truth,’ like ‘obeying the word’ (cf. 2:7–8), is a marked feature of the obedient children of God (1:14).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 383-84.]

<sup>18</sup>For Paul the phrase commonly is ὑπακοὴν πίστεως, obedience of faith, as expressed in Rom. 1:5, 16:26, when a qualifier of ὑπακοῆ is added. That is, the obedience that faith produces (Greek subjective genitive case). For Peter, the qualifier is either τῆς ἀληθείας (v. 22: obedience to the Truth) or εἰς ὑπακοὴν...Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v. 2: obedience to Jesus Christ), in the Greek objective genitive case use.

<sup>19</sup>‘Brotherly and sisterly love was urgently promoted in early Christianity (Rom 12:9–10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 2 Pet 1:7; cf. Sedlaczek 1894). Its Christian accentuation reflects not only the importance attributed to action that assured the cohesion of the community but also the movement’s understanding of itself as a new family of God. In 1 Peter, philadelphia and its related terms philadelphoi (‘loving of brothers [and sisters],’ 3:8), philoxenoi (‘hospitable,’ 4:9), and philēma (‘kiss,’ sign of familial affection) express the behavior that, like love (1:22b; 2:17; 4:8; 5:14), compassion (3:8), mutual respect (3:8; 5:6), and mutual service (4:8–11), is encouraged to enforce the emotional and social bonds within the ‘brotherhood’ (adelphotēs, 2:17; 5:9) or ‘household of God’ (2:5; 4:17).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 385-86.]

<sup>20</sup>‘Purification leads to sincere love for fellow believers. Literally, the expression used here is ‘sincere brotherly love,’ which was formerly used to refer to the love between actual brothers and sisters. In the New Testament, however, ‘brothers’ has come to mean fellow believers. The adjective sincere means negatively, free from hypocrisy or deceit, and positively, ‘genuine’ (Phps, Bre), a love that comes directly from the heart. To have a sincere love for your fellow believers may be rendered as ‘to really love your fellow believers.’ Such fellow believers may be rendered as ‘those who believe even as you do.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 46.]

<sup>21</sup>One should not forget that the verb translated as ‘purify’, ἀγνίζω, carries also the meaning of being set apart in dedication to God uniquely as His children. The commonly adjective ἅγιος, ἴα, ον, usually translated as ‘holy’ or ‘saint,’ designates one set apart to God, The noun ἡ ἀγιότης, -ητος specifies ‘holiness’ as a fundamental character trait; the noun τό ἅγιασμα, -ατος designates a holy place such as the temple that is dedicated to God; the noun ὁ ἁγιασμός, -οῦ designates either the process of becoming holy, or the resulting state of ‘having been made holy,’ that is, dedicated to God. The use of this set of words from the common root ἀγι- is extensive throughout the New Testament. For a helpful online discussion see M. William Ury, “Holy, Holiness,” *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/holy-holiness.html>.

<sup>22</sup>‘In a similar way, the phrase ἐκ καρδίας corresponds in meaning to ἀνυπόκριτον (cf. Rom 6:17 and Note b\*), so that the entire clause, with the exception of the adverb ἐκτενῶς, echoes the previous reference to genuine brotherly affection. Peter’s point is that having purified their souls for the express purpose of displaying genuine affection for each other, they must do exactly that.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002),

down inside them.<sup>23</sup>

**Expansion 3: ἐκτενῶς.** This third modifier is the first one to come after the verb; the above modifiers have stood at the beginning of the sentence in a position of heightened emphasis.<sup>24</sup> The post-field location after the verb doesn't suggest that it was unimportant, but rather that it is not as important as what comes in front of the verb. The adverb ἐκτενῶς stresses intensity either of passion or of sincere motivation.<sup>25</sup> Consistency is a major element emphasized here. Thus brotherly love is not to be spasmodic or occasional, but constant and consistent.

**Expansion 4a: ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου.** The first perfect participle ἡγνικότες, 'purified,' alluded to one's conversion experience. The perfect participle here, ἀναγεγεννημένοι, 'born again,' alludes to the same conversion moment. Thus conversion is both a purification and a new birth. The verb ἀναγεννάω is only used twice in the NT, both in First Peter (vv. 3, 23).<sup>26</sup> Thus brother love stems from a spiritual birth that transforms.

The source of that spiritual birth is defined first negatively and then positively.<sup>27</sup> One should note the use of the Greek preposition ἐκ here. The significance of this preposition is to denote source or origin. In the sexual language used here especially with σπορᾶς (seed), the concept of 'siring' or the male source of creation is primarily behind the imagery.<sup>28</sup> New birth doesn't originate οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς. Here is an emphatic denial that spiritual birth has any human or material origins. Human effort or activities cannot under any circumstance produce spiritual birth! Peter clearly affirms that we have nothing to do with the spiritual transformation of new birth in conversion. Ours is merely a faith response to what God alone accomplishes. The imperishable seed used to produce the new birth comes exclusively from God alone.

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75.]

<sup>23</sup>Note that the variant reading of this text ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας defines the idea as a decision to love that is clean, and thus free from impurities of phoney motivation etc. The latter addition of καθαρᾶς could perhaps have been motivated in part by what the copyists at the time noticed among their readers. Certainly insincere expressions of brotherly love certainly abound in our day.

<sup>24</sup>The sentence pre-field in ancient Greek is the primary place to place words etc. when special emphasis is given to them. The extensive use of spelling endings, suffixes, on almost all Greek words allowed for such placing of words anywhere in the sentence, unlike English where sentence location determines grammatical function and is rather fixed. The suffix spelling attached to words achieved this for Greek.

<sup>25</sup>ἐκτενῶς adv. of ἐκτενής (q.v.; Aristot. +; Polyb. 31, 14, 12; Diod S 2, 24, 3; M. Ant. 1, 4; Vett. Val. p. 187, 5; ins [s. ἐκτένεια]; POxy 2228, 40; PMichael 20, 2; LXX; Jos., Ant. 6, 341) **pert. to being persevering, eagerly, fervently, constantly ἀγαπᾶν 1 Pt 1:22.** Of prayer (as always in LXX: Jon 3:8; 3 Macc 5:9 al.) προσευχῇ ἐ. γινομένη **Ac 12:5.** βοᾶν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐ. 1 Cl 34:7.—Neut. of the comp. of ἐκτενής as adv. ἐκτενέστερον (Agatharchides: 86 Fgm. 6 Jac [in Athen. 12, 527c]; SIG 695, 66): ἐ. προσεύχεσθαι prob. elative very fervently **Lk 22:44.**—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), 310.]

<sup>26</sup>Related terms are ἀρτιγέννητος (newly born) and παλιγγενεσία (born again).

<sup>27</sup>"The means by which God begat his people is 'imperishable' rather than 'perishable seed.' The terms used here are among Peter's favorites. The heavenly inheritance of believers is 'imperishable' (aphthartos, 1 Pet 1:4), and God is pleased when women have the 'imperishable' (aphthartos) qualities of a 'gentle and quiet spirit' (3:4). On the other hand, believers are redeemed with Christ's precious blood, not with 'perishable' (phthartos) things like silver or gold (1:18). The human sperm of a father is perishable and earthly, and even if it produces children, they too will die eventually. The seed God uses to beget his people, on the other hand, is invincible and incorruptible. The term Peter used (spora) can be translated as 'sowing' or 'origin,' and some scholars understand it to have this meaning here.<sup>169</sup> It makes better sense in the context, however, if the term refers to that which is sown, namely, seed, and so we should not distinguish the meaning from the usual term for 'seed' (i.e., sperma)." [Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 37, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2007), 94-95.]

<sup>28</sup>σπορά, ᾧς, ἡ (s. σπείρω and two next entries; Aeschyl. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; TestSol 5:3 P; TestReub 2:8; Philo, Joseph., Just.; Tat. 11, 1; Ath. 22, 6 and R. 1 p. 48, 6) prim. 'the activity of sowing' and fig. 'procreation', then by metonymy 'that which is sown' (Eur., Andr. 637; pap; 1 Macc 10:30; Jos., Ant. 2, 306), whence it also comes to mean **seed** (SIG 826c, 15 [117 B.C.] μήτε σπορῶν μήτε καρπῶν; Herm. Wr. 13:2; PGM 1, 32; 13, 176), which is generally accepted for **1 Pt 1:23** (cp. θεοῦ σπορά Ps.-Callisth. 1, 10; 13), though E Selwyn, 1 Pt '46, 307 prefers origin or sowing.—DELG s.v. σπείρω. 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), 939.]

This is the only use of this word in the New Testament. Much more common for 'seed' is τὸ σπέρμα, ατος, with a very similar meaning. The thrust of the scripture quote that follows from Isaiah may have dictated the choice of σπορά over σπέρμα, but certainty as to the reason is not possible.

**Expansion 4b: διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος.** What is this seed, i.e., *sperma*, used by God? Peter's answer is 'the living and abiding Word of God.' This phrase is introduced by the preposition διὰ designating the means by which something is done. The seed comes from God and as the Word of God it becomes the agency of new birth.<sup>29</sup> The qualifiers ζῶντος...καὶ μένοντος are not completely clear as to whether they modify λόγου or θεοῦ.<sup>30</sup> Clearly they function as a pair and thus go back to the same reference. And since μένοντος more appropriate goes back to word rather than God, most likely both then qualify λόγου. The scripture quote from Isaiah that follows strongly favors this understanding.

Peter's point is to stress that God's Word in the Gospel is both dynamic and enduring. Thus as the agent in producing the new birth, this gospel message actively worked to produce spiritual transformation, and an enduring word it continues to play a dynamical role in transformation of the believer. The reason for such spiritual power is that the word comes from God, rather than coming from human imagination or fantasy.

One should note that the emphasis is upon the orally proclaimed gospel, rather than written documents, as the final comment at the end of verse 25 make abundantly clear. The New Testament is the written record of the Gospel, but is not synonymous with Gospel as the orally proclaimed message of salvation. Though the difference is not huge, it should be remembered and the two terms, gospel as preached message and as written record, should not be treated as synonyms.

**b. The scripture proof, vv. 24-25a**

24 For "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever."

24 διότι πᾶσα σὰρξ ὡς χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῆς ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν· 25 τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

**Notes:**

The subordinate causal conjunction διότι introduces the scripture quote as the fifth expansion of the admonition to love one another.<sup>31</sup> Peter reached out to the prophet Isaiah for an affirmation of the enduring quality of the word of God, and he found one in Isaiah 40:6-8. He shortened the quote and modified some of

**Isaiah 40:6-8**

**1 Peter 1:24-25a**

6 A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

7 The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

All flesh is like grass

and all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers,  
and the flower falls,

but the word of the Lord endures forever."

<sup>29</sup> A few scholars think the 'word' (logos) refers to Christ as the divine Word, a meaning that clearly is found in John (John 1:1, 14). We can be almost certain, however, that Peter used the term 'word' (logos) to refer to the gospel. It often has this meaning in the New Testament (e.g., Eph 1:13; Phil 2:16; Col 1:5; 4:3; 1 Thess 1:8; 2:13; 2 Thess 3:1; 2 Tim 2:9; 4:2; Titus 1:3; 2:5; Heb 13:7; Jas 1:21) and bears this meaning elsewhere in 1 Peter (2:8; 3:1). Grammatically we could translate the last phrase as 'the word of the living and enduring God.'<sup>170</sup> But context indicates that the NIV is correct, 'the living and enduring word of God' (cf. also Heb 4:12).<sup>171</sup> [Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 37, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2007), 95.]

<sup>30</sup> It is debated whether ζῶντος should be taken with λόγου or θεοῦ. A first impression is that the fixity of the phrase 'the living God' in biblical literature is decisive in favor of the latter. It appears that the purpose of the designation here, as in Acts 14:15; 1 Thess 1:9; and Heb 9:14, is to contrast God with the dead idols of paganism. Because the accompanying participle (μένοντος) seems redundant with 'God' and more appropriate with 'word' (cf. especially the end of the Scripture quotation in v 25), many commentators and most English translations have taken both participles with λόγου: 'the living and enduring word of God' (see especially La Verdère, 89-94; for the participle ζῶν with λόγος, cf. Heb 4:12). [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 76-77.]

<sup>31</sup> **3. marker used to indicate why someth. just stated can reasonably be considered valid**, used in place of ὅτι (TestAbr A 11 p. 90, 6 [Stone p. 28]; TestJob 49:3): **for Lk 1:13; Ac 10:20 v.l.; 18:10; 22:18; Ro 1:19-21; 3:20; 8:7; Gal 2:16 v.l.; 1 Th 2:18; 1 Pt 1:16ab (v.l.), 24 (ὅτι P72); 2:6.** [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), 251.]

the wording but the essential idea remains the same.<sup>32</sup>

What was the point made by Isaiah? And how does that compare with Peter’s use of Isaiah’s words? The conjunction διότι clearly sets up Isaiah’s words as the justifying basis of what Peter has just said about the word of God.<sup>33</sup> Michaels has helpful observations here:

The first part of the quotation can be understood as a comment on “the planting of perishable seed” to which he referred in v 23: “all humanity” (lit. “all flesh,” a common OT expression) is seen from the standpoint of its mortality, and human mortality is underscored by the metaphor of grass. Because the life cycle of plants is relatively short, and the perishability of plant life is more obvious and visible to humans than their own mortality, grass and flowers become appropriate metaphors (to Isaiah and Peter alike) for the human condition.

If πᾶσα σὰρξ refers to humanity generally, πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῆς is probably intended to focus on the outward attraction or splendor of pagan society and of the “way of life that was your heritage,” a way of life that Peter has already characterized as “empty” (v 18; cf. Hort, 94). He does not deny the external beauty of pagan culture; it is as beautiful in its way as the wild flowers that God placed in the grassy fields, but it is also just as fragile and short lived. ἄνθος χόρτου is the LXX’s free translation of a Hebrew phrase meaning “flower of the field” (for a more literal rendering see Ps 102[103]:15), and refers to actual flowers, not to the tiny blossoms of the grass.<sup>34</sup>

Thus the first part of the Isaiah text serves mainly to set a backdrop for the final statement on the durability of the word of God, which is Peter’s main point in his writing. The temporary and uncertain nature of human life stands in stark contrast to the durability of God’s word in the gospel. Thus, the admonition to love one another grows out of the purification and spiritual new birth accomplished by God’s message of salvation. And that salvation message will stand forever! Thus we have powerful reason to love one another.

**c. This applies to that, v. 25b**

That word is the good news that was announced to you.

τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς.

**Notes:**

This last segment could be termed ‘applicational.’<sup>35</sup> Peter reminded his initial readers that this word of God alluded to in Isaiah ultimately was the message that had been ‘gospelized’ (τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν) to them. Several aspects of this short sentence are important to understand.

τοῦτο, ‘this,’ refers back to the Isaiah quote, rather than to any single word in the quote.<sup>36</sup> The quality of endurance of the word of God mentioned in Isaiah applies to the gospel message of Jesus. τὸ ῥῆμα, labeled τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου in Isaiah, stresses an orally spoken word. Whereas ὁ λόγος, used in v. 23, is broad in mean-

<sup>32</sup>Comparison of the two texts in Greek reflects a similar pattern, as does the English translation:

Isaiah 40:6-8 (LXX)	1 Peter 1:24-25a
<p><sup>6</sup>φωνῆ λέγοντος Βόησον· καὶ εἶπα τί βοήσω; Πᾶσα σὰρξ χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· <sup>7</sup>ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν, <sup>8</sup>τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. [Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Is 40:6–8.]</p>	<p><sup>24</sup> διότι πᾶσα σὰρξ ὡς χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῆς ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν· <sup>25</sup> τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.</p>

<sup>33</sup>“Peter follows the LXX closely. His two deviations in v 24 (first, the use of ὡς before χόρτος, making the phrase a simile rather than a metaphor; and second, the substitution of αὐτῆς for ἀνθρώπου in agreement with the Hebrew) are probably to be attributed not to Peter’s editorial activity but simply to his use of a LXX manuscript tradition different at small points from that reflected in modern critical editions (cf. Hort, 94).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 77.]

<sup>34</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 78.

<sup>35</sup>This is one of the hundreds of instances clearly illustrating the faulty versification of the scripture text in the late 1500s. The placing of the verse marker in the middle of the quote rather than at the end most likely reflects that Robertus Stephanus, i.e., Robert Estienne, failed to recognize where the quote ended and Peter’s comments began, when he set up the verse reference system that is universally followed today. For more details, see “Chapters and verses of the Bible: Verses,” Wikipedia online.

<sup>36</sup>“To Peter, the message of Jesus and the message about Jesus are the same message, just as they are to Mark (1:1, 14–15) and to the author of Hebrews (2:3–4). The gospel is an eternal gospel that promises eternal life and demands eternal love (cf. 1 John 2:17).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 79.]

ing and can include both written and orally delivered words, τὸ ῥῆμα is restricted to orally delivered words. The historical setting makes it clear that the apostolic preaching of the gospel was what Peter had in mind, since none of the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus had yet been written when this letter was produced. τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς, with the Aorist passive participle verbal, makes it clear that this salvation message about Christ had already been proclaimed to the readers and they had positively responded to it in conversion. Additionally, Peter may have been further motivated to pick up on the verb idea of εὐαγγελίζω, since this verb was used in verse 9 of the Isaiah text just beyond Peter's quote.<sup>37</sup>

What Peter had to say in vv. 22-25 is both powerful and relevant to us. Disunity and lack of harmony often dominates much of Christianity in our day. Establishing unity, unfortunately, has been attempted too frequently by adopting the lowest common denominator of belief to the sacrifice of important truths of the biblical message. Peter's solution to achieving harmony and togetherness in a community of faith is simple: commit yourself to loving your brother and sister in Christ. Let the powerful dynamic of God's Word enable you to move that direction. When you have experienced the life transforming new birth and purification of the gospel in conversion, you have all the needed tools in order to love fellow believers. Now use them!

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<sup>37</sup>LXX: ἔπ' ὄρος ὑψηλὸν ἀνάβηθι, ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Σιων· ὑψωσον τῆ ἰσχύι τὴν φωνήν σου, ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Ἱερουσαλημ· ὑψώσατε, μὴ φοβεῖσθε· εἰπὸν ταῖς πόλεσιν Ἰουδα Ἰδοὺ ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν.

[Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Is 40:9.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 7**  
**1 Peter 2:1-8**  
**“Living Like New Babies”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

2.1 Ἀποθέμενοι οὖν πᾶσαν κακίαν καὶ πάντα δόλον καὶ ὑποκρίσεις καὶ φθόνους καὶ πάσας καταλαλιάς, 2 ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ αὐξηθῆτε εἰς σωτηρίαν, 3 εἰ ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος.

4 Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι, λίθον ζῶντα, ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον 5 καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· 6 διότι περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ· Ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον ἀκρογωνιαίον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ κατασχυνοθῆ. 7 ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν· ἀπιστοῦσιν δὲ λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας 8 καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος καὶ πέτρα σκανδάλου· οἱ προσκόπτουσιν τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες· εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

2 1 Macht darum Schluss mit allem, was unrecht ist! Hört auf zu lügen und euch zu verstellen, andere zu beneiden oder schlecht über sie zu reden. 2 Wie neugeborene Kinder nach Milch schreien, so sollt ihr nach dem unverfälschten Wort Gottes verlangen, um im Glauben zu wachsen und das Ziel, eure Rettung, zu erreichen. 3 Ihr habt doch schon gekostet, wie gültig Christus, der Herr, ist.

4 Kommt zu ihm! Er ist der lebendige Stein, den die Menschen als unbrauchbar weggeworfen haben; aber bei Gott ist er ausgesucht und wertvoll. 5 Lasst euch selbst als lebendige Steine zu einem geistigen Haus erbauen, zu einer Priesterschaft, die Gott geweiht ist und die ihm, vermittelt durch Jesus Christus, Opfer darbringt, Opfer geistiger Art, an denen er Gefallen hat, nämlich den Opferdienst des ganzen Lebens.

6 In den Heiligen Schriften heißt es: »Auf dem Zionsberg lege ich einen Stein, einen ausgesuchten, wertvollen Grundstein. Wer auf ihn vertraut, wird nicht zugrunde gehen.«

7 Wertvoll ist dieser Stein für euch, die ihr auf Jesus Christus vertraut. Aber für die, die ihn ablehnen, gilt:

»Der Stein, den die Bauleute als wertlos weggeworfen haben, ist zum Eckstein geworden. 8 An ihm stoßen sich die Menschen. Er ist zum Felsblock geworden, an dem sie zu Fall kommen.«

An ihm stoßen sich alle, die dem Wort Gottes nicht gehorchen. Doch so hatte es Gott für sie bestimmt.

**NRSV**

1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and 5 like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." 7 To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," 8 and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

**NLT**

1 So get rid of all malicious behavior and deceit. Don't just pretend to be good! Be done with hypocrisy and jealousy and backstabbing. 2 You must crave pure spiritual milk so that you can grow into the fullness of your salvation. Cry out for this nourishment as a baby cries for milk, 3 now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness. 4 Come to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by the people, but he is precious to God who chose him. 5 And now God is building you, as living stones, into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are God's holy priests, who offer the spiritual sacrifices that please him because of Jesus Christ. 6 As the Scriptures express it, "I am placing a stone in Jerusalem, a chosen cornerstone, and anyone who believes in him will never be disappointed." 7 Yes, he is very precious to you who believe. But for those who reject him, "The stone that was rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone." 8 And the Scriptures also say, "He is the stone that makes people stumble, the rock that will make them fall." They stumble because they do not listen to God's word or obey it, and so they meet the fate that has been planned for them.

## Quick Links to the Study

### I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

### II. [Message](#)

- a. [Be like hungry infants, vv. 1-3](#)
- b. [You are becoming God's temple, vv. 4-6](#)
- c. [You value Christ as the cornerstone, 7-8](#)

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## Introduction to Study.

Peter opened the letter body with a series of admonitions in 1:13-25 that continue in 2:1-10 but begins transitioning into profound doctrinal affirmations about Christ and the nature of the believing community as the new People of God instead of Israel. This leads up to the climatic affirmations in 2:9-10 that provide marvelous assertion that believers, Jews and non-Jews, in Christ now are God's own special people upon whom His blessings are poured out. It's a wonderfully powerful affirmation of the blessings and responsibilities that believers have in the family of God. And certainly merits our careful attention.

The first part of 2:1-10 both continues the admonitions pattern but begins transitioning into the spiritual concepts that fully dominate verses 9-10. In this study we will give attention only to the first eight verses, in order to keep the study from becoming too long.

## I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>

The background of verses one through eight play some role in the exegesis of the passage, but not a dominating role as is sometimes the case.

### a. Historical

**External History.** In the UBS 4th revised edition of the Greek New Testament, only one variation of wording in the existing copies of the Greek text is considered important enough for analysis. And it stands as a later attempt at writing stylistic improvement over the wording of the original text.<sup>2</sup> This is in verse three where the introductory conjunction *εἰ* is replaced by *εἴπερ*, with essentially the same meaning of 'if' or 'since.' Thus no shift in meaning takes place.

The critical apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 27th rev. edition Greek New Testament lists twenty separate places where variation of wording exists, but they do not impact the meaning of the text and are considered insignificant.<sup>3</sup> Thus from this overview we can conclude that this text in its original form was carefully preserved

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>2</sup>"The reading *εἰ*, supported by early representatives of the Alexandrian type of text (P72  $\kappa^*$  A B), was improved stylistically in later witnesses by using the more subtle *εἴπερ* ( $\kappa$  C K P  $\Psi$  81 614 1739 vg syr<sup>h</sup>), which among New Testament authors occurs only in Paul." [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), 619.]

<sup>3</sup>As an example of three such instances note Michaels comments:

1.a. In most of the ancient MSS, the first two items on this list ("malice" and "deceit") are singular and the last three plural, but the tendency of a few MSS is to make some or all of the last three singular as well. The evidence is strongest in the case of "hypocrisies," which is singular (*ὑπόκρισιν*) in B  $\kappa$ 1 and two Old Latin versions, yet the plural *ὑποκρίσεις* is to be preferred. "Malice" and "deceit" are set apart from the items that follow by the repetition of "all" (*πᾶσαν* and *πάντα*, singular in Greek). It is more likely that the singular *δόλον* ("deceit") would influence scribes to make "hypocrisy" singular (because of their similarity in meaning) than that the plurals at the end of the list would influence a change in the opposite direction. The credibility of B in this verse is not enhanced by its unique scribal error *φόνους* ("murders") in place of *φθόνους* ("jealousies").

2.b. The words "to salvation" (*εἰς σωτηρίαν*) are omitted in the majority of later MSS (cf. KJV/AV), perhaps because a salvation to which one might attain by spiritual growth seemed inconsistent with a distinctly eschatological salvation waiting to be revealed at the last day (1:4; cf. 1:9). The phrase is found in all the earlier and better MSS and should be retained.

3.c. A number of ancient MSS (p72 K L and others) read *Χριστός* ("Christ") instead of *χρηστός* ("good" or "pleasing"), in line with a wordplay very common in early Christianity (BGD, 887; TDNT 9:488-89). The effect of this variation is to turn a scriptural allusion into a confessional formula ("that the Lord is Christ" or "that Christ is Lord"; cf. 3:15). The earliest of the MSS that does this (p72) also inserts *ἐπιστεύσατε* after *ἐγέυσασθε* as an unmistakable indication that "tasting" means believing

in the centuries of being copied by numerous scribes.

**Internal History.** The time / place markers inside these verbs are numerous but revolve around the two figurative images of an infant and the Jerusalem temple, as signals of Christian commitment.

Childbirth in the ancient world was challenging.<sup>4</sup> From every indication, infant mortality was high in ancient Greco-Roman society, with estimates of between five and ten percent of the babies not surviving their first month.<sup>5</sup> Although Egyptian society appears not to have made extensive use of them, most other ancient societies employed a midwife for delivery of the infant. The feeding of infants in the ancient world was virtually always by breast-feeding, either by the mother and/or a 'wet' nurse in some aristocratic circles. Typically this was the primary, if not exclusive, source of nourishment for the infant during the first three years of its life. The language of Peter in verses one through three plays off this backdrop with the image of a hungry infant clamoring for milk.



Building construction in the ancient world made use of a cornerstone as the starting point for placing all the other stones in the construction of a masonry foundation.<sup>6</sup> This is rather different in modern construction where such a stone is more ceremonial than integral to the construction of the building. In the ancient method, the cornerstone played a crucial role in the proper construction of a building. In verses four through eight, Peter uses the image of both the construction of the temple of God and Jesus as cornerstone for vehicles to describe who believers are spiritually. Additionally the role of the priesthood in this temple is important to Peter's presentation. Clearly in the background is

the Jerusalem temple, known as Herod's Temple, and the idea of its construction. The concept of cornerstone comes out of Psalm 118:22, which is quoted often in the New Testament.<sup>7</sup>

### b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** At the *broad genre* level 2:1-8 stands as a part of the letter body and reflects the nature and purpose of ancient letter writing as a 'substitute presence' of the sender of the letter. The occasional nature of ancient letters, i.e., written to specific individuals in a specific geographical place dealing with specific issues at the time of the writing, must not be overlooked. At the *narrow genre* level, our text stands as general paraenesis, i.e., moral exhortation to specified patterns of behavior. The content of the text does not allow for further delineation of more specific forms of paraenesis.



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in Christ. *χρηστός*, found in all other significant MSS, as well as the LXX passage to which Peter is alluding (Ps 33[34]:9a [8a]), is without question the correct reading.

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 82.]

<sup>4</sup>For an interesting but rather blunt account of pregnancy and childbirth in the ancient world, see "Pregnancy and Childbirth," *Women in the Ancient World*. The article focuses on ancient Egyptian women but includes Greek and Roman perspectives as well.

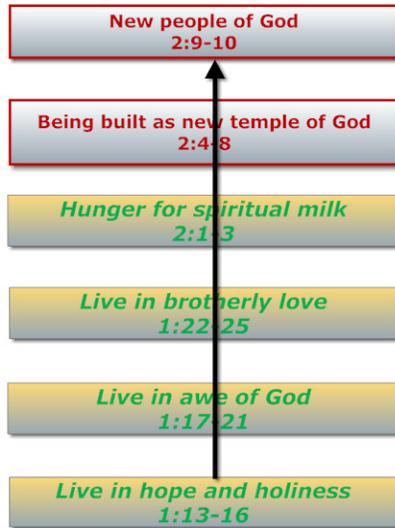
<sup>5</sup>For some helpful background, see Valerie French, "Midwives and Maternity Care in the Roman World," in *Helios*, New Series 13 (2), 69-84.

<sup>6</sup>"The **cornerstone** (or **foundation stone**) concept is derived from the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. Over time a cornerstone became a ceremonial masonry stone, or replica, set in a prominent location on the outside of a building, with an inscription on the stone indicating the construction dates of the building and the names of architect, builder and other significant individuals. The rite of laying a cornerstone is an important cultural component of eastern architecture and metaphorically in sacred architecture generally." ["Cornerstone," *Wikipedia* online]

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:7.

**Literary Context.** As the outline of First Peter illustrates, 2:1-8 stand as a part of the subunit 2:1-10, which in turn is a part of 1:13-2:10, the first major section of the letter body. In this opening section Peter lays on the table a series of admonitions detailing the kind of ideals believers are to live by in serving Christ. He brings this to a climax in 2:9-10 with the declaration of our being the new people of God, and thus obligated to live by God's standards and expectations. As such this material continues to express the profoundly rich concepts about being a follower of Christ.

**First Peter 1:13-2:10**



**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*

**Literary Structure.** The thought flow in this text is more complicated grammatically but can be visually presented by the Block Diagram of the original Greek text that is reflected in the English translation below.

```

2.1     Therefore
        having shed off all evil
                and
                all guile
                and
                hypocrisies
                and
                envies
                and
                all slanders
2.2     as newly born infants
7       desire the undefiled spiritual milk
        by it
        so that you...may grow
2.3     into salvation
        since you have tasted
                that the Lord is gracious.

2.4     To whom coming
        a living stone
                indeed rejected by men
                but with God chosen
                esteemed

2.5     also
        as living stones
8       you yourselves are being built into a spiritual house
        for a holy priesthood
        to offer up spiritual sacrifices
                well pleasing to God
                through Jesus Christ;

2.6     wherefore it stands
                | in scripture:
                |---|
    
```

| Behold,  
a stone is laid  
| in Zion  
| a cornerstone  
| chosen  
| esteemed,  
| and  
the one believing...will not be ashamed.  
in Him

2.7 Therefore  
9 **to you He is precious**  
who believe;  
but  
a stone whom the builders rejected  
10 **to disbelievers...This One has been turned**  
| into a head of the corner  
2.8 | and  
| a stone of stumbling  
| and  
| a rock of offense,  
who stumble  
by disobeying the word;  
11 **for which they were destined.**

As the block diagram above illustrates, the flow of thought internally moves in a three-fold direction. It begins with the admonition to be hungry like infants (#7, vv. 1-3), then moves on to two sets of affirmations. The first, #8 in vv. 4-6, declares that believers are being built as God's new temple, and the second, #s 9-11 in vv. 7-8, amplifies the scripture quote from Psalm 118 by asserting Christ as the cornerstone of this new temple of God.

## II. Message

The above natural division of the text provides the basis for our study, and is reflected in the outline below.

### a. Be like hungry infants, vv. 1-3

1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

2.1 Ἀποθέμενοι οὖν πᾶσαν κακίαν καὶ πάντα δόλον καὶ ὑποκρίσεις καὶ φθόνους καὶ πάσας καταλαλιὰς, 2 ὡς ἄρτιγέννητα βρέφη τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ αὐξηθῆτε εἰς σωτηρίαν, 3 εἰ ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος.

#### Notes:

This single sentence in the Greek text makes a single point that is expanded in four different ways beyond the core admonition.

**Core Admonition:** τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε. Both the verb meaning and the tense / imperative mood of the verb stress intensive, decisive action. Thus Peter puts extra emphasis on the importance of this responsibility. A distinctively Pauline used verb (with 7 of 9 uses) in the NT, Peter finds it suitable to express the high level intensity of desire appropriate to his admonition.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>“ἐπιποθέω fut. ἐπιποθήσω; 1 aor. ἐπεπόθησα (ποθέω ‘long for’, s. next entry; Hdt. et al.; LXX, Philo) **to have a strong desire for someth., with implication of need, long for, desire τι someth.** (Pla., Protag. 329d; Plut., Agis 798 [6, 2]; Lucian, D. Deor. 4, 3; Ps 118:131, 174; Tat. 20, 1) γάλα milk **1 Pt 2:2.** τινά someone (Hdt. 5, 93; Diod S 17, 101, 6; Epict. 3, 24, 53; Sir 25:21) πάντας ὑμᾶς **Phil 1:8; 2:26** (v.l. π. ὁ. ἰδεῖν). ὑμᾶς **2 Cor 9:14.** W. inf. foll. (Philo, Abr. 87 ἐ. θεὸν ἀνευρεῖν) τὸ οἰκητήριον ἐπενδύσασθαι **2 Cor 5:2.** ἰδεῖν τινα **Ro 1:11; 1 Th 3:6; 2 Ti 1:4.** πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα **Js 4:5** is difficult because of the problem posed by uncertainty in the tradition concerning the correct reading of the verb: κατοικίζω text (causative) and κατοικέω v.l. (intr.), but the mng. of the verb is clear; if κατόκισεν is read, one can render either *the spirit that (God) has caused to dwell in us yearns jealously* or (God) *yearns jealously over the spirit that he has put in us*; if κατόκησεν *the spirit that has taken up abode in us yearns jealously*. See MDibelius ad loc. (w. lit.). AMeyer, D. Rätsel des Jk 1930, 258f; ASchlatter, D. Brief d. Jak. ’32, 248–53.—CSpicq, RB 64, ’57, 184–95. B. 1162. TW. Spicq. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Bible Study: Page 77*

*What is it that believers are to desire so intently?* τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα is the answer. The τὸ...γάλα, 'milk,' is clear and corresponds to the comparative clause (cf. expansion 2 below), comparing this desire to that of a newly born baby.<sup>9</sup> The literal meaning of milk is clear, but obviously Peter is not talking about mother's milk for a new baby here. The figurative meaning is what is intended, but what is that? The core idea of milk is nourishment with food that is healthy. So the image points to something healthy and nourishing.

The two qualifying adjectives through some light on the figurative meaning of milk: λογικὸν ἄδολον. The second adjective ἄδολον points to something without deceit.<sup>10</sup> That is, this milk is WYSIWYG.<sup>11</sup> This milk is 'pure' (NRSV; NLT; TEV; ESV; Message), 'pura' (BDA), 'pur' (Segond), 'without guile' (ASV), 'true' (BBE), 'sincere' (KJV), 'unadulterated' (HCSB), 'unverfälschten' (Elberfelder 1905; GNB), 'lautern' (Luther Bibel 1912, 1984). As these translation examples illustrate expressing the precise idea in a modern western language is not easy. The literal meaning of the adjective is closer to 'unadulterated' but the dilemma of translators is what is 'unadulterated' milk?<sup>12</sup> Most opt for the reverse positive idea of 'pure' rather than the negative literal 'impure.' The idea, however, is clear. This milk is not contaminated with impure properties; it comes straight from the source without any corruption.

The first adjective λογικὸν is the really challenging modifier.<sup>13</sup> Two categories of meaning are possible: 1) reasonable and 2) spiritual. In the other of the two NT uses in Rom. 12:1 'reasonable' is the most likely meaning, while most translators opt for the second category 'spiritual' here. The disconnect between reason *Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 377.]

<sup>9</sup>“γάλα, γάλακτος, τό (Hom.+ ) milk

a. as material fluid **1 Cor 9:7**; B 6:17. W. honey as sign of fertility 6:8, 10, 13 (cp. Ex 3:8, 17; 13:5 al.; Lucian, Saturn. 7, Ep. Sat. 1, 20; Himerius, Or. 13, 7 W. ῥεῖν μέλι καὶ γάλα; Dio Chrys. 18 [35], 18 Indian rivers, in which milk, wine, honey and oil flow). As product of human mammary gland γάλα τ. γυναικῶν (Hippocr., Mul. 8: VII, p. 206 L.) ApcPt, Fgm. 2 p. 12, 24 (s. πήγνυμι 3). Of extraordinary circumstance [ὅτι τραχηλοκοπη]θείσης τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ γάλα ἐξῆλθεν when (Paul) was beheaded, milk came out from him (evidently in contrast to blood) AcPI Ha 11, 1.

b. fig. (cp. Philo, Agr. 9 ἐπεὶ δὲ νηπίος μὲν ἐστὶ γάλα τροφή, τελείους δὲ τὰ ἐκ πυρῶν πέμματα, καὶ ψυχῆς γαλακτώδεις μὲν ἂν εἶεν τροφαὶ κτλ., Omn. Prob. Lib. 160, Migr. Abr. 29 al.; Epict. 2, 16, 39; 3, 24, 9. For Hebraic associations s. FDanker, ZNW 58, '67, 94f) of elementary Christian instruction **1 Cor 3:2**; **Hb 5:12f.** τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γ. the unadulterated spiritual milk **1 Pt 2:2** (Sallust. 4, 10 p. 8, 24 of the mysteries: γάλακτος τροφή ὡσπερ ἀναγεννωμένων). S. HUsener, Milch u. Honig: RhM 57, 1902, 177–95=Kleine Schriften IV 1914, 398ff; ADieterich, Mithraslit. 1903, 171; RPerdelwitz, D. Mys. 1911, 56ff; KWyss, D. Milch im Kultus d. Griech. u. Römer 1914; FLehmann, D. Entstehung der sakralen Bedeutung der Milch: ZMR 22, 1917, 1–12; 33–45; ESelwyn, 1 Pt. '46, ad loc. and 308f; BHHW II 1215f; Kl. Pauly III 1293f.—DELG. 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), 186.]

<sup>10</sup>“ἄδολος, ον ‘without deceit’ (Pind. et al., but mostly act., ‘honest’, so also as adv. Wsd 7:13 and Jos., Ant. 1, 212; Just., D. 125, 1 ἄδόλωσ) pass. unadulterated (esp. in pap and ins since III B.C.; e.g. PHib 85, 16f [261 B.C.]; 98, 19 [261 B.C.]; POxy 729, 19; BGU 290, 13; 1005, 5; 1015, 13; PTebt 105; SIG 736, 100; Philo, Rer. Div. Her. 95) of milk 1 Pt 2:2.—FDölger, Ac I 1929, p. 170, 39.—DELG s.v. δόλος. 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), 21.]

<sup>11</sup>What You See Is What You Get.

<sup>12</sup>“The guileless milk of the word (to logikon adolon gala). The phrase is ‘unquestionably difficult’ (Hort 1898, 100) but in the light of its context refers to ‘the divinely-given nourishment supplied by the Gospel’ (Selwyn 1947, 154).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 399.]

<sup>13</sup>“λογικός, ἦ, ὄν ([adv. λογικῶς Ath. 27, 2] a favorite expr. of philosophers since Aristot.; SIG 803, 5. Not LXX, but oft. Philo, Just., Tat., Ath.) pert. to being carefully thought through, thoughtful λογικὴ λατρεία a thoughtful service (in a dedicated spiritual sense) **Ro 12:1** (the cognitive aspect anticipates the phrase εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ; cp. Herm. Wr. 1, 31 λογικὴ θυσία; 13, 18; 21; Epict. 1, 16, 20f the singing of hymns is the sacred service of a human being, as a λογικός=one endowed with reason; 3, 1, 26 τὸ λογικὸν ἔχεις ἐξάιρετον· τοῦτο κόσμει καὶ καλλῶπιζε. Philo, Spec. Leg. 1, 277 God places no value on sacrificial animals, but on τοῦ θύοντος πνεῦμα λογικόν. TestLevi 3:6 λ. καὶ ἀναίμακτος προσφορά [v.l. θυσία]; Ath., 13, 2; Eus., HE 4, 23, 13; cp. the exhortative pattern of Plut., Mor. 478de.—Rtztst., Mysterienrel. 3 328f; Ltzm., Hdb. exc. on **Ro 12:1**; BSchmidt, D. geistige Gebet, diss. Bresl. 1916; OCasel, Jahrb. f. Liturgiewissensch. 4, 1924, 38ff; CMoule, JTS n.s. 1, '50, 34f). Most likely τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα **1 Pt 2:2** is to be taken in a related way pure spiritual milk; it is to be borne in mind that λ. means spiritual not only in the sense of πνευματικός, but also in contrast to ‘literal’, w. the mng. ‘metaphorical’ (cp. Pel-Leg. p. 20: the bishop is the shepherd τῶν λογικῶν προβάτων τοῦ Χριστοῦ; Eus., HE 1, 1, 4 ἐκ λογικῶν λειμώνων; s. DMcCartney, ZNW 82, '91, 128–32, w. emphasis on Hellenic connection of reason and verbal communication).—DELG s.v. λέγω B 2. 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), 598.]

and spirituality in western thinking may create some of the translation delimita. The ancient world saw in the adjective **λογικός, ἢ, ὄν** a signal of something beyond the material that belonged to a higher level.<sup>14</sup> This

<sup>14</sup>“The basic metaphor is ‘pure milk’ in the sense of milk from a mother’s breast; at one level λογικόν simply shows Peter’s self-consciousness about using metaphorical language (somewhat like the τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν of 1:13). Instead of relying on the metaphor by itself to carry the meaning, he adds λογικόν as a reminder that he is speaking metaphorically (much as we might add the words ‘so to speak’). The force of the term is that Peter is referring not to literal mother’s milk but to milk in a ‘higher’ (i.e., metaphorical) sense. λογικός, however, meant more to Peter’s contemporaries than what is usually meant by ‘metaphorical’ today. Its primary meaning was ‘rational’ or ‘spiritual’ in the sense of that which distinguished the human or divine from merely material things or from animals (cf. Epictetus, Diss. 1.16.20; 3.1.26; Philo, Migr. Abr. 185). In particular, it was used in connection with the spiritualizing of cultic terminology or practice (BGD, 476; G. Kittel in TDNT 4:142–43; in the NT, cf. Paul’s λογικὴν λατρείαν or ‘spiritual worship,’ in Rom 12:1; in Hellenistic Judaism, cf. T. Levi 3.6, with reference to worship offered by the angels; in Hellenistic literature, cf. especially λογικὴ θυσία in Corp. Herm. 1.31; 13.18, 21). A few verses later, however, when Peter himself wants to spiritualize the language of temple and sacrifice, he uses not λογικός but πνευματικός for ‘a spiritual house’ and ‘spiritual sacrifices.’

“For this reason it is possible that there are other factors at work in the choice of λογικός here. The KJV/AV rendering, ‘sincere milk of the word’ (a considerable departure from Tyndale’s ‘that reasonable mylke which is with out corrupcion’), seems to presuppose a twofold wordplay: first, between ἄδολον and δόλον (v 1); second, between λογικόν and λόγου (1:23). The former is unmistakable: ‘pure milk’ is apparently understood as the spiritual food that guards against the vices listed in v 1, deceit in particular. The latter is not so immediate or obvious, yet the parallel with James 1:21 (where the positive side of ἀποθέμενοι is receiving ‘the implanted word [λόγον] that is able to save your souls’) gives it a certain plausibility. If this parallel is made determinative, then instead of speaking, like James, of longing for the ‘implanted word’ (or, in his own terms, for the ‘word of the living God’) Peter is introducing the metaphor of milk to much the same effect, while retaining ‘word’ as an adjective (λογικόν) rather than a noun (cf. Bigg, 126–7; Kelly, 85).

“It is doubtful that the readers of the epistle would have noticed such a subtle connection. Although Peter may have chosen λογικόν with 1:23 still in mind and may even be using milk as a metaphor for the proclaimed ‘message of the gospel’ (1:25), the translation ‘milk of the word’ is too explicit (cf. Hort, 100). It shifts the emphasis from ‘milk,’ where it belongs, to ‘word,’ where it does not belong. The purpose of λογικόν is not to interpret and thereby dissolve the metaphor, but simply to underscore the fact that it is a metaphor (i.e., that Peter is speaking not of literal milk but of a more excellent, although undefined, ‘spiritual’ milk). The same considerations make it unlikely that Peter is referring to an actual liturgy in which new converts were given milk and honey as a part of their initiation (cf. Hippolytus, Apost. Trad. 23.2, 7; Tertullian, adv Marcionem 1.14, De Corona 3.3: in the pagan mystery religions, cf. Sallustius, De Deis 4; see H. Schlier in TDNT 1:646). Not only is honey unmentioned in 1 Peter but the basis of Peter’s metaphor of milk is obviously not liturgy (as in v 5) but life: the nurture of children on then mothers’ milk.

“What then is the ‘pure spiritual milk’? The uses of the metaphor in 1 Cor 3:2 and Heb 5:12–13, where ‘milk’ is elementary Christian teaching, could suggest that here too it refers to the instruction needed (both elementary and advanced) for the believer to ‘grow up to salvation’ (this is possible even if λογικόν is not intended to define it as such explicitly). Broader parallels yield a broader understanding of the milk metaphor. In the early collection of hymns known as the Odes of Solomon, Christ says of those who are his own: ‘I fashioned their members, and my own breasts I prepared for them, that they might drink my holy milk and live by it’ (Odes Sol. 8.14: OTP 1:742). Another ode testifies: ‘A cup of milk was offered to me, and I drank it in the sweetness of the Lord’s kindness. The Son is the cup, and the Father is he who was milked: and the Holy Spirit is she who milked him’ (19.2; cf. also 35.5: ‘And I was carried like a child by its mother; and he gave me milk, the dew of the Lord. And I grew strong in his favor, and rested in his perfection’ [OTP 1:752, 765]). The image of milk from the breasts of the Lord is used in a variety of ways in the Odes of Solomon, almost always in some relation to his mercy or kindness (cf. also 4.10; 14.2–3; 40.1). The Semitic roots of such mother/father imagery can be seen in the Qumran hymns, or Hodayoth, whether used of God himself (1QH 9.35–36) or of his surrogate, the leader of the community (1QH 7.20–22: cf. Paul in 1 Thess 2:7).

“Milk, like blood, or water, or wine, is a natural and appropriate symbol of life (cf. Clement of Alexandria’s ingenious attempt to equate milk with the ‘blood of the Word’ in Paed. 1.6: e.g., ‘Thus in many ways the Word is figuratively described, as meat, and flesh, and food, and bread, and blood, and milk. The Lord is all these, to give enjoyment to us who have believed on Him’ [ANF, 2.221]). The life of God as the believer’s present possession is not a major theme in 1 Peter as it is in John or 1 John (when ζωή is mentioned in 1 Pet 3:7 and 10, it is seen more as a future than as a present reality). Yet ‘living’ (ζῶν or ζῶσαν) is a key adjective in the epistle, whether applied to God himself (1:23), the Christian hope (1:3), or Christ as ‘living stone’ and believers as ‘living stones’ (2:4–5). The contrast of life with death was implicit in Peter’s polemic against paganism, and especially in the contrast between the sowing of perishable and imperishable seed in 1:23, with its accompanying quotation from Isa 40:6–8.

“It is doubtful, however, that the significance of ‘pure spiritual milk’ for Peter can be summed up in just one word or concept. It can be understood to represent divine mercy or grace as easily as divine life. Not only the parallels in the Odes of Solomon but the larger framework of the first major section of 1 Peter (1:3–2:10), in which a reference to mercy both begins (1:3, ‘in his great mercy’) and ends the argument (2:10, ‘now you have received mercy’), gives force to this interpretation. In the immediate context, the result of tasting the ‘spiritual milk’ is trading out ‘that the Lord is good’ (i.e., χρηστός, ‘kind, loving, benevolent’ [BGD, 886]).

milk then is no ordinary milk with earthly origins. Its source is from God and its potency for creating spiritual health is enormous.

**Expansion 1:** Ἀποθέμενοι οὖν πᾶσαν κακίαν καὶ πάντα δόλον καὶ ὑποκρίσεις καὶ φθόνους καὶ πάσας καταλαλιὰς. The conjunction οὖν draws an inference from the preceding paragraph in 1:22-25. What was implicit there is now made explicit by the sentence in vv. 1-3.

The first expansion of the core admonition to long for milk is set forth by an alternative image of getting undressed. The undressing, Ἀποθέμενοι, is an antecedent action (Aorist tense Greek participle) that works in tandem with the longing for milk. Before the longing can reach the necessary level, certain things need to be removed from the believer's life. This 'undressing' alludes to conversion which included a genuine expression of repentance from sin. At that moment we made a commitment to clean up our lives.

What were we to remove like old dirty garments? A list of 'vices'<sup>15</sup> follows as the direct object of the participle: "all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander."<sup>16</sup> The number specification of the words in the list merits noting. The first two traits, πᾶσαν κακίαν καὶ πάντα δόλον, are singular, but the last three are plural, καὶ ὑποκρίσεις καὶ φθόνους καὶ πάσας καταλαλιὰς. The first, second, and fifth traits are qualified by the adjective πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν. More literally the translation reads, "every evil, and every deceit, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all slanders." One impact of this structuring is to highlight expressions of these traits, and not just the abstract trait itself. The more general traits are listed in the first two and expressions of evil and deceit reflect themselves in various expressions of hypocrisies, envies, and slanders. Peter's point is that such patterns of behavior have no place in the believer's life and should have been removed at conversion.

**Expansion 2:** ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη. The second major expansion of the admonition sets up the comparative reference for the admonition. The longing for milk is to be compared to that of a ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη. The adjective ἀρτιγέννητα, only used here in the New Testament, stresses just born and limits the reference to a baby at birth, not during the first two or three years of life.

Can implications about the image of 'baby' be drawn here? An older commentary tradition saw the image as suggesting that Peter was speaking to new converts at their baptism in this admonition. But this is not warranted by the image, and the larger context argues against it, and thus it has largely been rejected in recent years by commentators. More likely the image is a faint echo of Jesus' use of little children and their 'child-like faith' as models for believers. But it could simply be Peter reaching out to a natural comparison from the every day world of his time to find a comparison to graphically illustrate the principle of intense desire. I tend to favor the latter option as the more likely one.

**Expansion 3:** ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ αὐξηθῆτε εἰς σωτηρίαν. The objective of this longing for spiritual milk is stated as "so that in Him you may grow into salvation." The image of longing for milk like newly born babies is continued by this dependent purpose clause, although the exact meaning of the connection between "grow" and "salvation" remains unclear.<sup>17</sup> The surface level meaning of 'growing into salvation' seems clearly contradictory to the teaching of the New Testament elsewhere on salvation.<sup>18</sup> The solution from the context is to understand

In light of 1:25 there can be no doubt that the medium by which the milk is received is the proclaimed message of the gospel, but the milk itself is more appropriately interpreted as the sustaining life of God given in mercy to his children." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 86-89.]

<sup>15</sup>For more details on vice lists in the New Testament, see my "New Testament Vice Lists" at [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com).

<sup>16</sup>"The list of vices begins with πᾶσαν κακίαν and πάντα δόλον, each a rather general term in itself and each generalized still further by being put in the singular with πᾶς; in other lists, cf. πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν in James 1:21; πᾶσα πικρία and πάση κακίᾳ in Eph 4:31; also 1 Clem 13.1, 35.5). The effect is to subsume under the general headings of 'malice' and 'deceit,' respectively, all possible instances and variations of these evil qualities (cf. BGD, 631.1aβ). κακία can refer either to evil or wickedness in the most inclusive sense, or (only a little more specifically) to malice or ill will (BGD, 397.1a, b]). The distinction is not (as the translations 'malice' or 'ill will' might suggest) that the second category has to do with evil intentions not realized in practice, but that it has to do with certain antisocial attitudes and behavior. κακία could be summarized as 'mischief' or 'bad blood,' the nursing and acting out of grudges against particular people, or against society as a whole." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 85.]

<sup>17</sup>This was sufficiently problematic so that later manuscripts following the Byzantine text tradition omitted εἰς σωτηρίαν, so that the clause read simply "so that in Him you may grow." But the overwhelming weight of the earliest and most reliable manuscripts favors its inclusion rather than omission.

<sup>18</sup>σωτηρία, ας, ἡ (Trag., Hdt.+)

1. **deliverance, preservation**, w. focus on physical aspect: fr. impending death, esp. on the sea (IMaronIsis 11; Diod S 3, 40, 1 λιμὴν σωτηρίας; 2 Macc 3:32; GrBar 1:3; Philo, Mos. 1, 317; Jos., Ant. 7, 5; 183; Ar. 3, 2) **Ac 27:34; Hb 11:7**. Of the deliverance

'salvation' as the eschatological realization of salvation in final judgment.<sup>19</sup> Peter has already used σωτηρία three times, 1:5, 9, 10, with the eschatological emphasis. Thus logically it would continue to have this meaning here in the fourth and final use of the term in the letter.<sup>20</sup>

of the Israelites fr. Egyptian bondage (Jos., Ant. 2, 331) **Ac 7:25** (διδόναί σωτηρίαν on the part of a deity: Menand., Col. Fgm. 292, 5=1, 5 Kō.). Survival of a hand punished by fire GJs 20:3. A transition to mng. 2 is found in **Lk 1:71**, where σωτηρία ἐξ ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν deliverance from the hand of our enemies is expected (cp. Ps 105:10 and ApcPt Rainer ἐν σωτηρία Ἀχερουσίας λίμνης, where the ref. is to a baptism marking the beginning of life in Elysium); 1 Cl 39:9 (Job 5:4).—S. λίμνη, end.

**2. salvation**, w. focus on transcendent aspects (LXX, Just., Iren; cp. Herm. Wr. 7, 2 [on salvation through gnosis s. GLuck, SBLSP 24, '85, 315–20]; Ael. Aristid., Sac. Serm. 3, 46 p. 424 Keil ἐγένετο φῶς παρὰ τῆς Ἰσιδος καὶ ἕτερα ἀμύθητα φέροντα εἰς σωτηρίαν; the Hymn to Attis in Firmicus Maternus, De Errore Prof. Relig. 22, 1 Θαρρεῖτε μύσαι τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένου. Ἔσται γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐκ πόνων σωτηρία [HHepding, Attis, seine Mythen u. sein Kult 1903, 167]. The Lat. 'salus' in the description of the Isis ceremony in Apuleius corresponds to the Gk. σωτηρία [GANrich, Das antike Mysterienwesen 1894, 47f; Rtzst., Mysterienrel. 3.39]). In our lit. this sense is found only in connection w. Jesus Christ as Savior. This salvation makes itself known and felt in the present, but it will be completely disclosed in the future. Opp. ἀπόλεια **Phil 1:28** (Mel., P. 49, 356; on the probability of military metaphor s. EKrentz, in Origins and Method, JHurd Festschr., ed. BMClean, '93, 125f); θάνατος (cp. Damasc., Vi. Isid. 131: through Attis and the Mother of the Gods there comes ἡ ἐξ ἄδου γεγονυῖα ἡμῶν σωτ.) **2 Cor 7:10**; ὄργη **1 Th 5:9**. W. ζῶη 2 Cl 19:1; ζῶη αἰώνιος IEph 18:1. σωτηρία αἰώνιος (Is 45:17) **Hb 5:9**; short ending of Mk; ἡ κοινὴ ἡμῶν σωτ. Jd 3 (SIG 409, 33f ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ τῆς κοινῆς σωτηρίας); σωτ. ψυχῶν salvation of souls **1 Pt 1:9** (σ. τῶν ψυχῶν Hippol., Ref. 10, 19, 3); cp. vs. **10** (ESelwyn, 1 Pt '46, 252f). σωτηρία ἢ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν MPol 22:1. ἢ τῶν σωζομένων σωτ. 17:2 (ἢ σ. τῶν μετανοούντων Did., Gen. 71, 28; σωτηρία τῶν ἀγαθῶν Hippol., Ref. 7, 28, 6; ἢ τῶν ἀνθρώπων σ. Orig., C. Cels. 4, 73, 13). On κέρασ σωτηρίας **Lk 1:69** s. κέρασ 3. σωτηρίας as objective gen. dependent upon various nouns: γνῶσις σωτηρίας **Lk 1:77**; ἐλπίς σωτ. (TestJob 24:1; cp. Philemo Com. 181 οἱ θεὸν σέβοντες ἐλπίδας καλὰς ἔχουσιν εἰς σωτηρίαν) **1 Th 5:8**; 2 Cl 1:7; ἐνδειξίς σωτ. **Phil 1:28** (opp. ἀπόλεια). τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν **Eph 1:13**. ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας ταύτης **Ac 13:26**. ὁδὸς σωτηρίας way to salvation **16:17**; περιποίησις σωτ. **1 Th 5:9**. ἡμέρα σωτηρίας (quot. fr. Is 49:8) of the day when the apostle calls them to salvation **2 Cor 6:2ab** (cp. the mystery in Apuleius, Metam. 11, 5 'dies salutaris' = 'day of initiation'). Christ is ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτ. **Hb 2:10** (ἀρχηγός 3). ὁ θεὸς τῆς σωτ. μου 1 Cl 18:14 (Ps 50:16).—Used w. verbs: ἔχειν σωτηρίαν Hv 2, 2, 5; 3, 6, 1; m 10, 2, 4; 12, 3, 6. κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν **Hb 1:14**. τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σωτ. κατεργάεσθαι **Phil 2:12** (κατεργάζομαι 2). σωτηρίας τυχεῖν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰ. **2 Ti 2:10** (τυχεῖν σωτηρίας; Diod S 11, 4, 4; 11, 9, 1). εἰς σωτηρίαν for salvation (i.e. to appropriate it for oneself or grant it to another) **Ro 1:16**; **10:1**, **10**; **2 Cor 7:10**; **Phil 1:19** (ἀποβαίνω 2); **2 Th 2:13**; **2 Ti 3:15**; **1 Pt 2:2**. πόρρω ... ἀπὸ τῆς σωτ. 1 Cl 39:9 (Job 3:4). τὰ ἀνήκοντα εἰς σωτηρίαν the things that pertain to salvation 1 Cl 45:1; B 17:1 (cp. SIG 1157, 12f).—σωτηρία is plainly expected to be fully culminated w. the second coming of the Lord **Ro 13:11**; **Hb 9:28**; **1 Pt 1:5**.—(ἢ) σωτηρία without further qualification=salvation is also found **Lk 19:9** (cp. GJs 19:2); **J 4:22** (ἢ σωτ. ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν); **Ac 4:12** (cp. Jos., Ant. 3, 23 ἐν θεῷ εἶναι τ. σωτηρίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ); **Ro 11:11**; **2 Cor 1:6**; **Hb 2:3** (τηλικαύτη σωτ.); **6:9**. ἢ σωτ. ἡμῶν 2 Cl 1:1; 17:5; B 2:10.—Christ died even for the salvation of the repentant Ninevites in the time of Jonah 1 Cl 7:7; cp. vs. 4.—σωτηρία stands by metonymy for σωτήρ (in the quot. fr. Is 49:6) τοῦ εἶναι σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς **Ac 13:47**; B 14:8. On the other hand, for a circumstance favorable for our attainment of salvation ἡγεῖσθαι τι σωτηρίαν **2 Pt 3:15**.—In the three places in Rv in which σωτ. appears as part of a doxology we have a Hebraism (salvation as victory intimately associated w. God; Pellingworth, BT 34, '83, 444f; cp. Ps 3:9 and PsSol 10:8 τοῦ κυρίου ἢ σωτηρία) **7:10**; **12:10**; **19:1**.—LMarshall, Challenge of NT Ethics '47, 248–66; HHaerens, Σωτήρ et σωτηρία dans la religion grecque: Studia Hellenistica 5, '48, 57–68; FDölger, Ac 6, '50, 257–63.—DELG s.v. σωτ. RLoewe, JTS 32, '81, 341–68 (ins pp. 364–68). DBS XI 486–739. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 985-86.]

<sup>19c</sup>The purpose of (ἵνα), and therefore the reason for, such a desire is given in the second half of the sentence: the milk for which the readers are so heartily to yearn is the means (ἐν αὐτῷ)<sup>58</sup> of further growth. The antecedent of αὐτῷ in this context is most likely γάλα, although it could grammatically also have a masculine antecedent, viz., θεός ('God') or, less likely, χριστός ('Christ').<sup>59</sup> Given the author's keen awareness of the nearness of the parousia and the final judgment, it is more likely that σωτηρία ('salvation') refers to eschatological deliverance than to Christian maturity.<sup>60</sup> The point is that the purpose of yearning for and holding to God's word is a growth (αὐξηθῆτε) whose goal (εἰς is here telic) is one's deliverance at the time of the final divine judgment." [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), 147.]

<sup>20</sup>Also helpful is an analysis of the different verbs used with the prepositional phrase εἰς σωτηρίαν: εἶναι (to be; Act 13:47, Rom. 1:16, 10:1); ὁμολογεῖται (Rom. 10:10); ἀποβήσεται (Phil. 1:19); σοφίσει (2 Tim. 3:15); ἀπεκδεχομένοις (Heb. 9:28); κατεσκεύασεν (Heb. 11:7); φρουρουμένους (1 Pet. 1:5); αὐξηθῆτε (1 Pet. 2:2). The wide variety of verbal expressions to which the prepositional phrase εἰς σωτηρίαν highlights both the diversity of idea capable with the noun σωτηρία, as well as the very unusual nature of using αὐξηθῆτε (grow into salvation) with the noun. Something can exist 'for salvation,' confession for salvation can be made, prayers can turn into deliverance for imprisonment, the scriptures can wisen us up for salvation, we can wait for salvation, an ark can be built for deliverance, we are being protected for salvation. But to grow into salvation seems unnatural, and out of the normal range

The prepositional phrase ἐν αὐτῷ can mean either ‘by it,’ i.e., by the γάλα, or, ‘in Him,’ i.e., in Christ or God (cf. 1:23). In the context more likely is the first meaning: by the nourishing milk we grow up.

The point of the purpose clause then seems to be to stress that the spiritual nourishment gained from the Word matures us (grows us up) in anticipation for standing before God in final judgment so that we are fully prepared to face that divine scrutiny of our life. Probably the idea is somewhat akin to Paul’s rather obscure statement in Phil. 2:12, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε (“*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*”). For Paul, ongoing faithful commitment is essential to deepening the deliverance from sin that prepares us for final judgment. For Peter ongoing nourishment from the Gospel is critical for preparing us for final deliverance at the Second Coming. Complementary ideas from two apostles.

**Expansion 4:** εἰ ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος. The last major expansion also continues the longing for milk image with the verbal expression for ‘tasting.’ Incentive for this longing for milk is driven by having tasted something that made us hungry. The Aorist tense verb ἐγεύσασθε stresses action prior to the longing. And it reaches back to our conversion. In coming to Christ we ‘tasted’ something really delicious that made us want more.

What was it that we ‘tasted’ that was so good? The answer is found in the direct object clause ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος. In conversion we ‘tasted’ the graciousness and kindness of the Lord! Peter here echoes Ps. 34:8, “*O taste and see that the LORD is good*” (γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος). The imagery of ‘tasting’ stresses ‘experiencing’ something.<sup>21</sup> In conversion we experienced the χρηστὸς of the Lord. That is, we discovered the kindness of God toward us. The profound richness of this adjective makes it almost untranslatable.<sup>22</sup> In conversion<sup>23</sup> we met a gracious God who showed us ultimate kindness by cleansing us from our sins, and relieving us of its guilt.

The conjunction εἰ<sup>24</sup> is better translated as ‘since’ rather than as ‘if.’ This conjunction sets up a first class conditional protasis in ancient Greek, which was the way to express a certain assumption. Peter assumes

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of ideas for σωτηρία, as used in the New Testament especially for spiritual deliverance.

<sup>21</sup>“‘To taste’ here is a figure of speech, which means to ‘experience’ (Brc), or ‘to come to know something’ (Arndt-Gingrich [AG]). Most translations have retained the metaphor; however, the TEV has dropped it in favor of a straightforward translation: you have found out for yourselves.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 53.]

<sup>22</sup>χρηστός, ἦ, ὄν (χράομαι; Trag., Hdt.+; ins, pap, LXX; En 32:1; TestSol; TestJob 13:6; TestBenj 3:7; Just.; Ath.; superl. Just. A I, 4, 1) gener. ‘useful, beneficial’

**1. pert. to that which causes no discomfort, easy** (PsSol 8:32 of divine judgments; Jos., Ant. 3, 98 of news) ὁ ζυγός μου is easy to wear **Mt 11:30** (metaph.).

**2. pert. to meeting a relatively high standard of value, fine** οἶνος (Plut., Mor. 240d; 1073a; Hippiatr. II 66, 16; Abercius ins 16; cp. En 32:1 ‘fine’ nard) **Lk 5:39** the old is (just) fine = the old suits me fine (the Greek is normal, and it is not necessary to assume an Aramaism, but s. μέγας **9:48** and B-D-F §245; v.l. has the comp. χρηστότερος [Philo, In Flacc. 109; Jos., Ant. 8, 213]).

**3. pert. to being morally good and benevolent.** This mng. is in keeping w. the Israelite and Hellenic ideal of morality as exhibition of usefulness within the socio-political structure (s. κακός, πονηρός; EWelskopf, Soziale Typenbegriffe im alten Griechenland ’68; KDoover, Greek Popular Morality ’74).

**a. reputable** (Ath. 36, 1 βίος) ἦθη χρηστά **1 Cor 15:33** (s. ἦθος.—ἦθος χρηστόν also POxy 642; 1663, 11; EpArist 290; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 38 ἦθη χρηστά διαφθείρεται).

**b. kind, loving, benevolent** (Jos., Ant. 6, 92 w. ἐπιεικής; 9, 133 >w. δίκαιος; Herodian 4, 3, 3 and Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 67 w. φιλόανθρωπος; Cass. Dio 66, 18; ins in FCumont, Études syr. 1917 p. 323, 12; POxy 642)

**a. of humans** (Nicophon Com. [V/IV B.C.] 16; Ps.-Demosth. 59, 2; TestJob 13:6 λίαν μου χρηστοῦ ὄντος) **1 Cl 14:4** (Pr 2:21). εἷς τινα to someone (POxy 416, 2) **Eph 4:32**.

**β. of God** (Hdt. 8, 111; Sb 158, 1; LXX; PsSol 2:36 al.; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 46 al.; SibOr 1, 159) **1 Pt 2:3** (Ps 33:9), Χριστός P72; Dg 8:8. ἐπί τινα to someone **Lk 6:35**. ἐν τοῖς κτλ. among those = to those, who **1 Cl 60:1**.

**4. subst. τὸ χρηστόν the quality of beneficence, kindness** (Philo, Virt. 160; Jos., Ant. 8, 214; Just., A I, 4, 5 [w. wordplay on Χριστιανοί]; 15:13, and D. 96, 3 [Luke 6:35f]; diff. Ath. 20, 3 τί τὸ σεμνὸν ἢ χρηστόν τῆς τοιαύτης ἱστορίας;) τοῦ θεοῦ **Ro 2:4**.—JZiegler, Dulcedo Dei ’37; CSpicq, RB 54, ’47, 321–24.—DELG s.v. χρησ-. Frisk s.v. γρή. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1090.]

<sup>23</sup>This is clearly the point of reference, and not the taking of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic interpretation of this where their mistaken theology claims that the elements of communion become the actual body and blood of Christ that are eaten and drunk by the laity and the priests.

<sup>24</sup>Substituted with εἴπερ in some much later manuscripts in order to intensify the idea of certainty.



Greek verb οἰκοδομεῖσθε ('are being built') highlights this construction as an ongoing process, rather than a single action.<sup>28</sup> The passive voice of the verb implies that God is the One doing the building of this temple.<sup>29</sup> The intensive pronoun αὐτοὶ ('yourselves') stresses the subjects as the building materials for this building. The καὶ in the adjunctive function, 'also,' stresses the readers as living stones just like Christ, and highlights their being incorporated into God's new temple as an additional divine activity.

The believers are compared to ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες. The idea of a living stone is not found in the Old Testament, or subsequent Jewish intertestamental literature. The modifier ζῶντες stresses not just physical life, but spiritual life, as related images in 2:24 ('we might live for righteousness') and 3:7 ('the grace of life') suggest. Only transformed human beings can serve as building material for God's new temple.

The construction process pertains not to a private residence, but rather to the new temple of God, the οἶκος πνευματικός.<sup>30</sup> What is God making the believers as living stones into? Clearly, it is His new temple, that is, His new dwelling place on the earth where He is to be worshipped and served. Thus *the gathered communities of faith* as they meet together in homes, public buildings etc. constitute this new temple of God.

**Expansion 1:** Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι, λίθον ζῶντα, ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον παρὰ δὲ θεῶν ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον. This complex set of modifiers underscore several aspects of the building of the new temple of God. *First*, in order to become a part of this new temple, individuals must come to Christ: Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι. As the construction of the temple is taking place, new building blocks are being created through their coming to Christ. Thus the construction never stops for lack of a shortage of materials. The apostles had experienced this in their diverse ministries all over the eastern Mediterranean world of that time. As the Gospel was proclaimed in cities and towns, people responded in large numbers to the invitation to commit themselves to Christ. These new communities were made up of all kinds of folks, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freedmen, men and women (cf. Gal. 3:28). Together they form God's new dwelling place where He makes His presence and power known in this world.

*Second*, Christ stands as the living stone, λίθον ζῶντα, an image stressing His resurrection and continuous life with the Father and with His church on the earth.<sup>31</sup> At that point Peter picks up the rejection / acceptance contrast that will be stated directly as a quote bringing together a string of OT references from Isa. 28:16 (in v. 6), Ps. 118:22 (in v. 7), and Isa. 8:14 (in v. 8). On the human side Christ as a living stone stands rejected

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The verb οἰκοδομεῖσθε continues the imagery of "living stones" and must be understood as an indicative, not an imperative (cf. Hort, 109). Even within a metaphor, stones cannot be commanded to "be built up" (passive) or to "build themselves up" (middle), for that initiative rests with the builder. The metaphor makes sense only if Peter is affirming that in fact Christian believers are being built like stones so as to become a certain kind of edifice.

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 100.]

<sup>28</sup>Although a few commentators see a shift from individual growth in 2:1-3 to corporate existence in 2:4-10, little evidence in the text signals such a shift. This seems more a western cultural mindset, than an ancient Jewish way of thinking. Commentators without the western cultural background dominating see it differently:

It is clear from both these images that Peter has a high regard for the corporate nature of the people of God. Salvation is not simply an individual matter but involves participation in a community of believers.

[Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya; Grand Rapids, MI.: WordAlive Publishers; Zondervan, 2006), 1545.]

<sup>29</sup>The Greek middle voice is only a theoretical grammatical possibility, and the context overwhelmingly favors the passive voice. The middle voice concept 'you are building yourselves up into a spiritual house' radically contradicts the theology of salvation set forth elsewhere in First Peter, as well as destroys the metaphor of God as the builder building the temple.

<sup>30</sup>The adjective πνευματικός ('spiritual') is not so much symbolic or metaphoric as it is intended to indicate its nature: it is the place where the Spirit is to be found.<sup>85</sup> The context within which it appears — priesthood, sacrifices — suggests an intention here to describe the Christian community in terms of a new temple,<sup>86</sup> perhaps, in contrast to the old temple, one where God's Spirit is now truly present.<sup>87</sup> The idea of the community as a new temple is found in the NT<sup>88</sup> as it is also in some of the literature from Qumran.<sup>89</sup> [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), 155-56.]

<sup>31</sup>The designation λίθος anticipates the Scripture quotations in vv 6–8, and at the same time implicitly identifies the κύριος of v 3 as Jesus Christ. The participle ζῶντα does not arise out of the quotations, but it is a feature of Petrine vocabulary (cf. 1:3, 23) and it serves here as a characteristic Petrine signal (like λογικόν in v 2 or πνευματικός in v 5) that he is using the word 'stone' in a metaphorical rather than literal sense (cf. Selwyn, 158; Goppelt, 141; J. Jeremias in TDNT 4:279). [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 98.]

by men (ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδεδοκιμασμένον). In contrast on the divine side, Christ stands chosen and esteemed before God (παρὰ δὲ θεῶ ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον). The rejection emphasis stresses the wider rejection of Jesus than just from the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> So far as God the Father is concerned, however, this same living stone is both divinely chosen and precious. Already in 1:1 Peter has indicated that his readers are also ἐκλεκτοῖς. So both they and Jesus share the common ground of being divinely chosen by the Heavenly Father. And furthermore this living stone is ἔντιμον, i.e., regarded as very precious, by the Father. For believers, public opinion matters nothing; the only opinion about Jesus that matters is that of God. And Jesus stands at the top of the list with the Heavenly Father. This is the basis of believers then coming to Him for acceptance.

**Expansion 2:** εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῶ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The metaphor of the building of the temple quickly merges into the activities inside of and the purpose for that temple. The believers then become building blocks of the temple and at the same time they are the consecrated priests who serve God in the temple.<sup>33</sup> Just as the priests in the Jerusalem temple were set aside in dedication (ἅγιον) to God, so also are believers. The objective of this dedicated service is to offer up sacrifices to God. But unlike the temple priests who offered up prescribed animal and cereal sacrifices, believers are to offer up 'spiritual sacrifices' to God through Jesus Christ.<sup>34</sup> The nature and quality of Christian sacrifices to God are substantially different from those offered in the Jerusalem temple.

Not only are such sacrifices 'spiritual' in nature, but also they are to be εὐπροσδέκτους θεῶ, i.e., fully acceptable to God.<sup>35</sup> In the background stands the OT mandate that the animal and cereal sacrifices had to be

<sup>32</sup>“Rejected ... as worthless but chosen ... as valuable is a reference to Psalm 118:22, which is quoted fully in verse 7. In its Old Testament context, ‘stone’ refers either to the temple or Mount Zion. Mount Zion itself could refer to many things: (1) A hill outside Jerusalem, upon which ‘David’s City’ was built; (2) the hill upon which the temple was built; (3) the city of Jerusalem; and (4) the people of Jerusalem, and in an extended sense, the people of Israel. If taken in this fourth sense, then ‘builders’ would logically refer to the rulers of the nations around Israel who did their best to defeat and destroy her. This verse very early in the Christian tradition came to be understood as a prophecy regarding Christ’s suffering and subsequent exaltation; the Gospel writers even record that Jesus himself used it in this way (compare Mark 12:10; Matt 21:42; Luke 20:17). The change of ‘builders’ in the quotation to ‘man’ (verse 4) may have the purpose of signifying that it is not only the Jewish leaders, or the Jewish people who have rejected Christ, but mankind in general, that is, people who do not believe the gospel which is proclaimed to them. The word for stone (*lithos*) here and in verse 5 refers not to a rock or boulder, but to a stone which is already prepared to be used in the building itself. It should not be confused with the cornerstone in verse 6 (Greek *akrogonaiion*).” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 55-56.]

<sup>33</sup>“Some might object that believers cannot be both the temple and the priests that minister in the temple, that the mixture of metaphors is intolerable. In reply it should be noted that the fulfillment in Christ transcends the types that anticipate it. Hence, we should not be surprised that believers are both priests and the temple. They are God’s dwelling place by the Spirit and his new priesthood. No internal contradiction is involved since Peter did not refer to believers as priests serving in a literal temple. The spiritual nature of the house does not draw our attention to its immateriality but to a temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit.<sup>220</sup>” [Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 37, 1, 2 *Peter; Jude*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2007), 105-06.]

<sup>34</sup>“To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.’ Ἀναφέρειν is thus used, not in classical Greek, nor by St. Paul, but commonly in the LXX. (e.g. Gen. 13:2, 13, of the sacrifice of Isaac), by James (2:21), and in Heb. (7:27, 13:15). St. Peter does not define the sacrifices further than by saying that they are spiritual, as befits the spiritual house and the holy priesthood. The epithet πνευματικὰς distinguishes them from the offerings of the Law; they are not shadows and symbols, but realities, such as spirit offers to spirit, and a holy priesthood to a holy God. It would, however, be pressing the word too far to regard it as excluding all connexion with material objects; for a gift of money is spoken of as a θυσία (Phil. 4:18; cf. Acts 10:4; Heb. 13:16). Purely spiritual acts of self-dedication, praise, faith, are also spoken of as sacrifices (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17; Eph. 5:1, 2); and no doubt no sacrifice is πνευματικὴ without the act of self-surrender. Here, where the sacrifices are those of the community, it seems impossible so to restrict them as to make them merely another name for φιλαδελφία, or for the putting away of all malice or wickedness. The praise and prayers of the assembly of brethren are no doubt meant, but their gifts are not excluded.” [Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1901), 129.]

<sup>35</sup>εὐπρόσδεκτος, ον ‘(easily) acceptable, pleasant, welcome’ (s. προσδέχομαι; Plut., Mor. 801c)

### 1. pert. to being capable of eliciting favorable acceptance, *acceptable*

a. of things: of offerings (schol. on Aristoph., Pax 1054 εὐπρόσδεκτος ἢ θυσία) προσφορά **Ro 15:16**; of pers. 1 Cl 40:4. Of willingness to give, which is said to be acceptable **2 Cor 8:12**. W. the dat. of the one to whom someth. is acceptable: to people **Ro 15:31**; to God θυσία εὐ. τῷ θεῷ **1 Pt 2:5** (cp. Vi. Aesopi W 8 P. εὐπρόσδεκτον παρὰ τῷ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθοποιεῖν; Cat. Cod. Astr. VII 178, 6 εὐ. αἰ εὐχαι πρὸς θεόν; SIG 1042, 8 ἀπρόσδεκτος ἢ θυσία παρὰ τ. θεοῦ). ἰλαρότης Hm 10, 3, 1. λειτουργία Hs 5, 3, 8. εὐ. τῷ θελήματι αὐτοῦ acceptable to his will 1 Cl 40:3; τὰ εὐ. what is acceptable to God 35:5.

the best of the best. Just so also for what believers offer up to God; it must represent the very best they can present to God. The priests offered up sacrifices in the temple, but believers as priests go through Jesus, the high priest, in making their sacrifices to God in gathered communities of worshippers.

**Expansion 3:** διότι περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ· Ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ κατασχυνοθῆ. At this point Peter introduces a series of ‘scripture proofs’ as the foundation of his declaration: διότι περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ. The series of texts alluded to through verse eight are frequently used in the early church for messianic claims applied to Christ.<sup>36</sup> Peter’s use of Isa. 28:16 differs somewhat from the original OT text, which likely reflects a different, unknown text tradition of the LXX:<sup>37</sup>

<p>therefore thus says the Lord GOD, See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: “One who trusts will not panic.”</p>	<p>διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως λέγει κύριος Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐμβαλῶ εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιών λίθον πολυτελεῖ ἐκλεκτὸν ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον εἰς τὰ θεμέλια αὐτῆς, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ κατασχυνοθῆ.</p>
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Peter makes somewhat different use of this text from that of Paul in Rom. 9:33.<sup>38</sup> Jesus is now the cornerstone of this new temple that God is building. And the central role of this cornerstone is such that it will confidently hold together the building under construction. And believers can be certain of this!

**c. You value Christ as cornerstone, vv. 7-8**

7 To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,” 8 and “A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

7 ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν· ἀπιστοῦσιν δὲ λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας 8 καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος καὶ πέτρα σκανδάλου· οἱ προσκόπτουσιν τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες· εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν.

**Notes:**

This concluding section develops the theme of contrasting the believers’ positive experience of Jesus as cornerstone to those who reject Him as having this spiritual role.<sup>39</sup> This is developed through a series

b. of pers. 1 Cl 40:4.

**2. pert. to being welcome in a situation, favorable,** of a time that is favorable for bringing God’s grace to fruition καιρὸς εὖ.  
**2 Cor 6:2.**—DELG s.v. δέχομαι. 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), 410-11.]

<sup>36</sup>V. 6 from Isa. 28:16 found in Rom. 9:33 and Eph. 2:20 as well as here. V. 7 from Psa. 118:22 found also in Mt. 21:42 and Acts 4:11. V. 8 from Isa. 8:14 found also in Rom. 9:33. This has led some to conclude these allusions came more directly from a written collection of OT scriptures understood to refer to Christ circulated in the churches. Although there is clear indication of such a Book of Testimonies in later second century Christianity, no clear evidence exists to suggest such a document was composed and circulated in the first century. More likely, what was collected was done orally and not in written form.

<sup>37</sup>“Peter’s citation of Isa 28:16 differs from the LXX at several points: the use of τίθημι instead of ἐγὼ ἐμβαλῶ, and of ἐν Σιών instead of εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιών; and the omission of πολυτελεῖ and the redundant εἰς τὰ θεμέλια αὐτῆς. The words with which he begins (ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών) are identical to the words with which Paul in Rom 9:33 begins his composite citation of Isa 8:14 and 28:16, and therefore probably based on textual traditions of the LXX derived from earlier Jewish or Jewish Christian adaptations of the Isaiah texts.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 103.]

<sup>38</sup>as it is written,

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

“The difference between Paul’s use of Isaiah and Peter’s is that what is laid ‘in Zion’ for Paul is a ‘stone of stumbling and a rock to trip over’ (i.e., for the Jewish people), while for Peter it is a ‘choice and precious stone, a cornerstone’ (i.e., for Christian believers, v 7a). Peter too will look at the negative side in due course (vv 7b–8), but for the moment his focus is on the promise the quotation holds for his readers.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 103.]

<sup>39</sup>“Peter retains the image of cornerstone to indicate that the church is built on Christ, as foundation, which Paul also emphasizes in 1 Corinthians 3:11: ‘For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.’ In this image, Jesus Christ is both foundation stone and cornerstone, the stone from which the building derives its proper angles.

of three main clauses with expansion elements attached to each, mostly OT quotes.

**First Declaration:** ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. The positive stance toward Jesus comes from believers (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν), whom Peter identifies as his readers (ὑμῖν). To believers He is precious (ἡ τιμὴ).<sup>40</sup> In Christ, then, believers being esteemed by God and not shame will come at final judgment through Christ.



**Second Declaration:** ἀπιστοῦσιν δὲ λίθος ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας 8 καὶ λίθος προσκόμματος καὶ πέτρα σκανδάλου· οἱ προσκόπτουσιν τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες. To those who refuse to believe in Christ (ἀπιστοῦσιν) the scripture allusion from *Psa. 118:22*<sup>41</sup> becomes applicable:<sup>42</sup>

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the very head of the corner,”  
and also Peter applies *Isa. 8:14*<sup>43</sup> to these unbelievers as well:

“A stone that makes them stumble,  
and a rock that makes them fall.”

The ultimate point made from the use of these two OT texts is that rejection of Jesus will in Final Judgment come back to ‘bite’ these rejectors. Instead of seeing Jesus as worthless, they should have recognized what God was doing in and through Him, and then come to faith in Him. For without doubt, He will be vindicated at the end as the most significant person to ever walk on the earth. Rejection of Him now will bring about the downfall of the rejectors.

**Third Declaration:** εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν. Peter’s comment here on the above scripture quotes serves to apply these OT texts to the rejectors of Christ in his day.<sup>44</sup> Their nature and religious orientation was such that

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An alternate reading of ‘capstone’ or ‘keystone’ in place of cornerstone is unlikely, since in Peter’s imagery Christ as stone is also one over whom unbelievers stumble.” [Erland Waltner and J. Daryl Charles, *1-2 Peter, Jude.*, Believers church Bible commentary (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1999), 76.]

<sup>40</sup>“The great majority of commentators have therefore (rightly) understood ἡ τιμὴ as a noun (‘the honor’ or ‘the privilege’) and as subject of the sentence (e.g., with some variations, Hort, 117–18; Bigg, 131; Selwyn, 164; Beare, 124; Kelly, 93). The ‘honor’ or ‘privilege’ to which Peter refers is final vindication before God, the equivalent of never being put to shame (cf. Goppelt, 149); it is the same vindication already described more fully as ‘praise, glory, and honor (εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν) at the time when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (1:7).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 104.]

<sup>41</sup>“The first of these quotations (*Ps 117*[118]:22) occurs also in the Gospel tradition (*Mark 12:10* // *Matt 21:42* // *Luke 20:17*), and in each of its NT occurrences follows the LXX word for word. ‘The builders’ in the psalm (οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες), identified in the Gospels as the religious leaders of the Jewish people (cf. *Mark 12:12*; *Matt 21:45*; *Luke 20:19*; also the paraphrase attributed to Peter in *Acts 4:11*), are here understood as citizens and magistrates in Rome and in the provinces (thus presumably Gentiles, *2:12*; *4:3*) who harass Christians in Peter’s community and the communities to which he writes (cf., e.g., the accusers anti questioners of *2:12* and *3:15–16*, the ‘foolish people’ of *2:15*, the cruel masters of *2:18*, the unbelieving husbands of *3:1*, and the revelers and blasphemers of *4:4*).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 105.]

<sup>42</sup>“Peter will elaborate in vv 9–10 on the ‘honor’ reserved for those who believe, but before doing so he introduces two more quotations (*Ps 117*[118]:22 and *Isa 8:14*) contrasting Christian believers with ‘unbelievers’ (ἀπιστοῦσιν), understood in the broadest possible terms as ‘people generally’ (ὕπὸ ἀνθρώπων, v 4) who reject Christ, ‘the living Stone.’” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 105.]

<sup>43</sup>“Peter’s third quotation (*Isa 8:14*), like the first but unlike the second, differs significantly from the LXX (καὶ οὐχ ὡς λίου προσκόμματι συναντήσεσθε αὐτῷ οὐδὲ ὡς πέτρας πτώματι). The LXX context is one with which Peter shows familiarity (cf. his allusion to *Isa 8:12–13* in *3:14–15*). In each of his references to *Isa 8:12–14*, as well as his citation of *Isa 28:16*, Peter adapts his text with a certain freedom not exercised in connection with *Ps 117*[18]:22 (cf. Paul’s freedom with respect to *Isa 8:14* and *28:16* in *Rom 9:33*). Peter’s adaptation here shows the possible influence of MT (לִוְשֵׁי כֶּסֶף יִפְּצֵלוּ וְיִבְנֶה לְיְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ אֶבֶן סֹדֵף), where ‘stone of stumbling’ and ‘rock of offense’ refer to what the ‘Lord of hosts’ will become to sinful Israel rather than to what He will not become to those who put their trust in Him (as in the LXX). Even apart from any influence of the MT, the contrast already in place in v 7 between ποῖς πιστεύουσιν and ἀπιστοῦσιν virtually required such an adaptation. Aside from syntactical changes, the principal difference between Peter’s text and the LXX is the substitution of σκανδάλου for πτώματι.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 106.]

<sup>44</sup>“The antecedent of εἰς ὃ is the ‘stumbling’ expressed in the verb προσκόπτουσιν. Peter has chosen ἐτέθησαν to match the τίθημι with which he began the first quotation in v 6, so forming an inclusion that makes vv 6–8 a unit. His use of with καὶ accents

they inevitably rejected Jesus, and thus sealed their eternal fate by this action. The 'placing' of Jesus as cornerstone (cf.  $\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$  in v. 6) means the 'placing' of rejectors whose heart wasn't open to God's action. This is just as true today as it was in the first century.

Peter's exhortation and affirmations in 2:1-8 continue to probe the richness of our salvation in Christ. In this we rejoice with increasing awareness of all that God has accomplished in His saving work. We enjoy blessed privilege as the new temple of God and as the new people of God. Our longing should be to grow spiritually from infancy to adulthood as we anticipate the final judgment of God. This longing is measured by the example of a newly born baby clamoring for milk. Spiritual nourishment comes through the Word of God, that we long to take into our lives.



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the repetition ('... and to that they too were appointed'). God is the subject of  $\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$  and (by virtue of the passive voice; see above, p. 45) the implied agent of  $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\acute{\epsilon}\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$  as well (for  $\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$  as a sovereign act of God, see Gen 4:17 LXX // Rom 4:17, Isa 49:6 LXX // Acts 13:47; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11; Heb 1:2; cf. John 15:16). The matching verbs do not represent two distinct 'appointings' but one with a twofold result (cf. Paul's use of  $\acute{\epsilon}\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron$  in 1 Thess 5:9). In the single act of raising Jesus from the dead (1:3, 21), God has laid the 'choice and precious Stone' that means honor and vindication for those who believe, but stumbling and shame for the disobedient (cf. Paul's argument with respect to Israel, Rom 9:21–23).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 107.] **Bible Study: Page 88**



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 8**  
**1 Peter 2:9-10**  
**“Living with New Identity”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

9 Ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς· 10 οἳ ποτε οὐ λαὸς νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ, οἳ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

9 Ihr aber seid das erwählte Volk, das Haus des Königs, die Priesterschaft, das heilige Volk, das Gott selbst gehört. Er hat euch aus der Dunkelheit in sein wunderbares Licht gerufen, damit ihr seine machtvollen Taten verkündet. 10 Früher wart ihr nicht sein Volk; aber jetzt seid ihr das Volk, das Gott gehört. Früher galt euch nicht sein Erbarmen; aber jetzt habt ihr sein Erbarmen erfahren.

**NRSV**

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

**NRSV**

9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests, God’s holy nation, his very own possession. This is so you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. 10 “Once you were not a people; now you are the people of God. Once you received none of God’s mercy; now you have received his mercy.”

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Our Position before God](#)
  - b. [Our Purpose in the world](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

This final subunit in the pericope of 2:1-10 brings the affirmations of spiritual status to a climax. By reaching back into the Hebrew Bible Peter finds a series of titles originally applied to covenant Israel by the prophets and re-applies them to the new covenant people of God, the believing church. This powerful affirmation of being God’s very own people stands in stark contrast to the negative label of “the exiles of the Dispersion” used in 1:1. While the surrounding world may look down on the communities of believers, in God’s eyes they are His very own people. No higher status can be found anywhere!

**I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>**

This single sentence in Greek is packed full of rich concepts, largely taken from the Israelite heritage in the Old Testament. The background aspects mostly center on the historical understanding of each of these titles as they were applied to ancient Israel.

**a. Historical**

**External History.** The copying of this text over the first eight centuries of the Christian era is relatively stable and consistent. The UBS 4th rev. ed. Greek New Testament does not list any variations of readings considered significant enough to impact the translation of this text into other languages. The only variation listed in the more detailed apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 27th ed. of the Greek New Testament is the omission of the pronoun αὐτοῦ (*his*) at the end of verse nine, so that the text reads εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν φῶς, “[into the marvelous light.](#)” Only two ancient copies adopt this reading, neither of which is a major ancient copy of the New Testament: P<sup>72</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

and some copies of the Boharic Coptic translation.

Thus the reading of the current printed Greek texts represent with great certainty the original wording of this passage.

**Internal History.** The time / place markers in this sentence focus on the present spiritual status of Peter’s initial readers as believers in Christ. The one set of time markers is found in verse ten with “once...but now” (ποτε... νῦν δὲ). The shifting point between ‘once’ and ‘now’ is the conversion to Christ of the believer. The coming of Christ into the person’s life marks the transition from the former life to the present life. The qualities of contrast are normally spelled out in the details attached to both sides of the contrast. Here two sets of contrasts are attached to each era: 1) “once”: not a people, not objects of mercy; 2) “now”: God’s people, objects of mercy.

The five spiritual titles and one affirmation about believers used by Peter here have their background in the Old Testament with initial application to covenant Israelites.<sup>2</sup> Two key texts surface here:

**Exodus 19:5-6.** 5 Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be **my treasured possession** out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, 6 but you shall be for me **a priestly kingdom and a holy nation**. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.<sup>3</sup>

**Isaiah 43:20-21.** 20 The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to **my chosen people**, 21 **the people** whom I formed for myself **so that they might declare my praise**.<sup>4</sup>

To re-apply them to the believing community that included non-Jews was indeed shocking and considered rank heresy from the Jewish synagogue perspective. Yet Peter does not indicate that he is picking a fight with the synagogue here. Whether he saw the believing community with Gentiles as a ‘new Israel’ replacing the ‘old Israel’ or whether he saw the believing community being added to the ‘Israel of God’ is not indicated here or elsewhere in the letter. One can be certain, however, that from the synagogue perspective either one of these perspectives would have been vigorously rejected. Gentiles could be added to covenant Israel only by circumcision and a formal pledge to Torah obedience.<sup>5</sup> And even then they would forever only have second class status as the people of God. For anyone to suggest that an alternative way existed would have quickly caused them to be labeled as heretics. But Peter expressly declares here that the only way to be the people of God is through accepting the cornerstone Jesus Christ, something most Jews refused to do.

**b. Literary**

**Literary Form (Genre).** Verses nine and ten do not fall into a distinct genre form, as a part of the letter body. They come somewhat close to a virtue list, but the honorific titles are not ethically oriented as are the qualities found in ancient virtue lists.<sup>6</sup>

**Literary Context.** As noted in the outline of First Peter on

<sup>2</sup>“All four of these titles of honor (or five, depending on how they are counted) appear to be adaptations of titles from either Exod 19:6 or Isa 43:20–21, and were therefore originally designations of Israel as the people of God (cf. the specific phrase, ‘people of God,’ in v 10). With the use of these titles, Peter makes explicit his basis for consistently addressing his Gentile Christian readers as if they were Jews (see Comment on 1:1).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 107.]

<sup>3</sup>LXX: <sup>5</sup>καὶ νῦν ἐὰν ἀκοῆ ἀκούσητε τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς καὶ φυλάξητε τὴν διαθήκην μου, ἔσεσθέ μοι **λαὸς περιούσιος** ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν· ἐμὴ γὰρ ἐστὶν πᾶσα ἡ γῆ· <sup>6</sup>ὕμεις δὲ ἔσεσθέ μοι **βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα** καὶ **ἔθνος ἅγιον**. ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα ἐρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ. [*Septuaginta*: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Ex 19:5–6.]

<sup>4</sup>LXX: <sup>20</sup>εὐλογήσει με τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ, σειρήνες καὶ θυγατέρες στρουθῶν, ὅτι ἔδωκα ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὕδωρ καὶ ποταμοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀνύδρῳ ποτίσαι **τὸ γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν**, <sup>21</sup>**λαόν μου**, ὃν περιποιησάμην **τὰς ἀρετὰς μου διηγείσθαι**. [*Septuaginta*: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Is 43:20–21.]

<sup>5</sup>Sometimes proselyte baptism was a third requirement, but not always.

<sup>6</sup>See my “New Testament Virtue Lists” for details at <http://cranfordville.com/NTVirtueLists.html>.

**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**

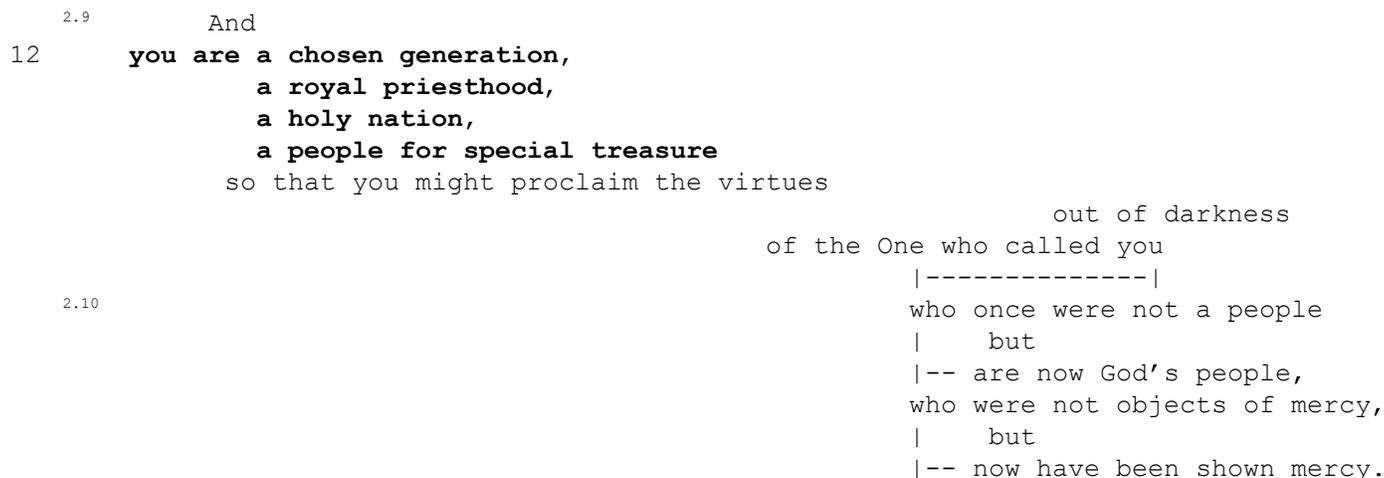
**Conclusio: 5:12-14**

- **Sender Verification, 5:12**
- **Greetings, 5:13-14a**
- **Benedictio, 5:14b**

the preceding page, 2:9-10 comes as the third sub-unit of verses one through ten, which itself is the final section of the first major division of the letter body in 1:13 - 2:10. This section is largely made up of a series of admonitions to certain standards of Christian living. Peter begins transitioning from admonitions to declarations in 2:4-8 and shifts completely to declarations in verses nine and ten. The Christian life then is depicted in terms of high standards of living as the very people of God Himself. As God's own people, we are called to live dedicated to our God and true to His character and standards of morality.

### Literary Structure.

This single sentence is broken down into its component elements in the visual diagram below.



The main clause contains four honorific titles, highlighted in **bold type**, and then followed by the dependent purpose clause stating the intended mission for those enjoying such privilege before God. Peter comes back to two sets of additional declarations in the poetic structured relative clause in verse ten. These sets which are antithetical internally but are set in synonymous parallelism as sets affirm the foundation position of believers as the very people of God. The 'once not...but now are' sets have a more Gentile thrust, while the first four honorific titles in the main clause are more Jewish in their orientation.

## II. Message

Our structuring of the study will focus attention on the position of believers before God and their purpose in this world aspects of this one sentence in the Greek text.

### a. Our Position before God

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people,... Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Ἕμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν,... οἱ ποτε οὐ λαὸς νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ, οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες.

#### Notes:

Placed in emphatic position is Ἕμεῖς δὲ, 'but you,' stressing the positive position of believers in contrast to those rejecting Christ as the cornerstone.<sup>7</sup> What believers enjoy before God is not possessed by those who stumbled over Jesus as the cornerstone of God's new temple. Their disobedience to the message of the Gospel (τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες) brought about their downfall. Their disobedience to the Word is defined mainly in terms of refusing to believe in Jesus (ἀπιστοῦσιν). But in contrast, the targeted readers of the letter had begun a life long pattern of believing in Jesus (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). In consequence they had entered into a profound new existence of having standing before Almighty God, the very standing the unbelievers claimed

<sup>7</sup>"The words Ἕμεῖς δὲ, picking up the ὑμῖν οὖν of v 7, introduce a series of honorific titles spelling out the τιμὴ of those who believe. If the 'honor' of v 7 was eschatological because of its connection with the οὐ μὴ κατασχυνοθῆ of v 6b, its basis 'in God's sight' (παρὰ δὲ θεῶ, v 4) implied a present dignity for Christian believers as well. Vv 9-10 unfold both the present and future aspects of this 'honor.'" [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 107.]

through their Jewish heritage but did not possess in light of their rejection of Jesus.

What was this standing? It is defined in two ways here. Primary honorific titles are set in the main clause and have a Jewish thrust to them. Secondary declarations are set in a dependent relative clause at the end with a more Gentile thrust to them.

**Jewish oriented titles, primary.**<sup>8</sup> The first set of four titles<sup>9</sup> have a strong Jewish heritage from the Old Testament and were titles, which covenant Judaism claimed exclusive ownership during the first century. Not clear from Peter's words whether his thinking was that the believing community now constituted God's new Israel, thus taking the place of covenant Israel from the Old Testament. It is possible to assume this as an implication of this text, but one must remember that the text does not state this in clear, direct language. And so whether this was in Peter's thinking or not remains uncertain, although the injection of the necessity of faith in Jesus as required of God's people would point towards 'replacement' thinking.

**A chosen race, γένος ἐκλεκτόν.**<sup>10</sup> This label and the fourth one are taken from the LXX translation of Isaiah 43:20-21.<sup>11</sup> The noun γένος underscores the collective designation of a community and not individuals. Peter doesn't intend to label Christianity as a 'race.' The term γένος, although it possesses the meaning of race, is here used to simply designate a distinct group of people. The adjective ἐκλεκτόν specifies the divine choosing of the believing community for God's own purposes, and continues the theme of divine choosing begun in 1:1 and 2:4.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup>"In the last two verses of this section, the author now turns his attention once more to his readers, particularly in their corporate existence as a believing community. Using the Old Testament liberally, he ascribes to the Christian community the titles applied to Israel. The conclusion is inevitable that here the church is described as the new Israel, although the thought perhaps is not that the church has supplanted Israel, but that God's people should be what the church is now, namely, a community not bound to one nation or blood, but encompassing all nations and all peoples. But you contrasts the believers with the unbelievers referred to in the immediately preceding verses. What follows are four descriptions of the church, all taken from the Old Testament." [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 62.]

<sup>9</sup>"The relationship between the four expressions the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, and God's own people must be explicitly indicated in some languages, for example, 'you are the chosen race; you are also the King's priests, also the holy nation, also God's own people.' Otherwise, readers might understand that the believers were divided into four different groups rather than being related to God in these four supplementary ways." [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 64.]

<sup>10</sup>"*The chosen race* (literally 'a chosen race') is from Isaiah 43:20. For *chosen*, see 1.1 and 2.4, where it is applied to Christians and to Christ respectively. Here it is applied to the whole church. The implicit actor is God, since in the New Testament it is normally God who chooses (compare Phps 'God's chosen generation'). In the Old Testament, Israel is God's chosen people; here it is Christians as members of a believing community who are the chosen people of God. *Race* (Greek *genos*) includes the idea of blood relationship and is a term appropriate for the old Israel. When applied to the church as the new Israel, blood relationship is no longer in focus, but corporate unity; that is, Christians of all races are one family in union with Christ. The passive phrase *the chosen race* must be rendered in some languages as 'the people that God has chosen.' In certain instances the concept of race may be expressed as 'tribe,' that is to say, 'the tribe that God has selected.' In employing a word for 'chosen' or 'selected' it is important to avoid the implication of God having shown undue favoritism." [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 62.]

<sup>11</sup>NRSV: 20 *The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, 21 the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.*

LXX: <sup>20</sup>εὐλογήσῃ με τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ, σειρήνες καὶ θυγατέρες στρουθῶν, ὅτι ἔδωκα ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὕδωρ καὶ ποταμούς ἐν τῇ ἀνύδρῳ ποτίσαι τὸ γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν, <sup>21</sup>λαόν μου, ὃν περιποιησάμην τὰς ἀρετὰς μου διηγείσθαι. [Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Is 43:20–21.]

<sup>12</sup>Quite interestingly, evidence suggests that this phrase γένος ἐκλεκτόν later beginning in the second century became a major label for Christianity, as Michaels notes:

Possibly (although by no means certainly) on the basis of either this passage or Isa 43:20 itself, γένος ("race" or "stock") became in the second century a collective designation for Christians throughout the world: e.g., *Mart. Pol.* 3.2: "the God-loving and God-fearing race of the Christians"; *Mart. Pol.* 14.1: "the whole race of the righteous" (cf. 17.1); *Diogn.* 1: "this new race" (καινὸν τοῦτο γένος); Tertullian, *ad Nat* 1.8 and *The Preaching of Peter* in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.5.41 ("the third race,," in distinction from Gentiles and Jews; cf. 1 Cor 10:32). Like *Mart. Pol.*, but unlike the others, 1 Peter has no particular interest in the Gentiles or Jews as "races" distinct from the community of Christians. His single focus at this point is the Christian community itself.

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 108.]

**A royal priesthood**, βασιλειον ιεράτευμα.<sup>13</sup> This second label follows exactly the LXX text of Exodus 19:6, which differs from the Hebrew text.<sup>14</sup> The label reaches back to the reference in 2:5, ιεράτευμα ἅγιον, but with the distinct emphasis upon a priesthood in the service of the king, i.e., God Himself. The believing community exists solely to serve God in ministry to others.

**A holy nation**, ἔθνος ἅγιον.<sup>15</sup> The noun stresses the collective community of believers in terms of a ‘nation’ with the example of Israel as a nation in the background.<sup>16</sup> The phrase ἔθνος ἅγιον is taken directly from Exodus 19:6 (LXX).<sup>17</sup> Holy, ἅγιον, specifies not just the moral character of the community of believers, but more importantly it stresses being set apart to God, i.e., dedicated to God, for His own purposes.<sup>18</sup> This label, similar in thrust to the previous one, heightens the emphasis on belonging to God in ministry and service. The very existence of the community depends on its belonging to God; otherwise, it would have no justification for existing.

**God’s own people**, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν.<sup>19</sup> This final label comes from Isaiah 43:21 along with the first

<sup>13</sup>“*The King’s priests* translates the Greek phrase *basileion hierateuma* (literally ‘a kingdom of priests,’ or ‘a kingly priesthood’). The quotation is from Exodus 19:6. The difficulty here is that *baseleion* can be taken either as a noun or as an adjective. Arguments for it being a noun include: (1) The word *baseleion* is usually used as a noun both in religious and secular literature of that day. (2) If it is an adjective, then it would be more natural to have it after ‘priesthood’ rather than before it. (3) Elsewhere in the New Testament, the word, taken with ‘priesthood,’ is used as a noun. (Compare Rev 5:10, where the TEV translates ‘kingdom of priests.’ The word used in Revelation, however, is not ‘priesthood’ but ‘priests.’) As a noun, the meaning could be (a) a royal palace (compare Kelly ‘a royal house’), (b) kingdom, as territory, (c) a group of kings. To treat it as a noun would further mean that it should be taken separately from *hierateuma* (for example, Kelly ‘a royal house, a priesthood’). Most translations and interpreters, however, take *baseleion* as an adjective for the following reasons: (1) Since the other collective nouns in the verse are modified by adjectives, it is logical to expect an adjective modifying ‘priesthood.’ (2) It is more likely that *baseleion* in Exodus 19:6 is treated by the Septuagint translators as an adjective (TEV ‘you will serve me as priests’). As an adjective, the term then can mean ‘kingly,’ but more probably ‘royal,’ that is, priests in the service of the king, who in this instance is God. Most translations follow this interpretation. The idea of the church as the King’s priests harks back to 2:5, but with the focus not on function, but on privilege. In verse 5, every believer is a priest, but here, the whole church as a corporate body is a ‘priesthood.’ In most instances the mere use of capitalization of King’s will not indicate that this is a reference to God (this is certainly true in oral communication of the message). It may therefore be important to translate the King’s priests as “the priests of God who is King” or “the priests who serve God as King.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 62-63.]

<sup>14</sup>“This phrase follows exactly the LXX of Exod 19:6, which differs in meaning from the MT, ממלכת כהני, ‘a kingdom of priests.’ If βασιλειον is understood as an adjective (i.e., the neuter of βασιλειος, BGD, 136), then βασιλειον ιεράτευμα is a ‘royal priesthood’ or ‘king’s priesthood’ (virtually reversing the relationship implied by the Hebrew, a ‘priests’ kingdom’ or ‘kingdom of priests’).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 108.]

<sup>15</sup>“*Holy nation* is also from Exodus 19:6. As in 1:15 and 2:4, *holy* characterizes the church’s unique relationship to God: it is holy because it is consecrated to God and set apart for his service. (Compare NEB ‘a dedicated nation’; JB ‘a consecrated nation’; also Mft, Knox.) In Exodus 19:6, the TEV translates the same expression as ‘a people dedicated to me alone.’ *Holy nation* may be rendered as ‘the nation dedicated to God’ or ‘the nation dedicated to serve God.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 63.]

<sup>16</sup>“ἔθνος, like the other nouns in the series, is used with Israel in mind as the prototype. Although in Jewish literature and in the NT the plural τὰ ἔθνη means predominantly ‘Gentiles’ (in 1 Peter, cf. 2:12, 4:3), the singular ἔθνος is normally to be translated ‘nation’ and often refers to Israel (e.g., Luke 7:5; 23:2; John 11:48, 50–52; 18:35; Acts 10:22, 24:2, 10, 17; 26:4, 28:19; cf. ‘nation of Samaria’ in Acts 8:9). The beginnings of the transfer of the singular ἔθνος to the Gentile Christian movement can be glimpsed in Matt 21:43, in Paul’s use of Deut 32:21 LXX in Rom 10:19, and in the present passage.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 109.]

<sup>17</sup>NRSV: **but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.**

LXX: ὑμεῖς δὲ ἕσεσθέ μοι **βασιλειον ιεράτευμα** καὶ **ἔθνος ἅγιον.**

<sup>18</sup>The concept of ‘holy’, ἅγιος, -ία, -ον, is a significant theme in First Peter: 1:12, 15, 16; 2:5, 9; 3:5. See 1:2, ἁγιασμῶ πνεύματος, ‘being made holy by the Spirit,’ which sets the definition for the concept.

<sup>19</sup>“*God’s own people* is literally ‘a people for possession,’ an allusion to Exodus 19:5 (RSV ‘my own possession among all peoples’); Malachi 3:17 (RSV ‘my special possession’); and Isaiah 43:21 (RSV ‘The people whom I formed for myself’). The Old Testament background of the expression indicates that God is the implied subject of ‘possession,’ and most translations make this fact explicit (for example, NEB ‘a people claimed by God for his own’; Knox ‘a people God means to have for himself’; Mft ‘the people who belong to him’; GECL ‘God has chosen you to be his people’; SPCL ‘a people that belongs to God’). The word for

label. It has an eschatological thrust pointing to God's own possessing of His people in final judgment.<sup>20</sup> That the believing community indeed belongs to God will be decisively demonstrated in final judgment.

When brought together in such a list as here, the collective impact is substantial. The believing community enjoys a status before God that equals, or surpasses, that of ancient Israel. Privilege beyond description are implicit in these titles, taken together. This new community being brought together through common commitment to Christ enjoys blessing and privilege unimaginable in the non-Jewish world of Peter's time. And the ultimate affirmation of that privilege will come in final judgment when God takes full possession of this community and brings them into His eternal presence.

**Gentile focused titles, secondary.**<sup>21</sup> All of this comes together fully at the end of the sentence with two sets of contrasts of the pre-Christian status of Peter's Gentile readers to their new position before God now through Christ.<sup>22</sup>

**Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people,** οἱ ποτε οὐ λαὸς νῦν δὲ λαὸς θεοῦ. The first of the two contrasts captures the essence of the beginning four labels: the believing Gentiles have become the "people of God."<sup>23</sup> The amazing aspect of this is the reality of the ethnic diversity of the Gentiles who belonged to the believing communities of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1). Greeks, Romans, Parthians, Persians, Jews etc. were just a few of the many ethnic groups who inhabited this region in the first Christian century. Although they possessed ethnic identity by way of language, customs etc., they had no collective identity across these ethnic heritages. But in Christ they had come together to form the people here is *laos*, a term used for Israel in the Old Testament to describe its intimate relationship with God; this term is now used of the Christian community. What is being emphasized here is that the Christians now have a relationship to God which is different from that of non-Christians: they are God's people and are completely dedicated to him. In the phrase God's own people there is an emphasis in the Greek text upon the corporate unity and entity which is involved. It is not simply God's 'persons.' The closest equivalent of God's own people may simply be 'the nation that belongs to God' or 'God's tribe.'" [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 63-64.]

<sup>20</sup>"λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, 'a people destined for vindication.' This phrase, together with the whole clause that follows, recalls Isa 43:21 LXX (not, as in Titus 2:14, the λαὸς περιούσιος of Exod 19:5). Peter has changed Isaiah's λαὸν μου ὃν περιεποιήσαμην to the more future-oriented λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν. In view of Peter's characteristic use of εἰς in various eschatological expressions in 1:3-5, and especially the εἰς σωτηρίαν of 1:5 and 2:2, περιποίησις could be plausibly understood as a synonym for σωτηρία (cf. BGD, 650.1) in the sense of future or final salvation (cf. S. Halas, *Bib* 65.2 [1984] 254-58, who translates accordingly, 'people destiné au salut' [258])." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 109.]

<sup>21</sup>"The meaning of darkness and light is here made clear, as Peter contrasts the previous condition of his readers to their present state. In doing this, he draws heavily from the book of (Hosea 2:23; 1:6, 9; 2:1). You were not God's people is literally 'you were no people.' In Hosea 1:10, Hosea's son is called lo-ammi ('not my people') to show God's displeasure against Israel, but in 2:1 (or 1:12 in the Hebrew text) the name has been changed to 'my people,' and in 2:23b (or 2:22 in Hebrew) we have 'and I will say to Not my people, 'you are my people ...' (RSV). This Old Testament background clearly indicates that 'no people' should be understood in terms of the believers' relationship to God; they were 'no people' simply because they were not yet God's people. As already noted, the word for people here (*laos*) is used only of Israel in the Old Testament; its usage for the Christian church indicates that Christians now have the same intimate relationship with God as Israel had in the past." [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 65.]

<sup>22</sup>"The plural article οἱ picks up the plural 'you' of the preceding verse, while ποτε, used elsewhere in 1 Peter in connection with well-known events from Israel's past (cf. 3:5, 20), refers here to the past life of the epistle's readers in idolatry and paganism (cf. the πρότερον of 1:14). The paired adverbs, ποτε ... νῦν, are used not to underscore a parallel between biblical times and present experience (like the ποτε ... νῦν of 3:20-21) but to underscore a contrast between the past and present status of Gentile Christians before God (like the ποτε ... νῦν δὲ of Eph 2:11-13 (cf. Eph 2:2,3))." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 112.]

<sup>23</sup>"The phrase οὐ λαὸς echoes the LXX (οὐ λαὸς μου) of Hos 1:9; 2:1 [1:10] (cf. 2:25 [23]). The μου of the LXX is dropped because God is not represented as the speaker (cf. the γέος ἐκλεκτόν of v 9, in relation to Isa 43:20 LXX), and the effect of the omission is to generalize what Peter is saying. Not only were his readers not the people of God, they were not a 'people' (in the sense of a corporate community) at all. For the positive side of the contrast, Peter bypasses the highly appropriate phrase from the LXX of Hos 2:1 [1:10], 'sons of the living God' (υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος; cf. Rom 9:26) in favor of the simpler λαὸς θεοῦ (cf. the positive λαὸς μου of Hos 2:25 [23]). With this he echoes the λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν of v 9 and provides a kind of postscript and summary to the four titles of honor listed in v 9a." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 112.]

one people of God, thus bridging all their diversity into a single community. For everyone living in a highly pluralistic society, the difficulty of succeeding in bridging such diversity is enormous. But it was accomplished in Christ, and the result was a unified ‘people of God.’ For Jews this label was assumed in the midst of their ethnic unity. But Peter’s declaration here alludes to something far more significant. Out of the nations of the world, God was forming a single people for Himself.

**Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy**, οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες.<sup>24</sup> In their pre-Christian existence they were not being shown mercy by God. But now in their Christian conversion, they became objects of divine mercy through Christ.<sup>25</sup> Closely linked to becoming a people of God is the experience of receiving God’s mercy in conversion. Forgiveness of sin, the showing of divine favor, the shielding of the sinner from divine wrath -- all these and more are bundled together in the concept of God’s mercy being shown to the community of believers.

### b. Our purpose in the world

in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς κατέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς·

#### Notes:

One should carefully note that these privileges given to the believing community had an important goal in them. That of the community becoming a shining witness of the greatness of the God who worked in their midst. Spiritual privilege never comes because individuals or groups of individuals deserve them. They never are given because individuals work sufficiently to earn them. Spiritual privilege comes because God has something in mind that He wants to accomplish through them.

The purpose clause introduced by ὅπως states the divine objective behind granting such privilege to the believing community. Their mission is to ‘proclaim’ the powerful actions of God. The verb ἐξαγγέλλω in its single NT use here has the idea of give a report. In its LXX usage it uniformly suggests collective worship of God as a public means of affirming the actions of God in behalf of His people.<sup>26</sup> Through worship the believing

<sup>24</sup>οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες, ‘once, destitute of mercy, you have now received mercy.’ The language of ‘mercy’ (cf. 1:3) also comes from Hosea (i.e., οὐκ—ἠλεημένη, 1:6, 8 LXX; ἐλεήσω τὴν οὐκ—ἠλεημένην, 2:25 [23]), but the structure of the clause, like that of the previous one, is Peter’s own, built around the implied contrast of ποτε and νῦν. The repetition of οἱ requires a masculine plural participle in place of the feminine singular of the LXX (which reflected simply the particulars of the Hosea story). This first participle is perfect passive, as in the LXX, but to express the positive side of the contrast Peter shifts to the aorist, in keeping with his fondness for aorist passives (whether participles or indicatives) with ἄρτι (1:6) or νῦν (1:12; 2:25) to refer to present Christian experience (cf. also 1:20; 2:21a, 24b; 3:6, 9).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 112.]

<sup>25</sup>ἐλεέω fut. ἐλεήσω; 1 aor. ἠλέησα, impv. ἐλέησον. Pass.: 1 fut. ἐλεηθήσομαι; 1 aor. ἠλεήθην; pf. pass. ptc. ἠλεημένος (s. ἔλεος; Hom.+)  
**to be greatly concerned about someone in need, have compassion/mercy/pity** τινά on or for someone (Diod S 12, 30, 4; 20, 4, 6 τοὺς πολίτας; PCairZen 145, 12 [256 B.C.]; UPZ 78, 24 [159 B.C.]; PFay 106, 16 [II A.D.] ἀξιῶ σε ἐλεῆσαί με; PFlor 378, 3; TestJob; Philo) Hv 1, 3, 2. τὸν σύνδουλον **Mt 18:33**. Abs. feel pity MPol 2:2. Esp. *show mercy to someone, help someone (out of compassion)* **Mt 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30f** (on κύριε ἐλέησον cp. Epict. 2, 7, 12 [TZahn, D. Stoiker Epikt. u. s. Verh. z. Christentum 2 1895, 46f; FDölger, Sol salutis 1920, 62f]; Ps 6:3; 9:14 al.; EPeterson, Εἶς θεός 1926, 164–67; Achilles Tat. 3, 5, 4 ἐλέησον δέσποτα Πόσειδον; Jos., Ant. 9, 64 δέσποτα ἐλέησον); **Mk 10:47f; Lk 16:24; 17:13; 18:38f**; D 2:7; **do acts of compassion** **Ro 12:8**; τινά **to someone** (Chariton 1, 9, 5; Celsus 2, 71) ApcPt 15:30; B 20:2; D 5:2. Of God’s mercy (Epici p. 43 B.=p. 20 K.: Cypria Fgm. 1, 3 Ζεὺς ἐλέησε; Hes., astron. Fgm. 182 Rz.: Ἡφαιστος; Phanodemus [IV B.C.]: 325 Fgm. 14b Jac.: Artemis; Menand., Epitr. 855, 874 S. [535, 554 Kō.] θεῶν τις ὑμᾶς ἠλέησε; Diod S 24, 12, 2 δαίμονιου ἐλεήσαντος; UPZ 78, 24 [159 B.C.] of Isis, the θεὰ θεῶν: ἐλέησον τὰς διδύμας; Jos., Ant. 11, 1; SibOr 3, 628); **Mk 5:19; Phil 2:27; Ro 9:15** (Ex 33:19), **16, 18; 11:32**; 1 Cl 18:2 (Ps 50:3); 59:4; 2 Cl 1:7; B 3:5 (on the acc. of the thing cp. Diod S 18, 25, 2); Dg 9:2; AcPlCor 1:6. Pass. **find or be shown mercy** (PsSol 7:6; 15:13; ὑπὸ κυρίου 16:15; Appian, Hann. 28 §119 ἐλεεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τινος, Bell. Civ. 4, 13 §52) **Mt 5:7; Ro 11:30f; 1 Ti 1:13, 16**; IEph 12:1; 1 Cl 56:16. οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες **who once had not found mercy, but now have found it 1 Pt 2:10**. Of a congregation ἠλεημένη that has found mercy (cp. Hos 1:6) IRo ins; IPHld ins; ISm ins; **receive as a gracious gift, be favored with** ἠλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι (Herm. Wr. 13, 7 ἐλεηθεὶς ὑπὸ τ. θεοῦ) **1 Cor 7:25**; cp. **2 Cor 4:1**; IRo 9:2; IPHld 5:1. Also s. ἐλεάω.—DELG s.v. ἔλεος. M-M. EDNT. 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), 315.]

<sup>26</sup>ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε, ‘to sound the praises,’ echoes to some degree the τὰς ἀρετὰς μου διηγείσθαι of Isa 43:21b. Peter, in keeping with his rather free treatment of this LXX passage, has replaced διηγείσθαι with ὅπως ... ἐξαγγείλητε. Elliott argues that both terms involve preaching to the world in the sense of “proclaiming the mighty acts of God” (42), but D. L. Balch

community is to celebrate God's mighty actions by recounting them and affirming them as praise to God.

What is it that they celebrate? τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς -- this is our assignment.<sup>27</sup> The content of this is focused on what God has done, more than on who God is. The LXX background of τὰς ἀρετὰς is more significant than the Greek philosophical heritage.<sup>28</sup> These mighty actions of God are specified in the dependent clause, "who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." The Aorist tense of καλέσαντος alludes to the moment of conversion when those coming to Christ moved from spiritual darkness to the spiritual light of God.<sup>29</sup> The full illumination of divine light, of course, will happen in final judgment when the believing community is carried into the splendors of Heaven.

Wow! What we have been given in Christ, as well as what we anticipate on that final day, should motivate us to obedience and praise of our God. The believing community is called by God to this very end! God help us move toward that.

These two sets of affirmations both bring to a close the discussion of the letter body up to this, as well as set the stage for the subsequent emphases beginning in verse 11.<sup>30</sup> This realization is important not only for understanding what has led up to v. 10 in 1:13-2:10, but also in what will follow in the subsequent text beginning in 2:11.

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(Domestic Code, 133) replies that 'in contexts where ἐξαγγέλλω refers to 'proclaiming' the praises, deeds, righteousness, or works of God, the proclaiming is always to God in worship' (cf. Pss 9:15[14]; 55:9[56:8]; 70[71]:15; 72[73]:28; 78[79]:13; 106[107]:22; 118[119]:13, 26; Sir 18:4; also Philo, Plant. 128)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 110.]

<sup>27</sup>τὰς ἀρετὰς (cf. Isa 43:21 LXX, for the Hebrew הַלְלָה, 'praise' or 'glory') does not refer to God's 'virtues' or ethical qualities in an abstract sense but to his praiseworthy deeds (i.e., 'praises,' BGD, 106.2; cf. τὰς ... δόξας in 1:11, the 'glorious things' planned and accomplished for Jesus Christ after his sufferings). What Peter speaks of elsewhere as 'glorifying God' (2:12; 4:11, 14b, 16) is here described as 'sounding his praises' for what he has done (cf. Isa 42:12 LXX, where τὰς ἀρετὰς αὐτοῦ ... ἀναγγελοῦσιν parallels δώσουσιν τῷ θεῷ δόξαν). What God has done is immediately defined (in the participial phrase that follows) by who he is." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 110-11.]

<sup>28</sup>The Greek philosophical heritage understood the term as abstract virtues, i.e., character qualities. But the LXX uses the term for the Hebrew הַלְלָה meaning praiseworthy actions by God. It is that sense of the term that Peter intends here. Note Michaels comments in the above footnote 27.

<sup>29</sup>"In this passage God's call is 'out of darkness into his marvelous light.' The 'darkness' of which Peter speaks is the same as the 'ignorance' (1:14) that belonged to his readers' Gentile past (cf. 'the empty way of life that was your heritage,' 1:18). It was the darkness of not being a people and of not knowing the mercy of God (v 10). What is the 'marvelous light'? The word θαυμαστὸν, possibly suggested to Peter's mind by the θαυμαστή of Ps 117[118]:23 in the immediate context of one of his preceding quotations (cf. Matt 21:42 // Mark 12:11), serves to heighten the contrast between light and darkness, but what is the nature of the contrast itself? Is it a contrast of 'then' and 'now' (cf. ποτε ... νῦν, v 10) or between 'then' and the final day of salvation (cf. the εἰς περιποίησιν of the previous clause and the εἰς σωτηρίαν of v 2)? Is the Christian community living in the 'marvelous light' of God, or waiting for it to dawn?

"Conversion from paganism to Christianity was commonly viewed by the early Christians as a passage from darkness to light (cf., e.g., Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:6; Col 1:12-13; 1 Clem 36.2, 59.2; Barn. 14.5-7), so that believers in Christ viewed themselves in some instances as 'light' (Eph 5:8-14) or at least as already living in the light (1 Thess 5:4-5; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:9-11). In 1 Peter, however, the phrase, 'into his marvelous light,' more likely belongs to the exalted language by which the author characteristically heralds the last day (cf. 'an indestructible, incorruptible, and unfading inheritance,' 1:4; 'rejoice with inexpressible and glorious delight,' 1:8; 'so that when his glory is revealed you may rejoice all the more,' 4:13; 'and when the one great Shepherd appears you will receive the unfading crown of glory,' 5:4)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 111.]

<sup>30</sup>"Taken together, vv. 9-10\* are both climax<sup>249</sup> and transition. As climax of the passage that has addressed itself to the nature of the community and its faith,<sup>250</sup> it points out that those who suffer in their society as exiles and aliens are in fact the true people of God.<sup>251</sup> As transition it prepares the chosen community for the hostile confrontation with its antagonistic environment by assuring it that whatever happens in that confrontation, it remains God's own and chosen people. Armed with that assurance, the community can face its painful encounter with an increasingly malevolent society." [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), 168.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 9**  
**1 Peter 2:11-12**  
**“Living Above the Flesh”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

11 Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς· 12 τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν, ἵνα, ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν, ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσι τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

11 Ihr wisst, meine Lieben, dass ihr Gäste und Fremde in dieser Welt seid. Darum ermahne ich euch: Gebt den Leidenschaften nicht nach, die aus eurer selbstsüchtigen Natur aufsteigen und die ständig mit eurem guten Willen im Streit liegen. 12 Euer Leben mitten unter den Menschen, die Gott nicht kennen, muss einwandfrei sein. Wenn sie euch alles mögliche Böse nachsagen, sollen sie eure guten Taten sehen und von ihren eigenen Augen eines Besseren belehrt werden. Vielleicht kommen sie dann zur Besinnung und preisen Gott für ihre Rettung am Tag seines Gerichts.

**NRSV**

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. 12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

**NLT**

11 Dear brothers and sisters, you are foreigners and aliens here. So I warn you to keep away from evil desires because they fight against your very souls. 12 Be careful how you live among your unbelieving neighbors. Even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will believe and give honor to God when he comes to judge the world.



**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Abstaining, v. 11](#)
  - b. [Positive lifestyle, v. 12](#)

**Introduction to Study.** The focus of the letter now turns a new direction with verses eleven and twelve. Peter will begin a series of admonitions on the responsibilities of the believing community to the outside world. Believers are reminded that not only are they being watched to see what impact their religion has on their life but also that they are obligated before God to present a positive witness about their God to their unbelieving neighbors. And this witness comes primarily through the way believers live, not just through their religious talk. The essence of this witness must be that believers are different people who live by noticeably different standards than do their pagan neighbors. The old clique of ‘being in the world but not of the world’ comes into view here and raises challenging issues related to how believers can achieve this very difficult balance. The passage remains vitally relevant to Christians in our world, just as it was to those initial readers in the middle of the first century.

**I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>**

Several aspects of the background are important for a more accurate understanding of this admonition of

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

Peter.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The history of the copying of this passage through the first eight centuries reflects a relatively stable transmission of this text. The United Bible Societies 4th revised edition Greek New Testament does not list any variant readings. This indicates that in the view of the editors no variation of wording in the existing manuscripts was considered significant enough to impact the translation of the text. The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition Greek text does list some variations of wording, especially in verse twelve, that have a minor impact on meaning.

In verse eleven, some manuscripts (P<sup>72</sup> A C L P and others) change the present tense infinitive ἀπέχεσθαι (to abstain) to the present imperative verb ἀπέχεσθε (be abstaining). The meaning remains the same; the change is stylistic. The majority of ancient manuscripts read ἀπέχεσθαι.<sup>2</sup>

More variations in wording surface in verse twelve, but they have to do with grammar structure and writing style of this somewhat long sentence. **First**, a few scribes saw the long participle clause ('while possessing...') as too disconnected to the core admonition, 'I exhort you to abstain...', and then filled in a second core admonition, 'and I also exhort this, that you have a noble manner of living...'. **Second**, a few scribes read the present indicative καταλαλοῦσιν (they slander) as present subjunctive καταλαλώσιν (they might slander). Overwhelmingly the weight of the manuscript evidence favors the present indicative. Peter assumes this criticism is happening rather than presents a hypothetical possibility of it happening. **Third**, several scribes inserted ἐποπτεύσαντες (having observed) in place of ἐποπτεύοντες (observing) because the prior action of observing to that of glorifying is more natural to Greek grammar. Again, the weight of evidence favors ἐποπτεύοντες. **Fourth**, P<sup>72</sup> manuscript inserts ὑμῶν before τὸν θεόν, thus making explicit (glorify your God) what is already implicit in the text from the article τὸν.

Although detailed analysis of the variations in the wording of the text can become very complex and technical, my goal is that you, the reader, will sense the nature of these variations and how they seldom have much impact on the meaning of the words of the text. Most of the time those making the copies either accidentally misread what they were copying or else sought to 'improve' the language of the text to bring it more in line with how Greek was written in their time. Virtually never can one detect intentional efforts to change the meaning of the text.

The consequence of this overview of our passage is to establish that we can now exegete the words of the Greek text with certainty that they represent exactly what Peter dictated to Silas in the original composition of this letter.

**Internal History.** The central historical issue present in these two verses revolves around non-Christian criticism of believers: "though they malign you as evildoers" (ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν). This is closely linked to 3:13-16 which addresses the same theme:

13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. **Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.** 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly Peter understood that some, perhaps many, outside the community of believers were falsely accusing the believers of being κακοποιῶν. What is in mind here is not made clear, although it may be defined more

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<sup>2</sup>The difference in translation is reflected in Ramsey Michaels' translation, "Dear friends, I appeal [to you] as aliens and strangers: renounce your natural impulses,..." who adopts the present imperative verb as the original reading, rather than the infinitive. [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 114.]

<sup>3</sup>GNT: 13 Καὶ τίς ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς ἐὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε; 14 ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχετε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε, 15 κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἔτοιμοι αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος, 16 ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, **συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε καταισχνῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφὴν.** 17 κρεῖττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιῶντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιῶντας.

precisely by Peter in 4:15 as “a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.”<sup>4</sup> Peter assumes that these accusations represent καταλαλοῦσιν, i.e., slander.

Does this represent persecution of Christians? More precisely, does this assumption by Peter suggest that official governmental persecution of Christians was taking place? Some see the later statement in 4:12 -- “Be-  
loved, do not be surprised at *the fiery ordeal* [τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει] that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” -- signaling as much. During the late 50s to the mid 60s, Christianity was just beginning to attract the notice of Roman government officials as a distinct religious movement. Until then Christianity had been considered as just another troublesome sect of Judaism along side Pharisees etc. But with the massive influx of non-Jews into the Christian movement during this period of time, government authorities began realizing that the followers of the Jewish Jesus of Nazareth were forming a religious movement separate from Judaism.<sup>5</sup> Clearly with Nero’s blaming of Christians in Rome for the massive fire that he had actually started in the mid 60s, governmental persecution of Christians, separate from Jews, was begun. But this outbreak was local, and not universal across the empire. That would not come for several decades.

Thus, one must be cautious about concluding that widespread government based persecution of believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia was taking place at the time of the writing of this letter. Clearly, believers in this region were not popular and esteemed by the rest of the people, but the opposition they were facing does not seem to have been driven by government authorities as a systematic effort of the Roman authorities to stamp out this new religious movement. If any government involvement in the criticism of Christians took place in this region, it would have been by local authorities acting on their own.<sup>6</sup>

What was taking place in these Roman provinces in ancient Anatolia reflects suspicion of and hostility to a new religious movement where its members lived by standards of behavior that were dramatically different from the commonly accepted patterns. These norms followed by Christians had much in common with that of Jews in the region, and Jews were even a part of this new movement. But Christians were different from Jews and rejected many of the norms insisted upon by Jews, such as dietary codes etc. Peter’s language both here and throughout the letter body suggests that this hostility mainly took the form of verbal attack, and seldom if ever resorted to physical violence against the Christians.

Probably, one source of suspicion against Christians was that it embraced a diversity of ethnic and cultural heritages by its members. Most ancient religions in the empire had clearly defined ethnic orientations, and seldom reached out beyond their own individual traditional heritage apart from insisting on the converts adopting the inherited ethnic orientation of the religion. Christianity by this point was clearly cross-cultural and embraced individuals from every race and background. This clearly made Christians a point of suspicion.

## **b. Literary**

**Literary Form (Genre).** Beyond being a part of the letter body with all the implications that this carries, 2:11-12 stands as an expression of *paraenesis*, i.e., moral admonition.<sup>7</sup> Not only does the beginning verb

<sup>4</sup>1 Peter 4:15 NRSV: But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. [μη γάρ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος]

<sup>5</sup>This severing of ties with Judaism was what posed problems. According to Roman law, no religious group could function legally unless they were a *religio licita* (a legally authorized religion). Judaism had this legal standing and thus could function. Christianity, as long as it functioned as a branch of Judaism enjoyed legal standing. When Christianity began distancing itself from Judaism in the middle of the first century, it moved into the status of *religio illicita* (illegal religion). Although Roman documents do not spell out the details clearly, the general sense is that for a religion to function outside legal status made participating in it an act of treason against Rome, and subjected one to possible execution. Some evidence exists suggesting the Christianity was first officially declared a *religio illicita* by Emperor Domitian in the 80s, but the details are not clear.

<sup>6</sup>One reason for the importance of careful analysis of this historical situation is that an older interpretive tradition assumed widespread government based persecution was behind First Peter. And, more importantly, that this reality was a decisive argument against Petrine authorship of the letter, since this kind of persecution could only be documented beginning at the end of the first century and not in the middle of it. Recognition of the lack of any signals of official government sponsored persecution in First Peter powerfully undermines the credibility of this non-Petrine origin view of the letter.

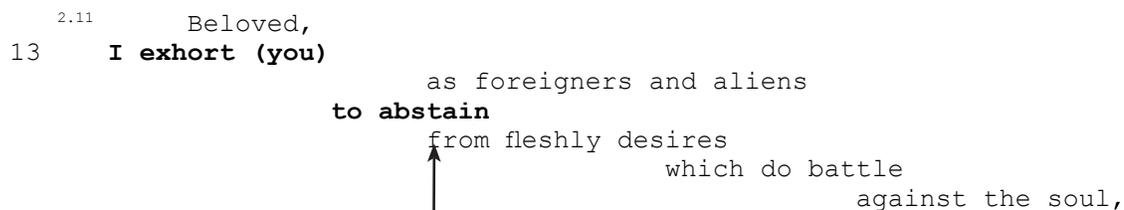
<sup>7</sup>“I exhort [you] (parakalō). This first instance of the author speaking directly (1st -person sing of parakaleō) introduces a combination of exhortation and encouragement that dominates the remainder of the letter. Exhortation, reflecting early Christian hortatory tradition (2:13–17, 18–20; 3:1–5, 7, 13–17; 4:1–6, 7–11, 12–19; 5:1–5a, 5b, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a), is supported with encouragement drawn from Christological (2:21–25; 3:18, 22; 4:1a, 13; 5:4), Scriptural (3:6, 10–12; 4:17–18; 5:5c, 7c), and liturgical (4:11; 5:10–11) tradition.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale Bible Study: Page 99

παρακαλῶ signal a new subject being introduced, it also introduces a long section of moral admonitions that will continue down through most of chapter four. The nature of the admonition introduced by παρακαλῶ carries the tone of 'I strongly encourage you...'. It has no threatening tones, but by coming as a vigorous encouragement from the aged and highly revered leader of the Christian movement, the tones of authority and importance of obeying are clearly present. The paraenesis here is not a distinctive sub-form as we will encounter beginning in the next pericope in 2:13, but instead it has a basic pattern of general admonition.

With moral admonition in the New Testament, one should pay close attention of how it is delivered. Especially in the letters of the NT, the weight of influence behind the admonitions is not based on a threat, "Do this or else....!" Instead, the forcefulness of the admonitions comes from the character and leadership role of the preacher / teacher delivering the admonition. In the modern world, preachers sometime today threaten their congregations, but this has no basis in the example of Jesus and the apostles. They, instead, appealed to the higher instincts of their readers / listeners coming out of a love for God and a desire to obey God in their lives. Their own example of living by what they preached gave their words forcefulness and influence as well. To be certain, they did not hesitate to tell their audience what God's will for living was, and they did so without compromise. Sometimes the consequences of not obeying in terms of God's punishment were laid before their audiences, but as a warning, not as a threat. Honesty demands that the divinely mandated accountability for one's decisions be included in the instructions given to God's people. But how this is done, the tone in which it is presented, -- all these play an important role in admonishing God's people to honor Him in their lives. Peter will give substantial insight into this with his encouragement to pastoral leaders in chapter five of this letter.

**Literary Context.** The literary setting for this passage has several aspects. The first two words in verse eleven Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ... ("beloved, I exhort....") clearly signal a new topic is being introduced.<sup>8</sup> From 2:11 through 3:12 at least we will notice a series of admonitions dealing with different Christian responsibilities. And actually, the admonitions will continue through 4:11 before the next major shift in literary form. This first pericope of 2:11-12 stand somewhat as a 'header' introducing the next several sections, as well as providing a foundational principle for these sections. The general theme is that of obligations to others: to non-believers, to family members, and to society in general. The encouragement to proper relationships with others continues in 3:13-5:11 but shifts to how to respond to harsh treatment from outsiders. The literary forms used in the remainder of the letter body are diverse and occasionally reflect considerable literary creativity either on Peter's part, or else, by Silas who was doing the actual writing of the letter.

**Literary Structure.** The block diagram below visually highlights the internal arrangement of secondary ideas to the core admonition in statement 13.



University Press, 2008), 457.]

<sup>8</sup>“This opening sentence of the body middle serves to introduce the major theme that is worked out in this portion of the letter: Christians who lack the legal rights and social standing as do exiles and aliens, and who are thus open to harassment on all sides, are to make sure their behavior does not give others an excuse to perpetrate such abuse.” [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *I Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 172.]

**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*

among the Gentiles  
 while possessing your noble manner of living  
 during which time they slander you  
 as evil doers  
 from your noble deeds  
 observing  
 so that they will glorify God  
 on the Day of Visitation.

The single sentence in verses eleven and twelve are built around the core admonition “I exhort you to abstain.” The ‘abstaining’ is defined by three expansion elements: 1) **as...**; 2) **from...**; and 3) **while...** The third expansion is the most detailed and has several ideas embedded inside it as well.

## II. Message

We will organize our study around the core admonition, and the expansion elements. This is the most natural way to try to understand the meaning of the text.

### a. Our responsibility to abstain, v. 11

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul.

Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς

#### Notes:

The sentence begins with ‘beloved’ (Ἀγαπητοί), the first time Peter has used such direct address to his readers. Beyond serving frequently as a signal of a new topic in the letters of the New Testament, the term expresses endearment of the readers to the apostle Peter.<sup>9</sup> His exhortation to them comes out of his love for them, and he expresses this at the outset. Such a posture for admonishing others should always be remembered and followed.

Peters begins with an appeal to his readers to adopt a stance of distancing themselves from ‘fleshly passions’ (τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν). The verb παρακαλῶ is widely used in the New Testament (108 times) with a diversity of meanings that are built off the root idea of ‘calling along side of.’ This sense is for someone to provide aid or assistance when they come to the person. This help can be physical, but often in the NT it is to be verbal assistance in the form of encouragement and/or admonition.<sup>10</sup> The content of the verbal help can

<sup>9</sup>“25.45 ἀγαπητός, ἡ, ὄν: (derivative of ἀγαπάω ‘to love,’ 25.43) pertaining to one who or that which is loved—‘object of one’s affection, one who is loved, beloved, dear.’” [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), 293.]

<sup>10</sup>The Gingrich-Danker Greek lexicon lists five categories of possible meanings for : **1.** to ask to come and be present where the speaker is, **2.** to urge strongly, appeal to, **3.** to make a strong request for something, **4.** to instill someone with courage or cheer, and **5.** to treat someone in an inviting or congenial manner.

**Meaning 2** is the one that is applicable to our text: “**2. to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage** (X. et al.; LXX) w. acc. of pers. **Ac 16:40; 2 Cor 10:1; 1 Th 2:12** (but s. 5 below); **5:11; Hb 3:13**; ITr 12:2; IRo 7:2. The acc. is found in the immediate context **Ac 20:1; 1 Ti 5:1** (but s. 5 below). Pass. **1 Cor 14:31**. τινὰ λόγῳ πολλῶ *someone with many words* **Ac 20:2**; also τινὰ διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ **15:32**. τινὰ δι’ ὀλίγων γραμμάτων IPol 7:3. W. acc. of pers. and direct discourse **1 Cor 4:16; 1 Th 5:14; Hb 13:22; 1 Pt 5:1**; direct discourse introduced by λέγων (B-D-F §420) **Ac 2:40**. W. acc. of pers. and inf. foll. (SIG 695, 43 [129 B.C.]) **11:23; 27:33f; Ro 12:1** (EKäsemann, Gottesdienst im Alltag, ’60 [Beih. ZNW], 165–71); **15:30; 16:17; 2 Cor 2:8; 6:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:2; Tit 2:6; 1 Pt 2:11** (cp. Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36 II, 4 Jac. p. 1172, 19; ELohe, ZNW 45, ’54, 68–89); **Jd 3** (the acc. is found in the immediate context, as Philo, Poster Cai. 138); ITr 6:1; IPhd 8:2; IPol 1:2a; Pol 9:1 al. W. inf. (acc. in the context), continued by καὶ ὅτι (s. B-D-F §397, 6; Rob. 1047) **Ac 14:22**. W. acc. of pers. and ἵνα foll. (PRyl 229, 17 [38 A.D.]; EpArist 318; Jos., Ant. 14, 168.—B-D-F §392, 1c; Rob. 1046) **1 Cor 1:10; 16:15f; 2 Cor 8:6; 1 Th 4:1** (π. w. ἐρωτάω as BGU 1141, 10; POxy 294, 29) **2 Th 3:12**; Hm 12, 3, 2; AcPl Ha 7, 32. The ἵνα-clause expresses not the content of the appeal, as in the pass. referred to above, but its aim: πάντα παρακαλεῖν, ἵνα σώζονται IPol 1:2b.—Without acc. of pers.: w. direct discourse foll. ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα *since God as it were makes his appeal through us*: ‘We beg’ **2 Cor 5:20**. Paul serves as God’s agent (like a ‘legate of Caesar’ Dssm. LO 320 [LAE 374]) and functions as mediator (like Alexander the Great, Plut., Mor. 329c διαλλακτής; cp. also the mediatorial role of a judge IPriene 53, esp. 10f; s. also CBreytenbach, Versöhnung ’89, 64–66). W. inf. foll. **1 Ti 2:1**. Abs. **Ro 12:8** (mng. 4 is also poss.); **2 Ti 4:2; Tit 1:9; Hb 10:25; 1 Pt 5:12** (w. ἐπιμαρτυρεῖν); B 19:10.—W. acc. of thing impress upon someone, urge, exhort πολλά ἕτερα **Lk 3:18**. ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει **1 Ti 6:2**. ταῦτα λάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγγε **Tit 2:15**. In the

range widely depending on the particular set of circumstances. The present tense of the verb underscores Peter's intention for this appeal to linger in the minds of his readers for some time to come.

The content of his appeal here is that his readers ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν. To abstain is expressed by ἀπέχεσθαι, which carries a range of meanings with 'abstain' being the meaning in five of the eighteen NT uses.<sup>11</sup> The readers are encouraged to put distance between themselves and their fleshly passions. One should note the present tense of the Greek infinitive here, which demands a continual distancing of oneself from these passions.

What is it that believers are to keep away from? τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν is Peter's answer.<sup>12</sup> The noun ἐπιθυμιῶν can suggest desires either good or bad.<sup>13</sup> But most of the uses stress the negative aspect. Clearly

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case of several of the passages dealt with in this section, it is possible that they could as well be classed under [mng 3].” [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), 765.]

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Thess. 4:3, 5:22, and 1 Pet. 2:11. The BAGD lexicon lists 5 meanings: 1. to receive in full what is due, 2. to meet the need of the moment, 3. idiomatic meaning in οὐδὲν ἀπέχει=‘nothing hinders’, 4. to be at some distance from a position, and 5. to avoid contact w. or use of something. It is the last meaning that applies to our text:

“**5. to avoid contact w. or use of someth., keep away, abstain, refrain from** mid. w. gen. of thing (Hom. et al.; SIG 768, 16 [31 B.C.]; PHerm 52, 21; StudPal V, 52, 21; 1 Esdr 6:26; Wsd 2:16; σου PsSol 8:32; τούτου TestAbr A 2 p. 79, 8 [Stone p. 6]; Jos., Bell. 2, 581, Ant. 11, 101; Just., A II, 7, 7 al.; Ath.) εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας *abstain fr: things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and irregular sexual union* **Ac 15:29** (s. Lev 18:6–30), cp. vs. 20 (s. αἷμα 1b). πάσης ἀδικίας (Hyperid., Fgm. 210 τ. ἀδικημάτων; SIG 1268 I, 18 [III B.C.] κακίας ἀπέχου; Ath. 1, 2 τοῦ ἀδικεῖν) Pol 2:2; cp. 6:1, 3; Hv 1, 2, 4; 2, 2, 3; 3, 8, 4; m 3:5; Dg 4:6. τῶν κακῶν βοτανῶν IPhd 3:1; cp. ITr 6:1. βρωμάτων **1 Ti 4:3**. εὐχαριστίας κ. προσευχῆς *keep away fr: the Lord's Supper and prayer* ISm 7:1; the response to those who absent themselves from the Lord's meal is to discontinue social relations with them, vs. 2 (Schol. Pl. Euthyphr. 2 A ἀπέχεσθαι μυστηρίων=remain aloof from the Mysteries). τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν **1 Pt 2:11**; D 1:4. τῆς γλώσσης=control the tongue Hv 2, 2, 3. λατρείας Dg 3:2.—W. ἀπό τινος (oft. LXX; En 104:6; TestAbr A 4 p. 81, 4 [Stone p. 10]; EpArJer 143; w. ἐκ ParJer 7:37 [7, 32 Harris]): ἀπό τῆς πορνείας **1 Th 4:3**; cp. **Ac 15:20** (v.l. ἀπό); ἀπό παντὸς εἶδους πονηροῦ *fr: every kind of evil* **1 Th 5:22**. ἀπό παντὸς κακοῦ 1 Cl 17:3 (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3). ἀπέχεσθε ἀπό τ. ἀνθρώπων *keep hands off the men* **Ac 5:39** D.—Pol 5:3; Hm 2:3; 4, 1, 3 and 9; 5, 1, 7; 5, 2, 8; 7:3; 9:12; 11:4, 8, 21; 12, 1, 3; 12, 2, 2; Hs 4:5.—DELG s.v. ἔχω. 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), 103.]

<sup>12</sup>“ἀπέχεσθε τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, ‘renounce your natural impulses.’ The phrase ἀπέχεσθε ἐπιθυμιῶν was long familiar in Greek ethical instruction (e.g., Plato, Phaedo 82C, 83B; Laws 8.835E). On the imperative, see Note a\* Because they are ‘aliens and strangers’ in Roman society by virtue of their election, Peter urges on his readers a clean moral break with the ‘natural impulses’ of their past (cf. ἐπιθυνῖαι in 1:14; 4:2), impulses belonging to the ‘darkness’ out of which they have been called (cf. 2:9). With the adjective σαρκικοί Peter characterizes these impulses as merely physical in motivation and intent, centered on self-preservation and material well-being (cf. σαρκί or ἐν σαρκί with reference to the realm of physical life in 3:18; 4:1, 2, 6). Such ‘natural impulses,’ although not intrinsically evil for Peter, must yield to other, more vital considerations, centered on what he calls ‘the soul.’” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 116.]

<sup>13</sup>ἐπιθυμία, ας, ἡ (s. ἐπιθυμέω; Pre-Socr., Hdt.+)

#### **1. a great desire for someth., desire, longing, craving**

a. as a neutral term, in Hdt., Pla., Thu. et al. αἱ περὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐ. *desires for other things* **Mk 4:19**. ἐ. πράξεων πολλῶν *desire for much business* Hm 6, 2, 5 (but mng. 2 below is also poss.). ἐ. τῆς ψυχῆς *desire of the soul* **Rv 18:14**.

b. of desire for good things (Diod S 11, 36, 5 ἐπιθ. τῆς ἐλευθερίας=for freedom; Pr 10:24 ἐ. δικαίου δεκτῆ; ἄνερ ἐπιθυμιῶν GrBar 1:3; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 111) ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχειν εἷς τι *have a longing for someth.* **Phil 1:23** (ἐ. ἔχειν as Jos., C. Ap. 1, 255; ἐ. εἰς as Thu. 4, 81, 2). ἐπιθυμία ἐπιθυμεῖν (Gen 31:30) *eagerly desire* **Lk 22:15** (s. on ἐπιθυμέω); ἐν πολλῇ ἐ. w. *great longing* **1 Th 2:17**. ἐλπίζει μου ἡ ψυχὴ τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ μου μὴ παραλελοιπέναι τι *I hope that, in accordance with my desire, nothing has been omitted* B 17:1. ἡ ἐ. καὶ ἡ ἀγρυπνία 21:7. ε. ἀγαθὴν καὶ σεμνήν Hm 12, 1, 1.

**2. a desire for someth. forbidden or simply inordinate, craving, lust** (as early as Plato, Phd. 83b ἡ τοῦ ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλοσόφου ψυχῆ οὕτως ἀπέχεται τ. ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν κτλ.; Polystrat. p. 30; Duris [III B.C.]: 76 Fgm. 15 Jac.; then above all, the Stoics [EZeller, Philos. d. Griechen III/14, 1909, 235ff], e.g. Epict. 2, 16, 45; 2, 18, 8f; 3, 9, 21 al.; Maximus Tyr. 24, 4a μέγιστον ἀνθρώπων κακὸν ἐπιθυμία; Herm. Wr. 1, 23; 12, 4, also in Stob. p. 444, 10 Sc.; Wsd 4:12; Sir 23:5; 4 Macc 1:22; 3:2 al.; ApcMos 19 ἐ. ... κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀμαρτίας; Philo, Spec. Leg. 4, 93, Leg. All. 2, 8, Vi. Cont. 74; Jos., Bell. 7, 261, Ant. 4, 143) **Ro 7:7f; Js 1:14f; 2 Pt 1:4**. ἐ. πονηρὰ (X., Mem. 1, 2, 64; Ar. 8, 4) Hv 1, 2, 4; 3, 7, 3; 3, 8, 4; m 8:5. ἐ. κακῇ (Pla., Leg. 9, 854a; Pr 12:12; 21:26; Just., A I, 10, 6) **Col 3:5**.—Of sexual desire (as early as Alcaeus [acc. to Plut., Mor. 525ab]; lead tablet fr. Hadrumetum 7 in Dssm., B 28 [BS 273ff] and IDefixWünsch no. 5 p. 23; PGM 17a, 9; 21; Sus Theod. 8; 11; 14 al., LXX 32; Jos., Ant. 4, 130; 132; Ath. 33, 1 μέτρον ἐπιθυμίας ἡ παιδοποιία; Did., Gen. 151, 27 ἄλογος ἐ.) D 3:3. πάθος ἐπιθυμίας **1 Th 4:5**. κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν (cp. Epict. 3, 15, 7; M. Ant.

Peter's repeated use of ἐπιθυμία in this letter falls into this latter category:

**1:14**, Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance (*ταῖς* πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν *ἐπιθυμίαις*).

**2:11**, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh (*τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν*) that wage war against the soul.

**4:2**, so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires (εἰς τὸ μηκέτι *ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις*) but by the will of God.

Such desires typify unsaved pagans prior to their coming to Christ, and reflect complete ignorance of God. These desires stand in contrast to the will of God, and have a human origin, not a divine one. They originate from 'the flesh,' as the adjective σαρκικῶν specifies. To be 'fleshly' is to be guided by the old sinful nature, and not by the Spirit of God (cf. 1 Cor. 3:3<sup>14</sup>). We are to follow the Spirit's leadership as the best defense against the influence of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:16,<sup>15</sup> Rom. 13:14<sup>16</sup>). The old carnal nature poses serious threat to experiencing a true spiritual existence. Even though 'positionally' it has been crucified in conversion,<sup>17</sup> it remains a part of us as long as we live in physical bodies. And so believers must be constantly vigilant to guard against its destructive influence in our life.

The qualitative relative clause αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς specifies the basis for abstaining from fleshly desires. This relative pronoun αἵτινες, used to introduce the clause, goes beyond the normal relative ἧ, adds a tone of "which are of such a nature that...". The clause then defines an important trait that makes it imperative for believers to abstain from such desires. Such desires, Peter declares, do battle against one's ψυχῆς. The sense of ψυχῆς here is not just one's soul, but something deeper, against the very core of one's existence. The harmful impact of fleshly lusts on the physical life are clear and often dramatic with the violence found in our society. But far more pervasive and ultimately more damaging is the destructive impact on the interior of our life, down to the foundation of our spiritual existence. James reminds us forcefully (4:1), "Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within

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2, 10, 1; 2; 3; Just., A II, 5, 4; Ath. 21, 1) *in accordance with physical desire alone* IPol 5:2. πρὸς ἐπιθυμίαν τ. ἀνθρώπων Ox 840, 38 (Ps.-Pla., Eryx. 21, 401e πρὸς τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ σώματος=to satisfy the desires of the body; cp. 405e: gambling, drunkenness and gluttony are called ἐπιθυμίας.—In Ox 840, 38, since the ν in ἐπιθυμίαν is missing and restored, the word might also be ἐπιθυμίας.). ἐ. γυναικός (Da 11:37) Hm 6, 2, 5; 12, 2, 1. Pl. (oft. LXX; EpArist 256; Philo) w. παθήματα Gal 5:24. In a list of vices (cp. Philo, Congr. Erud. Grat. 172, Migr. Abr. 60, Vi. Cont. 2) **1 Pt 4:3**; D 5:1. ἐ. πολλὰ ἀνόητοι *many foolish desires* **1 Ti 6:9**; νεωτερικαὶ ἐ. youthful desires 2 Ti 2:22 (WMetzger, TZ 33, '77, 129–36); κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ἐ. *in accordance w. their own desires* **4:3**; cp. πρὸς τὰς ἰ. ἐ. Pol. 7:1; κατὰ τὰς ἐ. αὐτῶν AcPl Ha 8, 20 (for this: ἀνομίας AcPl BMM recto, 26, restored after Ox 1602, 27). αἰ πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ἐ. *the desires that ruled over you formerly, when you were ignorant* **1 Pt 1:14**.—W. gen.: subjective gen. ἐ. ἀνθρώπων **1 Pt 4:2**; τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν **J 8:44**; gen. of quality ἐ. μιασμοῦ defiling passion **2 Pt 2:10**; cp. μιὰς ἐ. 1 Cl 28:1; βδελυκτὰς ἐ. 30:1. ἐ. τῆς ἀπάτης *deceptive desires* **Eph 4:22**. τῶν ἐ. τῶν ματαίων 2 Cl 19:2; cp. Hm 11, 8. ἐ. τῶν ἀσεβειῶν **Jd 18**. ἐ. τῆς πονηρίας *evil desire* Hv 1, 1, 8. ἐ. τῆς ἀσελγείας 3, 7, 2; the gen. can also indicate the origin and seat of the desire ἐ. τῶν καρδιῶν *of the hearts* (Sir 5:2) **Ro 1:24**. τῆς καρδίας ... τῆς πονηρίας 1 Cl 3:4. ἐ. τοῦ θνητοῦ σώματος **Ro 6:12** (Ps.-Pla., Eryx. 21, 401e, s. above; Sextus 448 ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ σώματος). τῆς σαρκός **Eph 2:3**; **1 J 2:16**; **2 Pt 2:18**; B 10, 9. τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν **1 J 2:16**; to denote someth. to which desire belongs gener. vs. 17; σαρκικαὶ ἐ. (Hippol., Ref. 5, 9, 22; Did., Gen. 62, 3) **1 Pt 2:11**; D 1:4; σωματικαὶ ἐ. (4 Macc 1:32) *ibid.*; κοσμικαὶ ἐ. worldly desires **Tit 2:12**; 2 Cl 17:3; ἐ. τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ Pol 5:3; εἰς ἐ. *to arouse desires* **Ro 13:14**; ποιεῖν τὰς ἐ. *act in accordance w. the desires* **J 8:44**. τελεῖν ἐ. σαρκός *gratify the cravings of the flesh* **Gal 5:16**; ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐ. *obey the desires* **Ro 6:12**; δουλεῖν ἐ. *be a slave to the desires* **Tit 3:3**; cp. δοῦλος ἐπιθυμίας IPol 4:3. ἄγεσθαι ἐπιθυμίας *be led about by desires* **2 Ti 3:6**. πορευεσθαι κατὰ τὰς ἐ. **Jd 16**; **18**; **2 Pt 3:3**; ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις (Sir 5:2) **1 Pt 4:3**; ταῖς ἐ. τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου Hs 6, 2, 3; 6, 3, 3; 7:2; 8, 11, 3. ἀναστρέφεσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐ. **Eph 2:3**.—BEaston, Pastoral Ep. '47, 186f; RAC II 62–78. S. πόθος.—Schmidt, Syn. III 591–601. 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), 372.]

<sup>14c</sup>for you are still *of the flesh*. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not *of the flesh*, and behaving according to human inclinations?"

<sup>15c</sup>Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify *the desires of the flesh*." (Λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ *ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκός* οὐ μὴ τελέσητε.)

<sup>16c</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires*." (ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, καὶ *τῆς σαρκός πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας*.)

<sup>17</sup>Gal. 5:24, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified *the flesh with its passions and desires*." (οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ *τὴν σάρκα* ἐσταύρωσαν *σὺν ταῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις*.)

you?”<sup>18</sup> Paul describes an ongoing conflict between the flesh and the Spirit that takes place in believers (Gal. 5:17): “For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.”<sup>19</sup> For him, the key to success in this conflict is following the leadership of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16). Failure to follow the Spirit’s lead opens a Pandora’s box of evil in the believer’s life, which Paul labels the deeds of the flesh.<sup>20</sup> Peter doesn’t go into such detail, but with this relative clause he clearly signals a common view.

This topic poses challenges. As long as we live in physical bodies, we are vulnerable to the temptations of the flesh. To be sure, the strangle hold over our lives by fleshly desires that prevailed before conversion has been broken by the coming of Christ into our lives. We are no longer bound slaves to the flesh. But we are not free from the potential influences of fleshly desires. What are these? As Peter makes clear in his three fold use of the term in the letter, fleshly desires are those that characterized our living prior to Christ (1:14), and they stand in opposition to the will of God in our life (4:2). As such they seek to destroy our very existence (2:11).

How do we successfully resist such fleshly desires? Peter calls upon believers to consistently do so. But how? The history of Christianity is littered with failed attempts to successfully ward off the temptations of fleshly desires. One of the most often repeated failures is asceticism. In the Christian practice of asceticism believers withdraw from society and live together in communes or monasteries, supposedly insulated from the temptations of the world. Probably Francis of Assisi (1181-1226 AD) is one of the best known monks. But withdrawing from society into a supposed ‘purer’ world is no answer, because these fleshly desires have their home base in our physical existence and we take them with us no matter where we go.<sup>21</sup> Periodically down through the years, heretical Christian groups have sometimes developed a religious schizophrenia theology that so splits the ‘soul’ from the physical ‘body’ that conversion only takes place in the soul and leaves the body untouched. In conversion, the soul is ‘made perfect’ and thus is untouchable by fleshly passions. Early expressions of such heresy arose in the second Christian century under the label of Gnosticism. Modern expressions of this old heresy surface in Pentecostalism and other places. Such false splitting of the individual into two largely unconnected parts not only has no basis in scripture, but represents a dangerous perversion of healthy personality development. Human beings are wholistic individuals, not disconnected compartments of soul and body.

How then do we abstain from fleshly lusts, in light of these failed efforts? Peter’s admonition is the starting point: we must make a clear decision to stand against every impulse that is contrary to God’s will for our life. And this commitment must be ongoing in our life, not momentary and spasmodic.

Crucial also to making this commitment to abstain is the realization of who we are spiritually. Peter calls upon his readers again to recognize that they are ὡς παροίκους καὶ **παρεπιδήμιους** (aliens and foreigners) in this world.<sup>22</sup> Coming at abstaining from such a posture is important. Already in 1:1, Peter has addressed his

<sup>18</sup>Πόθεν πόλεμοι καὶ πόθεν μάχαι ἐν ὑμῖν; οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν, ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν **τῶν στρατενομένων** ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν;

<sup>19</sup>Ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός, ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται, ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε.

<sup>20</sup>Gal. 5:19-21, “19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

<sup>21</sup>And without question the ‘mind over matter’ emphasis of Hindus and some other eastern religions offers no solution at all. These religious philosophies are built on the core principle of human self-effort, and seek to achieve their goals through meditation techniques designed to bring the ‘flesh’ under complete control by the mind. That some level of control can be achieved is clear, but such practices have absolutely no authentic spiritual value for bringing the individual closer to God through Jesus Christ.

<sup>22</sup>“The word **παροίκος**, originally meaning simply ‘neighbor,’<sup>15</sup> came in time, particularly in the east, to mean ‘resident alien,’<sup>16</sup> that is, one who, though not a full citizen<sup>17</sup> and hence having neither the obligations nor the privileges that fell to citizens,<sup>18</sup> nevertheless did have a recognized status and hence was not totally outside legal protection.<sup>19</sup> In the NT, it is most often used in the sense of ‘alien’ (Acts 7:6, 29; 13:17) but is applied to Christians in only one place (Eph 2:19) other than here in 1 Peter.<sup>20</sup>

“**Παρεπιδημος** did not come to refer to a class of people, but describes rather one who has settled in a given place on a temporary basis,<sup>21</sup> a sojourner, and hence without the recognized status even of a **παροίκος**. Rarer than **παροίκος**,<sup>22</sup> it occurs in the NT only one other time outside 1 Peter (Heb 11:13).<sup>23</sup> Both words describe people who were foreigners in an age when foreigners, however numerous they may have been particularly in the larger cities of the empire,<sup>24</sup> were *eo ipso* suspect,<sup>25</sup> and exile from one’s native land was one of the severest punishments that a city or state could impose.<sup>26</sup>” [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,

readers as ἐκλεκτοῖς **παρεπιδήμοις** διασπορᾶς (chosen foreigners of the Dispersion). The significance of such a posture is to recognize that this physical life in the material world is only temporary and is not really home. Thus we can and should live rather detached lives from ‘things’ around us. To become absorbed by the accumulation of such stuff is to open our lives to the destructiveness that Paul warned the rich about in 1 Tim. 6:9-10, “9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.” Without question, we are material in our existence, and remain so even as believers in this life. Seeking God’s help with basic material needs is certainly legitimate, as Jesus taught us to pray in the Model Prayer, (Mt. 6:11): “Give us this day our daily bread.” And He continued to admonish believers to not worry over these basics in Mt. 6:25-34 (// Luke 12:22-31), but to live trusting God to provide these things. So how we approach abstaining from fleshly desires is very important.

In addition, Paul’s advice to the Galatians in 5:16-21 is important as well. Central to this advice is the assertion that only under the continual leadership of the Holy Spirit is victory over the flesh possible. The combination of serious commitment to abstain and consistent submission to the Spirit is essential to success in rising above the fleshly temptations that come at us.

### **b. Don’t loose your positive lifestyle, v. 12**

Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλὴν, ἵνα, ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν, ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσι τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς.

#### **Notes:**

This third expansion element of the admonition to abstain from fleshly desires is more complex and detailed than the previous two. Because of this, the participle phrase is often handled by Bible translators as though it were a separate sentence.<sup>23</sup> But the Greek phrase ἔχοντες... stands as a modifier of the infinitive ἀπέχεσθαι. This connection is important, and separating it into another sentence weakens this connection. The process of abstaining is to take place while believers are living a ‘noble manner of life.’ Peter sensed that a strong counter active to fleshly desires was τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ...καλὴν. And also important was that such a lifestyle was to be lived ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (among Gentiles).<sup>24</sup> The expression underscores behavior and

1996), 173-74.]

<sup>23</sup>Compare the following:

**NRSV:** Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

**NLT:** Be careful how you live among your unbelieving neighbors. Even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will believe and give honor to God when he comes to judge the world.

**ESV:** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

**TEV:** Your conduct among the heathen should be so good that when they accuse you of being evildoers, they will have to recognize your good deeds and so praise God on the Day of his coming.

**HSCB:** Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that in a case where they speak against you as those who do evil, they may, by observing your good works, glorify God in a day of visitation.

**NIV:** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

**LBLA:** Mantened entre los gentiles una conducta irreprochable, a fin de que en aquello que os calumnian como malhechores, ellos, por razón de vuestras buenas obras, al considerarlas, glorifiquen a Dios en el día de la visitación.

**LB (1984):** Enthaltet euch von fleischlichen Begierden, die gegen die Seele streiten, und führt ein rechtschaffenes Leben unter den Heiden, damit die, die euch verleumden als Übeltäter, eure guten Werke sehen und Gott preisen am Tag der Heimsuchung.

<sup>24</sup>“This verse continues the thought of v. 11, now giving the positive side of living as aliens in their culture. The call to conduct<sup>54</sup> that is recognizably good in the eyes of nonbelievers is not unique to our author,<sup>55</sup> and by this time is part of Christian tradition.<sup>56</sup> Underlying this call is the conviction that both Christians and pagans recognize good behavior,<sup>57</sup> yet without the idea that the ‘good’ is identical for both.<sup>58</sup> The exhortation to humility, for example, found in 5:5, runs counter to Hellenistic thought,<sup>59</sup> and the command to be holy as God is holy<sup>60</sup> indicates that good conduct for Christians is conduct in accord with God’s will.<sup>61</sup>” [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), 176-77.]

patterns of day by day living. By living a life built around spiritual values, rather than material values, believers not only presented a strong witness to their God, but additionally helped fortify themselves against the temptations of the flesh.

Embedded into this noble lifestyle was an important objective: ἵνα...ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσι τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς. Non-believers would observe the wealth of ‘good deeds’ done by believers and thus be compelled to praise God at the Day of Visitation. Their praise would be to acknowledge that the believers’ lifestyle had its origin in God and represented a superior way of living to theirs. This will happen in spite of the non-believers ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν (*slandering believers as criminals while the believers are living this superior lifestyle before them*). Thus on the day of judgment they will profoundly regret their false accusations against believers and be compelled to acknowledge that this way of living was produced by God Himself in the lives of the believers.

The observation of non-believers presently is ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες. The participle ἐποπτεύοντες only surfaces in the NT here and in 1 Pet. 3:20.<sup>25</sup> In the latter passage, the non-believing husband can be possibly converted to Christ after having observed “*the purity and reverence of*” the wife’s Christian life. In our text, non-believers carefully watch the behavior of their Christian neighbors day by day. What they see shapes their opinion of the religious faith of these believing neighbors. The construction ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων specifies the source of what they are observing. The actions (τῶν...ἔργων) of the believers are presumed to be καλῶν, an adjective that stresses the outward beauty and appeal of the actions of the believers. This is a similar emphasis on what the non-believing husbands observe in their Christian wives (3:2): τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνῆν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν. The wife’s manner of living (ἀναστροφὴν) is characterized by both ἐν φόβῳ (*reverence of God*) and ἀγνῆν (*purity*). Her actions motivated by her devotion to God reflect the purity of her commitment to her husband. In 2:12 the τῶν καλῶν ἔργων (*noble deeds*) reflect the Christian τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλὴν (*noble lifestyle lived among the Gentiles*). In simple terms, how believers behave themselves reflects the quality of their style of living. When that lifestyle is καλὴν (*noble*), it signals the presence and activity of God in the believer’s life.

This observation of noble deeds being done is contradicted, however, by what the non-believers are saying about their Christian neighbors: ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν. They are saying that believers are κακοποιῶν.<sup>26</sup> The usual sense of the adjective κακοποιός, when used as a noun such as here is ‘*criminal*.’ Literally meaning ‘*doing evil*,’ the word normally defined those breaking the laws of the dominating government. This is the general sense of the three uses of the word in First Peter: 2:12, 14, 4:15. Thus while the non-Christian neighbors observed a ‘*noble life*’ in their Christian neighbors, they verbally accused the Christians of being criminals. Such a contradiction is correctly labeled as ‘*slander*’ (καταλαλοῦσιν<sup>27</sup>) by Peter. What the pagan neighbors observed was a standard of living far superior to theirs, and this made them uncomfortable

<sup>25</sup> ἐποπτεύω 1 aor. ἐπόπτευσα (s. next entry and ὀράω; Hom.+; Sym. Ps 9:35; 32:13; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 294; Ath. 13, 2) **to pay close attention to, watch, observe, see** τι someth. (Polyb. 5, 69, 6; 31, 15, 10; Heraclit. Sto. 53 p. 75, 19) τὴν ἀναστροφὴν *conduct* **1 Pt 3:2**. Abs. ptc. (ἐκ τ. καλῶν ἔργων is to be taken w. δοξάσωσιν: BWeiss, Kühl, HermvSoden, Knopf; differently Wohlenberg, Vrede) ἐποπτεύοντες *when they observe them* (sc. τ. ἔργα) **2:12** (s. ἐκ 3γβ) s. HMeecham, ET 65, ’53, 93f.—DELG s.v. ὄπωπα. 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), 387.]

<sup>26</sup> κακοποιός, ὄν (s. prec. entry; Pind. et al.; Hippol.) **pert. to doing evil** (Aristot., EN 4, 9 p. 1125a, 18f; Polyb. 15, 25, 1; Sallust. 9 p. 18, 19; Pr 12:4; AscIs 3:13; Ar. 13, 6 [fem.]) subst. *evil-doer, criminal* (schol. on Nicander, Alex. 569; PMich 149 [II A.D.], 10; 16 al.; Pr 24:19) **J 18:30** v.l.; **1 Pt 2:12; 3:16** v.l.; **4:15** (on support for the sense sorcerer s. ESelwyn comm. ad loc.). Opp. ἀγαθοποιός **2:14** (Artem. 4, 59 p. 238, 9; 11).—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), 501.]

<sup>27</sup> καταλαλέω fut. 3 pl. καταλαλήσουσιν Mi 3:7; 1 aor. κατελάλησα LXX (s. two next entries and λαλέω; Aristoph.+; Polyb.; Stoic. III 237, 6 al.; SIG 593, 6 [II B.C.]; PHib 151 [c. 250 B.C.]; LXX, En; TestAbr B 12 p. 116, 20 [Stone p. 80]; Test12Patr; Philo [only in connection w. the OT: Leg. All. 2, 66f=Num 12:8 and Leg. All. 2, 78=Num 21:7]) **speaking ill of, speaking degradingly of, speak evil of, defame, slander** τινός *someone* (Ps 77:19 τοῦ θεοῦ; 100:5 τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ; TestIss 3:4, Gad 5:4; cp. Diod S 11, 44, 6; τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δόξης Theoph. Ant. 3, 30 [p. 268, 28]) **Js 4:11ab**; 2 Cl 4:3; Hm 2:2a. ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν **1 Pt 2:12** (cp. SIG loc. cit. ἵνα μηδ’ ἐν τούτοις ἔχουσιν ἡμᾶς καταλαλεῖν οἱ ...). Also κατὰ τινος (so mostly LXX, En) 1 Cl 35:8 (Ps 49:20). Pass. **1 Pt 3:16**.—Fig. (Ps.-Lucian, As. 12 τοῦ λύχνου) νόμου *speaking against the law* **Js 4:11c**.—Abs. ὁ καταλαλῶν *one who speaks evil* Hm 2:2 (three times).—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), 519.]

enough to bring public accusations against their Christian neighbors that these ‘Christians’ were breaking the laws of Rome by their behavior. Their specific accusations are not spelled out here, although a possible hint at them may come in 4:15 with Peter’s admonition that no believer should be guilty of being *ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος* (a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or a mischief maker). Sinful people always feel uncomfortable around genuinely holy people. Sometimes that irritation rises to the level of leading the pagan to make false and defaming accusations against their Christian neighbor. Most countries in the western world have laws in place to protect innocent people against slanderous accusations. But such was not the case in the ancient Roman empire.

Peter’s reassurance of the believers is that although their pagan neighbors may slander them now, there is coming the day when they will be compelled to praise God for the godly lives of their Christian neighbors: *δοξάσωσι τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς*. The time of this sudden shift from criticism to praise is *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς*, “at the day of visitation.” The noun *ἐπισκοπή* has a variety of meanings.<sup>28</sup> Clearly here the sense is of a divine visitation prompting a response to Him at His visit. Although a few commentators try to see this in a positive way of signaling the ‘conversion’ of unbelievers either in a individual moment of divine encounter or at final judgment, the context of the letter, especially 4:17-18,<sup>29</sup> clearly demands that this day be understood as Final Judgment at the end of time.<sup>30</sup> In that moment, unbelievers will be compelled to speak truthfully in acknowledging that the noble living they observed in their Christian neighbors actually reflected the activity of Almighty God in the lives of these believers. This acknowledgement will be expressed as praise of God: *δοξάσωσι τὸν θεὸν*. Perhaps in a desperate move they will seek to avoid eternal damnation with a useless attempt to utter positive words to the God they treated with contempt all their lives. But as Jesus made pointedly clear in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 7:21), “Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” Desperate words coming too late make no difference in the eternal destiny of these who have slandered God’s people for living by God’s standards.

Clearly from 2:11-12 we have a huge responsibility to live by God’s standards, and not by paganism. We

<sup>28</sup>“*ἐπισκοπή, ἦς, ἡ* (s. prec. entry; Lucian, D. Deor. 20, 6= ‘visit’; OGI 614, 6 [III A.D.] = ‘care, charge’; Etym. Gud. 508, 27= πρόνοια; LXX; TestBenj 9:2; JosAs 29, end cod. A *ἐπισκοπή ἐπισκέπτεσθαι* τινα of God; Just., D. 131, 3).

**1. the act of watching over with special ref. to being present, visitation**, of divine activity

a. of a salutary kind (so Gen 50:24f; Ex 3:16; Wsd 2:20; 3:13; Job 10:12; 29:4 al.) *καιρὸς τῆς ἐ. the time of your gracious visitation* (Wsd 3:7) **Lk 19:44**. *ἐν ἐ. τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ when the kingdom of Christ visits us* 1 Cl 50:3. *ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς* **1 Pt 2:12** is understood in this sense by the majority (e.g. Usteri, BWeiss, Köhl, Knopf, Windisch, FHauck, et al.). S. also b below.—The gracious visitation can manifest itself as protection, care (Job 10:12; Pr 29:13; 3 Macc 5:42; Just., D. 131, 3; Orig., C. Cels. 6, 71, 8 [as providential care w. πρόνοια]) *ἐν ἐνότῃ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπισκοπῇ* in unity w. God and under God’s care IPol 8:3.

b. of an unpleasant kind (Hesych.= ἐκδίκησις; Jer 10:15; Sir 16:18; 23:24; Wsd 14:11; Theoph. Ant. 2, 35 [p. 188, 26]); *ἡμέρα ἐ.* (cp. Is 10:3) **1 Pt 2:12** is so understood by the minority (e.g. HvSoden, Bigg, Goodsp.; Danker, ZNW 58, ’67, 98f, w. ref. to Mal 3:13–18). S. a above.

**2. position of responsibility, position, assignment** (Num 4:16) of Judas’ position as an apostle *τὴν ἐ. λαβέτω ἕτερος* let another take over his work (not an office as such, but activity of witnessing in line with the specifications in **Ac 1:8, 21f**) **Ac 1:20** (Ps 108:8).

**3. engagement in oversight, supervision**, of leaders of Christian communities (a Christian ins of Lycaonia [IV A.D.] in CB I/2 p. 543; Iren. 3, 3 [Harv. II 10, 2] al.; Orig., C. Cels. 3, 48, 20) **1 Ti 3:1** (s. UHolzmeister, Biblica 12, ’31, 41–69; CSpicq, RSPT 29, ’40, 316–25); 1 Cl 44:1, 4.—DELG s.v. σκέπτομαι. M-M. EDNT. 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), 379.]

<sup>29</sup>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?”

<sup>30</sup>“The result of such observation, namely, the glorification of God, occurs on the ‘day of visitation’ (*ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς*). While it is possible that this could refer to the time of the conversion of the nonbelievers,<sup>80</sup> and has been suggested to mean the trial of Christians as wrongdoers not at God’s hands but at the hands of the civil authorities,<sup>81</sup> the use of this phrase in the Bible points rather to the time of the final judgment.<sup>82</sup> The thrust of the verse is therefore not that the good works Christians do will deliver them from unjust oppression when those who observe them are led to conversion, but that at the time of the final judgment nonbelievers will be brought to the realization that the Christians did what they did at God’s behest and with divine approval, and thus be led to glorify God.<sup>83</sup>” [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), 178.]

have been transformed by God's power in conversion; we now are obligated to live a 'noble life' with the highest standards of morality. This responsibility must be fulfilled even in the midst of slanderous criticism by our non-Christian neighbors. They must see God at work in our lives, and one day they will acknowledge it.

Much of contemporary Christianity suffers greatly from having compromised itself with the ways of the world around it. The non-Christian world looks at believers and doesn't see any real difference from themselves. Why then should they make a Christian commitment? The spiritual reality of eternity is hidden from their eyes. The richness of a relationship with God in this life is not understandable. They simply see worldly Christians and conclude that there's nothing of value in Christianity for them.

Over the centuries Christian groups have sometimes promoted being different from the world. Often, however, this difference is superficial and centers in wearing different kinds of clothes, not using make-up, fixing one's hair differently etc. Such 'differences' are phoney and not what Peter is talking about in this passage. Bumper stickers on our cars and crosses hanging around our necks carry no impact for Christ.



The primary way believers will impact their world is by how they live before their non-Christian neighbors. To be certain, this lifestyle must not be a 'do-gooder's' lifestyle. Self effort at doing good works will not have an impact! Mostly it will drive people away from Christ.

Peter's method is clear and forcefully presented: what non-Christians see in us must be τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν, 'a lifestyle' produced ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων, from noble deeds. Our ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν καλήν, 'noble lifestyle,' must reflect the activity of God in our life. This is why non-believing critics will be forced to praise God, δοξάσωσι τὸν θεόν, on the Day of Judgment. They won't praise believers; instead, they will have to acknowledge the activity of God in the lives of believers even though they refused to accept it at the time.

Here is the way to spiritual awakening in our world. This is the only way to spiritual renewal. Such is the key strategy in evangelistic outreach to the pagan world. Until a significant percentage of Christianity realizes this biblical truth, spiritual decline and deterioration will continue to happen in country after country. Christianity will continue to shrink and impact ever smaller percentages of the population.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 10**  
**1 Peter 2:13-17**  
**“Civic Duties of Believers”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

13 Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον· εἴτε βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, 14 εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι’ αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν 15 (ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀγαθοποιούντας φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν)· 16 ὡς ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, ἀλλ’ ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι. 17 πάντας τιμήσατε, τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπάτε, τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

13 Fügt euch um des Herrn willen jeder von Menschen gesetzten Ordnung. Ordnet euch dem Kaiser unter, der an höchster Stelle steht. 14 Ordnet euch seinen Vertretern unter, die er eingesetzt hat, um alle zu bestrafen, die unrecht tun, und alle mit Anerkennung zu belohnen, die das Rechte tun.

15 Denn Gott will, dass ihr durch eure guten Taten alle zum Schweigen bringt, die aus Dummheit und Unwissenheit gegen euch reden. 16 Handelt als freie Menschen; aber missbraucht eure Freiheit nicht, um ein zuchtloses Handeln damit zu entschuldigen. Denkt daran, dass ihr nur frei seid, weil Gott euer Herr geworden ist. 17 Ehrt alle Menschen, liebt die Gemeinschaft der Brüder und Schwestern, fürchtet Gott, ehrt den Kaiser!

**NRSV**

13 For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, 14 or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. 15 For it is God’s will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. 16 As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. 17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

**NLT**

13 For the Lord’s sake, accept all authority -- the king as head of state, 14 and the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish all who do wrong and to honor those who do right. 15 It is God’s will that your good lives should silence those who make foolish accusations against you. 16 You are not slaves; you are free. But your freedom is not an excuse to do evil. You are free to live as God’s slaves. 17 Show respect for everyone. Love your Christian brothers and sisters. Fear God. Show respect for the king.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Acknowledge human authority, vv. 13-16](#)
  - b. [Honor everyone by certain actions, v. 17](#)

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**Introduction to Study.** As Peter continues his encouragement to believers to develop proper relationships to ‘outsiders’ who are not a part of the church, he reaches out in vv. 13-17 to government authorities as the first specific group to be mentioned. This text raises the topic of Christian relationships to government leaders. Closely connected to this text is the related discussion by Paul in Romans 13:1-8,

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; 4 for it is God’s servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. 6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, busy with this very

thing. 7 Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. 8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Both Peter and Paul work off the foundational principle set forth by Jesus earlier and recorded in Matthew 22:16-21,

16 So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. 20 Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” 21 They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then he said to them, **“Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”**

By word and action, Jesus set the example of submitting to governmental authority, even though the individual leaders were not godly persons, and they often severely abused that authority in unjust treatment of the people of God. When Paul and Peter had their words penned in the mid 50s to early 60s, the Roman ruler in mind was Emperor Nero, who became the first and one of the worst persecutors of Christians in the first century. In these teachings of Jesus and his two disciples in the NT, the *quality of leadership* and *personal morality* of the individual leaders don’t alter Christian responsibility to accept their governmental authority. The leaders’ attitude toward Christianity, either support of or hostility to, has no bearing on our responsibility to them and their authority. Regardless of who they are, we have responsibilities to them that are spelled out in considerable detail by both Paul and Peter. Our focus is on Peter’s words, but those of Paul in Romans will provide supplementary insight as well.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>But this comparison must keep in mind not just the similarities but also the differences between the two texts, as Achtemeier and Epp point out:

“Similarities in language between 1 Pet 2:13–17 and Rom 13:1–7 have led some to conclude that the passages make a very similar point,<sup>18</sup> and that they may indeed stand in a direct literary relationship to one another.<sup>19</sup> Yet despite such similarities, 1 Peter displays a very different attitude to civil authority, and seeing it in the same light as the passage in Romans inevitably makes inaccessible the intention of the passage.<sup>20</sup> A careful comparison of the passages shows their very different intentions.

“Comparison of language will turn up a number of similar words,<sup>21</sup> but they are used so differently that the similarity is all but completely overshadowed. A consideration of such words will make the point clear.

“1. Both use a form of ὑποτάσσω, in Rom 13:1 referring to ‘superior authorities,’ which the rest of the passage makes clear are of divine establishment (vv. 1, 2, 4a, c). In 1 Pet 2:13 subordination is to be shown to every human creature,<sup>22</sup> with no word about their divine authority.<sup>23</sup> In a similar vein, while governing authority (ἐξουσία borne by ἄρχοντες) is established by and subordinate to God in Rom 13:1–2, governors (ἡγεμόνοι) are sent by and are hence subordinate to the emperor in 1 Pet 2:14.

“2. Both use a form of ὑπερέχω (‘be superior’), but in Rom 13:1 it refers to superior authorities of divine establishment, while its use in 1 Pet 2:13 refers to the ‘king,’ who has been identified as a ‘human creature.’

“3. Similarly, the phrases about punishing evildoers and praising those who do good are used in a context of divine action in Rom 13:3–4, but in a context of the purely human emperor and his governors in 1 Pet 2:14.

“4. Most striking is that both passages end using forms of φόβος (‘fear’) and τιμάω (‘to honor’) in the same order. Yet their use in Rom 13:7 is very general, in 1 Pet 2:17 quite specific. More importantly, 1 Peter reserves the use of ‘fear’ for God, while its use in Rom 13:3 refers simply to a very human fear in the presence of overwhelming governmental power directed at miscreants. The use of ‘honor the emperor’ in 1 Pet 2:17 as a direct parallel to ‘honor all people’ specifically divests the emperor of any and all trappings of divine authority or power.

“5. Both passages use θέλημα, but in Rom 13:3 it refers to human will, in 1 Pet 2:15 to God’s will.

“6. The primary motive for subordination in both passages is God’s will (1 Pet 2:12: διὰ τὸν κύριον, ‘because of the Lord’; Rom 13:5: διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, ‘because of [your] conscience’), but the secondary motives are quite different: escaping fear and gaining praise in Rom 13:3; putting an end to ignorant accusations against the Christians in 1 Pet 2:15.<sup>24</sup>

“There are other significant differences between the two passages. 1 Peter contains no reference to taxes (as in Rom 13:6–7); there is no use of abstract words for rule such as ἐξουσία or ἄρχοντες (as in Rom 13:1–3); there is no parallel in 1 Pet 2:13–17 to the idea that human rulers are God’s stewards (θεοῦ διάκονος, Rom 13:4, bis) or that opposition to them is tantamount to opposition to God (Rom 13:2); and there is no reference in Romans 13 to the fact that Christians are both free and slaves of God (1 Pet 2:16). Finally, political activities, while the principal concern of 1 Pet 2:13–17, are not the exclusive concern they are for Rom 13:1–7. While Paul deals exclusively with such activity in Romans, the author of 1 Peter begins by treating emperor and governors as subsets of the class κτίσις ἀνθρώπινη (‘human creature,’ 2:13), and concludes with advice on the Christian’s relationship to all people, to fellow Christians, and to God, in addition to the emperor (2:17).

“It is therefore apparent that while there is similar vocabulary in the two passages, the use to which that vocabulary is put is quite different, and those elements in each passage for which the other has no parallel point the respective passages in different directions,

## I. Context and Background<sup>2</sup>

Understanding the historical and literary background is important for this passage, since the political atmosphere behind Peter's words is very different than what most believers in the modern world experience. Only believers living in oppressive governmental situations in our world where Christianity is not tolerated have a clear sense of the significance of what Peter admonished believers in his day to do.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The history of the copying of this passage reflects a high level of stability for the text. This is signaled first by the absence of any variant readings in the text apparatus of the UBS 4th rev. edition of the Greek New Testament. In the Nestle-Aland 27th rev. edition Greek New Testament, a few variations of wording are listed in the apparatus, which again are mostly stylistic in nature. First, in verse 13, some late manuscripts add οὖν, "therefore," as the second word of the sentence in order to tie vv. 13-17 back to vv. 11-12 as an implication now being expressed directly. The great majority of early and important manuscripts do not include this conjunction. Several very late manuscripts add μὲν to the contrast in v. 14 between ἐκδίκησιν, "punishment," and ἔπαινον, "praise." This grammatical device simply heightens the contrast that is already implied in the conjunction δὲ. But again the early and significant manuscripts do not contain the μὲν. In verse 16, a few copyists were uncomfortable with the phrase θεοῦ δοῦλοι, "slaves of God," and in its place substituted θεοῦ φιλοί, "friends of God." But the overwhelming weight of evidence favors θεοῦ δοῦλοι. In verse 17, some confusion over the tense of the imperative verb to love surfaces. Was it present or Aorist tense? That is, is the command to 'be loving' or just 'love'? The verse contains four imperative verbs: τιμήσατε ('honor', Aorist), ἀγαπάτε (present, 'be loving'), φοβεῖσθε (present, 'be fearing'), and τιμᾶτε (present, 'be honoring'). Evidently their intent was to divide out the four verbs equally between the Aorist and present tense imperative forms, but in so doing they missed the implicit structure in these four verbs with the 'header' command coming first as an Aorist imperative, then followed by three ongoing responsibilities (present tense verbs) flowing out of the broad 'header' command. We will look at this further in the exegesis section below.

Once more our examination of the copying of this passage over the first eight centuries reveals a high degree of stability for this passage. No major variation in reading occurs, and the very minor variations represent attempts to polish the writing style of Silas.

**Internal History.** The time and place markers inside verses 13-17 are limited to broad indirect historical allusions. The responsibilities of the believing communities in Anatolia were centered on the government officials in place both in Rome and also in the five specific Roman provinces mentioned in 1:1, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. We know from detailed Roman records that Nero was the emperor from 54 to 68 AD in Rome. The various provinces, as reflected in the map, were controlled either by the emperor (green) or by the Roman senate (brown), and thus had different statuses in the empire. In the late 50s to mid 60s, this region, known also as Anatolia, was securely under Roman control, but a diverse mixture of Roman military officers, local rulers etc. administered the polices of the empire locally. With huge differences in culture, history, population demographics etc. governmental



the most striking of which is that the insistence in Romans 13 that rulers bear divine authority is totally absent in 1 Peter 2.25 The passages are thus quite different,<sup>26</sup> and to attempt to find the same point in both because of a superficial similarity of language is to overlook the very different point each passage seeks to make.<sup>27</sup> The increasing importance of the emperor cult,<sup>28</sup> particularly in Asia Minor, by the time 1 Peter was written, and the different destinations to which Romans and 1 Peter were addressed, are probably to be understood as the reasons for the different emphases in the two letters." [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), 180-82.]

<sup>2</sup>Serious 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.

authority ranged from a relatively ‘hands off’ approach all the way to rigid control by Rome. Governors and other regional leaders were continually in flux with their positions always dependent on the whims of either the emperor or the senate. The one constant was the presence of Roman soldiers throughout the region. Thus believers in these provinces, along with their neighbors, had to adjust to a constantly shifting expression of imperial authority over their lives. The eastern most province of Cappadocia was the most sparsely settled area and frequently served as a frontier buffer between the Romans and the Parthians to the east.

**b. Literary**

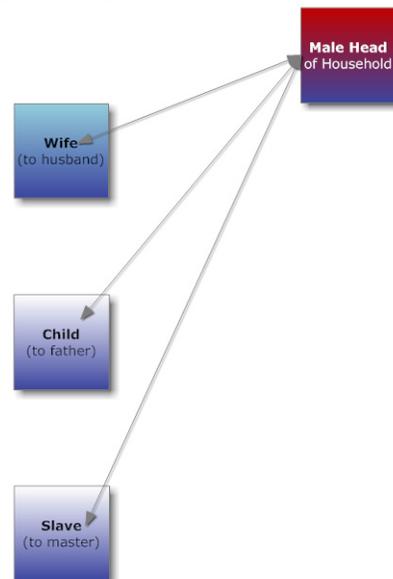
**Literary Form (Genre).** At the broad genre level, 2:13-17 continues the emphasis of the letter body, and in particular the emphasis begun in 11-12 on relationships to ‘outsiders.’ At the narrow genre level, considerable discussion centers around whether this material, 2:13-3:7, stands as a unit and constitutes Peter’s version of the ‘family code,’ often labeled *Haustafeln* from Luther’s heading. If this material is to stand together, then 13-17 must be understood as the ‘introduction’ to it, because the very well defined structure of the family code in Col. 3:18-4:1 and Eph. 5:21-6:9 is not found here in First Peter.<sup>3</sup> In Paul, the *Haustafeln* involved three sets of relationships in the ancient family: *husband to wife; father to children; and master to slave*. Only the first and last of these are touched upon in First Peter: 2:18-25 (slaves/masters) and 3:1-7 (wives/husbands). And Peter addresses these two pairs of relationships from a very different angle than does Paul.

My personal assessment of this is that 2:13-17 is better taken as a broader ‘community code,’ i.e., *Gemeinde Tafeln*, that is closely related to the Family Code but stands distinct from it. Romans 13:1-8 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 stand as two primary examples with an emphasis upon responsibility of the Christian community to outsiders, and to government authorities in particular. In First Peter the broader community code begins the discussion which then narrows down to the family code in 2:18-3:7. This close linking of the two areas of responsibilities stands as the basis for the continued dominate emphasis in the family code on the believer to the outsider: Christian slaves to non-Christian masters and Christian wives to non-Christian husbands. Even the grammar patterns will reflect this close relationship.

**Literary Context.** As the outline to the right illustrates, the literary setting for 2:13-17 is clear. First, it continues an emphasis begun in 2:11-12, where abstaining from fleshly desires was seen as a key strategy for defending believers from pagan criticism of their religious commitments. The noble standard of living to be followed by believers is made real by the “honorable deeds” (τῶν καλῶν ἔργων) that pagan neighbors observe in the living of the believers. This will stand as a witness not to the accomplishments of the believers but rather to the power of God at work in the lives of believers.

But what are noble deeds? Verses 13-17 lays out on the table several of these, with the dominant stress on how believers relate to the governmental authorities. Their acceptance of governmental authority stands them apart from their neighbors who complained about the government and especially those who agitated for rebellion against Roman authority. In no way could Christians be perceived

**Ancient Family: Haustafeln  
Ephesians, Colossians, First Peter**



**Outline of Contents  
in First Peter:**

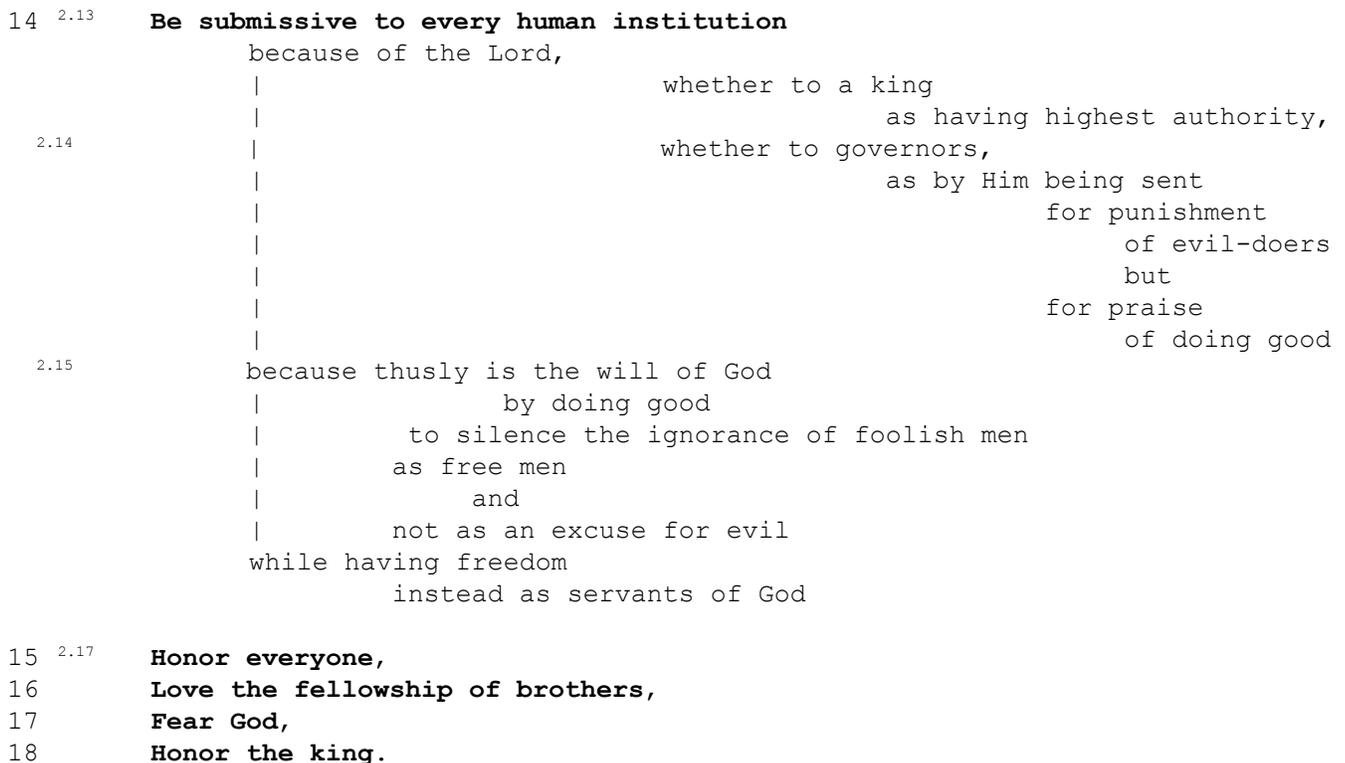
- Praescriptio: 1:1-2**
  - *Superscriptio*, 1:1a
  - *Adscriptio*, 1:1b-2a
  - *Salutatio*, 1:2b
- Proem: 1:3-12**
  - *Core*, 1:3a
  - *Expansion*, 1:3b-12
- Body: 1:13-5:11**
  - *Holy living* 1:13-2:10
    - *Ideals* 1:13-25
    - *Privileges* 2:1-10
  - *Obligations* 2:11-3:12
    - *Civic* 2:11-17
    - *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

<sup>3</sup>The background of the *Haustafeln* surface in the Greco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds, as Michaels notes: “Many parallels have been cited in Greek and Latin literature, but the most convincing ones are those from the Hellenistic Judaism of the NT period (e.g., Philo, Decal. 165–67; Hyp 7.14; Philo, Spec. Leg. 2.226–27; Josephus, C. Apion 190–219; Pseudo-Phocylides, Maxims 175–227).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 122.]

legitimately as agitators against Rome fomenting civil unrest among the population.

The listing of these 'noble deeds' will continue in the Family Code emphasis for Christian slaves to serve their human masters with honesty and integrity and thus distinguish themselves from the non-Christian slaves. A similar emphasis comes to the wife to live a godly life before her non-Christian husband as the key way to win him over to faith in Christ. This elaboration of specific 'noble deeds' concludes with 3:8-12. In this section, Peter is especially concerned that the believing community exhibit to the outside world that Christ calls humanity to live by much higher standards that make for peaceful relationships and rich life experiences. The impact of such examples upon non-believers will be significant and will be a major avenue by which God can bring them to faith commitment to Christ. Thus, 2:13-17 begins the elaboration of specific examples of 'noble deeds' alluded to in 2:11-12.

**Literary Structure.** The block diagram below visually highlights the primary ideas with their expansion elements.



The passage clearly divides itself into two sections: statement 14 and statements 15-18. The first admonition is broad and calls for acknowledgement of the authority of governmental leaders, including both the emperor and regional governors. Two religious oriented reasons are given, the first one general (διὰ) and the second one more specific (ὅτι). The second section, #s 15-18, come as a rapid first set of admonitions with a header introduction (#15) and three specific admonitions (#s 16-18) flowing out of the first admonition.

This twofold structure of the passage will provide the organizing structure of our study of the text.

## II. Message

Many Christians in today's world seldom give much consideration to responsibilities to 'outsiders.' Especially is this so in the Americas and Europe where Christianity is the dominate religion of these cultures. But where Christianity is only a minority group, and especially a very small minority, the responsibilities of believers to their non-Christian neighbors takes on significant meaning. Peter makes it very clear that all believers have duties to the outside world. And starting in this passage he lays down a number of those responsibilities.

### a. Acknowledge human authority, vv. 13-16.

13 For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme,



perative verb calls upon believers to acknowledge deliberately the rightful authority of certain individuals in society. Who that is, Peter defines as πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει, which is very difficult to translate accurately into English.<sup>5</sup> The term κτίσει is personal and not abstract. Against the backdrop of NT usage of the term, as well as the specification of the emperor and governors that follows, Peter clearly admonishes recognition of the legitimate authority of governmental leaders, but not as ‘gods’ (which was a tendency especially in Anatolia) and only as human beings created by God and accountable to God for the conduct of their authority over others. This is clearly implied in the phrase πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει, ‘every human authority.’

With somewhat different words, Paul advocates a similar stance in Rom. 13:1a, Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω (“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities...”). Again the focus is personal, and not institutional. When Paul and Peter expressed these ideas, Nero was the emperor and they both had him in view, not the institution of the emperorship, or merely the abstract concept of the Roman government in mind. And Nero was the ruler who ultimately had them executed! Believers are not called upon to merely accept the legitimacy of governmental authority. Instead, they are admonished to acknowledge the legitimate authority of individual rulers.

The basis for this acknowledgement is given by Peter as διὰ τὸν κύριον, “because of the Lord.” With a similar concept but with much greater detail Paul says (Rom. 13:1b-2), οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὐσαὶ ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσὶν. ὥστε ὁ ἀντιπασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθέστηκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται. (“for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.”) After elaborating on this some, Paul repeats the essence of this reason in 13:5: διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν (“therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.”). Rejection of civil authority will bring punishment down upon such a person, as Paul indicates in vv. 3-4. Additionally, Paul goes on to say that such acknowledgment of legitimate authority by government leaders means pragmatically to pay the taxes owed to them (Rom. 13:6-7): 6 διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε, λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσὶν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες. 7 ἀπόδοτε πᾶσι τὰς ὀφειλάς, τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος, τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν. (“6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, busy with this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.”). Both Peter and Paul have a common view that such acknowledgement of legitimate authority is not theoretical, but is functional and concrete.

**Details of acknowledgement.** In the expansion of the core admonition in vv. 13b-14, Peter makes very clear his intentions: “whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right.” (εἴτε βασιλεῖ<sup>6</sup> ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, 14 εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι’ αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν) In clarifying what he means by πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει, he specifies two governmental leaders, βασιλεῖ (emperor) and ἡγεμόσιν (governors).<sup>7</sup> The emperor is defined 2008), 486-87.]

<sup>5</sup>“to every human creature (*pasēi anthrōpinēi ktisei*). The expression is without parallel in secular as well as Biblical Greek and poses questions regarding both translation and meaning. The rendition of *ktisis* as ‘institution’ (RSV, NRSV, NEB, Selwyn) is inappropriate, for the abstraction ‘institution’ is a modern rather than an ancient concept. In secular Greek as a *nomen actionis*, it can denote the ‘founding’ of a city (Strabo, Geogr. 12.4.8); in the biblical literature it is used of the act of divine creation (Rom 1:20; Pss. Sol. 8:7; cf. Josephus, J.W. 4.533) or the result of the creative act: individual persons or things created, ‘creature’ (Tob 5:8, 15; Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 5:17; Heb 4:14), or the sum of everything created, ‘creation’ (Mark 10:6, 13:19; 2 Pet 3:4; Barn. 15:3). Here in 1 Peter, its reference to persons rather than ‘institution’ is clear from the qualifying words that follow, ‘whether to the emperor ... or to governors’; see also 2:18; 3:1, 5; and 5:5a, where subordination is to human persons and not ‘institutions’ (so Teichert 1949; Goppelt 1993, 182; and against Gielen 1990, 396–400, who favors institutionalized ‘order’). The rendition ‘creature,’ moreover, is consistent with the identification of God as ‘creator’ (*ktistēs*) in 4:19. In connection with emperor and governors, human creature has a particular salience. With this expression, imperial power is subtly but decisively demystified, desacralized, and relativized (Goldstein 1973, 92). In contrast to devotees of the imperial cult who render obeisance to the emperor as ‘Lord and God’ (*dominus et deus*, a title claimed by Domitian [Suet., Dom. 13.2]), Christians respect the emperor and his representatives only as human creatures, due only the deference owed to all human beings (stressed again in v 17). Ultimate supremacy is reserved for God the creator, and it is ‘because of him, the Lord,’ that Christians are subordinate (Schelkle 1976, 73; Gielen 1990, 401–2).” [John H. Elliott, 1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 489.]

<sup>6</sup>The Greek term Καῖσαρ (Caesar) is not used here because it has the nature of a title derived from a personal name, and thus would not have been a natural term for Peter’s meaning.

<sup>7</sup>“εἴτε βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, ‘whether to the emperor as sovereign.’ The transition from ‘every human creature’ to the Roman emperor in particular seems abrupt. The emperor was obviously not typical of the general populace with whom readers of the epistle

ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, as having highest authority,<sup>8</sup> and this was clearly the case in Peter's day. Also ἡγεμόσιν are specified, which indicates Roman governors in 19 of the 20 uses in the New Testament, especially when distinguished from a βασιλεύς. These rulers over the provinces indicated in 1:1 would have been closer to the readers in terms of interaction and contact.

Thus Peter characterizes them ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν ("as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right."). Here Peter echoes the words of Paul in Rom. 13:3-4, "3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; 4 for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer." (3 οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ. θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν; τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἔξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς· 4 θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. ἐὰν δὲ τὸ κακὸν ποιῆς, φοβοῦ· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὴ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ· θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν, ἔδικος εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τὸ κακὸν πράσσοντι.) Both Peter and Paul agree that the core divine assignment to government authorities is to maintain law and order and to promote the welfare of the people they rule over. Clearly, not every governmental authority either then or now follows this mandate. But the apostles' position is that they are accountable to God who will exact severe punishment on them for stepping outside this mandate.

The mentioning of doing good prompts Peter to inject a related idea in verse 15: ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀγαθοποιοῦντας φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν. ("For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish.") Acknowledging the authority of governmental leaders could also be accomplished by doing good, since it would erase any legitimacy for the authorities punishing believers. Were they to come down on believers, it would reflect their ignorance of the religious commitment of believers, who posed no direct threat to their authority and to the contrary acknowledged this authority as derived from their own God. Peter defines such a stance as τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ (the will of God).

In verse 16, Peter picks up the sentence of 13-14 again with a reminder to believers: ὡς ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, ἀλλ' ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι ("those who do right...as free people, and not as those using freedom as a pretext for doing evil, but as God's servants").<sup>9</sup> Peter affirms the spiritual liberation of believers (ἐλεύθεροι) meaning that in Christ they are free to serve God and only God. But such freedom

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would come in contact. The same transition occurs in 1 Tim 2:1-2, where it is a matter of intercessory prayer:

I urge (παρκαῶ) first of all, therefore, that petitions, prayers, entreaties, and thanks be made for all people (ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων)—for kings and all who are in authority... and—in reverse order—in Titus 3:1-2

Remind them to deter to rulers and authorities and to comply with them, to be ready for every good work, to slander no one, to be peaceable and cooperative, demonstrating humility toward all people (πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους)

"Paul makes a similar transition in Romans 12-13 where the command to defer to ruling authorities (13:1-6) is framed by the more general social obligations, whether to fellow citizens (πάντες ἄνθρωποι, 12:16-17) or fellow believers (ἀλλήλους, 12:10, 16, 13:8)."

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 124-25.]

<sup>8</sup>Of the 3 meanings given in BDAG, #2 is appropriate here for ὑπερέχω: "2 fig. **to be in a controlling position, have power over, be in authority (over), be highly placed** (οἱ ὑπερέχοντες='those in authority', 'superiors' Polyb. 28, 4, 9; 30, 4, 1 7; Herodian 4, 9, 2; Artem. 2, 9 p. 92, 17 H. [p. 109, 25 P.]; 2, 12 p. 102, 4 H. [p. 121, 21 P.]; PGM 4, 2169; of kings Wsd 6:5) βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι **1 Pt 2:13**. ἐξουσία ὑπερέχουσαι *governing authorities* (Syntipas p. 127, 4) **Ro 13:1**. οἱ ὑπερέχοντες *those who are in high position* (cp. Epict. 3, 4, 3; Diog. L. 6, 78; Philo, Agr. 121) B 21:2, *those who are better off* (economically) Hv 3, 9, 5. λαὸς λαοῦ ὑπερέξει *one people shall rule over the other* B 13:2 (Gen 25:23)." [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), 1033.]

<sup>9</sup>"The use of the nominative instead of the accusative (which would have agreed with the preceding ἀγαθοποιοῦντας and the implied ὑμᾶς) links this verse with the imperatives that dominate vv 13-17—either the ὑποτάγητε of v 13 or the series of four imperatives in v 17—and thus tends to confirm the parenthetical character of v 15. The tendency of most commentators is to link the sentence with ὑποτάγητε (e.g., Hort, 145; Selwyn, 173; Kelly, 111; Goppelt, 187; Brox, 122). Such a link is difficult to express in translation: Kelly's 'Live as free men' (107) virtually makes a new beginning, while Goppelt's '(Tut dies) als die Freien' (180) links the sentence more to v 15 than v 13. Once it is recognized that the four imperatives of v 17 resume and expand on the single imperative of v 13, a better alternative presents itself. The connection of v 16 with the ὑποτάγητε of v 13 is most easily maintained not by suppressing its connection with v 17 but precisely by emphasizing it: 'As those who are free ... yet as God's slaves, show respect for everyone...'" [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 128.]

does not provide any justification<sup>10</sup> for evil actions (τῆς κακίας).<sup>11</sup> Their commitment to God as His slaves (θεοῦ δοῦλοι) mandates that they follow His directives, which includes doing good and acknowledging the authority of civic leaders.

This emphasis comes back to Peter's general admonition in verse 12: "Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge." His deep concern was that the believers would function as good witnesses of their Christian faith to the governmental authorities. By their lives filled with good actions reflecting acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the governmental leaders' authority, not only these authorities but their pagan neighbors in general would sense that Christianity offered something not found in any other religious tradition. Hopefully some of them would then be attracted to this new religious movement.

One other word needs to be said about Paul's admonition in 1 Timothy 2:1-6<sup>12</sup> and Titus 3:1-2<sup>13</sup> since they touch on this theme as well. To Titus, Paul urged that he admonish the Cretans "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,..." (Υπομίμησε αὐτοὺς ἀρχαῖς ἐξουσίαις ὑποτάσσεσθαι πειθαρχεῖν, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοίμους εἶναι, 2 μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπιεικεῖς, πᾶσαν ἐνδεικνυμένουςπραῦτητα πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους.) This is entirely consistent with his words to the Romans and to Peter's words in our text. To Timothy, Paul urged him to encourage the Ephesians "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity." (Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις, εὐχαριστίας, ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 2 ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι.) The emphasis here is for believers to employ all kinds of prayer to God in behalf of governmental leaders. The goal is so that these leaders will allow believers to live "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity." This will enable them to do good day by day without harassment from these authorities.

How can we apply this admonition of Peter to our world? At first glance seem easy to apply; every believer today should acknowledge the legitimate authority of the government in the country where he/she lives. This sounds nice, but how should it work in real life? The situation is far more complex than one might assume. These words of Peter, and of Paul, were written in a society that had well designed structures of society with assumed 'stations' of life for every person. This perspective functioned in the context of a collective society, where the individual possessed no inherent rights or value apart from connection to the community. Western idealism with its emphasis upon inherent value and rights for every person is almost completely opposite in its thinking to the ancient world. In modern culture, authority begins with the individual and extends out to society that is given authority through its governing institutions for the welfare of individuals. This is the exact opposite of the world of the New Testament! Authority was a 'top down' process where aristocratic segments of society possessed all authority -- often under the assumption of divine mandate -- and they extended either authority and/or freedom to differing segments of society considered to be inferior to them.

Peter and Paul call upon believers to acknowledge this authority of the upper levels of society, and then to live out their lives within the framework of that ancient model of human authority. We, however, live in a world

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<sup>10</sup>ἐπικάλυμμα, lit., 'covering,' is used here metaphorically in relation to evil or misconduct (κακία; cf. Menander, Fragments 84 [90], ed. A. Koerte [Leipzig, 1953], 2:41: ἐπικαλυμμ' ἐστὶ κακῶν). The expression could refer either to something before the fact (i.e., an excuse or pretext for evil) or after the fact (i.e., a cover-up). The context supports the former; Peter's assumption is that his readers have put aside the κακία of their past life (cf. 2:1), and his concern is that they not take it up again." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 129.]

<sup>11</sup>Peter has in mind not political or social freedom (which for household servants [2:18-25] and wives [3:1-6] was limited at best), but freedom in Christ from the 'ignorance' (1:14) or 'darkness' (2:9) of paganism. The freedom of the epistle's readers was the result of being 'redeemed' (ἐλυτρώθητε, 1:18) with the blood of Christ. For Peter, as for Paul, this freedom is part of a paradox. Christians are free from all that bound them in the past, but at the same time they are slaves of God committed to full and unqualified obedience (cf. Rom 6:18, 22)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 128.]

<sup>12</sup>1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all —this was attested at the right time."

<sup>13</sup>1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone."

that rejected this model with the Enlightenment and the democratic revolutions beginning in the 1700s. The possession of authority was flipped on its head and replaced by the individual who then in community agrees to grant authority to elected individuals so that they can govern society. The previous 'divine right to rule' by kings that dominated Europe until the Enlightenment was totally rejected. The individual retains the ultimate right to take away governing authority from those who do not rule within established law. Systems of checks and balances have been put in place by different countries in order to guarantee this ultimate authority of the individual.

In theory, it should be easier to apply these biblical principles of acknowledging the authority of governmental leaders in our day. But in reality, it was easier in the apostles' day than in ours. Western democratic societies based upon individual rights necessitate citizens, including believers, to be deeply involved in the governing processes. How to do that as Christians is not easy, as a quick survey of religious involvement in the political processes of different countries in Europe and the Americas will dramatically illustrate. Great wisdom and profound understanding are essential, or else, Christians make fools of themselves with dumb mistakes. The harm done to the credibility of the Gospel in the eyes of non-Christians is immense.

What Jesus, Peter, and Paul advocate as foundational is that believers accept the legitimate power of government leaders to govern, whether they do it well or badly. This works well even in modern western society as long as the values of the believers from God's Word don't collide with the values being advocated by these government leaders. When, on the other hand, these two sets of value do clash with one another, clearly the believer is obligated to remain true to his/her Christian values while being willing to suffer punishment from these government leaders. First Peter 3:8-22 will address this issue more directly. Early on in his service to Christ, Peter expressed the core principle well in Acts 5:29, "[We must obey God rather than any human authority.](#)"

The great caution here is to make sure that our Christian values are grounded in clearly expressed biblical principle. Often what parades itself as 'Christian value' is really nothing more than regional cultural values with little or no biblical basis whatsoever. For example, note the use of the Bible to justify slavery in the US until the American Civil War. Christian values often get mixed up with local cultural values while still being considered to be Christian. Then when they clash with the prevailing values of governing leaders, Christians falsely claim persecution. Much of what is going on in the US these days reflects this false perception of things. A US oriented civil religion is gradually replacing biblically based Christian values in issues like prayer in the schools etc. with disastrous consequences to the Gospel. When the government comes down hard on such, Christians falsely scream persecution and rejection of Christianity. But such is not the case.

One major difference between believers today and those in Peter's day is that we have the opportunity to modify or change not only who governs but also the way they can govern over us. Such an option to the first readers of this letter from Peter would not have even been considered imaginable. The only way to curb the abuses of governing authorities in that world was through brute force and violent rebellion. But the New Testament is abundantly clear that such action was not allowable to believers. Jesus, in His trial before Pilate, set the example of passive submission to abuse, and New Testament writers will use that as a model for believers to follow, as we will see in 1 Peter 2:20-25. This raises the issue of 'civil disobedience' and 'non-violent resistance' by believers to governmental abuses. But this topic is better treated in the subsequent texts in First Peter that come closer to how believers are to respond to injustices inflicted upon them.

To live in obedience to God's demand that we acknowledge the governing authority of our leaders today is quite challenging, and requires real wisdom and sensitivity to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

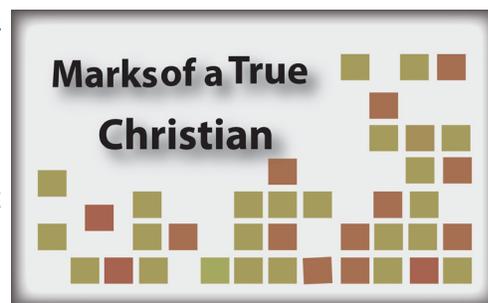
**b. Honor everyone by certain actions, v. 17**

17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

17 πάντας τιμήσατε, τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπήτε, τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλεῖα τιμᾶτε.

**Notes:**

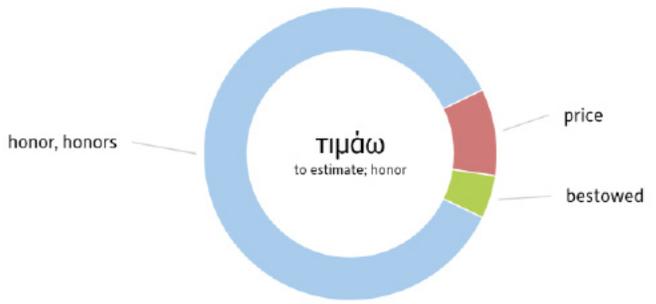
Just as Peter moves from the more specific admonition to a set of more general admonitions, so does the apostle Paul in his words to the Romans (13:7b-10): "...respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. 8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one



who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet’; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.” Paul built his general principles off the OT principle of loving one’s neighbor. Peter opted to issue a set of rapid fire admonitions covering a broad range of responsibilities.

*Some points consistent to all four admonitions.* *First*, the object of each admonition is placed before the verb. The limits of English will not allow such in a translation, but in the Greek this was done to highlight emphasis upon who is to be the object of Christian responsibility. Whom we honor, whom we love, whom we fear -- these are special points of emphasis in Peter’s words. *Secondly*, the first and fourth verbs are the same, from τιμάω. This sets up boundary markers, i.e., inclusia markers, holding these admonitions together as a unit expression. *Third*, the tense of the verbs is important, although obscured by translation. The first verb, τιμήσατε, is Aorist imperative, thus intensifying the thrust of the command. Given its inclusive object πάντας, ‘everyone,’ it functions as a ‘header’ admonition laying down a basic principle. The remaining three verbs, αγαπάτε, φοβεῖσθε, τιμάτε, are present imperative verbs. The significance of this is to emphasize that these three responsibilities grow out of the first ‘header’ admonition. And also the use of the present tense verb stresses ongoing responsibility, rather than a momentary obligation. *Fourth*, these admonitions, as reflected in the larger context of 2:11-3:7, emerge, in a general way, from the inclusive designation in 2:13 πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει, “every human creature.”<sup>14</sup> To acknowledge the authority of such individuals is expressed concretely in honoring, loving, reverencing. But one must not press this too far since the third admonition to fear God doesn’t easily fit this structure.

**Honor everyone:** πάντας τιμήσατε. Paul comes at this with slightly different words in Rom. 13:7: ἀπόδοτε πᾶσι τὰς ὀφειλάς,...τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν (Give back honor to the one whom honor is due.). What is showing honor? The verb τιμάω is used some 21 times in the New Testament either with the meaning “to set a price on” something, or “to show high regard for someone”, which is more commonly how it is used in the NT.<sup>15</sup> Both in attitude and actions we demonstrate respect and appreciation to the other individual when we ‘honor them.’<sup>16</sup>



**Love the family of believers:** τὴν ἀδελφότητα αγαπάτε. The second admonition, now in the present tense as an ongoing responsibility, relates to loving the τὴν ἀδελφότητα. Used only twice in the NT and only by Peter in this letter, the term refers to the communities of believers scattered in the provinces specified in 1:1 and in a broader setting in 5:9, τῇ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι, ‘your family of believers in the world.’ It also

<sup>14</sup>Not every commentator agrees with this understanding, but in reading several alternative explanations, most of which made little sense and seemed very artificial, this seems to me to be the better understanding.

<sup>15</sup>**2. to show high regard for, honor, revere** τινά someone God (X., Mem. 4, 3, 13; Diod S 6, 1, 4; 8 τοὺς θεοῦς; Strabo 16, 2, 35; Dio Chrys. 16 [33], 45; 58 [75], 8; Ael. Aristid. 13 p. 297 D.: πρὸ τῶν γονέων; freq. in honorific inscriptions, s. indexes in the various corpora, also New Docs 3, 37 no. 9, 3 [96/97 A.D.]; Is 29:13; EpArist 234; Philo; Jos., Ant. 9, 153; 256; Just., A I, 9, 1; Orig., C. Cels. 8, 56, 35) **Mt 15:8; Mk 7:6;** 1 Cl 15:2; 2 Cl 3:5; cp. 3:4.—**J 5:23bd; 8:49** (Jesus honors his Father). Christ J 5:23ac. On GpT 3:9 s. τιμή 2a (cp. Just., A I, 6, 2; 13, 3). Parents (Ex 20:12; also Ar. 15, 4) **Mt 15:4; 19:19; Mk 7:10; 10:19; Lk 18:20; Eph 6:2.** Cp. **Mt 15:6.** Elders (older members of the community) 1 Cl 21:6. The supervisor (ἐπίσκοπος) ISm 9:1a. Teacher of the divine word D 4:1. Those who are really widows **1 Ti 5:3** (though the mng. of τιμή 3 may be influential here; cp. Sir 38:1). πάντας (JWilson, ET 54, 42/43, 193f), τὸν βασιλέα **1 Pt 2:17ab.** (Opp. προσκυνέω Theoph. Ant. 1, 11 [p. 82, 5]). τ. πολλαῖς τιμαῖς (τιμή 2a) **Ac 28:10;** cp. GpT 3:9. Abs. Dg 5:15.—Of God (Soph., Fgm. 226 TGF ὃν τιμᾷ θεός; pass. 4 Macc 17:20) or Christ: (show) honor (to) or reward the Christians (so Isocr. 9, 42; X., An. 1, 9, 14; 5, 8, 25, Cyr. 3, 3, 6; Diod S 2, 3, 2 τιμῶν δῶροις; 2, 6, 9; 14, 42, 1; 16, 13, 1; Ps.-Callisth. 2, 1, 2 τιμάω τινὰ χρυσῶ; pass. Hdt. 7, 213; Lys. 12, 64; 19, 18; Diod S 15, 74, 1.—On the rewarding of devout persons by God: Ps.-Aristot., Mund. 6, 23 τιμᾶν; Simplicius, In Epict. p. 79, 11 Düb. τιμᾶν κ. κολάζειν; Mel., P. 73, 535 ἡτίμησας τὸν τιμήσαντά σε) **J 12:26;** 1 Cl 59:3; IPhld 11:2; pass. ISm 9, 1b.—The officials of a congregation are called οἱ τετιμημένοι ὑμῶν (partitive gen.) the honorable men among you D 15:2 (οἱ τετιμημένοι of persons in high standing: X., Cyr. 8, 3, 9). For ἡ αὐτοῖς τετιμημένη λειτουργία 1 Cl 44:6 s. λειτουργία 1b.—DELG s.v. τιμή. M-M. EDNT. 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), 1004-05.

<sup>16</sup>In Matthew 15:1-9 is a graphic illustration of phoney ‘honoring’ of parents that Jesus soundly condemns. The decalogue commandment to “Honor your father and mother” meant the concrete action of financially supporting them in their old age, although some in Jesus’ day had tried to find a loophole around this. Deeds cannot be separated from attitude!

repeats what Peter already encouraged in 1:22: “love one another deeply from the heart” (ἐκ καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς).

Mutual love for fellow believers is a critical means of giving witness to the outside world of the difference that Christ makes, as Jesus declared in John 13:34-35: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Peter’s repetition of the command here, with different words, underscores this principle in his emphasis on Christian responsibility to outsiders in our text.

**Fear God:** τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε. This admonition, also as an ongoing responsibility, repeats 1:17: “live in reverent fear during the time of your exile” (ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε). Another clear signal to outsiders of Christian commitment is our stance toward God. If we treat Him casually or superficially, the outside world quickly senses that God is unimportant. But if genuine honoring of God is expressed by our reverence for Him in attitude and actions, the outside world realizes that God matters. Of course one place where this is most visible is in Christian worship. How we worship Him reflects whether or not we revere Him.

**Honor the emperor:** τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε. Peter concludes where he began in verse 13 with believers showing proper respect for the emperor. The majority of them never saw Nero in person, and he never visited where they were living in Anatolia. But the local governors stood as his representatives and the believers did have some interaction with these men. Thus how they treated Nero’s representatives indicated whether or not they respected the emperor.

Wow! Peter has loaded up our spiritual plate heavily! We stand under heavy obligation to make sure our attitude, words, and actions about and toward governmental leaders are acceptable to God. For this to be true, these must stem from an acceptance of their authority to govern as God given. And this acceptance of their authority is reflected in concrete actions showing honor and respect. This responsibility also extends to fellow believers and to our God as well.

One application side note. I don’t read in any of these texts where a political campaign provides an exemption from these responsibilities. Seemingly in the political patterns emerging in western cultures, with the US perhaps being the worst example, the attitude is that political campaigning gives one an open door for every conceivable kind of denigration of character, the telling of outright lies, and a whole host of other character slandering words and actions. It will be an interesting day when believers who have engaged in this kind of sinful conduct are called upon by Almighty God to try to justify every word and deed done in these situations.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 11**  
**1 Peter 2:18-25**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

**“Serving Non-Christian Bosses”**

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**Greek NT**

18 Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπόταις, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς. 19 τοῦτο γὰρ χάρις εἰ διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσῃων ἀδίκως· 20 ποῖον γὰρ κλέος εἰ ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε; ἀλλ' εἰ ἀγαθοποιοῦντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῶ. 21 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ· 22 ὃς ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ· 23 ὃς λοιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδορεῖ, πάσῃων οὐκ ἠπεῖλει, παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως· 24 ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὐ τῷ μῶλωτι ἰάθητε. 25 ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

18 Ihr Sklaven und Sklavinnen, ordnet euch euren Herren und Herrinnen unter, und erweist ihnen den schuldigen Respekt, nicht nur den guten und freundlichen, sondern auch den launischen. 19 Es ist eine Gnade Gottes, wenn jemand ohne Schuld nur deshalb Kränkungen erfährt und leiden muss, weil er im Gewissen an Gott gebunden ist. 20 Habt ihr etwa Grund, euch zu rühmen, wenn ihr ein Unrecht begangen habt und dafür geschlagen werdet? Aber wenn ihr das Rechte getan habt und dafür leiden müsst, ist das eine Gnade von Gott. 21 Und eben dazu hat er euch berufen. Ihr wisst doch:

Christus hat für euch gelitten und euch ein Beispiel gegeben, damit ihr seinen Spuren folgt. 22 Ihr wisst: »Er hat kein Unrecht getan; nie ist ein unwahres Wort aus seinem Mund gekommen.« 23 Wenn er beleidigt wurde, gab er es nicht zurück. Wenn er leiden musste, drohte er nicht mit Vergeltung, sondern überließ es Gott, ihm zum Recht zu verhelfen. 24 Unsere Sünden hat er ans Kreuz hinaufgetragen, mit seinem eigenen Leib. Damit sind wir für die Sünden tot und können nun für das Gute leben. Durch seine Wunden seid ihr geheilt worden! 25 Ihr wart wie Schafe, die sich verlaufen haben; jetzt aber seid ihr auf den rechten Weg zurückgekehrt und folgt dem Hirten, der euch leitet und schützt.

**NRSV**

18 Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. 19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. 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. 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. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

**NLT**

18 You who are slaves must accept the authority of your masters. Do whatever they tell you -- not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are harsh. 19 For God is pleased with you when, for the sake of your conscience, you patiently endure unfair treatment. 20 Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing right and are patient beneath the blows, God is pleased with you. 21 This suffering is all part of what God has called you to. Christ, who suffered for you, is your example. Follow in his steps. 22 He never sinned, and he never deceived anyone. 23 He did not retaliate when he was insulted. When he suffered, he did not threaten to get even. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. 24 He personally carried away our sins in his own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by his wounds! 25 Once you were wandering like lost sheep. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

## Quick Links to the Study

### I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

### II. [Message](#)

- a. [Be respectful of those in authority, v. 18](#)
- b. [The reasons why, vv. 19-25](#)

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## Introduction to Study.

This lengthy passage continues the emphasis on outsiders that was begun in 1:11-12. But it turns a corner into a 'household code,' i.e., *Haustafeln*, format, although with some very distinctive traits in comparison to the more common Pauline expressions of the code in Eph. 5:22-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1. Additionally, Paul will have instructions for Christian slaves in 1 Tim. 6:1-2; and Titus 2:9-10. All of these texts, related to Christian slaves, form an important backdrop to Peter's very distinctive instruction here.

**Ephesians 6:5-9.**<sup>1</sup> **5 Slaves**, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; 6 not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, 8 knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free. 9 And, **masters**, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.

**Colossians 3:22-4:1.**<sup>2</sup> **3.22 Slaves**, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. 4.1 **Masters**, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

**1 Timothy 6:1-2.** 1 Let all who are **under the yoke of slavery** regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them on the ground that they are members of the church; rather they must serve them all the more, since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these duties.

**Titus 2:9-10.** 9 Tell **slaves** to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, 10 not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior.

**1 Corinthians 7:20-24.** 20 Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called. 21 Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. 22 For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters. 24 In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.

In the *Haustafeln* materials of Ephesians and Colossians, instructions to both Christian slaves and Christian slave owners are given. But in 1 Timothy, Titus, and First Corinthians instructions are given only to Christian slaves. In First Timothy, the instructions assume the Christian slave has a Christian owner, while in Titus the religious orientation of the owner is left undefined. The distinctive of First Peter is that the owner is assumed to not be a Christian, and the Christian slave is to be a witness to his non-Christian owner. This diversity of perspective reflects the individual needs of the groups being addressed by Peter and Paul in their letters.

The challenge of this text is one of application. We live in a world where slavery is at least illegal, although still present mostly as the forced bondage of women and children. In today's world a 'Christian slave owner' would be a contradiction of terms and not possible legitimately. The women and children in our world, who are enslaved for sexual abuse or for cheap labor, are caught up in a condition not legitimate and usually not legal.

This is a radically different situation than existed in the first century Roman empire that Paul and Peter are addressing. That world was dominated by slaves with almost a fourth of the Roman Empire populated by slaves. Unlike in early



<sup>1</sup>For a detailed study of the Ephesians *Haustafeln*, see Lorin L. Cranford, "Eph. 5:22-6:9: An Ancient Christian Family," at [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com).

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed study of the Colossians *Haustafeln* on slaves, see Lorin L. Cranford, Colossian Bible study 16 on 3:22-4:1 at [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com).

modern Western society where slavery was primarily ethnically based, slaves in the Roman Empire were mostly captured prisoners in military battles of the Roman army without any particular ethnic orientation. With the collapse of the Seleucid Empire (100-63 BC) years before, that included the region of First Peter, thousands of people in Anatolia were taken into slavery and shipped westward to the Italian peninsula. The readers of First Peter had a long history of exposure to slavery, and many of the believers in the various churches in Anatolia were themselves slaves. The best known example from this era is the runaway slave Onesimus whose Christian owner was Philemon, and lived in Colossae in the province of Asia. Paul's letter to Philemon deals with the issue of Philemon accepting Onesimus back after he had become a Christian. In early church tradition, this converted, runaway slave rose to become a pastor and spiritual leader in early Christianity. Some of these traditions claim that Onesimus followed Timothy as spiritual leader at Ephesus.<sup>3</sup> But we have no way of validating the accuracy of these church traditions to know with certainty what Onesimus did. But the reality of Onesimus' conversion and acceptance back by his Christian owner does provide a face to what Peter is talking about to his readers in our text, and this text would have especially spoken to the church at Colossae in the province of Asia when it was read to them.

Given this significant difference between that world and ours, how does this passage apply today? Clearly the assumption of slavery in the background of Peter's words no longer has relevance today.<sup>4</sup> Slavery then was an accepted fact of life, but no so in our world.<sup>5</sup> A growing movement prompted through the United Nations is attempting to stamp out all forms of slavery in our day. The UN sponsored *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* "states that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights' (Article 1) and that 'no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms' (Article 4)." The institution of slavery has no legitimacy in the modern world, and is banned. This reflects a substantial cultural distance between Peter's world and ours. And this automatically excludes any interpretation of these scripture texts to imply legitimacy for slavery as an institution in our world. The impact of Christian teachings over the centuries has brought western society to this opposition to the institution of slavery.

How then can we apply these teachings of Peter to our day? A common approach is to see the slave / owner as symbolic of employee / employer relationships. But this is highly questionable, to say the least. Basic principles of biblical interpretation seriously question such a linkage. Instead, one has to look more fundamentally at the slave / owner relationship in the ancient world for clues to patterns of relationship that might have relevance in our world. First of all, in the ancient world, the slave was a family member, not an outsider. He/she was connected to the male head of the household and looked to this person for the basics of daily existence. Roman law required slave owners to make basic provisions for their slaves, and most provided reasonably well for their slaves and some very generously. Many slaves received extensive education from their masters and served as doctors, lawyers, book keepers etc., sometimes with more education than their owners. The Greek term οἰκονόμος typically specified the slave who literally was the 'law of the house' and answerable only to the master, and had administrative responsibilities over the entire household. Roman law did give slaves some legal rights, although they were limited.

What the ancient experience of slavery suggests is a relationship of authority where one person comes under the authority of another person. This is perhaps the proper clue for finding modern applications of the principles set forth by Peter. Where believers find themselves under the authority of another person, whether that be in a work place, a school room, a social organization or whatever, this text has something important to say about believers relating properly to the authority individual. This perspective will guide our attempt to find contemporary meaning for this passage.

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<sup>3</sup>See "Apostle Onesimus," *Orthodoxwiki.org*, for details.

<sup>4</sup>"The NT presupposes and uncritically accepts slavery as an institution. The → parables of Jesus mention it (Matt. 18:23–35; 25:14–30; Luke 12:42–48; 17:7–10), but faith in Christ makes slaves and freemen equal before God (Gal. 3:26–28). Because believers have the eschatological → kingdom of God in view, social distinctions fade, and the community of faith is to assemble in → love for Christ. → Paul, then, can direct slaves to obey their masters, and masters to deal with their servants in a way that is pleasing to God (Eph. 6:5–8; Col. 3:22–4:1, → Household Rules; see also 1 Pet. 2:18–25). Paul emphatically calls himself a 'slave of (Jesus) Christ' (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10 NRSV marg.) and points to the new being 'in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:26, 28; see also 2:20), which makes all believers brothers and sisters (Phlm. 16)." [Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley, vol. 5, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill, 2008), 32.]

<sup>5</sup>An interesting chart, "Abolition of slavery timeline," in Wikipedia online charts out the legal outlawing of slavery around the world. Mauritania in west Africa was the last country to officially abolish slavery in 1981.

## I. Context and Background<sup>6</sup>

Although some attention to background issues has already been given above, other details will also play an important role in the interpretation of this text.

### a. Historical

**External History.** In the UBS 4th revised edition of the Greek New Testament variations of text readings occur at verses 19, 21, and 25, as listed in the text apparatus for Bible translators. This listing signals three places where variations of readings take place with enough importance to impact the translation of the text into other languages. In verse 19, later copyists felt the word χάρις needed further qualification.<sup>7</sup> Several manuscripts add παρὰ τῷ θεῷ after χάρις, so that it reads “this is grace from God...”. But the earliest and most important manuscripts do not contain παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, since it is implicit in the text already. Also efforts to clarify the phrase συνείδησιν θεοῦ, “a consciousness of God.” The adjective ἀγαθὴν is added either before or after θεοῦ in order to create the expression “a good conscious to God,” or else replaces θεοῦ with ἀγαθὴν resulting in the simpler expression “a good conscious.”<sup>8</sup> Once again the earliest and most important manuscripts favor the text reading συνείδησιν θεοῦ.

In verse 21, the verb ἔπαθεν, “he suffered,” is replaced with ἀπέθανεν, “he died,” in several manuscripts. Either makes sense, but the second verb is also used to replace ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, “once for all he suffered for sin,” in 3:18 by most of the same manuscripts with the more common “for sin he died.”<sup>9</sup> The weight of manuscript evidence favors ἔπαθεν over ἀπέθανεν in both 2:21 and 3:18. Also in verse 21, some late manuscripts have ἡμῶν ἡμῖν, “in our behalf for us,” instead of ὑμῶν ὑμῖν, “in your behalf for you.”<sup>10</sup> Overwhelmingly the evidence supports ὑμῶν ὑμῖν, the second person plural reference.

In verse 25, the participle πλανώμενοι is changed to πλανώμενα by several manuscripts.<sup>11</sup> The shift from

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<sup>6</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>7</sup>“In order to identify more precisely the idea conveyed by χάρις, copyists added various supplements, παρὰ τῷ θεῷ (from God), θεῷ (by God), and θεοῦ (of God). In translation, this implicit information may be made explicit. Compare TEV: ‘God will bless you for this.’ Even if translators follow the reading in the text, they still have to decide whether χάρις here refers to the unmotivated grace of God or whether, as Elliott (1 Peter, p. 518) argues, it ‘describes a human action of one who is mindful of God’s will ... or a human action that is credible in God’s sight.’” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 484.]

<sup>8</sup>“The difficulty of interpreting the expression διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ, a collocation that occurs only here in the New Testament, prompted copyists to introduce one or another alleviation. In accord with Ac 23:1; 1 Tm 1:5, 19 some witnesses (C 94 206 322 323 424c 614 915 1175 1518 1739 2298 syr<sup>p</sup>, h) replace θεοῦ with ἀγαθὴν. In other witnesses the two readings are conflated, producing θεοῦ ἀγαθὴν (A\* Ψ 33) and ἀγαθὴν θεοῦ (P72 81). The reading θεοῦ is strongly supported by κ A2 B K L P most minuscules vg cop<sup>sa</sup>, bo eth John-Damascus.” [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), 619.]

<sup>9</sup>“The reading ἔπαθεν, which is strongly supported by P72 A B C<sup>vid</sup> 33 81 614 1739 it<sup>ar</sup>, t, z vg syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>sa,bo</sup>, fay<sup>vid</sup>, was replaced in other witnesses (including κ Ψ 209\* 2127 syr<sup>p</sup> arm) by ἀπέθανεν, probably under the influence of the variant reading in 3:18.” [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), 619-20.]

<sup>10</sup>“Both external evidence and transcriptional probabilities join in favoring ὑμῶν ὑμῖν as the original reading. Supported by representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western types of text (P72 κ A B C 81 it<sup>ar</sup>, w, z vg syr<sup>h</sup>), the reading was altered by copyists either because of carelessness (having confused ὑ and ἡ, which were pronounced alike), or because reference to the work of Christ as an example to the readers alone seemed to be too limited.” [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), 620.]

<sup>11</sup> “The external evidence for each reading is fairly evenly balanced (-μενοι, κ A B 1505 2464 al; -μενα, P72 C Ψ and most minuscules), but in transcription the tendency to change to the neuter form was very natural in view of the word πρόβατα immediately preceding.” [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), 620.]

the masculine to the neuter participle shifts the translation from “you are being led astray like sheep” to “you are like sheep being led astray.” The manuscript evidence is divided enough that the reading could go either way, although the meaning remains the same whichever way it is taken.

The text apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition of the Greek New Testament lists 18 variant readings in these verses. The 13 additional ones, beyond those discussed above, have even less impact on the reading of the text, and/or surface in very late manuscripts with little indication of being original readings of the text.

Hopefully, from the above discussion, you can sense that when variations of readings do surface in the first eight hundred years of copying the Greek New Testament, these differences seldom have a major impact on the meaning of the scripture text.

**Internal History.** The time and place markers in vv. 18-25 center around the interaction between slaves and their masters in the first century world. And, secondly, around the trial and crucifixion of Jesus on the cross.

Slavery in ancient Rome formed the economic backbone of the Roman empire.<sup>12</sup> It motivated most of the expansion efforts of Rome beyond the Italian peninsula, along with a craving for new sources of wealth. The cheap labor of slaves provided most of the costs of living for the upper classes in Rome. Military conquests by the Romans was primarily to increase their wealth through plundering conquered lands and the importing of fresh supplies of slaves from the conquered peoples. The destruction of conquered territories was not massive, because the Romans supplemented their wealth from subsequent taxation of these territories. Of course, the different regions of the eastern Mediterranean Sea where this letter was sent had their own history of more localized slavery as well. Powerful aristocratic individuals in these provinces, apart from the Romans living there, were slave owners. The Roman law governed their treatment of their slaves, but how thoroughly these laws were enforced would be determined by the local Roman authorities.<sup>13</sup> And this would depend on

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Societies, 1994), 620.]

<sup>12</sup>“Slavery in the ancient world, specifically, in Mediterranean cultures, comprised a mixture of debt-slavery, slavery as a punishment for crime, and the enslavement of prisoners of war.<sup>[1]</sup> The institution of slavery condemned a majority of slaves to agricultural or industrial labour and they lived hard lives. In some of the city-states of Greece and in the Roman Empire, slaves formed a very large part of the economy, and the Roman Empire built a large part of its wealth on slaves acquired through conquest.” [“Slavery in antiquity,” *Wikipedia online*]

<sup>13</sup>The legal status of slaves:

\* Slaves were property. Owners exercised *dominium* over slaves. *Dominium* was the absolute right to dispose of and control the use of a piece of property. Interestingly enough, the authority of a pater over persons in his family was most frequently described as *potestas*. Legally, slavery was conceived of as a kind of death. Romans deemed citizens who did not return from battle as ‘dead’ because a captured citizen who survived battle would most certainly become an enemy slave. Thus, his will was read, his marriage formally ended, because the citizen was ‘socially’ dead to the Roman world.

\* Similarly, the Romans legally conceived of the slaves they owned as cut off from all the rights and rituals of human society. Slaves could have no family. In practice, slaves formed relationships and had children. But they had no legal authority to protect these relationships. If you were a slave who had borne or fathered a child, the child was not yours. Similarly, while owners frequently gave slaves a *peculium* (an allowance), the slave had no right to it and had to surrender it on demand. The *peculium* was simply a device which permitted an owner to use his property more efficiently. Note that the legal theory here sounds very rigid (like the pater’s *ius necandi*) and that social practice was much more flexible.

\* A slave by definition had no honor or dignity. The essence of being a slave was the inability to protect one’s body. While every citizen had the right to trial and appeal before they suffered physical punishment, a slave was defined by the absence of such a right and expectation. An owner could beat and abuse slaves (and it could not legally be considered assault) and compel sex from slaves of either sex (and it could not be considered rape). [Romans did not deal well with the notion that female citizens slept with male slaves, however.] If someone had sex with a slave without the owner’s permission, however, the owner could sue that person for trespass.

\* The inviolability of the citizen’s body was a very important concept in the complex of ideas that constituted Roman identity. One of Cicero’s most telling charges against Verres, the corrupt governor of Sicily, is that he beat citizens (something only a tyrant would do). One of the most surprising aspects of St. Paul’s identity was his Roman citizenship. He was able to protect himself from abusive treatment by local authorities with the simple assertion “*civis Romanus sum*.”

\* The mere experience of a state in which an individual could not protect his own body from abuse was inherently and permanently degrading. Thus, even if your owner treated you quite well, Romans believed that you were degraded simply by being subject to another man’s ability to treat you poorly if he chose.

\* A child born of a slave woman was a slave (the legal status of his father being irrelevant) and the property of the slave

how favorably these authorities viewed individual aristocrats.

Jews living in Anatolia possessed slaves, but they were governed by the Torah of the Old Testament, which laid down specific guidelines on the treatment of slaves:

Old Testament or Tanakh

Leviticus draws a distinction between Hebrew debt slavery:

25:39 If your brother becomes impoverished with regard to you so that he sells himself to you, you must not subject him to slave service.

25:40 He must be with you as a hired worker, as a resident foreigner; he must serve with you until the year of jubilee,

25:41 but then he may go free, he and his children with him, and may return to his family and to the property of his ancestors.

25:42 Since they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt, they must not be sold in a slave sale.

25:43 You must not rule over him harshly, but you must fear your God.

and “bondslaves”, foreigners:

25:44 As for your male and female slaves who may belong to you, you may buy male and female slaves from the nations all around you.

25:45 Also you may buy slaves from the children of the foreigners who reside with you, and from their families that are with you, whom they have fathered in your land, they may become your property.

25:46 You may give them as inheritance to your children after you to possess as property. You may enslave them perpetually. However, as for your brothers the Israelites, no man may rule over his brother harshly.

You could beat a slave within an inch of his or her life and if they died in the first day your punishment was a fine. If they survived one day and died, there was no fine.

Exo 21:20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished.

Exo 21:21 Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

As evident from the above, the Old Testament accepts the institution of slavery as such, but seeks to regulate it and ameliorate the slaves’ conditions. Transmitted throughout Western culture via Christianity (and given a slightly more anti-slavery spin in the New Testament), this ambiguous message could (and did) inspire both advocates of slavery and abolitionists.

That Christians, who came out of these backgrounds and lived in a slave owning culture, would possess slaves should not be surprising. Some of the New Testament texts treating slaves assume Christian owners, such as Philemon. To be clear, the tenor of the New Testament adamantly opposes the idea of one human owning another human, but the world of the New Testament did not share the values advocated by Jesus and the apostles, and it would take time before slavery as an institution began to be seriously questioned. Christianity began by seeking to help Christian slaves cope with their social situation, and by mandating very humane treatment of slaves by Christian owners.<sup>14</sup> Yet at the same time such declarations of Paul as “*there is no longer slave or free*” (Gal. 3:28b; cf. Col. 3:11 & 1 Cor. 12:13) laid the foundation for eventual abolition of slavery. By the second century many former slaves, now Christians, rose to leadership roles in the Christian movement.<sup>15</sup>

Thus this passage in First Peter must be understood against this historical backdrop on the situation of slavery in the first Christian century. Without understanding slavery in that world, we will be hard pressed to make correct sense of Peter’s words to slaves in our passage.

## **b. Literary**

**Literary Form (Genre).** The narrow genre issues of this text are complex but important for understanding our passage. Without serious question, 2:18-25 begins the Haustafeln material proper that will extend down through 3:7. Peter signals this in a unique way in Greek that is utterly impossible to preserve in English

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woman’s owner.

[“Roman Civilization: Roman Slavery,” *abacus.edu online*]

<sup>14</sup>Col. 4:1, “Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.”

Eph. 6:9, “And, masters, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.”

<sup>15</sup>See “Slavery and Christianity,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia online*.

translation. In 2:18 he begins the sentence with a participle rather than a regular verb: ὑποτασσόμενοι.<sup>16</sup> And the next two segments of the household code section will be introduced the same way: wives in 3:1, ὑποτασσόμεναι, and husbands in 3:7, συνοικοῦντες. These all build off the foundational admonition in 3:13, Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον. Ancient Greek utilized participles in a far greater range of functions than is possible with English participles. Consequently, the clearly embedded structure in the Greek text is completely erased in translation.

Although the instructions given by Peter to Christian slaves does not differ with the basically similar instructions given by Paul, the perspective is very different. Peter speaks to Christian slaves with non-Christian owners, while Paul either addresses Christian slaves with Christian owners, or slaves with either kind of owner. It is largely because of this perspective that Peter does not come back to address slave owners in their treatment of slaves. That there were Christian slave owners in the region addressed by First Peter is unquestioned since Colossians, Ephesians, First Timothy, and Philemon were all written to believers living in cities in the province of Asia that is included in First Peter. For unknown reasons, Peter felt no need to address these individuals, Christian slave owners, in his letter, whereas Paul did. This is one of those bits of unknown background derived from the ‘occasional’ nature of letters that would be interesting to understand, where it possible to learn the situation better.

The most controversial genre issue here relates to the nature of verses 22 through 25. The very distinctive, and repetitive use of the relative pronoun ὃς to introduce a series of short declarations about Jesus Christ has prompted numerous evaluations. The grammar pattern signals the use of ‘preformed Christian tradition,’ perhaps either a hymn or confession of faith statement.

Several questions emerge: Is the text quoting from pre-existing materials? If so, what was the nature of those materials? And how much of vv. 22-25 is quotation? Verse twenty only? Verses twenty through twenty-four? Or all of it? The N-A 27th revised edition of the Greek text places all five verses in poetic format indicating the editors’ view that all of it came from pre-existing material. But the UBS 4th revised Greek New Testament editors only list verse twenty-two in poetic format concluding that only this material is pre-existing, while the remainder is Peter’s composition. And Isaiah 53:9 is listed as the source of the quote in verse 22.<sup>17</sup> These two Greek texts represent the opposite ends of the spectrum on this topic.

*Is the text quoting from pre-existing materials?* Most scholars will answer yes to this question, but the agreement ends here. *If so, what was the nature of those materials?* Clearly the role of Isaiah 53:4-12 (LXX) is significant here.<sup>18</sup> Many will consider that Peter merely summarized Isaiah with application to Christ. But

<sup>16</sup>“The basic command is a participle rather than an imperative: ὑποτασσόμενοι (v 18), representing a further specific instance of the ὑποτάγητε of v 13. Deference to ‘every human creature’ covers far more than a citizen’s deference to the emperor or the provincial governor. It includes as well the deference of a domestic slave to his or her master, and of a wife to her husband. Peter focuses on these household situations in order to deal with something his optimistic view of the state and of Roman justice did not allow him to deal with in the preceding section: the possibility of suffering for doing good. While the state exists to punish wrongdoers and reward those who do good, the same is not true of every household. Peter calls attention precisely to the cruel master (v 18) and the unbelieving husband (3:1) in order to address cases where suffering could become a reality for some of his readers—and not just those who were literally domestic servants or wives.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 135.]

<sup>17</sup>Isaiah 53:9, “They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he *had done no violence*, and there *was no deceit in his mouth*.”

<sup>18</sup>LXX: **Isaiah 53:4-12**, 4 οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐλογισάμεθα αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐν πόνῳ καὶ ἐν πληγῇ καὶ ἐν κακώσει. 5 αὐτὸς δὲ ἐτραυματίσθη διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν καὶ μεμαλάκισται διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, παιδεία εἰρήνης ἡμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν, τῷ μῶλωπι αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἰάθημεν. 6 πάντες ὡς πρόβατα ἐπλανήθημεν, ἄνθρωπος τῇ ὁδῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπλανήθη, καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν. 7 καὶ αὐτὸς διὰ τὸ κεκακῶσθαι οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα, ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγῆν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἄμνος ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. 8 ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη, τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται; ὅτι αἴρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομιῶν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον. 9 καὶ δώσω τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν, οὐδὲ εὗρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ. 10 καὶ κύριος βούλεται καθαρῶσαι αὐτὸν τῆς πληγῆς, ἐὰν δῶτε περὶ ἁμαρτίας, ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὀψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον, καὶ βούλεται κύριος ἀφελεῖν 11 ἀπὸ τοῦ πόνου τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ, δεῖξαι αὐτῷ φῶς καὶ πλάσαι τῇ συνέσει, δικαιοῦσαι δίκαιον εὖ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς, καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν αὐτὸς ἀνοίσει. 12 διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοὺς καὶ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκῦλα, ἀνθ’ ὧν παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη, καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη.

[Septuaginta : With Morphology, electronic ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), Is 53:3–12.]

others are convinced that the allusions to Isaiah 53 have been filtered through an early Christian hymn based on Isaiah 53.<sup>19</sup> Three basic reasons are given as the basis for this assumption of a Christian hymn.<sup>20</sup> But counter arguments explaining these patterns in alternative ways are very possible and can be very persuasive.<sup>21</sup> Although the Block Diagram below visually tempts one to see hymnic qualities, the better conclusion is to see verses 21 through 25 as primarily Peter's interpretative application of Isaiah 53 to Christ, and via His example to believers, especially the slaves. Peter picks up phrases from Isaiah 53 and stitches them together in an eloquent praise of Christ and the example He set for His followers. Only verse 22 contains a long enough quote from Isaiah 53:9 to be considered a direct quote. Short phrases from Isaiah 53 are incorporated into the other expressions in verses 21-25. The modern label for this is Midrash or midrashic interpretation reflecting Peter's Jewish heritage in interpreting the Hebrew Bible, in a pattern that ancient Jewish scribes followed as reflected in the Talmud. Whether or not such a label applies to what Peter was doing here is questionable.<sup>22</sup>

**Literary Context.** The literary setting of 2:18-25 is charted out in the outline to the right. The passage continues the emphasis upon obligations, mainly to outsiders, begun in 2:11. This is the second of three major units of the letter body. 2:18-25 is the first segment of the three pronged Haustafeln section in 2:18-3:7, slaves (2:18-25), wives (3:1-6), and husbands (3:7). Because of the unique grammatical structure of the Haustafeln, a very close link of 2:18-3:7 to 2:11-17 exists, and particularly important is 2:13-17. One of the applications of the general admonition, "For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution," in 2:13a is 2:18-25, as well as 3:1-7. This will shape Peter's distinct perspective of addressing Christian slaves with non-Christian owners, in the continuation of the 'outsider' emphasis begun in 2:11. How could Christian slaves

<sup>19</sup>It has been widely argued (e.g., by Windisch and Preisker, 65; Bultmann, 295–97; Boismard, 111–32; Wengst, 83–86; and Goppelt, 204–07) that Peter is following not only (and not primarily) the text of Isa 53 itself but an early Christian hymn to Christ based on that passage (cf. also 1:20; 3:18–19, 22). [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 136.]

<sup>20</sup>Three features in the text of vv 21–25 as it stands have been cited as reasons to detect a possible hymnic source:

1. The shift from the second person plural pronouns in v 21 to the first person plural in v 24a-b, and back to the second person plural in vv 24c–25.
2. The repeated use of the relative pronoun ὅς in vv 22a, 23a, and 24a (for some scholars dividing the reconstructed hymn into strophes or stanzas; cf. ὅς ἐστιν in 1 Tim 3:16, and ὅς ἐστιν in Col 1:15, 18).
3. The thematic shift between Christ's example of endurance and non retaliation in time of suffering (vv 21–23: relevant to Christian slaves) and his vicarious suffering for sins (vv 24–25: relevant to the entire Christian community).

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 136.]

<sup>21</sup>This leads Michaels to discount the hymnic origin of this material and see it as Peter's commentary on Isaiah 53: "There is no need, therefore, to posit an early Christian hymn behind vv 21–25. Peter's text is adequately explained as a midrash on Isa 53:4–12 summarizing both the responsibility (vv 21–23) and the redemptive experience of the epistle's readers. Only v 23, ironically, the verse 'which, from the standpoint of style, shows the closest resemblance to parallel members of a hymn' (Osborne, 395), shows no direct influence of Isa 53. Not only Osborne, but several of those who attempt to reconstruct an ancient hymn from vv 21–25 judge v 23 to be 'almost certainly the creation of the author himself' (Osborne, 395; cf. Wengst, 85 and Goppelt, 205: with considerably more doubt, Bultmann, 285–97)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 137.]

<sup>22</sup>One should, however, be very careful about labeling every effort by NT writers to interpret OT texts as Midrashim, Midrash, midrashic. The tendency in modern biblical scholarship is to use the terminology very loosely and casually to label efforts of writers using the Hebrew Bible no matter how they approached it. The Talmud contains extensive examples of the development of both the Halakhah and Haqqadah types of Midrashim, developed especially by the rabbinic schools of Ishmael be Elisha and Akiba ben Joseph in the second century AD. See "Midrash," *Answers.com* for more details. These literary genres are very clear and well defined.

### 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

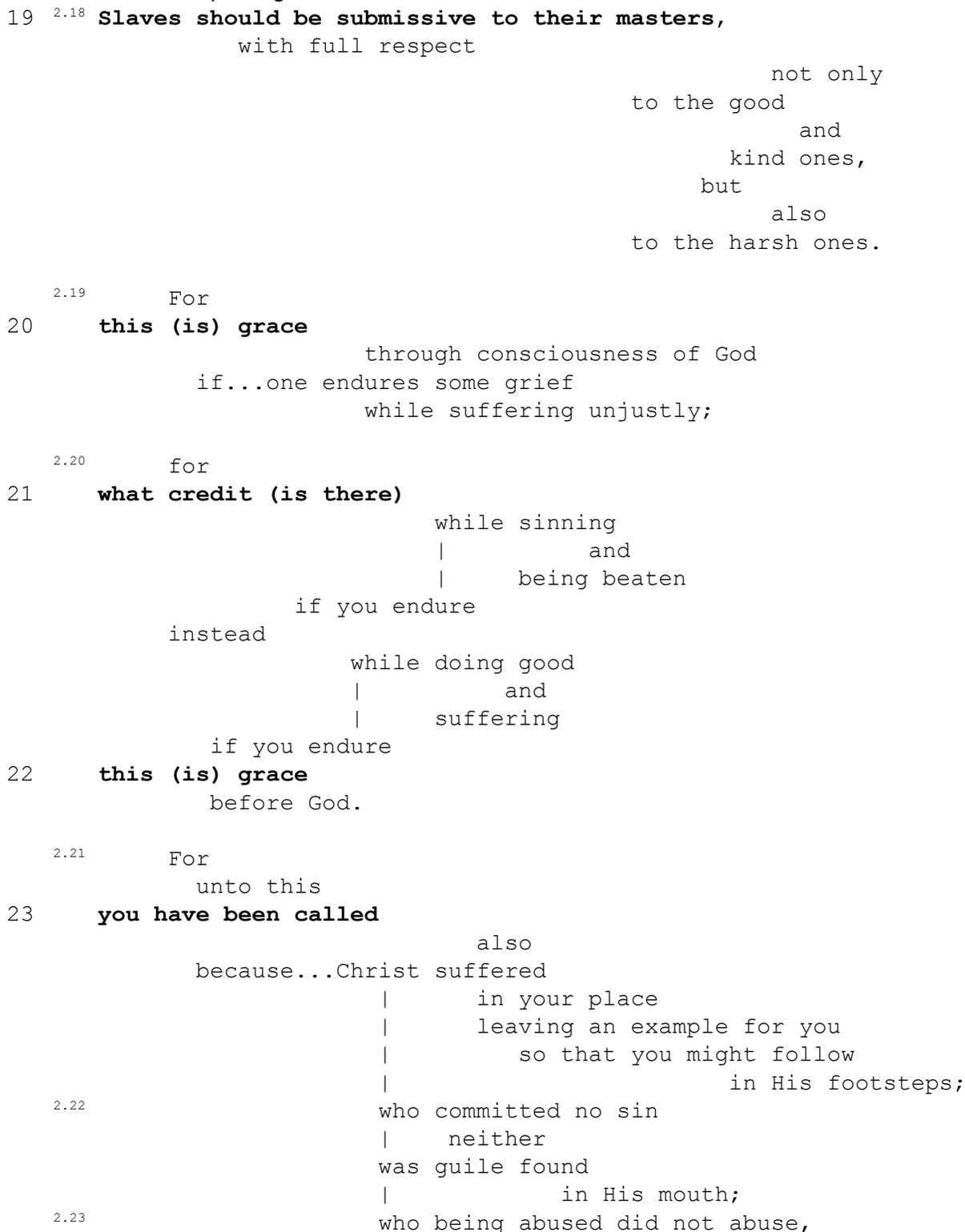
- *Holy living* 1:13-2:10
  - *Ideals* 1:13-25
  - *Privileges* 2:1-10
- *Obligations* 2:11-3:12
  - *Civic* 2:11-17
  - *Haustafeln* 2:18-3:7
  - *Social* 3:8-12
- *Persecution* 3:13-5:11
  - *Encouragement* 3:13-4:11
  - *Explanation* 4:12-19
  - *Proper Conduct* 5:1-11

#### Conclusio: 5:12-14

- *Sender Verification*, 5:12
- *Greetings*, 5:13-14a
- *Benedictio*, 5:14b

distinguish themselves to their non-christian masters? The core word of Peter is by showing proper recognition of their authority: ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ. In contrast to the Apostle Paul who would spell out the core obligation with details of specific actions, Peter does not go beyond the core admonition. Instead, he felt the need to provide a series of reasons for this obligation, which he specifies in detail in verses 19-25. Very quickly these verses beginning in verse 21 shift the focus to the example of Jesus that applies not just to the household slaves but generally to the believing community at large.

**Literary Structure.** The block diagram below, based on the Greek text, highlights the internal organization of ideas within the passage.



2.24 --- suffering did not threaten,  
 | but  
 --- entrusted Himself to the One who judges  
 | justly;  
 who Himself carried our sins  
 | in His body  
 | upon the tree  
 | being set free  
 | from our sins  
 | in righteousness  
 | so that we might live;  
 by whose strips you are healed.

2.25 For  
 24 **you...were being led astray**  
 like sheep  
 but  
 25 **you have returned**  
 now  
 to the Shepherd  
 and  
 Overseer  
 of your lives.

The arrangement of ideas in 2:18-25 is simple. The admonition (statement 19), which is built off the same verb in verse 13, is put before the readers. This is followed by three sets of reasons that provide the basis for the admonition. **First** in statements 20-22, there is nothing praiseworthy about enduring suffering for having done bad. Only enduring unjust suffering merits praise and divine blessing. **Second** in statement 23, unjust suffering is a divine calling based upon the example of Christ's experience in His trial and execution at the end of His earthly life. **Third** in statements 24-25, the readers are affirmed as having abandoned their wayward living to return to Christ as Shepherd and Caregiver of their lives. Thus they are following 'in His footsteps.' One should note the progression of ideas in these three reasons for the admonition.

## II. Message

Our study will revolve around the two natural emphases in the passage: the admonition (v. 18) and the basis for the admonition (vv. 19-25).

### a. Be respectful of those in authority over you, v. 18

Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh.

Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπότηταις, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς.

#### Notes:

The admonition contains three natural elements: **Who** is to do **What** to **Whom**? All three elements are significant for understanding.

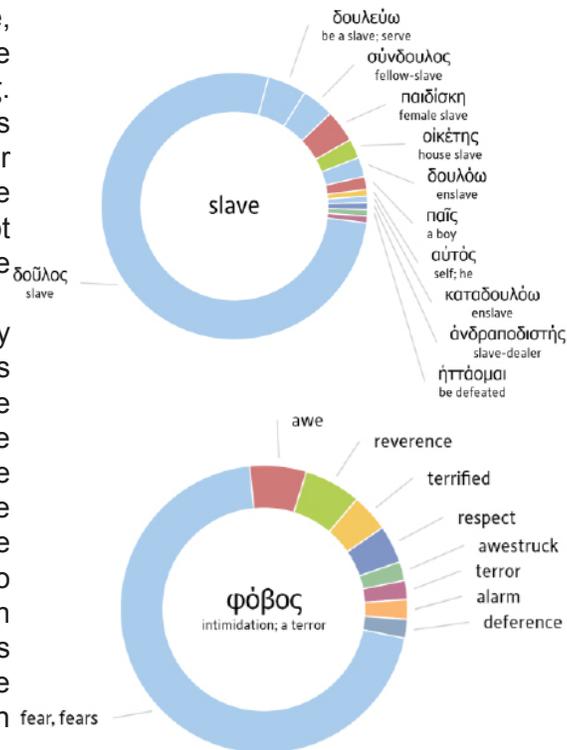
**Who?** The admonition is directed specifically to οἱ οἰκέται, the slaves.<sup>23</sup> This term οἰκέτης (4x), rather than the more inclusive commonly used (127x) word for slave δοῦλος, designated the slaves that were a part of the family and had duties in the home rather than in the fields or elsewhere outside the owner's house.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup>“The next class addressed is that of household slaves. But Peter probably does not intend to single out this group over against other slaves, but rather makes the distinction between a societal position that many, but not all, Christians had, and their slavery to God (mentioned in v. 16), which all had.” [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), 105.]

<sup>24</sup>“οἰκέτης, οὐ, ὁ (fr. οἶκος, cp. prec. entry) lit. ‘member of the household,’ then specif. house slave, domestic, and slave gener.

Quite a large number of Greek words had the meaning of slave, as the chart to the right illustrates. In the parallel passages on the domestic code, Paul consistently uses δούλος rather than οἰκέτης. What should we make of this different term used by Peter? Various opinions can be found, but very possibly it is merely stylistic rather than intended to make an important distinction.<sup>25</sup> Given the nature of the admonition and the expansion that follows, one should not draw much distinction from the use of οἰκέτης over against the δούλος that Paul uses.<sup>26</sup>

**What?** The essential instruction to the slaves is that they ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ to their masters. The essence is that slaves are to show proper respect to their masters who have authority over them. This covers attitude, actions, and words. The prepositional phrase ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ, “in full respect,” defines the posture of submission, ὑποτασσόμενοι,<sup>27</sup> as acceptance of the master out of respect for him. The word φόβος has a wide range of meanings, but here it is the idea of respect and deference to another human being.<sup>28</sup> This challenged a fundamental pattern of ancient slavery where slaves complied with their master’s demand out of the fear of punishment for non-compliance. Brute force was the channel for enforcing the master’s demands on



(in the specif. sense Aeschyl., Hdt.+) Ac 10:7. Opp. δεσπότης (Dio Chrys. 64 [14], 10; Ael. Aristid. 45 p. 40 D.; Pr 22:7; Philo, Deus Imm. 64) 1 Pt 2:18; opp. κύριος as master (Philo, Poster. Cai. 138) Lk 16:13; 2 Cl 6:1. ἀλλότριος οἰκ. another’s slave Ro 14:4.—B. 1332. DELG s.v. οἶκο A II 4. 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), 694.]

<sup>25</sup>“Although οἰκέται can specify slaves attached to a household rather than, for example, those who worked in the field,<sup>71</sup> it can also be used generically for slaves<sup>72</sup> and is probably to be understood in that way here. That is not to ignore the force of this term, however; it was most likely chosen to emphasize that slaves also belong to the Christian community as members of the household of God.” [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), 194.]

<sup>26</sup>One should note that ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι, “as God’s slaves,” is used in 2:16 of all believers, which may have played some role in Peter’s use of οἰκέται, “slaves,” two sentences later, in order to specify the social group of slaves.

<sup>27</sup>β. *subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey* abs. (Jos., Bell. 4, 175) **Ro 13:5**; **1 Cor 14:34** (cp. δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις Gal 5:13); 1 Cl 2:1a; 57:2. Of submission involving recognition of an ordered structure, w. dat. of the entity to whom/which appropriate respect is shown (Palaeph. 38 p. 56, 15; 57, 2): toward a husband (s. Ps.-Callisth. 1, 22, 4 πρέπον ἐστὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τῷ ἀνδρὶ ὑποτάσσεσθαι, s. 1a above; cp. SEG 26, 1717, 26 [III/IV A.D.] in a love charm) **Eph 5:22** v.l.; **Col 3:18**; **Tit 2:5**; **1 Pt 3:1** (on an alleged impv. sense s. Schwyzer II 407), 5; parents **Lk 2:51**; masters **Tit 2:9**; **1 Pt 2:18**; B 19:7; D 4:11; secular authorities (1 Ch 29:24; Theoph. Ant. 1, 11 [p. 82, 14]) **Ro 13:1** (CMorrison, The Powers That Be—**Ro 13:1–13**, diss. Basel ’56; EBarnikol, TU 77, ’61, 65–133 [non-Pauline]); **Tit 3:1**; **1 Pt 2:13**; 1 Cl 61:1; church officials 1 Cl 1:3; 57:1; IEph 2:2; IMg 2; 13:2; ITr 2:1f; 13:2; IPol 6:1; Pol 5:3; νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέρους **1 Pt 5:5**. To God (Epict. 3, 24, 65 τ. θεῶ ὑποτεταγμένοι; 4, 12, 11; Ps 61:2; 2 Macc 9:12) **1 Cor 15:28b**; **Hb 12:9**; **Js 4:7**; 1 Cl 20:1; IEph 5:3; to Christ **Eph 5:24**. To the will of God, the law, etc. **Ro 8:7**; **10:3**; 1 Cl 34:5; Hm 12, 5, 1; τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τῇ ἀγαθῇ 12, 2, 5.—Of submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love **1 Cor 16:16**; **Eph 5:21**; **1 Pt 5:5b** v.l.; 1 Cl 38:1.—The evil spirits must be subject to the disciples whom Jesus sends out **Lk 10:17, 20**. Likew. the prophetic spirits must be subject to the prophets in whom they dwell **1 Cor 14:32**.—HMerklein, Studien zu Jesus und Paulus (WUNT 105) ’98, 405–37.” [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), 1042.]

<sup>28</sup>“b. *reverence, respect ... β. toward humans, respect that is due officials* (cp. Byzantinische Papyri [Munich], ed. AHeisenberg/LWenger, 1914, no. 2, ln. 13 p. 43: ἔχοντες τὸν φόβον ... τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐνδόξου ὑπεροχῆς=having respect for your esteemed authority) Ro 13:7ab (CCranfield, NTS 6, ’60, 241–49: the ref. may be to God); fr. slave to master **1 Pt 2:18**; **Eph 6:5** (w. τρόμος); B 19:7=D 4:11 (w. αἰσχύνῃ); wife to husband **1 Pt 3:2** (cp. SEG XXXV, 1427, 5 [III A.D.]). Gener. 3:16 (w. πραύτης).—WLütgert, Die Furcht Gottes: MKähler Festschr. 1905, SBERkelbach v.der Sprenkel, Vrees en Religie 1920, 165ff; RSander, Furcht u. Liebe im paläst. Judentum ’35.—B. 1153. DELG s.v. φόβομαι I. M-M. EDNT. 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), 1062.]

the slave.<sup>29</sup> But for Christian slaves, their posture had to take on a different stance completely because of their faith (cf. 2:11-16). Conversion to Christ brought with it a new appreciation for humanity as created in God’s image and deserving respect, no matter how evil their actions. The opportunity for the Christian slave in responding to his human master with respectful obedience was to open the door for witness to the Gospel not only to the master but to the rest of the household including the other slaves.

Some of the Pauline instructions help ‘flesh’ out the idea of ‘respectful obedience.’

**Eph. 6:5-8**, “5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; 6 not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, 8 knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free.”

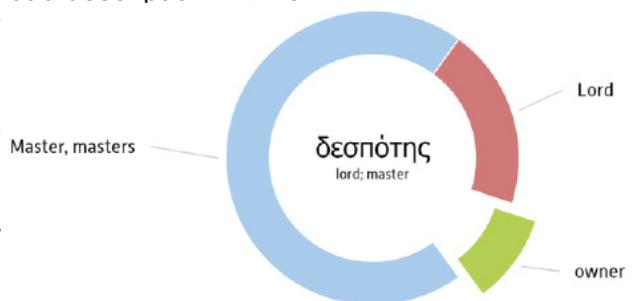
**Col. 3:22-25**, “22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality.”

**1 Timothy 6:1-2**. 1 Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them on the ground that they are members of the church; rather they must serve them all the more, since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these duties.

**Titus 2:9-10**. 9 Tell slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, 10 not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior.

A substantial variety of attitudes and actions are put on the table by Paul in defining proper interaction of the slave with his master. These have significance to Peter’s broad description in 2:18.

**To Whom?** Slaves were to respectfully obey τοῖς δεσπόταις, “their masters.” Of the ten uses of δεσπότης in the NT, four of them refer to individuals who own slaves. This is a different word from κύριος, that Paul uses in his Haustafeln instructions in Ephesians and Colossians. Perhaps Peter’s choice of terms is because he normally reserves κύριος as a reference to God or Christ,<sup>30</sup> although δεσπότης can refer to either God or Christ also, as in 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4; Acts 4:24; Rev. 6:10.



Peter further qualifies the slaves owners as οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς, “not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh.” Peter urges obedience not just to the good masters, but to those who aren’t good to their slaves as well. Here is where Christian commitment makes the difference. Roman history records violent reactions by slaves to harsh treatment from their owners. But Christian commitment will not allow such from slaves who are mistreated. As he will go on to say in the first of the three reasons below, acceptance and praise from God comes when one endures injustice unjustly. Harsh treatment, σκολιοῖς, could range from beatings to executions, and would tend to provoke anger and frustration by the slave. The fundamental point here is that slaves were obligated to show respect to their master no

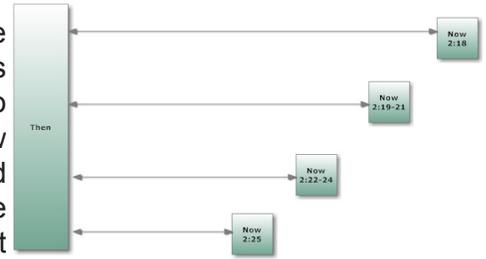
<sup>29</sup>“While their situation was undergoing a slow amelioration in the first century — freedom continued to be possible,<sup>28</sup> the slave could demand to be sold to another, kinder master,<sup>29</sup> Stoic thought argued that slaves were truly men and comrades<sup>30</sup> whom one should treat kindly and moderately<sup>31</sup> — they were still subject to harsh treatment.<sup>32</sup> For the mass of slaves, therefore, life was demeaning and often cruel, and many slaves reacted accordingly,<sup>33</sup> their reactions ranging from murderous assault on cruel masters<sup>34</sup> and the destruction of their own children by some slave women so as not to be compelled to raise them in addition to enduring slavery,<sup>35</sup> to flight,<sup>36</sup> to petty annoyance at fellow slaves who tried to please the master.<sup>37</sup> Since the safety of a household depended on the obedience of its slaves, however,<sup>38</sup> such obedience had to be obtained.” [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), 191.]

<sup>30</sup>“Because Peter reserves the designation ‘Lord’ ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον (κύριος) for God or Christ (the only exception being 3:6, where his language is dictated by an OT text), he chooses δεσπότης to refer to slave masters (cf. 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:9) instead of the κύριος of Colossians and Ephesians (where the same distinction is maintained by the phrase τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις in Eph 6:5 and the play on οἱ κύριοι and ὁ κύριος in Eph 6:9 and Col 4:1).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 138.]

matter his character or disposition toward them. Only by God's help could a Christian slave rise above raw human emotions to achieve such respect to the one with authority over his life.

The Decreasing Cultural Gap between 'Then' and 'Now' in 1 Peter 2:18-25

How should we apply this admonition to our world? As the chart to the right illustrates, the cultural distance between 'then' and 'now' meanings in verse 18 is substantial, and thus harder to find a proper application to the 'now' meaning. At the core of the concept of the admonition is how a believer is supposed to relate to a person who possesses some kind of authority over him. A wide variety of contemporary settings can be found ranging from the workplace to social life. Thus, I would suggest that this admonition relates to every believer in such situations. We are



obligated by God to accept the authority of the other person in a posture of respect of the individual. And this respect is not conditioned by the 'boss' being a 'good' boss. Does this mean that we are just to 'grin and bear it' when we are treated wrongly? Not at all! In modern western society, various remedies exist for seeking justice and fair play in such situations. Using legitimate channels to express genuine grievances is entirely appropriate. But no place exists for getting revenge or for character assassination of our 'boss.' Believers must *always* treat people over them in authority with respect! This is rooted in the core admonition of 2:13, with some elaboration here in 2:18: Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον. Such an 'above human' response is predicated on the Lord and the believer's commitment to Him.

### b. The reasons why, vv. 19-25

19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. 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. 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. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

19 τοῦτο γὰρ χάρις εἰ διὰ συνειδήσιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσχω· 20 ποῖον γὰρ κλέος εἰ ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε; ἀλλ' εἰ ἀγαθοποιῶντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῷ. 21 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἵχνεσιν αὐτοῦ· 22 ὃς ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ· 23 ὃς λοιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδόρει, πάσχω οὐκ ἠπειλεῖ, παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως· 24 ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὐ τῷ μῶλωπι ἰάθητε. 25 ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

#### Notes:

Three sets of reasons for the admonition are put on the table; note the repetition of γὰρ (for) in vv. 19, 20, 21, 25. This conjunction in Greek sets up reasons for a preceding assertion. These sets of reasons are 1) gaining χάρις for unjust suffering (vv. 19-20); 2) following the example of Christ enduring unjust suffering (vv. 21-24); and 3) having committed themselves to Christ (v. 25).

**1) Gaining χάρις for unjust suffering (vv. 19-20).** The repetition of the phrase τοῦτο χάρις (it is a credit; God's approval) in the first and last affirmation signal a unit of thought expression here; tucked between these two is ποῖον κλέος (what credit is that?). Appended to all three expressions is the subordinate conjunction εἰ introducing a real set of situations including unjust suffering, justified suffering, unjust suffering. The enduring of unjust suffering is defined as ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσχω ἀδίκως (enduring pain while suffering unjustly) and ἀγαθοποιῶντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε (while doing good and suffering you endure). Between these two is the justified suffering situation: ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε (while doing wrong and being beaten you endure). The first situation is generic (ὑποφέρει τις, someone endures), while the second and third situations are specifically directed toward the readers: ὑπομενεῖτε (you endure).

The common elements to all three situations are suffering (πάσχω; κολαφιζόμενοι; πάσχοντες) and en-

during (ὑποφέρει; ὑπομενεῖτε; ὑπομενεῖτε). The injustice of the suffering is defined as ἀδίκως (unjustly) and ἀγαθοποιούντες (doing good), while the justified suffering is based on ἀμαρτάνοντες (doing bad). A progression is clearly present that begins with a general principle of praiseworthiness for anyone suffering unjustly to no credit in being beaten for doing wrong to praiseworthiness from God for doing good and still suffering. The third expression is climatic and the ultimate point in mind by Peter. The praise is for enduring suffering, not just for suffering. χάρις (praise) is juxtaposed again κλέος (credit) as positive and negative aspects. Thus enduring unjust suffering is praiseworthy, while enduring deserved punishment for wrong doing merits no credit. The one giving either praise or no credit is God.

What Peter called for from Christian slaves in the first century was clearly ‘going against the stream’ of society at that time. One needs to remember the virtually universal mind set of the Romans in those days. The general feeling was that obedience to someone in authority had to be coerced by brute force. This was applied to all family members by the dominate male head of the household. It was applied to conquered peoples in the empire. School teachers assumed that learning had to be ‘beaten’ into children with severe force. Interrogation of prisoners always began with a severe beating to be followed by questions on the basis of instilling fear into the prisoner so he would be truthful in his answers. Thus the Christian slave was much more likely to encounter a master<sup>31</sup> who used harsh treatment (τοῖς σκολιοῖς<sup>32</sup>) rather than fairness and kindness (τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν<sup>33</sup>) to them. Most of the time, the brutal beatings etc. of slaves had no justification, and tended then to provoke in the slaves intense anger and determination to seek revenge. Peter calls upon the Christian slaves to continue doing good in respectful submission to the authority of the master even while enduring unjust treatment. This is the stance that will bring God’s “well done, my servant” in final judgment.

The application of this principle to our world is challenging. Particularly in modern western society where individualism has conditioned us to react very strongly to unjust treatment from people in supervisory roles in our life. In the work place, on the sports field, standing in line at the grocery store -- we face daily a host of situations where people are exercising some kind of authority over us and at times use that authority improperly or unjustly against us. The human impulse is to strike back in anger with verbal reaction, or even a violent physical response. But before giving in to our human nature, we need to remember Peter’s admonition and promise. God will acknowledge our enduring injustice with respectful submission, but only while we are doing good in it! The apostle John put it this way: “Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:18).

**2) Following the example of Christ enduring unjust suffering (vv. 21-24).** The second reason (γὰρ) for respectful submission by slaves to their owners is the example of Christ in His trial before Pilate and subsequent execution by the Roman authorities. Peter makes this clear by his introductory statement: εἰς τοῦτο

<sup>31</sup>One should resist the impulse to consider the ‘fair and gentle’ slave owners as Christians and the ‘harsh’ ones as pagans. These terms do not measure the religious commitment of the slave owner. Instead, they measure the treatment of the slave by his owner, whether Christian or non-Christian. The dominate orientation contextually strongly suggests that both types of slave owners were non-Christian. “Peter is not classifying slave masters on the basis of their religious convictions but on the basis of the way they treat their slaves.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 139.]

<sup>32</sup>σκολιός, ἄ, ὄν (σκέλος; Hom. et al.; Kaibel 244, 4; LXX, Joseph.; SibOr 1, 124; prim. ‘curved, bent’)

**1. pert. to being bent, curved, or crooked as opposed to straight, crooked** (opp. εὐθύς; cp. Jos., Bell. 3, 118 τὰ σκολιὰ τῆς λεωφόρου [=highway] κατευθύνειν) ἔσται τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθεΐαν Lk 3:5 (cp. schol. on Nicander, Ther. 478 of the ὁδός in contrast to εὐθύς; Is 40:4; 42:16). In imagery of τοῦ μέλανος ὁδός B 20:1 (cp. Pr 21:8; 28:18).

**2. pert. to being morally bent or twisted, crooked, unscrupulous, dishonest**, etc., fig. extension of 1 (Hom. et al.; Dio Chrys. 58 [75], 1 w. πονηρός; Lucian, Bis Accus. 16 ῥημάτια; LXX; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 179) γενεὰ σκ. (Dt 32:5 γεν. σκ. καὶ διεστραμμένη; Ps 77:8. Also Dionysius Perieg. [GGM II 186 p. 127 v. 392 σκολιὸν γένος]) Ac 2:40 (diff. MWilcox, The Semitisms of Ac, ’65, 30); Phil 2:15. δεσπότης harsh, unjust 1 Pt 2:18 (opp. ἀγαθοὶ κ. ἐπιεικεῖς).—σκολιόν τι someth. wrong 1 Cl 39:4 (Job 4:18).—JPalache, Semantic Notes on the Hebrew Lexicon ’59, 55f. B. 897. DELG s.v. σκέλος. 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), 930.]

<sup>33</sup>Kind is literally ‘good,’ not as inward quality, but as a description of the master’s dealing with his slaves, hence kind, ‘friendly’ (GECL). Considerate (Greek epieikēs) can also mean ‘gentle,’ ‘fair,’ and ‘reasonable.’ The two words are very close in meaning, describing a master who treats his slaves properly, in contrast to the master who is harsh.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 78.]



Paul's language, as well as verse 24b.<sup>38</sup>

Peter has surveyed the life of Christ, especially those final days before the cross, and found in Christ the example for believers, especially Christian slaves, to follow in their experience of unjust suffering. One important thing also to remember is that believers in most modern western countries have options to peacefully protest and address injustices through law that were unimaginable to first century believers. Pheme Perkins offers helpful applicational insights to these verses:<sup>39</sup>

The dynamics of this passage do not leave the Christian with a life of unjust suffering. Christ did not heal the flock in order to sacrifice the sheep. The concrete examples of suffering that Christians must endure point to episodic forms of harassment. For many the abuse is verbal. Slaves are at the greatest risk because their masters can physically abuse them. The example of Christ's suffering permits those who are slaves to recognize a value to their own experiences of injustice. At the same time, the sufferers know that they have a value to God, which has been expressed in Christ's death on their behalf. The negative words and deeds directed at believers will not shake their confidence in the salvation that they have already experienced. Suffering without belonging to this new community would be senseless. Even so, many Christians today feel that passages like 1 Peter 2:21–25 derail Christian opposition to social injustice and leave the oppressed as silent sufferers.

Certainly, in many parts of the world, Christians as a community are not "resident aliens" dependent on the whims of others. They are responsible for conditions in society. There is no reason for Christians to copy the silent Christ by not responding to speech designed to wound others. We must oppose unjust actions and words — especially when our silence might imply consent to such behavior. But we also know that at times we should walk away rather than respond to the violence directed against us. On the secular level, violence reduction programs in schools often teach such techniques. Christians also must raise challenges to the assumption that self-interest should come first in all situations. "When you try to sacrifice for others and show love rather than fighting back, people call you a fool," a parishioner protested. She did not mean that she would stop trying to follow the example of Christ. The edge of pain in her voice showed that the "name calling" was close to home and painful. That's why we have a church, a community. Christians must support those who are suffering.

We have an obligation to stand for justice and righteousness in our world. But taking such a stance does not allow us to be disrespectful of people in places of authority, no matter who they are. There is the 'Christian way' of seeking justice that refuses to succumb to anger, vengeance, or violence. It always operates from love and respect, first to God and then to human authorities. This is the example of Christ to us!

**3) Having committed themselves to Christ (v. 25).** The third reason (γὰρ) for respectful submission of people in authority is based on conversion to Christ. Still with Isaiah 53 (vv. 5-6) in view,<sup>40</sup> Peter switches from Christ to his readers and their transforming experience of coming to Christ, using the language of Isaiah. Conversion is described here -- using the imagery of Isaiah 53 -- as a return from "going astray" to "the shepherd and guardian of your souls." The expression of Peter is particularly graphic in the original text: ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. He notes the BC and AD eras in the lives of his readers:<sup>41</sup>

**BC era:** ἦτε ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι. You *were* being led astray like sheep, Peter says. The Christian slaves, and also the larger Christian communities as a part of the reference, were living in deception and false understanding prior to Christ. The Greek verb expression ἦτε...πλανώμενοι<sup>42</sup> highlights an extensive

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<sup>38</sup>Unlike vv. 22 and 24, there is no reflection of language from Isaiah 53 in this verse; in light of the clear dependence in those verses on that passage from Isaiah, however, the silence of the sacrificial lamb described in Isa 53:7<sup>156</sup> could well lie behind this verse,<sup>157</sup> particularly if the author had in mind the silence Jesus maintained in face of the abuse he received during his trial.<sup>158</sup> Yet the point of the first two clauses is not specifically Jesus' silence; it is rather that in face of verbal abuse he did not retaliate in kind. Such non retaliation in kind, while certainly true of the passion, is nevertheless also true of the whole of Jesus' career.<sup>159</sup> [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), 200.]

<sup>39</sup>Pheme Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude*, Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1995), 54-55.

<sup>40</sup>Isaiah 53:5–6 (NRSV): "5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 6:10 also plays an indirect role in this shift.

<sup>41</sup>This "once" and "now" perspective of Peter plays an important role in the letter. Verse 25 should be compared to 2:3-10, as well as 1:14-15, 18, 23; 4:3-4.

<sup>42</sup>Periphrastic Imperfect verb construction.

period of being deceived.<sup>43</sup> Peter's drawing upon Isaiah 53 for the image doesn't imply that he is just talking about Jews here, which was the reference point in Isaiah.<sup>44</sup> Rather, he took this imagery and applied it first to slaves and then to his readers generally who were both Jewish and Gentile. His point is that those living apart from Christ are living in self-deception and in a condition separated away from Christ. This self-deception will continue until they come to Christ as Savior.

**AD era:** ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. A decisive change took place with the readers that Peter is addressing, and is highlighted by two strong words: ἀλλὰ and νῦν: "but now." Their conversion is defined as a "having been turned," ἐπεστράφητε.<sup>45</sup> The Aorist passive verb stresses a decisive moment of turning around their lives (the Aorist tense), and that God turned them around (the passive voice). Their coming to Christ in conversion is a divine action in their lives that moved them from being separated from Christ to now coming under His leadership and protection.

The turning around of the "sheep" is so they can come to their τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον.<sup>46</sup> The Old Testament background of this would suggest the reference is to God, but in the New Testament only Jesus is referred to as Shepherd, not God the Father.<sup>47</sup> The shepherd, ποιμένα, and the caretaker, ἐπίσκοπον, are two ways to highlight the pastoral care and protection of the people of God. Later in 5:1-4, Peter will see in Jesus' care of His people the model for pastors to follow:

1 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, I exhort the elders among you 2 to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.<sup>48</sup>

Pastors are encouraged to both 'pastor' (ποιμάνετε) and take care of (ἐπισκοποῦντες) the flock of God placed in their care. Jesus stands as the 'chief shepherd' (τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος) who will evaluate their work in final judgment.

Although many translations render τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν as "of your souls," the better translation is "of your lives." Sheep had no 'souls' but they did have 'lives.' This understanding stresses the complete care and protection of the believer by Jesus, the chief Shepherd. He takes care of us as complete persons, not just of our souls!<sup>49</sup>

In a wonderful climax to this passage we are reminded of what we have received. Peter inspired Christian slaves to endure unjust suffering not only following the example of Christ (vv. 21-24) but because that same Christ stands as shepherd and protector of the lives of these slaves. And also of us as believers today!

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<sup>43</sup>The Greek verb πλανᾶω in 39 NT uses contains a variety of meanings: **1.** to cause to go astray from a specific way, **a.** lead astray, **b.** mislead, deceive; **2.** to proceed without a sense of proper direction, go astray (pass. frequently in active sense), **a.** lit. go astray, **b.** fig., stray from the right way, **c.** fig. without imagistic detail, **i.** go astray, be deluded, **ii.** wander away from something, **iii.** be mistaken in one's judgment, **iv.** be deceived, misled. The BDAG lexicon lists 1 Peter 2:25 under 1.b., "in imagery of people who strayed fr. the right way (cp. 1a), ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι 1 Pt 2:25." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 821.]

<sup>44</sup>The straying sheep simile is adopted from Isa 53:6 (cf. Ps 118[119]:176; Isa 13:14; Jer 27[50]:17)." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 537.]

<sup>45</sup>The act of being turned<sup>205</sup> here suggests not so much that the readers once had been with the shepherd, had strayed, and are now being returned (e.g., Jewish Christians) as their conversion from their former status of unbelievers to that of members of the Christian community (e.g., gentile Christians),<sup>206</sup> the more so since this verb could be used as virtually a technical term for conversion of Gentiles.<sup>207</sup> [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), 204.]

<sup>46</sup>Note the grammar construction: Article Noun καὶ Article Noun means one reference from two perspectives, not two separate references. Also this phrase, τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον, is unique to First Peter and not found elsewhere in the New Testament. This is the failure of the King James Version translation, the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls, to sense this inner connection of the two terms and thus misses the idea of ἐπίσκοπον with the much latter and theologically loaded term Bishop.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. John 10:1-16; 21:15-17; Heb. 13:20.

<sup>48</sup>5.1 Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 2 ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν, μὴδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως, 3 μὴδ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· 4 καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.

<sup>49</sup>This phrase refers to the servants/slaves as whole persons, similar to the sense of psychai in 1:9 and 1:22." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 539.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 12**  
**1 Peter 3:1-6**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

**“Winning a non-Christian Husband”**

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**Greek NT**

3.1 Ὁμοίως γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα καὶ εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἅνευ λόγου κερδηθήσονται 2 ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφήν ὑμῶν. 3 ὣν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἕξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος, 4 ἀλλ’ ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής. 5 οὕτως γὰρ ποτε καὶ αἱ ἅγαι γυναῖκες αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι εἰς θεὸν ἐκόσμουν ἑαυτάς, ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, 6 ὡς Σάρρα ὑπήκουσεν τῷ Ἀβραάμ, κύριον αὐτὸν καλοῦσα· ἧς ἐγενήθητε τέκνα ἀγαθοποιοῦσαι καὶ μὴ φοβούμεναι μηδεμίαν πτόησιν.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

3.1 Für euch Frauen gilt dieselbe Regel: Ihr müsst euch euren Männern unterordnen, damit die von ihnen, die das Wort der Guten Nachricht nicht hören wollen, durch eure Lebensführung auch ohne Wort für den Glauben gewonnen werden. 2 Das kann geschehen, wenn sie sehen, dass ihr ihnen Respekt erweist und ein vorbildliches Leben führt. 3 Putzt euch nicht äußerlich heraus mit aufwendigen Frisuren, kostbarem Schmuck oder prächtigen Kleidern. 4 Eure Schönheit soll von innen kommen! Freundlichkeit und ein ausgeglichenes Wesen sind der unvergängliche Schmuck, der in Gottes Augen Wert hat. 5 Auf diese Weise haben sich auch früher die frommen Frauen geschmückt, die ihre Hoffnung auf Gott setzten. Sie haben sich ihren Männern untergeordnet, 6 wie zum Beispiel Sara, die Abraham gehorchte und ihn ihren »Herrn« nannte. Ihre Töchter seid ihr, wenn ihr das Rechte tut und euch davon durch keine Drohung abbringen lasst.

**NRSV**

1 Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; 4 rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight. 5 It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. 6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you.

**NLT**

1 In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands, even those who refuse to accept the Good News. Your godly lives will speak to them better than any words. They will be won over 2 by watching your pure, godly behavior. 3 Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. 4 You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. 5 That is the way the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. 6 For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, when she called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [The admonition, vv. 1-4](#)
  - b. [The reason, vv. 5-6](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

This study continues the emphasis on ‘outsiders’ that Peter begun in 2:11. It also continues the Haustafeln

emphasis that was begun in 2:18. The focus now is on Christian wives married to non-Christian husbands,<sup>1</sup> which gives it a distinction from the Pauline emphasis on Christian wives married to Christian husbands.<sup>2</sup> These Pauline passages are important background to Peter's words:<sup>3</sup>

**Ephesians 5:22-24.** 22 Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. 24 Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.<sup>4</sup>

**Colossians 3:18.** 18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

One will detect very quickly the distinct emphasis of Peter over against Paul's. Another important text comes from **Titus 2:4-5**, where Paul instructs Titus on encouraging older women in the church to instill certain values in the younger women who were wives:

1 But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. 2 Tell the older men to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. 3 Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited. 6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.<sup>5</sup>

Some of these values may seem strange to modern ears, but one has to remember that marriages in the ancient world were uniformly between women in their early to middle teens and men mostly in their thirties at least. A thirteen year old mother with a thirty-five year old husband would not have been unusual at all. These young girls who became wives and mothers very early in life needed wise counsel from the older, more experienced women in the churches.



We live in a world where establishing lasting relationships between men and women is becoming more and more difficult, along with meaningful relationships with other people in general. And this in spite of it being the 'age of communication.' The popularity of marriage swings up and down in western society. Increasingly in many western countries especially, 'cohabitation' is the favored option, even over 'common-law marriage.' Yet numerous scientific studies affirm that such a living relation without a formal marriage commitment almost certainly dooms the future of the relationship. The problem of cohabitation is significantly worse in Europe than elsewhere in the world, apart from a few isolated exceptions such as North America (= Mexico; US; Canada). The rate of divorce in western society is very high, although highest in the US more than Europe and most of the rest of the world where the divorce rate is slowly declining in some countries such as the UK, in contrast to the US.

Given this backdrop of modern struggles with marriage and being a married partner, what message does the Gospel offer? Peter offers important guidelines for a Christian wife who wants to win her non-Christian husband to faith in Christ. Beyond this setting, most of these guidelines have much wider application as well.

<sup>1</sup>Interestingly, the New Testament contains a reference to a marriage where the wife, Joanna, was a follower of Jesus, but not the husband, Chuza, in all likelihood: **Luke. 8:1-3**, "Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, 2 as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and **Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza**, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources." Joanna along with several other women, some married and some not, were fellow travelers with Jesus along with the disciples during much of His earthly ministry.

<sup>2</sup>"Peter's concern at this point is not life within the Christian community, but life at those points where the Christian community interfaces with the world around it." [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), 115.]

<sup>3</sup>For a quick summary overview of wives (γυνή) in the New Testament, the NRSV uses the English words wife or wives in some 68 passages.

<sup>4</sup>One should also note the final statement (Eph. 5:33) where Paul summarizes both husband's and wife's responsibilities: "Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and **a wife should respect her husband.**" (πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, **ἢ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.**)

<sup>5</sup>**GNT Titus 2:3-5.** <sup>3</sup>Πρεσβυτίδας ὡσαύτως ἐν καταστήματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς, μὴ διαβόλους μηδὲ οἶνω πολλῶ δεδουλωμένας, καλοδιδασκάλους, <sup>4</sup>ἵνα σωφρονίζωσι *τὰς νέας φιλόανδρους εἶναι, φιλοτέκνους, <sup>5</sup>σώφρονας, ἀγνάς, οἰκουργοῦς, ἀγαθάς, ὑποτασσομένας τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημηται.*

## I. Context and Background<sup>6</sup>

The literary and historical background to this passage are especially important to the interpretive process.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The history of the copying of the text during the first eight centuries reflects a very stable text for verses one through six. The UBS 4th revised edition Greek New Testament text apparatus lists only one variation of reading that was considered important enough for Bible translators to give attention to.

In verse one, the most likely original reading Ὁμοίως γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι sometimes is written as Ὁμοίως **αἱ** γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι in several manuscripts, inserting the definite article αἱ.<sup>7</sup> But several important early manuscripts do not include it. So we can't be absolutely certain whether it was or wasn't in the original writing. A very small number of late manuscripts will insert καὶ (**also**) in place of αἱ, but this is redundant with Ὁμοίως and was picked up by looking at ἴνα **καὶ** εἴ τινας on the next line and by mistake inserting it as the second word in the sentence. The impact of the presence or absence of the article for translation is very minimal, and doesn't change the meaning either way.

The Nestle-Aland 27th rev. edition Greek text lists a total of nine variations of wording, of lessor impact than the one above. Most of them pertain either to words or phrases being accidentally left out, or, with a couple of phrases, the sequence of the words in the phrase is altered. None of these variations is supported by early and significant manuscripts, and reflect the typical stylistic mistakes often made when copying of texts was done by volunteers rather than professionals. Thus, nothing in the history of the copying of this passage casts serious doubt on the wording and meaning of the passage.

**Internal History.** Wives in the ancient world did not enjoy the status, both legally and socially, that they do in today's world. The first century Roman world was a male dominated world. Girls and women were valued but did not enjoy anything close to equal status to the men and boys. But also great differences in the status of women existed in the various cultures of the Mediterranean world of the first century.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, Jewish women were trapped by one of the more repressive cultures of that world.<sup>9</sup> But



<sup>6</sup>Serious study of the Bible requires careful analysis 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.

<sup>7</sup>"The weight of external evidence is rather evenly balanced for and against the presence of the article, which perhaps was omitted by scribes in order to indicate more clearly that γυναῖκες is vocative. On the basis of P<sup>72</sup> κ<sup>2</sup> C Ψ 33 1739 al, the Committee decided to include the article; in view of its absence, however, from P<sup>81</sup> κ\* A B 81 al, the word was enclosed within square brackets." [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), 620.]

<sup>8</sup>"Within the patriarchal framework that existed throughout the Roman Empire, there was a surprising degree of variety in the roles and positions women could and did assume from culture to culture. For example, in Rome women could at most be the power behind the throne, whereas in Egypt women could openly rule. Or again, in Athens married citizen-women seem to have been confined to domestic activities, whereas women in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Egypt engaged in their own private businesses, served in public offices, and had prominent roles in various religious cults." [David Noel Freedman, vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 958.]

<sup>9</sup>"The Palestinian Jewish culture was one of the most patriarchal in the Mediterranean crescent. The home and family were basically the only spheres where women could play significant roles in early Judaism. This was true not only because of the extensive power that a father had over both his wife and daughters in determining their activities and their relationships, but also because various levitical laws were interpreted in such a way that women were prohibited from taking significant roles in the synagogue due to their monthly period of levitical uncleanness." [David Noel Freedman, vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 957.]

in spite of the serious restrictions placed on Jewish women, they did enjoy significant degrees of respect and honor.<sup>10</sup> The economic status of women played differing roles as well. Women in aristocratic families usually wielded much more power and influence both in the home and in public life, than did women coming from low income homes. Slave women were not permitted to enter formal marriage, because they were the property of their owner.



The wife of the ancient world in most every culture was under the authority of her husband as the head of the household. In most of these cultures she had few legal rights, almost no property ownership rights, and very limited freedom of movement outside the home. In very real ways, she 'belonged' to her husband. Spousal abuse laws were virtually unknown in first century law of any culture, and the wife would be protected from abuse by her husband only to the extent that penalties for such had been included in the marriage contract agreed to between her father and the bride's father. In Jewish society only the husband could divorce his wife, but in Roman society the wife had that option as well the husband.

When Jesus and the apostles laid out their teachings on marriage and husband / wife relationships, the emphasis both fits into the surrounding culture and at the same time radically challenges many aspects of it, especially the Jewish side.<sup>11</sup> When the married women traveled with Jesus and the apostles (cf. Luke 8:1-3), such was a radical departure from prevailing trends of that day in Palestine. With Paul's emphasis on equal responsibilities between husbands and wives not only in the Haustafeln passages of Ephesians and Colossians, but elsewhere in his letters also,<sup>12</sup> he was challenging attitudes in both Jewish and Roman societies very intensely. What Peter will say both to wives (3:1-6) and to husbands (3:7) follows this same framework, and continues the beginning Christian emphasis upon the dignity and partnership role of the wife in a Christian

<sup>10</sup>“These facts should not cause us to overlook the positive statements made by early Jews about honoring and respecting women, nor should we ignore the extensive responsibilities placed on a Jewish husband in regard to his wife and daughters, nor forget that much of what we have discussed resulted from the attempt by an occupied people to preserve their culture and religious way of life. Nevertheless, the dominant impression left by our early Jewish sources is of a very patriarchal society that limited women's roles and functions to the home, and severely restricted: (1) their rights of inheritance, (2) their choice of relationships, (3) their ability to pursue a religious education or fully participate in the synagogue, and (4) their freedom of movement.” [David Noel Freedman, vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 957-58.]

<sup>11</sup>“The subordination of wives to husbands reflected in this passage must be seen against the background of the general status of women in the Hellenistic world of that time. Dominant among the elite<sup>12</sup> was the notion that the woman was by nature inferior to the man.<sup>13</sup> Because she lacked the capacity for reason that the male had,<sup>14</sup> she was ruled rather by her emotions,<sup>15</sup> and was as a result given to poor judgment,<sup>16</sup> immorality,<sup>17</sup> intemperance,<sup>18</sup> wickedness,<sup>19</sup> avarice;<sup>20</sup> she was untrustworthy,<sup>21</sup> contentious,<sup>22</sup> and as a result, it was her place to obey.<sup>23</sup> Such a view of women was also sedimented in legal tradition: women could not vote or hold office,<sup>24</sup> could not take an oath or plead a case in court, could not be the legal guardian of their own minor children, and were legally dependent on either their father or a guardian.<sup>25</sup> To be sure, some of these measures began to be relaxed in the time of Augustus.<sup>26</sup> Women could petition for a change in guardian if the present one proved harsh; they could inherit and hold property;<sup>27</sup> they could decide whom and when to marry and whether to divorce, and by decree of Augustus if a mother had three to five children, depending on her status, she acquired legal independence and full right to participate in business.<sup>28</sup> Despite this emancipation of women in the Augustan period, however, the idea of women remaining subordinate to men remained. The equality of women espoused in theory by the Stoic philosopher Musonius,<sup>29</sup> for example, in practice was denied in favor of the traditional notion that the man should rule the woman,<sup>30</sup> and the cults of Dionysus and Isis, which gave women a dominant role, were criticized for their excesses by Roman men.<sup>31</sup> The role of married women at this time was also undergoing change;<sup>32</sup> Plutarch, for example, urged that in the proper marriage there ought to be a mutual amalgamation of bodies, property, friends, and relations, with all material possessions held in common.<sup>33</sup> Yet even Plutarch held that the wife must be subordinate to the husband, who must rule her, in a kindly way, to be sure, but he must nevertheless be the superior partner in the marriage,<sup>34</sup> even to the point of determining which gods the family is to worship.<sup>35</sup>” [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), 206-07.]

<sup>12</sup>For example, his instructions to husbands and wives in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, he adopted a revolutionary position: “3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

home.

## b. Literary

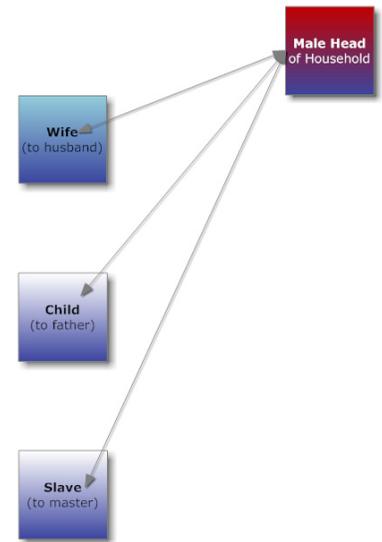
**Literary Form (Genre).** The larger literary form here is of course the letter body, in which Peter is sharing spiritual insights with his readers as a substitute visit. Whether one can deduce from this that marital problems were present in the Christian communities is questionable. What is clear from studying the broader historical background of marital relationships in general during this era is that Christian couples that came from either a Jewish or Roman background would have needed careful instruction on just how to be truly 'Christian' in their marital relationship since the guidelines for Christians seriously deviated from what they had been taught before coming to Christ. Making the transition from that earlier heritage to the new Christian responsibilities would not have been easy. And yet making this transition took on enormous importance as a witness to their non-Christian friends and family about the difference that Christ would make in one's life and home. This is why several of the passages contain purpose statements defining the goal of such values as being to advance the Gospel of Christ.

The narrow genre of 3:1-6 is that of *Haustafeln*.<sup>13</sup> From the time of the New Testament forward, family relationships were a significant discussion among Christian leaders.<sup>14</sup> This topic was also discussed extensively in non-Christian circles of that era.<sup>15</sup> The Pauline *Haustafeln* is more tightly arranged into three pairs of family relationships: wife to husband; children to father; slave to master (see chart on the above right). Responsibilities flowed both directions in each of the three sets of relationships. These three sections covered the full range of responsibilities inside the family. Peter's discussion touches only on slaves (to masters) and wife / husband relationships. The Christian slave is given instructions on relating to non-Christian owners. He doesn't give instructions to Christian slave owners, as did Paul. And the discussion of the wife's responsibilities are focused on her winning over to Christ her non-Christian husband, whereas the husband is assumed to be a believer married to a believing wife. Thus Peter's discussion seems to be targeting some very specific needs present in the churches of Anatolia in the mid-first century. He makes use of the *Haustafeln* tradition but doesn't feel the need for a full discussion of it. This seems to be partially due to this section (2:11-3:7) focusing on the believer's relationships to non-believers. Probably other factors motivated his distinctive emphasis, but we can't determine clearly what they were.<sup>16</sup>

**Literary Context.** As the outline on the right illustrates, 3:1-6 stands as a part of the letter body under the second division entitled "Obligations." After treating various aspects of holy living in 1:13-2:10,

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### Ancient Family: *Haustafeln* Ephesians, Colossians, First Peter



### 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

<sup>13</sup>The German term *Haustafeln* comes from the heading that Luther gave the passages in Ephesians, Colossians, and First Peter in the Luther Bibel translation. Literally it means 'rules of the house,' and when translated into English is usually rendered 'Household Code' or 'Domestic Code.'

<sup>14</sup>See Matt 5:27-32; 19:3-12/Mark 10:1-12; 22:23-28; 1 Cor 5:1-11; 7:1-40; 14:34-37; Eph 5:22-33; Col 2:18-19; 1 Thess 4:3-8; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 3:11-12; 5:9-16; Titus 2:4-5; Heb 13:4; 1 Clem. 1:3; 21:6-7; Herm. Mand. 4.1; Ign. Pol. 5:1-2; Pol. Phil 4:2.

<sup>15</sup>See Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 35-57; Arist., *Pol.* 1-2; Ps.-Arist., *Oec.*; Xen., *Oec.*; Philo, *Decal.* 165-67; *Spec.* 3. 169-71; *Hypoth.* 7. 14; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.189-209; *Hier.* (in *Stobaeus*, books 1-5; esp. 4.22.21-24; 4.502.1-507.5; cf. also 4.24.14; 4.603.8-24; 5.5-22; 5.696.23-697.3). Sometimes this was identified in ancient Greek as the *oikonomia* tradition, 'household management' tradition.

<sup>16</sup>This may also be connected to the much larger region covered in First Peter -- Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1) -- than Paul's emphasis in Ephesians, Colossians, and Titus, which covered Ephesus and Colossae in Asia along with Crete.

Peter turned to discuss the obligations that believers have, mostly to ‘outsiders,’ that is, non-Christians, in 2:11-3:12. He begins with the foundational admonition of believers living as ‘strangers and foreigners’ in this world, since Heaven is our real home (2:11-12). Then he calls upon believers to acknowledge the legitimate authority of specific humans in leadership roles (2:13-17). With ὑποτάγητε πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον in 2:13, he sets the tone for 2:14-17 on government leaders. But this admonition is foundational for his admonition to Christian slaves in 2:18-25, Christian wives in 3:1-6, Christian husbands in 3:7, and the believing community in 3:8-12. Christian respect for authority differed from the secular world of that time which called upon individuals to accept the authority of ‘higher ups’ because these people were superior to everyone else and all others were inferior to them. Christians, however, respect individuals in leadership roles because they are humans created in God’s image and also because they stand accountable to God just as believers do, not because they are superior human beings. Peter’s admonitions to wives in 3:1-6 stand as the second unit of Haustafeln instruction that was preceded by instructions to slaves and will be followed by instructions to Christian husbands. The unique use of Greek participles instead of regular verbs for the core admonitions gives a distinctive character to these three units and ties them very closely back to the beginning regular verb ὑποτάγητε in 2:13.

**Literary Structure.** As the block diagram below illustrates, the thought structure of the passage is relatively clear.

```

3.1           Likewise
26  the wives should be submissive to their own husbands,
      even if some are not obeying the Word
          through the lifestyle of their wives
          without a word
      so that they...may be won over
          in reverence
3.2           observing your...pure lifestyle.

27 3.3 Whose let it not be the outward
      braiding of hair
          and
      putting on of gold ornaments
          or
      wearing of fine clothes,

3.4           instead
28  (whose let it be) the secret person of the heart
      in the incorruptible
          gentle
          and
          quiet
      of a...spirit
          which is...very valuable
          before God

3.5           For
          likewise
          formerly
          also
29  the holy women...were adorning themselves,
      who put their hope in God
          by being submissive to their own husbands,
3.6           as Sarah was obedient to Abraham
          calling him lord,
          whose children you have become
          by doing good
          and
          not fearing any terror.

```

In spite of the rather artificial punctuation of both the UBS and N-A Greek texts creating three sentences in these verses (vv. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6), in reality only two sentences are present (vv. 1-4, 5-6). The above diagram follows the two dominate Greek texts' punctuation, but in truth statements 27 and 28 are relative clause modifiers of 'the wives' in verse one. Peter essentially gives the admonition to Christian wives in statement 26 and then expands this admonition down through verse four (#s 27 & 28). The second point is to defend (γάρ) the admonition in verse 1 (#26) by appealing to the example of Old Testament wives, and Sarah in particular (#29).

## II. Message

In light of the more natural structure of the text as explained above we will organize our study around two points: the admonition to wives (vv. 1-4) and the reason for the admonition (vv. 5-6).

### a. Wives, show proper respect to your non-Christian husband, vv. 1-4

1 Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; 4 rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God's sight.

3.1 Ὁμοίως γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα καὶ εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἄνευ λόγου κερδηθῆσονται 2 ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφήν ὑμῶν. 3 ὣν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἕξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος, 4 ἀλλ' ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἀφάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής.

#### Notes:

The core admonition in verse 1a is followed by an expression of purpose or intention. This is in turn expanded with instructions on how to achieve this goal of winning over a non-believing husband.

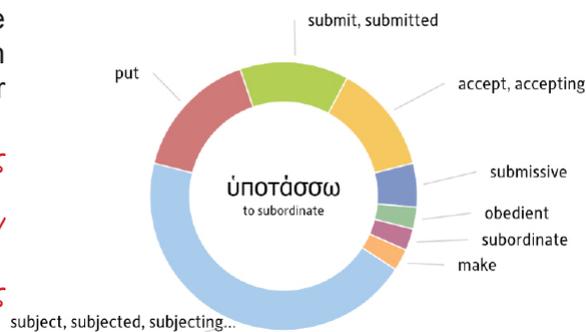
**The admonition:** Ὁμοίως γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ("Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands"). The adverb of manner Ὁμοίως links the admonition to the wife that is given to slaves in 2:18 (Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπόταις). In the first century world the wife did enjoy a higher status in the household than did the slaves, but she was not considered the equal to her husband. Culturally such would have been difficult, given the typical age difference of at least ten years and more between husband and wife. The concept expressed by Peter is similar to that of Paul:

**Eph. 5:22.** Αἱ γυναῖκες [ὑποτασσόμεναι] τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ

**Col. 3:18.** Αἱ γυναῖκες, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ὡς ἀνήκεν ἐν κυρίῳ.

**1 Pet. 3:1.** Ὁμοίως γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν,

The core verbal expression is uniform across all three expressions. The verb ὑποτάσσω can be translated in a variety of ways as the diagram on the above right illustrates. According to the BDAG Greek lexicon, the basic meaning in the 38 NT uses is "to cause to be in a submissive relationship, to subject, to subordinate."<sup>17</sup> The wife is to acknowledge a leadership role of the husband in the



<sup>17</sup> **1. to cause to be in a submissive relationship, to subject, to subordinate**

a. act., abs. **Ro 8:20b**; 1 Cl 2:1b. τινά bring someone to subjection (Herodian 7, 2, 9) IPol 2:1. τινί τινα or τι someone or someth. to someone (Epict. 4, 12, 12 of God ὑπ. τί τινι; cp. Da 11:39 Theod.; TestJud 21:2; ApcSed 6:2; SibOr Fgm. 3, 12; Ar. [Milne 76, 49]; Menander Eph.: 783 Fgm. 1, 119 Jac. [in Jos., C. Ap. 1, 119]; Just., A I, 49, 7, A II 5, 2.—Cp. ὑπέταξεν ἑαυτοῦ τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦς Πάρθους Hippol., Ref. 9, 16, 4) **1 Cor 15:27c, 28c**; **Phil 3:21**; **Hb 2:5, 8b**; Dg 10:2; Hm 12, 4, 2; AcPl Ha 8, 15. In the same sense ὑπ. τι ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας τινός **1 Cor 15:27a**; **Eph 1:22**; also ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν τινος **Hb 2:8a** (Ps 8:7). ὑποτάσσειν ἑαυτόν τινι subject oneself to someone (Plut., Mor. 142e to the husband; Simplicius In Epict. p. 33 Düb. to transcendent powers) Hs 9, 22, 3.

b. pass.

a. become subject τινί to a pers. or a state of being (Iren. 5, 5, 2 [Harv. II 332, 11]) **Ro 8:20a**; **1 Cor 15:28a**; **Hb 2:8c**; **1 Pt 3:22**; Dg 7:2; Pol 2:1. Abs. (Diod S 1, 55, 10; Aristobulus in Eus., PE 8, 10, 10 [=p. 140 Holladay] πάνθ' ὑποτέτακται; Just., D. 85, 2 νικᾶται καὶ ὑποτάσσεται [Ath. 18, 2]; Iren. 1, 13, 4 [Harv. I 120, 7]) **1 Cor 15:27b**.

household, but not in some demeaning way that reduces her humanity and value. This acknowledgement was the cultural norm for the first century Roman world and Christianity adopted it, but with different tones and motivations.<sup>18</sup> In the following expansions, Peter will extend the idea of submissiveness in very distinctly Christian ways that ran counter to much in the surrounding culture. The Christian faith of the wife played the key role in how she responded to her husband.

Of the two distinctive qualities expressed by Peter beyond that in Paul, ὁμοίως and ἰδίοις, the wife could learn from the domestic slaves (ὁμοίως) that respectful attitudes toward the dominating male head of the household could be used to change his attitude toward both the slave and the wife. And she was responsible to her own (ἰδίοις) husband, not to other men. Her first and primary obligation was to the man she married.<sup>19</sup>

**The intention:** ἵνα καὶ εἴ τινας ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἄνευ λόγου κερδηθήσονται ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφήν ὑμῶν (“so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives”). The motivation of the wives to respect their husbands was religious in nature: ἵνα... κερδηθήσονται (“that they may be won over”). This is distinct from but not contradictory to Paul’s advice in Titus 2:5, “so that the word of God may not be discredited,”<sup>20</sup> where the religious concern is for the credibility of the gospel. Peter was addressing a situation that easily arose in the ancient world.<sup>21</sup> The general custom was that whatever the

β. *subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey* abs. (Jos., Bell. 4, 175) **Ro 13:5; 1 Cor 14:34** (cp. δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις **Gal 5:13**); 1 Cl 2:1a; 57:2. Of submission involving recognition of an ordered structure, w. dat. of the entity to whom/which appropriate respect is shown (Palaeph. 38 p. 56, 15; 57, 2): toward a husband (s. Ps.-Callisth. 1, 22, 4 πρέπον ἐστὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τῷ ἀνδρὶ ὑποτάσσεσθαι, s. 1a above; cp. SEG 26, 1717, 26 [III/IV A.D.] in a love charm) **Eph 5:22 v.l.; Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1 Pt 3:1** (on an alleged impv. sense s. Schwyzer II 407), **5**; parents **Lk 2:51**; masters **Tit 2:9; 1 Pt 2:18**; B 19:7; D 4:11; secular authorities (1 Ch 29:24; Theoph. Ant. 1, 11 [p. 82, 14]) **Ro 13:1** (CMorrison, The Powers That Be—**Ro 13:1–13**, diss. Basel ’56; EBarnikol, TU 77, ’61, 65–133 [non-Pauline]); **Tit 3:1; 1 Pt 2:13**; 1 Cl 61:1; church officials 1 Cl 1:3; 57:1; IEph 2:2; IMg 2; 13:2; ITr 2:1f; 13:2; IPol 6:1; Pol 5:3; νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέρους **1 Pt 5:5**. To God (Epict. 3, 24, 65 τ. θεῶ ὑποτεταγμένος; 4, 12, 11; Ps 61:2; 2 Macc 9:12) **1 Cor 15:28b; Hb 12:9; Js 4:7**; 1 Cl 20:1; IEph 5:3; to Christ **Eph 5:24**. To the will of God, the law, etc. **Ro 8:7; 10:3**; 1 Cl 34:5; Hm 12, 5, 1; τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τῇ ἀγαθῇ 12, 2, 5.—Of submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love **1 Cor 16:16; Eph 5:21; 1 Pt 5:5b v.l.**; 1 Cl 38:1.—The evil spirits must be subject to the disciples whom Jesus sends out **Lk 10:17, 20**. Likew. the prophetic spirits must be subject to the prophets in whom they dwell **1 Cor 14:32**.—HMerklein, Studien zu Jesus und Paulus (WUNT 105) ’98, 405–37.” [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), 1042.]

<sup>18</sup>“The instruction of wives and husbands that follows echoes sentiments and values concerning spousal roles and relations that prevailed in the Greco-Roman world of the day. These perspectives were enshrined in particular in moral instruction on ‘household management’ (oikonomia), a tradition with which our author was clearly familiar. Xenophon’s treatise *On Household Management* (*Oeconomicus*) has been described as ‘the most fully developed treatise on married life that classical Greece has left us’ (Foucault 1985, 152). With its attention to marriage (ch. 7), domestic order (chs. 8–9), cosmetics (ch. 10), and the husband as gentleman (ch. 11), it illustrates the traditional place of these subjects in the household management (*oikonomia*) tradition of moral instruction. This is in accord with Aristotle’s seminal observation (Pol. 1.5.1) that ‘the science of household management has three divisions, one the relation of master to slave . . . , one the paternal relation, and the third the conjugal, for it is part of the household science to rule over wife and children’; see also Ps.-Arist., *Oec.*, book 1 (1.2.1; 3.1–4.3) and book 3 (regarding the virtuous wife and honorable marital relations).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 553.]

<sup>19</sup>Quite interestingly Xenophon in his *Oeconomicus* uses the classical Greek dialogue format to stress the importance of the husband training his wife to function in the household. In chapters seven through ten, Socrates quizzes Ischomachus about how he prepared his fifteen year old wife to manage the operation of his large country home outside Athens in the third century BCE. In the discussion between these two, Ischomachus explains how he went about educating his young wife to take care of the household and to supervise all the domestic slaves inside the home. At least from Ischomachus’ account, she learned well and managed the household quite efficiently. The key to his educating her was to teach her how to organize everything properly, right down to their clothes and sleeping arrangements for everyone in the house, and even how she could best use makeup and personal grooming. How typical this was to both the earlier Greek culture and then to the later Roman culture is not clear.

<sup>20</sup>ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημῆται

<sup>21</sup>Paul is the only other author to address the marital situation of one person being a Christian and the other not. He has an interesting take on the situation in 1 Cor. 7:12-16:

12 To the rest I say — I and not the Lord — that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving

religious orientation of the head of the household, all the family members including slaves would be oriented that same direction.<sup>22</sup> But given the polytheistic patterns of that time, if family members wanted to adopt another religion the head of the family would normally be open to such. In the believing communities of the letter evidently a significant number of women had come to faith in Christ but not their husbands. The issue was important enough that Peter felt the need to offer advice to these young wives on the best way to win over their husbands.<sup>23</sup> Whether or not efforts to do so had not been successful is not clear. But given that most of these young wives would have been teenagers trying to win over husbands ten to twenty years older than they were is reason enough for the elderly Peter to provide some wise counsel to them.

Peter qualifies the situation of the husband with *καὶ εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ*, “even if some of them do not obey the word.” This makes a basic assumption that such a situation is present.<sup>24</sup> Overcoming the disobedience of the husband will not be easy, but is possible in Peter’s thinking.

The husbands are defined not as ‘unbelievers’ (ἄπιστοι) who have rejected the claims of the gospel mentally and in commitment, but as *τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ*, i.e., some who are by their actions actively rebelling against God.<sup>25</sup> Later on in the letter, Peter makes some strong statements about people who disobey the Word (4:17): “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?”<sup>26</sup> Probably some of these husbands fell into this group of disobedient individuals. So these wives were not dealing with indifference to the Gospel by their husbands.

partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

<sup>22</sup>This general expectation is illustrated in the observation by Plutarch in his *Advice to Bride and Groom* (*Conj. praec.* 19, Mor. 140D): ‘wife should not acquire her own friends, but should make her husband’s friends her own. The gods are the first and most significant friends. For this reason, it is proper for a wife to recognize only those gods whom her husband worships and to shut the door to superstitious cults and strange superstitions. The performance of clandestine and secret rites by a woman do not ingratiate her to any of the gods.’ The second-century report (Just. Mart., *2 Apol.* 2) of a Christian wife married to a pagan husband and the martyrdom of her instructor, Ptolemaeus, provides a later example of the kind of hatred that Christian wives and their fellow-believers could encounter from reprobate pagan husbands.<sup>167</sup> Thus, the regard that Christian wives demonstrate for domestic order and the authority of their husbands will be an important means for allaying any fears of disruption and insuring domestic tranquillity. In actuality, however, the stated goal of subordination is not simply marital harmony but the very conversion of unbelieving husbands through their wives’ chaste and reverent conduct (vv 1e–2) and gentle and tranquil spirit (v 4).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 557-58.]

<sup>23</sup>The verb *κερδηθήσονται* is clearly with the meaning to ‘win to faith in Christ’: “It is so used in Matt 18:15; 1 Cor 9:22; cf. Lippert, ‘Leben,’ 250; David Daube, ‘Κερδαίνω as a Missionary Term,’ HTR 40 (1947) 109–20.”

<sup>24</sup>The *καὶ εἴ* construction introduces a concessive protasis, dependent clause here assuming the likelihood of the situation that can be overcome by the action defined in the apodosis, i.e., main clause. “Καὶ εἴ (εἰάν) concessive occurs somewhat rarely in the New Testament. See Matt. 26:35; John 8:16; 1 Cor. 8:5; Gal. 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:1 (but cf. WH.). The force of the *καὶ* is apparently intensive, representing the supposition as actually or from a rhetorical point of view an extreme case, improbable in itself, or specially unfavorable to the fulfilment of the apodosis.” [Ernest De Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1898), 113.]

This rarity of occurrence in the NT of *καὶ εἴ* is what evidently prompted a few copyists later on to reverse the words to the more common *εἴ καὶ*, which also introduces a concessive protasis. Other copyists just dropped the *καὶ*, thus reverting the protasis to a simple first class conditional clause, “since....”. Still others substituted *οἅτινες* (whoever) for *καὶ εἴ* or else wrote *καὶ οἅτινες*. But these are a small number of copyists who worked many centuries after the original writing of the document and struggled with the unfamiliar grammar structure of *καὶ εἴ*.

<sup>25</sup>“The phrase ‘disobedient to the word’ (cf. 2:8) points to situations where Christian wives were married to unbelieving husbands (cf. the phrase, ‘disobedient to the gospel of God,’ in 4:17; also perhaps the ‘disobedient spirits’ of 3:19–20). Balch (*Domestic Code*, 99) comments that this ‘disobedience’ entails for Peter ‘more than passive disbelief. Some husbands were almost certainly among those actively ... slandering the Christians’ (e.g., in 2:12, 15; 3:9, 16). He suggests further that Peter’s advice to women married to such husbands ‘should be understood against the social background in which a wife was expected to accept the customs and religious rites of her husband’ (e.g., see Balch, *Origin*, 240–46). In society’s eyes these women were already highly insubordinate just by virtue of their Christian commitment, and Peter is concerned that they not compound the difficulty by abrasive or troublesome behavior (see the graphic description in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 9.14, of a wife, possibly a Christian, who substituted for ‘our sure religion an only god by herself’). Peter’s unqualified advice to Christian wives to ‘defer to your husbands’ must be seen in this light.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 157.]

<sup>26</sup>ὅτι ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ δὲ πρῶτον ἀφ’ ἡμῶν, τί τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀπειθοῦντων τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ;

Rather they were coping with overt hostility to the Gospel. And yet Peter was confident that the believing wives could win over such husbands, but only by following a carefully laid out strategy.

**The strategy:** διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἄνευ λόγου κερδηθήσονται ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν, ὧν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἕξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος, ἀλλ' ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἀφάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἔστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής (“without a word by their wives’ conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight.”).

Here the apostle lays out a rather detailed strategy for converting the husbands to Christ. **First, the means of such** is διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς, i.e., “through the manner of living by the wives.” How a person lives before someone else plays a vital role in influencing them in the right direction. It is challenging to do so day in and day out, but this is essential, if the proper influence is going to be exerted. **Second, the means of such** is ἄνευ λόγου, i.e., “without a word.” What does Peter mean?<sup>27</sup> That the wife not talk to her husband? Hardly! Most likely, it was Peter’s way of stressing the importance of conduct over against repeated verbal pleadings for her husband to become a Christian. **Third, the means of such** influence is ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν, i.e., “having observed your absolutely holy conduct in reverence to God.” He repeats the reference to the wife’s conduct but with two strongly religious modifiers: ἀγνὴν and ἐν φόβῳ. The idea of the adjective ἀγνός, ἡ, ὄν is of purity and holiness.<sup>28</sup> The prepositional phrase ἐν φόβῳ stresses the wife’s reverence for God.<sup>29</sup> In her personal living she is morally pure and upright and possesses a deep devotion to God. These shape the pattern of her day to day living. And this becomes clear to her husband as he carefully watches her daily.<sup>30</sup> What he sees is a godly woman who makes a wonderful wife.

**Fourth,** she does not resort to sensual devices in order to ‘charm’ him into religious commitment: ὧν ἔστω

<sup>27</sup>“ἄνευ λόγου, ‘without a word,’ represents a verbal play on ‘disobedient to the word’ in the previous clause. Those who are impervious to the proclaimed word of the Christian gospel can and will be changed by the unspoken testimony of their own devoted wives (cf. the ‘humble and quiet spirit’ in v 4). The notion of a testimony borne by conduct is common enough in the NT (not least in 1 Peter), but this is the only instance in which words are specifically excluded. The author’s point is not to forbid verbal testimony by Christian wives but to suggest tactfully that such testimony is not obligatory, and sometimes not helpful (contrast 1 Tim 2:11–12, where silence becomes in certain circumstances an actual obligation for the wife).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 157-58.]

<sup>28</sup>According to the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon, ἀγνός, ἡ, ὄν belongs to a group of several words stressing holiness and purity; cf. topics 88.24-88.35. The adjective (# 88.28) ἀγνός, ἡ, ὄν pertains “to being without moral defect or blemish and hence pure — ‘pure, without defect.’ ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ‘for they will see how pure and reverent your conduct is’ 1 Pe 3:2.” [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), 745.]

<sup>29</sup>“The prepositional phrase ἐν φόβῳ virtually makes of φόβος an adjective, ‘reverent’ (φόβος has no cognate adjective with this meaning; φόβερος means ‘frightful’ or ‘terrifying’). ‘Reverent’ refers to the wives’ conduct toward God (cf. 1:17; 2:17, 18) and not toward their unbelieving husbands (the watchword in the latter relationship is the opposite: ‘let nothing frighten you,’ v 6; cf. 3:14).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 158.]

<sup>30</sup>“The manuscript evidence for the participle translated “when they observe” is divided. The aorist participle *epopteusantes*, preferred by NTG27 (κ̅ A B C P Ψ and the majority), is punctiliar, whereas the present participle *epopteuontes* (P<sup>72</sup> κ̅\* and others) implies repeated observance. This variant perhaps has been conformed to the same present tense of the verb in 2:12, also with conduct (‘good deeds’) as its object. Here, as in 2:12, stress is placed on the direct, face-to-face observance by nonbelievers of the proper conduct of believers, by which the latter can positively impress and attract the former.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 559.]

οὐχ ὁ ἔξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος,<sup>31</sup> i.e., “whose adornment is not to be the external braiding of hair and the wearing of gold ornaments or fine clothing.” Women’s fashion in ancient Rome sometimes went to the extreme of elaborateness.<sup>32</sup> Paul echoes similar views about women’s dress in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, especially for those in leadership roles:



Also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God.<sup>33</sup>

To be clear, one must acknowledge that this Christian emphasis away from external appearance<sup>34</sup> and stress on inward character traits was not unique in the first century world.<sup>35</sup> Greek and Roman philosophers frequently satirized aristocratic women for their excesses and called for modesty in appearance.<sup>36</sup>

**Fifth**, the Christian woman values inward qualities that can genuinely influence her husband the right way: ἀλλ’ ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ τοῦ πράεως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής, i.e., “rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight.” The dramatic contrast between ὁ ἔξωθεν... κόσμος (the outward adornment) and ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος (the secret person of the heart) is placed in strong contrast

<sup>31</sup>Peter’s use of κόσμος (v. 3) and ἐκόσμου (v. 5) is of standard terminology for people’s outward appearance, especially when the issue is clothes, jewelry, grooming etc. The English words ‘adornment’ and ‘to adorn oneself’ are accurate expressions of the Greek terms, although not often used in the English speaking world today.

<sup>32</sup>For an interesting and helpful discussion with pictures see “Roman Clothing: Women,” online at <http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/clothing2.html>. Also see “Roman Fashions: Women’s Apparel” as quoted below:

Wealthy women wore clothes of rich colors and fine materials, such as muslin and silks. Some areas also saw women wearing close fitting bonnets and hair nets. Women also wore a palla, a long shawl made of woolen goods for outdoor wear.

As fair as their hair goes, women could do anything! Hair could be dyed golden red or black. The hairdresser could skillfully use a curling iron for ringlets and crude scissors. She could also use oils and tonics to hurry growth and add both softness and luster. In the late 1st century and early 2nd century high-piled hairstyles of curls and plaits became popular. By the mid 2nd century, less elaborate plaits and waves were adapted. Hair was usually styled at home by slaves. Dyes were used, and blond hair was fashionable. Black hair wigs were imported from India and blond ones from Germany.

In terms of makeup, a woman’s face powder was a mixture of powdered chalk and white lead. Rouge for cheeks and lips was acher or the lees of wine. Eyebrows and eyelashes were blackened with ashes or powdered antimony, and teeth glistened with enamel. A lady chose her jewels, a diadem of precious stones for the hair, earrings, at least one necklace, rings for her fingers, bracelets for her wrists, and circlets for her ankles.

A woman was typically accompanied by two slaves, one with a parasol.

<sup>33</sup>ὡσαύτως καὶ γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ, ἀλλ’ ὁ πρέπει γυναίξιν ἐπαγγελομέναις θεοσεβείαν, δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν.

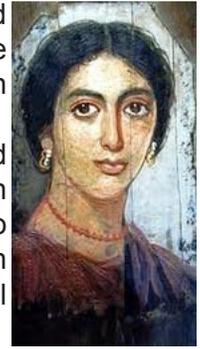
<sup>34</sup>It is possible to translate the Greek in such a way that the women are not prohibited from using outward aids, but are instead urged not to depend on these for their beauty (compare NEB ‘Your beauty should reside, not in outward adornment’; Phps ‘Your beauty should not be dependent on ...’; Brc ‘your beauty must not be the superficial beauty which depends on ...’). However, the TEV rendering is also possible and makes the verse an accurate description of the negative attitude of the early Christians toward superficial beauty aids (compare 1 Tim 2:9).” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 90.]

<sup>35</sup>“Censure of the love of finery (*philokosmia*), immoderate display, and extravagance was a commonplace of moral exhortation among Israelites, Greeks, and Romans alike.<sup>173</sup> (= <sup>173</sup> See Isa 3:16–4:1; T. Reu. 5:5; Philo, *Sacr.* 21; *Virt.* 39–40; *Mos.* 2.243; *Plut. Conj. praec.* 48 (Mor. 145A); cf. *Juv.*, *Sat.* 2.6.50.2–3; *Martial*, *Epig.* 9.37; *Strabo*, *Geogr.* 17.7, *Epict.*, *Ench.* 40; *Sen.*, *Ben.* 7.9.)” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 562.]

<sup>36</sup>“Regarding proper adornment, Plutarch, in his *Advice to Bride and Groom* (*Conj. praec.* 26; Mor. 141E) also recalls: ‘For, as Crates used to say, ‘adornment (*kosmos*) is that which adorns,’ and that adorns (*kosmei*) a woman which makes her more decorous. It is not gold or precious stones or scarlet that makes her such, but whatever invests her with that something which betokens dignity, good behavior and modesty (*hosa semnotētos eutaxias aidous emphasin peritithēsin*)’ (cf. also *Conj. praec.* 48; *Mor.* 144A–146A).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 563.]

to one another by ἀλλ' (but rather). When Peter shifted from the external appearance based on clothes, hair, and jewelry to the inner character, he didn't use outer/inner terms. Rather he shifted to an emphasis upon the individual woman and what she develops inwardly that then expresses itself outwardly in her actions.<sup>37</sup>

Very interesting is that Peter does not turn to the household duties of the wife.<sup>38</sup> She had many responsibilities that related to keeping the household functioning. Nor does he even allude to the major responsibility in the ancient world for the wife to produce a male heir who could inherit the property of his father. These 'functional' duties could easily have been seen as virtues of a good woman, as one finds in Proverbs 31:1-31. Instead, he turned to spiritual qualities.



What is it then that she is to cultivate as an essential part of her true self? In verse four, he mentions two traits, which he then indicates are pleasing to God: ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής. Basically Peter focuses on the human spirit (πνεύματος)<sup>39</sup> with two important qualities: πραέως (gentle) and ἡσυχίου (quiet). The first trait from the adjective πραῦς, πραεῖα, πραῦ defines an attitude of "not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentle, humble, considerate, meek in the older favorable sense."<sup>40</sup> The second trait comes from the adjective ἡσύχιος,

<sup>37</sup>“The rendering of *your beauty should consist of your true inner self* will depend in large measure upon the manner in which beauty is spoken of in the first clause of verse 3. For example, one may render *your beauty should consist of your true inner self* as ‘your beauty should depend upon what you yourself really are’ or ‘... what you are in your heart’ or ‘... what you are inside of you.’ On the other hand, it may be necessary to restructure this initial clause of verse 4 as ‘what you are in your heart is what causes you to be beautiful’ or ‘... causes you really to be beautiful.’ The ‘heart’ stands for the whole person, or more specifically, for his character and personality (compare Brc ‘inner character and personality’).” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 91.]

<sup>38</sup>“Within the home, the wife bore responsibility for tending the hearth, obtaining the water, preparing the meals, spinning wool, weaving cloth, sewing the clothing, and other tasks needed for the operation of the household as both a social and economic unit. In particular, the rearing of children was her responsibility. Consistent with this identification of the female and the wife with the internal sphere of the home, stress also was laid on the primary importance of the inward character and disposition of the wife herself. In Rome, the sequestered Vestal Virgins, who represented the purity of the Roman people, tended the hearth in the Temple of Vesta in the Roman Forum. Like the Vestal Virgins, the ordinary wife also maintained the heart of the home, the hearth; correlatively, her own heart and internal disposition could be said to be of far greater importance than her external appearance. See the explanation of baptism in 3:20 for a further contrast of external-internal spheres in 1 Peter.

“Marriages, generally arranged by the male heads of the families of bride and groom, created new and mutually advantageous familial alliances. The chief aim of marriage in classical antiquity was to produce a male child who could inherit the family property. It is thus worth noting that the Petrine author says nothing about the wife's obligation of providing a male heir but focuses exclusively on her personal virtue.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 569-70.]

<sup>39</sup>“The noun ‘spirit’ (*pneuma*) refers not to the divine Spirit (which would make no sense in connection with v 4c), but to a person's frame of mind, disposition, temperament, and ‘inward nature and essential character’ (Beare 1970, 155).<sup>179</sup> For the virtual equivalence of ‘heart’ and ‘spirit,’ see Ezek 36:26.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 566.]

<sup>40</sup>“πραῦς, πραεῖα, πραῦ (Hom.+; Crinagoras [I B.C. / I A.D.] in Anth. Pal. 10, 24, 4; 16, 273, 6; PGM 4, 1046; LXX; Jos., Ant. 19, 330; SibOr 4, 159 with v.l.) gen. πραέως (1 Pt 3:4; cp. W-S. §9, 5 p. 87; Kühner-Bl. I §126, 3 n. 9; B-D-F §46, 3; Mayser I/2 §68, 2, 1e p. 55f) and πραέος; pl. πραεῖς (on πραῦς and πρᾶος Kühner-Bl. I 532f; B-D-F §26 app.; Mlt-H. 160; Thackeray 180f; Crönert 290, 2.—But in our lit. πρᾶος [2 Macc 15:12; Philo; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 267] occurs only Mt 11:29 v.l.) pert. to not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentle, humble, considerate, meek in the older favorable sense (cp. OED s.v. 1b; Pind., P. 3, 71 describes the ruler of Syracuse as one who is π. to his citizens, apparently the rank and file [Gildersleeve]), unassuming D 3:7a; Mt 21:5 (Zech 9:9). W. ταπεινός (Is 26:6) Mt 11:29 (THaering, Schlatter Festschr. 1922, 3–15; MRist, JR 15, '35, 63–77). W. ἡσύχιος (and occasionally other characteristics) 1 Pt 3:4; 1 Cl 13:4 (cp. Is 66:2); B 19:4; Hm 5, 2, 3; 6, 2, 3; 11:8 (Leutzsch, Hermas 452, n. 122). Among the qualities required of church officials D 15:1. πρὸς τὰς ὀργὰς αὐτῶν ὑμεῖς πραεῖς gentle in the face of their wrath IEph 10:2 (cp. PLond 1912, 83f εἶνα Ἀλεξανδρεῖς πραέως καὶ φιλανθρώπως προσφέροντε [=προσφέρονται] Ἰουδαίους=therefore we affirm that the Alexandrines are to conduct themselves with kindness and goodwill toward the Judeans/Jews [41 A.D.]).—οἱ πραεῖς (Ps 36:11) Mt 5:5 (WClarke, Theology 47, '44, 131–33; NLOhfink, Die Besänftigung des Messias, Gedanken zu Ps. 37 [Mt]: FKamphous Festschr., ed. JHainz et al. '97, 75–87; Betz, SM 124–27); D 3:7b.—LMarshall, Challenge of NT Ethics '47, 80ff; 300ff.—DELG s.v. πρᾶος. M-M. EDNT. Spicq. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 861.]

ov and designates a quiet, well-ordered personality.<sup>41</sup> How is the pure and reverent lifestyle (v. 2) to express itself? Peter sees the temperament of the woman as a major avenue of expression for this devotion to God.<sup>42</sup> The two qualities of gentleness<sup>43</sup> and quietness<sup>44</sup> are important expressions of her love for God. By showing these toward her husband and others as well, he will see the difference that God makes in her life. This kind of disposition Peter characterizes as imperishable adornment: ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ (κόσμῳ).<sup>45</sup> The external only lasts momentary, but this kind of inward adornment lasts forever. Additionally, this inward adornment pleases God greatly: ὁ ἔστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής.<sup>46</sup> For a Christian woman, to value what God values in her is her first priority.

What applications of this instruction should be made to our world? **First**, we should note that what Peter said to the women in the first century Christian community had relevance to every believer in that day. Many commentators have correctly noticed that the qualities stressed by Peter are closely linked to what he said to the entire communities in 2:13 and 15-17:

12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

15 For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. 16 As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. 17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

<sup>41</sup>“ἡσύχιος, ον (s. prec. two entries and ἡσύχωσις; Hom. et al.; ins, pap; Is 66:2; PsSol 12:5; Joseph.) **quiet, well-ordered** D 3:8. W. πραῦς 1 Cl 13:4; B 19:4 (both Is 66:2); Hm 5, 2, 3; 6, 2, 3; 11:8. Again w. πραῦς: πνεῦμα **1 Pt 3:4** (cp. PsSol 12, 5 ψυχῆ ἡσ.). βίος (Pla., Demosth.; SIG 866, 15; POxy 129, 8 [VI A.D.]) εἰρηνικὸν καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάξει *lead a peaceable and quiet life* (thus lightening the task of the heads of state; Jos., Ant. 13, 407 βίος ἡσύχιος, but in a diff. sense; cp. Thu. 1, 120, 3) **1 Ti 2:2**. Here ἡσ. prob.= without turmoil. ἡσύχιον εἶναι Hm 8:10.—B. (ἡσυχος) 840. DELG s.v. ἡσυχος. 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), 440-41.]

<sup>42</sup>See 1 Timothy 2:2 where this trait applies to all believers: “so that we may lead a **quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity**” (ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι).

<sup>43</sup>“The adjective ‘gentle’ (praus) has a range of meanings (‘gentle,’ ‘humble,’ ‘modest,’ ‘unassuming,’ ‘meek’) and refers to a highly prized virtue among the Greeks (Bolkestein 1939, 108–11, 140), as among Israelites. Of Leah, Jacob’s wife, for example, it was said: “For he loved her very much after Rachel, her sister, died, since she was perfect and upright in all her ways, and she honored Jacob. And in all the days which she lived with him, he never heard a harsh word from her mouth because she possessed gentleness, peace, uprightness, and honor” (Jub. 36:23–24). According to the common expectations of the honor and shame code, the wife, in addition to her submission and deference to the authority of her husband and father and her protection of her chastity, was to display modesty and restraint in all things (Malina 1993d, 48–54). Compare again 1 Clem. 21:7, ‘let them (wives) show forth the innocent will of gentleness (tēs prautētos).’

“While the term gentle is used here in regard to females, as in 1 Clem. 21:7, gentleness was valued as a male virtue as well (Ps 36[37]:11; Matt 5:5; Gal 5:23; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; Titus 3:2). Jesus in fact describes himself as ‘gentle and humble’ (Matt 11:29; cf. 21:5; 2 Cor 10:1). Paul likewise speaks of a ‘gentle spirit’ in connection with himself (1 Cor 4:21) and other male believers (Gal 6:1; see Goppelt 1993, 222–23). This quality is urged on all believers in 3:16 so that here again the character and behavior of the wives are paradigmatic of the community as a whole.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 566.]

<sup>44</sup>“The accompanying adjective ‘tranquil’ (hēsychios, only here and in 1 Tim 2:2) denotes a state of inner peacefulness and calm, quiet serenity, and tranquility, unruffled by the vicissitudes and disturbances of the daily round. In 1 Tim (2:11, 13) a wife’s quiet tranquility (hēsychia), as opposed to her teaching, is regarded as a feature of her subordination to her husband. This quality, however, is also urged elsewhere as an appropriate quality of all believers, male as well as female (2 Thess 3:12; 1 Tim 2:2; cf. 1 Thess 4:11). The terms gentle and tranquil are closely related and often combined (cf. 1 Clem. 13:4 [cf. Isa 66:2]; Barn. 19:4; Herm. Mand. 5.2.3; 6.2.3; 11.8).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 566.]

<sup>45</sup>The adjective ἀφθάρτῳ implies repetition of κόσμος as the opposition adornment from the external.

<sup>46</sup>“**πολυτελής, ἐς** (τέλος; Hdt. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; En; TestSol 5:1 D; TestJob; TestJud 26:3; JosAs) **pert. to being of great value or worth, ordinarily of relatively high degree on a monetary scale, (very) expensive, costly** (so Thu.+; ins, pap, LXX, Philo; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 191) of ointment **Mk 14:3**. Of clothing (X., An. 1, 5, 8; Diod S 4, 53, 3; 17, 35, 2; Polyaeus 6, 1, 4; Philo, Sacr. Abel. 21; Jos., Bell. 1, 605) **1 Ti 2:9**. Of stones (Diod S 1, 33, 3; 2, 16, 4; OGI 90, 34; 132, 8 [s. note 7]; SEG VIII 467, 16 [217 B.C.]; PGM 5, 239. So mostly LXX; En 18:6; EpArist 60 al.) λίθος π. B 6:2 (Is 28:16); pl. MPol 18:2. παρατάξεις π. costly establishments (s. παρατάξεις 2) Hs 1:1.—Metaph., of inward adornment ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής (i.e. God appraises it at high value) **1 Pt 3:4**.—DELG s.v. τέλος. 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), 850.]

Beyond this larger text of 2:11-3:7, the qualities advocated here are applied to all believers, male and female without regard to gender.<sup>47</sup>

**Second**, the general principle clearly in this passage has vital relevance to our day: what is on the inside of us is far more important than our outward appearance. Much too often modern society focuses solely on outward beauty, especially for women. But Christian principles reverse this with the contention that inward beauty is far more important. This emphasis needs much stress in churches of today.

**Third**, we should not make the mistake of many of the early church fathers who took Peter's words to mean that Christian women should not wear makeup, braid their hair, or wear expensive clothes at all.<sup>48</sup> When Peter's words, especially in verse three, are understood properly against the first century backdrop, it becomes clear that he is urging modesty in dress outwardly and speaking against the extremes current in his time. And he is joining with many other non-Christian writers in his time who spoke out against such practices as well. When Paul spoke in 1 Timothy 2:9 of desiring Christian women to "adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire," he did not mean total disregard of one's outward appearance. And Peter did not imply that here either. Paul's ἐν καταστολή κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης ("in seemly apparel with modesty and sensibly") implies legitimate concern for one's physical appearance.

**Fourth**, how should modesty be defined in our day? One should not overlook the common emphasis between early Christian writers and secular writers in the first century.<sup>49</sup> We have already noted that Peter's words here echo many of the same themes as ancient Greek and Roman philosophers about women's dress. Good tastes were understood by non-Christians in the first century. The problem arose when many women ignored those standards of propriety with extremes in their dress and appearance. What this underscores is that the existing society will normally have standards of appropriateness that serve as a background to Christian understandings of propriety. Peter and Paul, who alone address these matters in the New Testament, used those secular standards as a base and added to or modified them with distinctive Christian insights. Most importantly the Christian woman should seek to use her outward appearance to glorify her God, not her body. This is an essential guiding principle in how she dresses.

### **b. Wives, look to OT wives as an example, v. 5-6**

5 It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. 6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you.

5 οὕτως γὰρ ποτε καὶ αἱ ἅγιοι γυναῖκες αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι εἰς θεὸν ἐκόσμου ἐαυτάς, ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, 6 ὡς Σάρρα ὑπήκουσεν τῷ Ἀβραάμ, κύριον αὐτὸν καλοῦσα· ἥς ἐγενήθητε τέκνα ἀγαθοποιοῦσαι καὶ

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<sup>47c</sup>While the term gentle is used here in regard to females, as in 1 Clem. 21:7, gentleness was valued as a male virtue as well (Ps 36[37]:11; Matt 5:5; Gal 5:23; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; Titus 3:2). Jesus in fact describes himself as 'gentle and humble' (Matt 11:29; cf. 21:5; 2 Cor 10:1). Paul likewise speaks of a 'gentle spirit' in connection with himself (1 Cor 4:21) and other male believers (Gal 6:1; see Goppelt 1993, 222–23). This quality is urged on all believers in 3:16 so that here again the character and behavior of the wives are paradigmatic of the community as a whole." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 566.]

<sup>48c</sup>It is interesting to observe that the Church Fathers show more interest in this text in 1 Peter than in other passages that might be expected to draw attention, such as the letter's Christological statements or other soteriological formulations. Several Fathers regard this text as establishing an authoritative prohibition of external adornment for Christian women.<sup>175</sup> In general, later Christian attitudes toward female attire and modesty remained conservative and conventional in nature.<sup>176</sup> [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 565.]

<sup>49c</sup>The qualities of a deceased wife inscribed on a second-century CE funerary epitaph by a mourning husband are a moving tribute to her virtuous qualities and her husband's profound sense of loss. Though the words are those of a non-Christian, the virtues extolled are strikingly similar:

Farewell, lady Panthia, from your husband. After your departure, I keep up my lasting grief for your cruel death. Hera, goddess of marriage, never saw such a wife: your beauty, your wisdom, your chastity. You bore me children completely like myself; you cared for your bridegroom and your children; you guided straight the rudder of life in our home and raised high our common fame in healing—though you were a woman, you were not behind me in skill. In recognition of this your bridegroom Glycon built this tomb for you. I also buried here the body of [my father] immortal Philadelphus, and I myself will lie here when I die, since with you alone I shared my bed when I was alive, so may I cover myself in ground that we share, (cited in Lefkowitz and Fant 1982, 104–5)

[John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 567.]

μὴ φοβούμεναι μηδεμίαν πτόησιν.

### Notes:

In making his appeal to the Christian wives in his letter, Peter bases (οὕτως γάρ) this appeal on the model of godly women in the Old Testament, and in particular uses Sarah as the prime example. All of this is expressed in a single sentence as the causal basis for the previous admonition.

**Example of holy women.** Peter looks back in time for examples. He begins with the general examples of ‘holy women’ (αἱ ἅγια γυναῖκες) who placed their hope / expectancy in God (αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι εἰς θεόν). He doesn’t name individuals other than Sarah. Given the pivotal role of Abraham in Israelite history, the example to women would naturally be Sarah. These women ‘adorned themselves’ (ἐκόσμουσαν ἑαυτάς) by submitting to their husbands (ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν). Peter thus links the piety of these women to how they related to their husbands.<sup>50</sup> As a part of covenant Israel, they followed the norms established for the Israelites in the marital relationship. Now, one would want to note that these women were not morally spotless, and sometimes even abused the influence they had over their husband in order to gain advantage for a favored son. But Peter is speaking in terms of basic principles and is not assuming perfection by these OT women before using them as models for the women in the churches of Anatolia.

**Example of Sarah.** Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is the only woman identified by name as a worthy example. Her ‘adorning herself’ is identified as having “obeyed Abraham and called him lord” (ὡς Σάρρα ὑπήκουσεν τῷ Ἀβραάμ κύριον αὐτὸν καλοῦσα). In the Greek, the text literally reads “obeyed Abraham by calling him lord.”<sup>51</sup> Sarah’s life was not without fault and failure, but Peter’s point is to underscore that Sarah did respect her husband and essentially did what he asked her to do.

What can we learn from the Old Testament women? Peter’s basic point remains valid: a women’s devotion to God has important connections to how she relates to her husband. If she enjoys spiritual health and vitality, she will have a respectful and positive relationship with her husband.

Also, she doesn’t have to be perfect in order to be a good wife. None of these women in the OT were perfect, and yet most of them related positively to their husband even in the harsh patriarchal system of ancient Israel.

Finally, what Peter does here underscores something Paul stressed in Titus 2:3-5 when older women in the church were to be teachers of the younger women. We need role models to look to when trying to develop good relationships. For some in the churches of ancient Anatolia with no Jewish heritage or background, the example of Sarah probably didn’t mean a lot. But for others with Jewish heritage, it had significant impact. But the image of Sarah held up in discussions of this letter of Peter by women in these churches served to encourage all the married women, and especially those with non-Christian husbands.

Wow! Peter covers lots of territory with these two sentences in 3:1-6! He leaves us with some profound insights that God can use a godly witness to influence even those very close to us in life. Christianity genuinely lived out in the presence of unbelievers can be a vital instrument used by God to bring them to faith in Christ. This we must realize and then implement in our relationships.

<sup>50</sup>“While groups of people are identified as ‘holy’ in the NT (e.g., holy apostles and prophets, Eph 3:5; 2 Pet 3:2; Christian believers as a class, Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; Phil 1:1), the phrase ‘holy women’ (αἱ ἅγια γυναῖκες) is unique here in the Christian canon.<sup>129</sup> The mention of Sarah in v. 6 makes it likely that the author has in mind in the first instance the matriarchs of Jewish tradition, viz., Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah,<sup>130</sup> who were holy not because of moral acts but because of their membership in God’s holy people.<sup>131</sup> The ‘holy women’ function therefore not so much as models of moral behavior to be imitated as examples of women who have followed the path here described.<sup>132</sup> That point is confirmed by the different language used to describe them from the language used to describe Christ in the preceding section, where the household slaves were in fact ‘called’ to emulate aspects of that life. Such ‘calling’ to follow an example is absent here. The activity most characteristic of the women for our author was their continuing hope<sup>133</sup> in God; the similar form of αἱ ἅγια (‘the holy [women]’) and αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι (‘who hoped’) makes clear that it is that aspect of holiness the author wishes to emphasize.<sup>134</sup>” [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), 214-15.]

<sup>51</sup>Very likely this is an allusion to Genesis 18:12 in the Septuagint: ἐγέλασεν δὲ Σάρρα ἐν ἑαυτῇ λέγουσα Οὐπω μὲν μοι γέγονεν ἕως τοῦ νῦν, ὁ δὲ κύριός μου πρεσβύτερος. (“So Sarah laughed in herself saying, ‘No longer is it possible for me until now, and my lord is old.’”). The ironic aspect is that the occasion in Genesis 18 is where the angel announces to Abraham that a son will be born. And Sarah overhearing this doesn’t believe him nor believes that Abraham at this age can produce a son. Jewish rabbinical tradition held this verse to reflect Sarah’s obedience to Abraham. Perhaps it is that interpretive tradition that Peter is adopting. Interestingly, Genesis 16:2 indicates that Abraham obeyed Sarah, and this verse became an embarrassment to Jewish interpreters in the ancient world like Philo and Josephus.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 13**  
**1 Peter 3:7**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

**“Husbands, live with your wife”**

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**Greek NT**

Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως  
 συνοικοῦντες κατὰ  
 γνῶσιν, ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ  
 σκεύει τῷ γυναικίῳ  
 ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν, ὡς  
 καὶ συγκληρονόμοις  
 χάριτος ζωῆς, εἰς τὸ  
 μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς  
 προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

Ihr Männer müsst euch  
 entsprechend verhalten.  
 Seid rücksichtsvoll zu eu-  
 ren Frauen! Bedenkt, dass  
 sie der schwächere Teil  
 sind. Achtet und ehrt sie;  
 denn sie haben mit euch  
 am ewigen Leben teil, das  
 Gott schenkt. Handelt so,  
 dass nichts euren Ge-  
 beten im Weg steht.

**NRSV**

Husbands, in the same  
 way, show consideration  
 for your wives in your life  
 together, paying honor to  
 the woman as the weaker  
 sex, since they too are  
 also heirs of the gracious  
 gift of life—so that nothing  
 may hinder your prayers.

**NLT**

In the same way, you  
 husbands must give hon-  
 or to your wives. Treat her  
 with understanding as you  
 live together. She may be  
 weaker than you are, but  
 she is your equal partner  
 in God’s gift of new life. If  
 you don’t treat her as you  
 should, your prayers will  
 not be heard.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Husbands, show your wife consideration](#)
  - b. [How and Why.](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

This text continues the emphasis on the *Haustafeln*, i.e., domestic code, that Peter began in 2:18. This time the focus falls on Christian husbands and their treatment of their wives.<sup>1</sup> Of the three topics in this material -- slaves, 2:18-25; wives, 3:1-6; husbands, 3:7 -- his emphasis on husbands is the shortest, but is packed full of rich insight and advice.

In similar texts in the writings of Paul, the focus on Christian husbands is much more detailed than in First Peter, especially in Ephesians:

**Ephesians 5:25-33. 25 Husbands, love your wives**, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, 27 so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind — yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. 33 Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Since this verse shares characteristics similar to the preceding sections dealing with household conduct—introduction with ὁμοίως (‘similarly’), address, participle, advice, and then motivation—it is, despite its brevity, to be regarded as the third in the series advising household members on appropriate conduct, each of which depends on the imperatives of 2:17.<sup>1599</sup>” [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), 217.]

<sup>2</sup>GNT: 25 *Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας*, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς, 26 ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι, 27 ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἕνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ’ ἵνα ᾖ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος. 28 οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα· ὁ ἀγαπᾶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ, 29 οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, 30 ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. 31 ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. 32 τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν, ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. 33 πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ’ ἓνα ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἢ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

**Colossians 3:19.** 19 *Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.*<sup>3</sup>

The perspective of a Christian husband relating to a Christian wife is similar in all three of these passages. This represents a departure of Peter from his previous emphasis (cf. 2:11-3:6) on the Christian relating to the non-Christian, either in society or in the home. Why he made this shift is not clear; perhaps it had to do with perceived needs among his readers. But whatever the reason, Peter picks up the responsibility of respectful regard to human authorities that he began in 2:13 and relates it to Christian husbands in terms of their responsibilities to their wife.<sup>4</sup> The ultimate authority of God (cf. διὰ τὸν κύριον in 2:13) mandates these responsibilities of the husband to his wife.

## I. Context and Background<sup>5</sup>

Background concerns play a role here as they always do in understanding a text properly and clearly.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The UBS 4th revised edition of the Greek New Testament lists two places where wording varies from manuscript to manuscript in the ancient copies, while the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition Greek text lists five variations of wording in this sentence that surface in the many manuscript copies.

The first of the two variations in the UBS text is with συγκληρονόμοις, 'joint heirs.'<sup>6</sup> Some manuscripts read συγκληρονόμοι, using the nominative case ending -οι rather than the instrumental case ending -οις. The essential meaning is the same, but the issue is one of style and better Greek grammar. The question is whether συγκληρονόμοις, 'joint heirs,' refers to husbands, or to wives as joint heirs with their husbands. The comparative phrases introduced by ὡς and ὡς καὶ on either side of the participle ἀπονέμοντες strongly assert that the case of σκεύει and συγκληρονόμοις should match, which they do with the use of the instrumental (=instrumental dative) cases of both these words.<sup>7</sup> Thus συγκληρονόμοις is the preferred reading, and places more emphasis on the concept by asserting the wife to be joint heir with her husband, rather than συγκληρονόμοι which would assert the husband is joint heir with his wife.

The second variation is with χάριτος ζωῆς, 'grace of life.'<sup>8</sup> The primary alternative reading is ποικίλης χάριτος ζωῆς, 'the manifold grace of life.' The phrase χάριτος ζωῆς is rather unusual in ancient Greek and prompted several changes by copyists trying to make clear sense of the phrase: χάριτος ζωσσης, 'living grace'; χάριτος

<sup>3</sup>GNT: 19 οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς.

<sup>4</sup>The use of the participle συνοικοῦντες in 3:7 matches the ὑποτασσόμενοι in 3:1 and ὑποτασσόμενοι in 2:18, all of which play off the foundational finite verb Ὑποτάγητε in 2:13. While such a grammar structure was easy to do in ancient Greek and easily understood in terms of subordinating a series of ideas to a primary one, such is utterly impossible to re-create in English translation, or any of the modern western languages for that matter. Thus by just reading a modern translation of this text, the reader would have not a clue as to the arrangement of ideas in the larger passage of 2:13-3:7.

<sup>5</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>6</sup>"Of the two chief readings (συγκληρονόμος 2127 can be disregarded as a scribal idiosyncrasy) the external support for συγκληρονόμοις appears to be slightly stronger (P<sup>72</sup> κ<sup>c</sup> (κ συγκληρονόμους) B<sup>c</sup> (B συνκληρονόμοις) 33 1739 it<sup>ar</sup>, t vg sy<sup>mp</sup> arm eth (Speculum)) than that for συγκληρονόμοι (A C K P Ψ 81 614 Byz Lect sy<sup>th</sup>). If one adopts the dative, the reference of the clause ὡς ... ζωῆς is to the wives; if the nominative, the reference is to the husbands.<sup>1</sup> The transition in sense from the singular τῷ γυναικείῳ σκεύει to the plural συγκληρονόμοις may have seemed harsh to copyists, who therefore preferred the nominative. Actually, however, the transition is not unnatural, and the dative is more in harmony with the structure of the sentence and the thought (for the presence of καὶ seems to favor taking the two clauses as coordinate)." [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), 620-21.]

<sup>7</sup>The ending -οις is signaling a connection to the neuter gender word σκεύει, 'vessel,' which is a clear reference here to the wife as the appositional modifying adjective γυναικείῳ (neuter gender singular number) indicates. The plural συγκληρονόμοις simply individualizes the previous reference to singular 'the female vessel.'

<sup>8</sup>"Several witnesses have added the adjective ποικίλης (manifold/of various kinds) from 4:10, where the reference to 'God's grace in its various forms' is natural and appropriate. A literal translation of the Greek 'grace of life' may not have a clear meaning. The genitive ζωῆς is probably epeexegetic, that is 'grace that consists in life' (Achtmeier, 1 Peter, p. 218; Elliott, 1 Peter, p. 580)." [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 486.]

ζωῆς αἰωίου, ‘grace of life eternal’; ποικίλης χάριτος ζωῆς, ‘manifold grace of life.’ None of these variations have strong support from significant early copies of the New Testament, and thus should be rejected. The best meaning of χάριτος ζωῆς will be explored below, and this reading should be understood as original.

The remaining three variations listed in the N-A 27th Greek text reflect stylistic and spelling ‘improvements’ because of the changing patterns of Greek over the centuries of copying this text. A couple of manuscripts drop the article Οἱ at the beginning so that ἄνδρες matches γυναῖκες in 3:1 without an article. A very few substitute συνοικοῦντες (“live with”) with a form of συνομιλέω (“talk with”). Two copies read ταῖς προσευχαῖς rather than τὰς προσευχάς, “so that you won’t be hindered in your prayers” rather than “so that your prayers won’t be hindered.” But these variations have very little manuscript support and are later alternations by copyists. Thus they are to be rejected as not being original. The text as it stands in the above listing is the original wording, and we can be virtually certain of that.

**Internal History.** The background history present in this text is indirect and relates to the general attitude of husbands toward wives in the first century. Again some general trends will surface, but great diversity will also be reflected in the different cultures, and, even inside specific cultures, different men adopted different postures toward their wife. The one universal given of that world was that it was a patriarchal world where the male dominated life. This power over others, especially inside the family unit, had few restraints imposed by the surrounding culture. The more extreme side was the Roman tradition of the *patria potestis* which granted absolute power of life and death over family members.<sup>9</sup> The Greek tradition didn’t go quite as far with society imposing acceptable norms on how the male head of the household could treat his family. Jewish tradition was guided by the Torah of the Old Testament that imposed a number of limitations on how family members were to be treated. Plus, the economic status of the husband and wife played an important role in defining acceptable and improper treatment by the husband of his wife. Harsh treatment such as that which Paul forbids in Col. 3:19, μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς, was relatively commonplace from all indications. But one can also find examples of great honor and respect being given to wives by their Roman, Greek, or Jewish husbands.<sup>10</sup> Careful examination of the available data about husband’s attitudes and relationships toward their wives in the Roman empire during the first Christian century reveals a mixture of occasional brutality and sometimes

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<sup>9</sup>The restraint on this during the first century came with Emperor Augustus imposing radical reforms on Roman society after consolidating his power as emperor. One of these reforms was the imposing of the Lex Papia Poppaea laws governing marriage in AD 9. This reform was designed to encourage marriage and the stability of marriages for child bearing purposes among the Italians. Interestingly, the law was introduced by the suffect consuls of that year, M. Papius Mutilus and Q. Poppaeus Secundus, although they themselves were bachelors. The intent and impact was to strengthen the marital relationships and to make them more harmonious.

Roman patterns were more ‘liberal’ than many of the other traditions, with Roman wives enjoying considerably greater freedom and rights; for details see “Marriage in ancient Rome: Conventions of Roman Marriage,” Wikipedia.

<sup>10</sup>Most of these are found as inscriptions on the tomb stones of wives who have passed away. These are generally written by their husbands to pay tribute to being an extraordinary wife. To be sure, this represents mostly the wealthier classes of ancient society and does not give insight into the peasant class of Roman society that was by far the largest segment. Some of the data suggests that the wealthier classes responded differently than those without wealth, in large part simply because the wife would normally come from a family of wealth and power. Abusing her could bring serious repercussions to the husband.

One example of devotion to a wife is a letter from Pliny the Younger (AD 61-112) about Calpurnia, his wife, written to Calpurnia Hispulla, his wife’s aunt who had raised her after her father’s death (*Epistulae* bk 4, letter 19):

As you yourself are a model of the family virtues, as you returned the affection of your brother, who was the best of men and devoted to you, and as you love his daughter as though she were your own child, and show her not only the affection of an aunt but even that of the father she has lost, I feel sure you will be delighted to know that she is proving herself worthy of her father, worthy of you, and worthy of her grandfather. She has a sharp wit, she is wonderfully economical, and she loves me -- which is a guarantee of her purity. Moreover, owing to her fondness for me she has developed a taste for study. She collects all my speeches, she reads them, and learns them by heart. When I am about to plead, what anxiety she shows; when the pleading is over, how pleased she is! She has relays of people to bring her news as to the reception I get, the applause I excite, and the verdicts I win from the judges. Whenever I recite, she sits near me screened from the audience by a curtain, and her ears greedily drink in what people say to my credit. She even sings my verses and sets them to music, though she has no master to teach her but love, which is the best instructor of all. Hence I feel perfectly assured that our mutual happiness will be lasting, and will continue to grow day by day. For she loves in me not my youth nor my person -- both of which are subject to gradual decay and age -- but my reputation. Nor would other feelings become one who had been brought up at your knee, who had been trained by your precepts, who had seen in your house nothing that was not pure and honourable, and, in short, had been taught to love me at your recommendation. For as you loved and venerated my mother as a daughter, so even when I was a boy you used to shape my character, and encourage me, and prophesy that I should develop into the man that my wife now believes me to be. Consequently my wife and I try to see who can thank you best, I because you have given her to me, and she because you gave me to her, as though you chose us the one for the other. Farewell.

of beautiful devotion and love. This is all the more interesting because of the usual age difference of between ten and twenty-five years between married couples. Thus Peter's admonitions to Christian husbands would resonate with the men in the churches simply because most of them would have known of examples who followed most of these instructions, even among their non-Christian friends.

## b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** The broad genre is that of the letter body which implies the occasional nature of these instructions. That is, what Peter said was prompted by real circumstances existing in the churches that the letter was addressed to, rather than being a hypothetical situation. The narrow genre issue is that this sentence is *paraenesis* of the Haustafeln category. That is, it is moral admonition given to the family, and in this case the male head of the household. As such, it puts on the table standards of conduct expected from believers and these become ideals that are to be seriously sought after for incorporating into daily living and relationships. They are not threatening laws imposed down upon the targeted individuals. Rather they are presented as divine expectations and in the case of 3:7 as expectations that have potential consequence if not followed.

**Literary Context.** The literary setting of 3:7 is relatively easy to detect. It stands as the third part of the Haustafeln section of 2:18-3:7 dealing with slaves, wives, and husbands. This in turn is a part of a larger section, 2:11-3:12, that deals with Christian obligations, mostly to the non-Christian world surrounding believers. This is the second topic of three in the letter body. Peter is seeking to explain to his readers that we Christians are mandated by God to reach out in positive ways to other people, especially to those who do not know Christ, and to those who in some setting possess authority over our lives whether it be government, family, or social settings.

### Literary Structure.

The block diagram below illustrates the thought structure of this single sentence in Greek.

likewise

30 <sup>3.7</sup> **husbands should live together (with their wives)**  
 according to knowledge,  
 as a weaker vessel  
 showing their wife honor  
 as also joint heirs of the grace of life,  
 so that your prayers won't be hindered.

The core expression (highlighted in **bold type** above) is clear. What is less certain are the connections of the modifying expressions that follow the initial verbal expression. Differences in punctuation of the three major printed Greek texts of this passage reflect this uncertainty.<sup>11</sup> The above diagram reflects a tentative

<sup>11</sup>**UBS 4th revised edition:** Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικοῦντες κατὰ γνῶσιν ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκευεῖ τῷ γυναικείῳ, ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

**Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition:** Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικοῦντες κατὰ γνῶσιν ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκευεῖ τῷ γυναικείῳ, ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

**SBL GNT:** Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως συνοικοῦντες κατὰ γνῶσιν, ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκευεῖ τῷ γυναικείῳ ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν, ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

The UBS and the N-A texts agree in the placing of commas after ὁμοίως, γυναικείῳ, and ζωῆς. But the newer SBL GNT differs by placing commas after γνῶσιν, τιμὴν, and ζωῆς. The impact of this is the defining of what modifies what. Both the UBS and N-A editors assume that κατὰ γνῶσιν ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκευεῖ τῷ γυναικείῳ modify the participle συνοικοῦντες. The translation impact would be as follows: "Like wise husbands, live together with your wife according to knowledge and as the weaker vessel, showing (her) honor also as joint heirs of the grace of life, lest your prayers be hindered." The second participle ἀπονέμοντες is the modifying

### 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

understanding of how everything is connected in the sentence. Which ever punctuation pattern is adopted, the essential meaning remains pretty much the same; only some emphases shift.

This highlights one of the issues in developing a modern Greek text from comparative analysis of the existing ancient manuscripts. It wasn't until about the fifth century with the shift to minuscule style writing of Greek that very primitive punctuation marks begin showing up in the writing of Greek. Prior to that, with everything being written in uncial style Greek, no breaks even between words were present, as well as no punctuation marks at all.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the editors of modern Greek texts have to make decisions about inserting periods, question marks, commas, colons, semi-colons, blank spaces between words etc. based on a particular understanding of thought flow. Usually, the text makes this very clear but on occasions, such as our text in 3:7, the issues are cloudy and some aspects are debatable.

## II. Message

Given the structural understanding above, the passage will be examined around two major divisions: the main responsibility, and expansions of that responsibility. One should note that even though the translation of the main clause (cf. a. below) is with an English imperative verb, the structure of the Greek makes the participle συνοικοῦντες better understood as instrumental in that it reaches back to Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον in 2:13 with connections also to 2:11-12, as Achtemeier and Epp correctly contend.<sup>13</sup> How does one show proper acceptance of human authorities? Husbands show it by how they treat their wives.

### a. Husbands, show consideration for your wives

Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together

Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως συνοικοῦντες κατὰ γνῶσιν,

#### Notes:

In a world where the husband controlled the family with few limits imposed on him, Peter calls upon Christian husbands to step away from their power to control and to reach out to their wives with thoughtfulness and respect. Paul's way of expressing this was for husbands to love their wives: Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19). Peter's wording is different with συνοικοῦντες<sup>14</sup> κατὰ γνῶσιν, which literally is "Make a home together using good sense." The husband is to be committed to building a proper home together with his wife. The συνοικέω in this single use inside the entire New Testament stresses the home and the joint responsibility of husband and wife for developing it.<sup>15</sup> In the cultural worlds of the first century, reference for ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς, with εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν going back to the first participle συνοικοῦντες.

On the other hand the SBL GNT punctuation impacts the translation differently: "Husbands similarly should live together (with their wives) according to knowledge, showing them honor as weaker vessels and also as joint heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers are not hindered." The weakness of this approach is the presence of "your," ὑμῶν, at the very end of the sentence. The second person plural form rather than a more natural third person "their" raises questions about the accuracy of this approach.

<sup>12</sup>In non-technical very simple terms, *uncial* means capital letters, while *minuscule* means cursive letters. The terms are universal and application to all western languages. For a helpful but not overly technical description of these issues along with diagrams, see "Evolution of the Uncial Script," at skypoint.com. Even clearer is "Minuscule Greek," at Wikipedia online. For a sample file of minuscule style of Greek see "Thucydides" at Wikipedia.

A very helpful introduction to all this is "An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism," at skypoint.com. My "Study in Textual Criticism," at cranfordville.com highlights the issues for fourth semester Greek students, and beyond.

<sup>13</sup>The participle συνοικοῦντες ('living with'), like the those in 2:18 and 3:1, is to be construed not as imperatival<sup>160</sup> but as instrumental: it indicates the way obligations are to be met.<sup>161</sup> [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), 217.]

<sup>14</sup>συνοικέω fut. 3 sg. συνοικήσει Dt 25:5; aor. συνώκησα LXX; pf. ptc. fem. συνώκηκυῖα LXX live with τινί someone (since Hipponax [VI B.C.] 20 Diehl3 and Aeschyl.; also Demetr.: 722 Fgm. 2, 2 Jac.) of man and wife (Hdt. et al.; OGI 771, 28; pap, LXX; Jos., Ant. 4, 247; 8, 191; Demetr.: 722 Fgm. 1, 12; cp. Philo, Sac. Abel. 20) **1 Pt 3:7**.—New Docs 3, 85. DELG s.v. οἶκος II C. 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), 973-74.]

<sup>15</sup>As a term of the *oik-* family, *synoikeō* (lit., 'make a home [*oikos*] with [*syn-*']'), like *oiketai* (2:18), is perhaps intentionally employed to underline the household realm of this body of instruction (2:18–3:7). The cooperation of husband and wife in household management (*oikonomia*) is noted by Philo (QG 1.26, commenting on Gen 2:22):

Why does Scripture call the likeness of the woman 'a building'? The harmonious coming together of man and woman and their consummation is figuratively a house. And everything that is without a woman is imperfect and homeless. For to a man are entrusted the

this carried with it implications of the husband taking care of responsibilities outside the house, and giving his wife full reign over things inside the house with his complete support. Cultural patterns in today's world have changed so that responsibilities both inside and outside are shared by both husband and wife. But Peter's essential point remains valid to today's situation. Husbands must fully support their wives in the building of a home together.

This support was to be given *κατὰ γνώσιν*. The prepositional phrase stresses the giving of support out of a realization of the nature of the situation with his wife.<sup>16</sup> This includes at least the two aspects that Peter will specify in the expansions: 1) weaker vessel and 2) co-heirs. Beyond this, the experiential knowledge orientation of *γνώσις* stresses a understanding gained out of experience and observation, rather than by pure theory. When a husband reaches out to his wife in such an affirming and positive way, he will discover much about the richness of the marital relationship and about his wife. And this developing understanding should encourage his growing support of her in the building of a home together.

Paul's way of stressing the positive stance of the husband toward his wife is with the concept of self-sacrificing love and devotion to her. The *ἀγάπη* kind of love is defined in Ephesians 5: 25b-33a basically in terms of a comparison to Christ and how He sacrificially loved the church in giving Himself for it in order to make it the most beautiful bride ever. By Paul's admonition in Col. 3:19, loving one's wife is the opposite of both showing bitterness toward her and causing her to feel bitterness against him.

This is a challenge to every Christian husband. And it is something desperately needed in modern western society. The physical aspects of marriage have been so emphasized by the cultural perversions of Hollywood, that marriage is equated with sex and little more. And this even is often touted to be boring and unsatisfying after a period of time! What both Paul and Peter are calling husbands to do is to make deep, abiding commitments to their wives that seriously seek to make the wife a better person and to develop a profoundly satisfying home together. As the old hymn declares, "God, give us Christian homes!"<sup>17</sup>

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public affairs of state; while to a woman the affairs of the home are proper. The lack of her is ruin, but her being near at hand constitutes household management (*oikonomia*)."

[John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 575.]

<sup>16</sup>"*considerately*. The adverb translates *kata gnōsin* (lit., 'in accord with knowledge, insight'; cf. *ennoia*, 4:1, and contrast *agnōsia*, 2:15). This considerateness or knowledge pertains not only to the assumed condition of wives as 'weaker feminine vessels' but also and especially to their special status as 'co-heirs of the grace of life.' Therefore, it is unnecessary to suspect here a repudiation of the depreciation of women in various Gnostic circles (against Reicke 1954). The thought reflects conventional wisdom: 'My soul takes pleasure in three things and they are beautiful in the sight of the Lord and humans: agreement between brothers, friendship between neighbors, and a wife and husband who live in harmony' (Sir 25:1); 'happy is the one (male) who lives with (synoikōn) an intelligent wife' (Sir 25:8). See also Ps.-Arist., Oec. 3.4, where the unity of husband and wife is 'allied with wisdom and understanding.' On the mutuality of the marital relationship, see also 1 Cor 7:1-5, 10-16, 36; Eph 5:25-33; 1 Thess 4:4-6." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 575-76.]

<sup>17</sup>1. God, give us Christian homes!

Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,  
Homes where the Master's will is sought,  
Homes crowned with beauty Your love has wrought;  
God, give us Christian homes;  
God, give us Christian homes!

2. God, give us Christian homes!

Homes where the father is true and strong,  
Homes that are free from the blight of wrong,  
Homes that are joyous with love and song;  
God, give us Christian homes,  
God, give us Christian homes!

3. God, give us Christian homes!

Homes where the mother, in caring quest,  
Strives to show others Your way is best,  
Homes where the Lord is an honored guest;  
God, give us Christian homes,  
God, give us Christian homes!

## b. Here's how to do it and why

paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life — so that nothing may hinder your prayers.

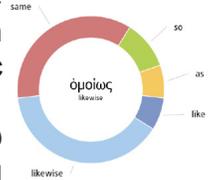
ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει τῷ γυναικείῳ ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν, ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

### Notes:

How does a husband build a solid home together with his wife? In the expansion elements added to the core assertion (cf. a. above), the answer to this question is provided by Peter. It contains several elements:

**Likewise:** ὁμοίως.<sup>18</sup> This comparative adverb indicates that the responsibilities for the husband are in line with those for the wife (3:1, Ὅμοίως), and for the slave (2:18). Through this word, Peter stresses that the husband is under authority himself and thus has specific guidelines for his conduct.<sup>19</sup>

**Paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex:** ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει τῷ γυναικείῳ ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν. The core expression ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν has the literal sense of 'treating her like a queen.' How does the husband cooperate with his wife in home building? The primary way, as this instrumental participle asserts, is by elevating her to the status of queen of the house and then showing her appropriate respect and support. This was a mandate quite distinct from the surrounding cultural values which affirmed that the wife gained honor and respect from her husband by producing a son for him.<sup>20</sup> This distinctive emphasis of Peter is also to be understood against the ancient backdrop where the wife typically had responsibility of the management of affairs inside the home. This gave her status and influence which Peter urges the husband to support. In many of the tomb stone inscriptions praising the wife, one



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4. God, give us Christian homes!  
Homes where the children are led to know  
Christ in His beauty who loves them so,  
Homes where the altar fires burn and glow;  
God, give us Christian homes,  
God, give us Christian homes!

<sup>18</sup>ὁμοίως adv. of ὁμοίος (Pind., Hdt.+)  
**pert. to being similar in some respect, likewise, so, similarly, in the same way** Mk 4:16 v.l.; Lk 3:11; 10:37; 13:3, 5 v.l. (see ὡσαύτως) al. ὁμ. καὶ and so, so also Mt 22:26; 26:35; Mk 15:31; Lk 5:33; IPol 5:1. ὁμ. μέντοι καὶ in the same way, too Jd 8. ὁμ. δὲ καὶ (pap, EpArist; Jos., Bell. 2, 575, Ant. 14, 216) Lk 5:10; 10:32; 1 Cor 7:3f; Js 2:25. In Ro 1:27 the rdg. varies betw. ὁμ. τε καὶ and ὁμ. δὲ καὶ (v.l.). Sim. Mt 27:41 ὁμοίως καὶ (vv.ll. ὁμ. δὲ καὶ and simply ὁμ.).—καθὼς θέλετε ... , ποιεῖτε ὁμοίως as you wish ... , do so Lk 6:31. ὁμ. καθὼς in the same way as 17:28. ὁμ. πάλιν similarly, again 12:1. W. the dat. foll. ὁμ. πλανᾶσθαι ἐκείνοις to go astray as they did 2:9. Somet. the idea of similarity can fade into the background so that ὁμ. means also (UPZ 70, 8 [152/151 B.C.] ὁμνύω, ὅτι ψευδῆ πάντα καὶ οἱ παρὰ σὲ θεοὶ ὁμοίως; 65, 8f ὁμ. καὶ Κότταβος, ὁμ. καὶ Χεντοσνεύς; TestJob 47:6 ἀφανεῖς ἐγένοντο ... οἱ σκώληκες ... , ὁμ. καὶ αἱ πλῆγαι; GrBar 9:3; Ath. 9, 2 [to introduce additional Scriptural evidence]) ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμ. ποιεῖ this the Son also does J 5:19; cp. 6:11; 21:13.—As a connective (Hierocles 26 p. 480 [ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ]; oft. pap); more than one ὁμ. in the same way ... also (an edict of Augustus fr. Cyrenaica, SEG IX, 8, 108; 110 [lit.] = DocsAugTib 311) 1 Pt 3:1, 7. Cp. 5:5.—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), 707-08.]

<sup>19</sup>This is contra the position of Elliott in the Anchor Bible commentary: “The adverb homoiōs, rather than introducing some aspect of similarity in the sense of ‘likewise’ (as in 3:1a), serves here (as in 5:5a and occasionally elsewhere in Greek literature) as a simple connective with the sense of ‘in turn’ or ‘also.’” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 574.

<sup>20</sup>“A wife, who was not part of the husband’s kin-group, remained an ‘outsider’ on the periphery of his family until she bore him a son and thereby brought the family honor. Her honor generally was her chasteness, but it was also enhanced by the fidelity and respect of her husband (cf. Xen., Oec. 7.42; 9.11). Thus it was noted (Ps.-Arist., Oec. 3.2, 3), ‘Now a virtuous wife is best honored when she sees that her husband is faithful to her, and has no preferences for another woman; but loves and trusts her and holds her as his own ... he should approach his wife in honorable wise, full of self-restraint and awe ... advising her in a courteous and modest manner’ (cf. similarly, Plut., Conj. praec. 47; Mor. 144F: The husband should show ‘no greater respect for anybody than for his wife’; and Ps.-Arist., Oec. 3.2: ‘Now to a wife nothing is of more value, nothing more rightfully her own, than honored and faithful partnership with her husband. Wherefore it befits not a man of sound mind to bestow his person promiscuously, or have random intercourse with women; for otherwise, the baseborn will share in the rights of his lawful children, and his wife will be robbed of her due honor, and shame will be attached to his sons’).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 579.]

of the most common themes is about how well the wife took care of running the household and in seeing that food and other supplies were always adequately available for the entire household.

When Peter uses the comparative ὡς ἄσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει τῷ γυναικείῳ, (“as the weaker sex”), he adopts what was universally believed throughout the ancient world: the woman is ‘weaker’ than the man. Mostly this was based on simple physical strength comparisons, but sometimes it was carried over into the moral and intellectual realms by some philosophers.<sup>21</sup> Yet in spite of such contentions by various male writers, Roman society by the mid-first century was stepping away from associating moral and intellectual weakness with the female. Women were gaining increasing rights along with more advanced education so that they entered public life increasingly on a competitive level with men. How much of the ancient assumptions about female weakness Peter has in mind is not clear. In the best case assumption, he was asserting only the external physical strength difference. This would be favored by his language affirming the leadership role of the woman inside the home, since good management of a household required considerable mental and people skills.

Peter’s use of this cultural perspective is seen not as an opportunity for the husband to abuse or take advantage of his wife. But rather as an incentive for respect and tenderness in his actions toward her. The ultimate point of Peter’s comparison is that the wife needs the husband’s help, and he must be sensitive and supportive in giving it to her. This is connected to Paul’s model of sacrificial love from the husband for his wife.

**Since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life:** ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς. The second point of comparison (= ὡς καὶ) motivating the husband to treat his wife like a queen is that they share jointly in the spiritual riches of eternal life. Clearly Peter assumes both are believers, and wants the husbands to understand that their wives stand on equal ground with them in experiencing the grace of God that brings spiritual life, not just to each one but jointly to their home as well. The richness of the phrase centers on the noun συγκληρονόμοις. The wives may indeed be a ‘weaker female vessel’ physically, but spiritually they stand on equal ground with their husbands before the Lord. What God has promised in eschatological salvation to the husbands is shared equally with the wives. There is no distinction, just as Paul had declared in a couple of writings dated about the same time as First Peter:

**Gal. 3:28,** There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, **there is no longer male and female;** for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.<sup>22</sup>

**Col. 3:11,** In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

<sup>21</sup>“The adjective ‘weak’ (*asthenēs*) and the noun ‘weakness’ (*astheneia*) are used to describe humans as weak beings (Philo, *Deus* 80; *Spec.* 1.293–94; *Clem. Alex.*, *Strom.* 2.15.62; 2.16.72; 7.3.16; *Paed.* 3.12.86), the female gender as weak (4 *Macc* 15:5; *PLond.* 971.4; *Clem. Alex.*, *Paed.* 2.10.107), physical infirmity (*Matt* 25:43; *Mark* 6:56; *Acts* 5:15–16; 2 *Cor* 12:7–10), the weakness of human nature (*Heb* 5:2 [‘ignorant and wayward’]; 7:28), weaker parts of the body (1 *Cor* 12:22), spiritual weakness or helplessness (*Rom* 5:6; 6:19; *Heb* 4:15), moral sensitivity (1 *Cor* 8:7–13), the weakness of the flesh in contrast to the power of the spirit (*Matt* 24:41; *Rom* 8:26), economic weakness or poverty (*Acts* 20:35; 1 *Cor* 1:27), and Christ as ‘crucified in weakness’ (2 *Cor* 13:4).

“Here the comparative adjective ‘weaker’ (*asthenerōi*) is linked conceptually with *gynaikeiōi* (‘feminine,’ only NT appearance), with both adjectives modifying *skeuei* (‘vessel’). Females were generally regarded (by males!) to be weaker than males physically, intellectually, and morally. Thus, it was held that ‘the male (seed) is stronger than the female (seed)’ (Hippocratic Corpus, *Gen.* 6.1). ‘The female nature, in humankind,’ according to Plato (*Leg.* 6.781B), ‘is inferior in virtue to that of males.’ In fact, he claims, ‘the female is in all respects weaker (*astheneron*) than the male’ (*Resp.* 5; 455D; also 451C–56A; *Meno* 71C–73C). Accordingly, female infants, because they are weaker (and less desirable) than males, comments Ovid (*Met.* 10.23), should be exposed. The weakness of females is also cited as a reason for their restriction to the home and indoor matters: ‘For Providence,’ it was noted (*Ps.-Arist.*, *Oec.* 1.4, 1344a), ‘made man stronger and woman weaker (*astheneron*), so that he, in virtue of his manly prowess, may be more ready to defend the home, and she, by reason of her timid nature, more ready to keep watch over it; and while he brings in fresh supplies from without, she may keep safe what lies within.’ According to the Israelite Letter of Aristeas (250–51), ‘the female sex is bold, positively active for something it desires, easily liable to change its mind because of poor reasoning powers, and of naturally weak constitution,’ and thus the female requires a husband as a ‘pilot.’ Musonius Rufus, the Roman moralist, likewise comments (*Educ.*) that ‘in the human race, man’s constitution is stronger and woman’s weaker’ so that ‘heavier tasks [gymnastics and outdoor work] should be given to the stronger and lighter ones [spinning and indoor work] to the weaker.’ According to the Roman jurist Gaius (*Inst.* 1.144), earlier generations wished women, even those of a mature age, to be under a guardian, because of the ‘innate weakness of their sex’ (cf. S. Dixon 1984).188” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 576-77.]

<sup>22</sup>GNT: οὐκ ἐν Ἰουδαίῳ οὐδὲ Ἕλληνι, οὐκ ἐν δοῦλῳ οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερῳ, **οὐκ ἐν ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ**· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἓστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Although Paul does not mention male and female in Colossians, the principle expressed there is identical to the one expressed in Galatians. What Peter had mentioned in his opening prayer in 1:4-5,<sup>23</sup> he now affirms that men and women share on an equal basis. The implications of this are enormous. The surrounding culture may have signaled to the husbands that their wives were somehow inferior. The differences in physical strength seemingly confirmed those cultural signals. Peter counters that by acknowledging the difference in physical strength as an incentive for thoughtfulness by the husband to his wife and then by affirming the wives' complete equality with their husbands before God -- a powerful affirmation of their value and importance that should motivate the husbands to treat their wives like queens!

What is it that both husbands and wives inherit from God? Peter answers with χάριτος ζωῆς. A phrase found only here in the New Testament, it has produced challenges to understanding, including efforts by ancient copyists to modify the wording in their production of copies of the Greek New Testament.<sup>24</sup> Modern Bible translators struggle with the phrase as well.<sup>25</sup>

What did Peter mean by this expression?<sup>26</sup> Most likely the phrase designates the divine grace that brings spiritual life.<sup>27</sup> Whether the emphasis is upon conversion or, more likely, on the future experience of spiritual life in final judgement is debatable. The ancient copyists who added αἰωνίου to ζωῆς had a correct idea, but lacked a sufficient basis to legitimately understand it as the original wording of the text.<sup>28</sup> Peter does understand God's grace as life giving, as is reflected in his multiple use of the word for grace in this letter.<sup>29</sup> Divine grace and spiritual life encompass our experience from conversion to consummation, but the linking of divine

<sup>23</sup>1 Peter 1:4-5: 4 and into *an inheritance* that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

4 εἰς κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς 5 τοὺς ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ φρουρουμένους διὰ πίστεως εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ.

<sup>24</sup>“The addition of ‘eternal’ to ‘life’ in P<sup>72</sup> and the Syriac Peshitta perhaps was influenced by the stock expression ‘eternal life.’<sup>190</sup> ‘Varied’ (*poikilēs*) appears to have been added to ‘grace’ by other scribes (Ⲙ A and others) on the analogy of 4:10.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 580.]

<sup>25</sup>Note the patterns of translating χάριτος ζωῆς. In a few instances a different wording of the Greek text is assumed:

**English:** “grace of life,” KJV, ASV, HCSB, NASB, NKJV, RSV; “the gracious gift of life,” NRSV, NIV, TNIV; “God’s gift of new life,” NLT; “God’s gift of life,” TEV; “the grace that gives true life,” NCV; “the new life of God’s grace,” The Message; “God’s free gift of Life,” Weymouth;

**German:** “der Gnade des Lebens,” Luther 1912, Luther 1984, Elberfelder 1905, Einheitsübersetzung; “ewigen Leben, das Gott schenkt,” GNB; “der Gnadengabe des (ewigen) Lebens,” Menge Bibel; “der lebensspendenden Gnade,” Züricher Bibel; “Gottes Gnade Erben des ewigen Lebens,” Neue Genfer Übersetzung; “das ewige Leben von Gott geschenkt bekommen,” Neues Leben Bibelübersetzung;

**Spanish:** “la gracia de la vida,” La Biblia de las Américas, La Biblia Reina-Valera Antigua, 1960, 1995, Sagradas Escrituras 1569, Nueva biblia Latinoamericana de Hoy; “la vida que Dios da,” Castilian; “la vida que Dios les dará como herencia,” Dios Habla Hoy; “la nueva vida que Dios les ha dado,” Nueva Traducción Viviente; “del grato don de la vida,” Nueva Versión Internacional; “del don de la vida,” Reina Valera Contemporánea; “ellas Dios les ha prometido la vida eterna,” Traducción en lenguaje actual.

From the above comparisons in English, German, and Spanish, one can easily note the difficulties in translation. The translations are struggling not over the essential meaning of the phrase, but how to best express the idea in the respective languages.

<sup>26</sup>The view of a few ancient commentators that is repeated by a few modern commentaries that life here means procreation, and thus Peter is promising children to the husband who treats his wife properly is without any merit whatsoever. Thus it will not be considered in our discussion.

<sup>27</sup>“The genitive ζωῆς (‘life’) is probably exegetical (‘grace that consists in life’) rather than qualitative or adjectival (‘living grace’),<sup>176</sup> and bears an eschatological implication: it refers to the new life awaiting the Christian subsequent to God’s judgment of the world.<sup>177</sup>” [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), 218.]

What I find interesting in the comments of Achtemeier and Epp, as well as quite a number of other commentators, is their use of archaic Greek grammar terminology that hasn’t been used in Greek grammars for well over half a century. The current term for the grammar function of ζωῆς is either Genitive of Apposition or Appositional Genitive. Unfortunately this tendency by some of the commentators is not limited to isolated instances, but instead is fairly consistent. The sad aspect of this is the reflecting of outdated understanding of Greek grammar by these commentators, which at times seriously weakens the strength of their understandings of the text.

<sup>28</sup>“‘Eternal’ has been added to ‘life’ by scribes in p<sup>72</sup> (ζωῆς αἰωνίου) and supplied in the Syriac Peshitta.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 155.]

<sup>29</sup>See the concordance listing of ‘grace’ in the NRSV for First Peter at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=grace&c=1p&t=nrsa&ps=10&s=Bibles>.

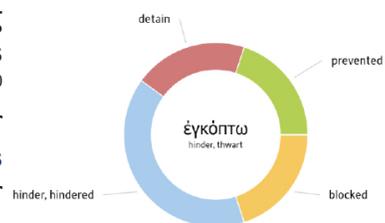
grace and spiritual life to ‘inheritance’ here favors a dominate emphasis on the eschatological realization of spiritual life in final judgment.

The powerful assertion of Peter is that the wife needs to be shone proper honor and respect, and this is prompted both by her needs as the physically weaker of the two and also by her full spiritual equality with her husband before God. She is a person highly honored by God, and so should also be honored by her husband. Here Peter provides a clearly distinct Christian perspective that had substantially different perspectives than those typically found in the non-Christian cultures that his readers reflected both in their differing ethnic heritages and in the multi-cultural environment in which they lived in ancient Anatolia. As Christian families implemented this concept set forth by Peter, their neighbors would begin to notice that commitment to Christ indeed does make a difference in how one lives. Hopefully this difference would be appealing enough to draw their neighbors to consider Christ as Lord of their lives and homes as well.

**So that nothing may hinder your prayers:** εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν. How important this way of husbands treating their wives is can be seen in this warning that Peter issues at the end of the sentence.<sup>30</sup> The importance of praying seriously and consistently is set forth by Peter later in 4:7, “the end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers.” For the husband to fail to treat his wife with proper respect means that his prayers are ‘hindered.’ The verb ἐγκόπτω, according to the BDAG lexicon, means “to make progress slow or difficult.”<sup>31</sup> The husband’s prayers aren’t nullified, but they lose their vitality and praying ceases to be a vital part of spiritual health. Why? Because of a fundamental biblical principle: right relationship with God is vitally linked to right relationships with other people. Peter sees this foundational concept applicable to husband / wife relationships.

Husbands can stifle their relationship with God simply by not treating their wives properly. In such cases, God essentially says, “Don’t come wanting to talk with me, until you talk correctly to your wife! I told you to honor her. When you do that, then I’ll be happy to converse with you.” There is a powerful need for Christian husbands to grasp Peter’s words here.

In summary, Peter has something vitally relevant to say to modern Christian husbands in this text. When we husbands begin taking these words seriously, not only will our homes become more Christian, but I’m convinced our churches will become more Christian as well. The ancient pagan world would occasionally sing the praises of wives, usually on their tombstones after the wife’s death. And typically those praises were based on what the wife did for her husband. Peter calls upon Christian husbands to ‘sing the praises’ of their wives while they’re still living, and because of who the wives are in God’s eyes. That’s the Christian difference!



<sup>30</sup>εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν, ‘That way your prayers will not be hindered.’ Peter views the believing husband and wife as a kind of church in miniature (cf. Paul in 1 Cor 7:5; also Clement of Alexandria’s interpretation of the ‘two or three’ gathered in prayer according to Matt 18:20 as the Christian wife, husband, and child, Strom. 3.10). The only other use of προσευχή in 1 Peter occurs at 4:7, in a series of guidelines for church life, with the implication that to ‘attend to prayers’ (νήψατε εἰς προσευχὰς) necessitates mutual love, hospitality, and ministry as described in 4:8–11 (in the Gospel tradition, cf. Mark 11:25; Matt 5:23–24; 6:12, 14; 18:15–20). When these same qualities are lacking in a Christian marriage (e.g., when husband and wife do not treat each other mutually as ‘co-heirs’), their common prayers will be ‘hindered’ (ἐγκόπτεσθαι); whether the hindrance results from simple lack of ‘attention’ on the part of those praying, or from actual divine judgment for disobedience (cf. v 12: God’s ears are open to the righteous but not to evildoers) is not specified.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 170-71.]

<sup>31</sup>ἐγκόπτω (ἐν + κόπτω) 1 aor. ἐνέκοψα; impf. pass. ἐνεκοπτόμην (Hippocr. et al., ins, pap; Jos., Bell. 1, 629; 6, 111; Just., D. 45, 1 τοῖς λόγοις ‘interrupt’ and thus hinder the progress of a discussion; Ath. 26, 1 [cause wounds]) **to make progress slow or difficult, hinder, thwart** (so Hesych.: ἐμποδίζω, διακωλύω; Polyb. 23, 1, 12; M. Ant. 11, 1, 2; PAlex, 4, 3 [=Witkowski 33, 1, III B.C.; and Sb 4305]; PMichZen 56, 6 [III B.C.]) in NT w. the acc. (B-D-F §152, 4) τίς ὑμᾶς ἐνέκοψεν; foll. by inf. w. μὴ as neg. (B-D-F §429; Rob. 1094) *who hindered you?* **Gal 5:7**; cp. **1 Th 2:18**. εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν *in order that your prayers may not be hindered* **1 Pt 3:7**. ἐνεκοπτόμην τὰ πολλά w. gen. of the inf. foll. (B-D-F §400, 4) *I have so often been prevented* **Ro 15:22**.—ἵνα μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν σε ἐγκόπτω **Ac 24:4** is understood by Syr. and Armen. versions to mean *in order not to weary you any further*; cp. ἐγκοπος weary Diog. L. 4, 50; LXX; and ἐγκοπον ποιεῖν to weary Job 19:2; Is 43:23. But impose on is also prob.; detain NRSV—B. 1355. DELG s.v. κόπτω. M-M s.v. ἐκκόπτω. 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), 274.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 14**  
**1 Peter 3:8-12**  
**“Live compassionately”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

8 Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὔσπλαγχοι, ταπεινόφρονες, 9 μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες, ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε. 10 ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον, 11 ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν, ζητησάτω εἰρήνην καὶ διωξάτω αὐτήν· 12 ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὤτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακά.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

8 Euch allen schließlich sage ich: Haltet in derselben Gesinnung zusammen und habt Mitgefühl füreinander! Liebt euch gegenseitig als Brüder und Schwestern! Seid gütig und zuvorkommend zueinander!

9 Vergeltet Böses nicht mit Bösem, und gebt Beleidigungen nicht wieder zurück! Im Gegenteil, segnet eure Beleidiger, denn Gott hat euch dazu berufen, seinen Segen zu empfangen. 10 Ihr wisst ja:

»Wer nach dem wahren Leben verlangt und glückliche Tage sehen will, der nehme seine Zunge gut in Acht, dass er nichts Schlechtes und Hinterhältiges sagt. 11 Er kehre sich vom Bösen ab und tue das Gute. Er mühe sich mit ganzer Kraft darum, mit allen Menschen in Frieden zu leben. 12 Denn der Herr hat ein offenes Auge für die, die das Rechte tun, und ein offenes Ohr für ihre Bitten. Aber er wendet sich gegen alle, die Böses tun.«

**NRSV**

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from speaking deceit; 11 let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

**NLT**

8 Finally, all of you should be of one mind, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. 9 Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate when people say unkind things about you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and he will bless you for it. 10 For the Scriptures say, “If you want a happy life and good days, keep your tongue from speaking evil, and keep your lips from telling lies. 11 Turn away from evil and do good. Work hard at living in peace with others. 12 The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.”

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Live righteously, vv. 8-9](#)
  - b. [Scripture basis for doing so, vv. 10-12](#)

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**Introduction**

Peter brings this section of moral admonitions in 2:11-3:12 to a close (= Τὸ δὲ τέλος) with a miscellaneous collection of encouragements to the Christian community as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Just as he began this material with exhortations to the entire Christian community in 2:11-17, he returns to the community at large with the conclusion in 3:8-12. The individualized *Haustafeln* section in 2:18-3:7, with Peter’s creative adaptation of it, is tucked in the

<sup>1</sup>“The adjectives and participles of vv 8–9 maintain the participial form for exhortations used throughout much of 2:13–3:7, and the phrase τὸ δὲ τέλος suggests that Peter is now drawing a line of thought to its conclusion.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 174.]

middle. This pattern of grouping a series of short generalized admonitions in paraenetic material was very common in the ancient world, so there is nothing unusual about the way Peter brings the material together. The focus on behavior is mostly regarding relationships with others both inside the community of believers and also with outsiders not a part of the Christian community.

Additionally, the emphases in 3:8-12 find close affinity with Paul's admonitions in Rom. 12:9-21:<sup>2</sup>

Group/Individual Emphasis	
2:11-3:12	
* 2:11-12	(group)
* 2:13-17	(group)
* 2:18-25	(individual: slaves)
* 3:1-6	(individual: wives)
* 3:7	(individual: husbands)
* 3:8-12	(group)

9 Don't just pretend that you love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. **Stand on the side of the good.** 10 **Love each other with genuine affection**, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and always be prayerful. 13 When God's children are in need, be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night. 14 If people persecute you because you are a Christian, don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 **When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow.** 16 **Live in harmony** with each other. **Don't try to act important, but enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!** 17 **Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.** Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 **Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.** 19 Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. 20 Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." 21 Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.<sup>3</sup>

While no one can seriously claim that Peter depended on Romans for his ideas, both passages do reflect generally similar thinking about Christian responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps a common pool of general teaching used by Christian leaders that followed the apostolic gospel may lie behind this material, but that is not certain. With Romans written a bit earlier by Paul from Corinth to the church in Rome, and Peter being in Rome after the receiving of this letter from Paul by the church there, it should not be surprising to find similarities of ideas by these two apostles. Add to that the common link of Silas and his close friendship with both of these men.

Peter has some important ideas here that modern churches would do well to ponder and implement in their fellowships.

## I. Context and Background<sup>5</sup>

### a. Historical

**External History.** In the copying of this passage over the first eight centuries of Christian history, not many variations of wording surface in the several thousand Greek texts of this passage that we have access to today. The UBS 4th revised edition of the Greek New Testament lists only one variation that the editors considered important enough to impact the translation of the text. The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition Greek

<sup>2</sup>The places of close affinity with First Peter 3:8-12 are in **bold italic red print**.

<sup>3</sup>GNT: 9 Ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος· ἀποστρυγόντες τὸ πονηρόν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ· 10 τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι, 11 τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες, τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες, 12 τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες, τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες, 13 ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες, τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες. 14 εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας, εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε. 15 χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων, κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων. 16 τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες, μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες ἀλλὰ τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι. μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς. 17 μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες· φρονοοῦμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων· 18 εἰ δυνατόν, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες· 19 μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες, ἀγαπητοί, ἀλλὰ δότε τόπον τῇ ὀργῇ, γέγραπται γάρ· Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω, λέγει κύριος. 20 ἀλλὰ ἐὰν πεινᾷ ὁ ἐχθρὸς σου, ψώμιζε αὐτόν· ἐὰν διψᾷ, πότιζε αὐτόν· τοῦτο γὰρ ποιῶν ἄνθρακας πυρὸς σωρεύσεις ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. 21 μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ, ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.

<sup>4</sup>The Romans text that is **bold/italic in red** represents points where Peter and Paul intersect one another with similar ideas. In addition to the thought expression, both texts employ some similarly creative uses of Greek grammar that are not common elsewhere in the New Testament.

<sup>5</sup>Serious 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.

text lists a total of seven variations of wording.

The first listing common to both modern Greek texts is with ταπεινόφρονες in verse eight. A small number of late manuscripts read φιλόφρονες (*courteous*) rather than ταπεινόφρονες (*humble*). An even smaller number subsequently try to correct this by including both words: φιλόφρονες ταπεινόφρονες.<sup>6</sup> The overwhelming weight of both external and internal evidence favor the reading ταπεινόφρονες.

The N-A 27th ed. Greek text will reflect in *verse nine* some late manuscripts reading εἰδότες ὅτι (*because of knowing that...*). But little evidence supports this reading, and all the significant early manuscripts support only ὅτι (*because*). The use of Psalm 34:13-16<sup>7</sup> in verses ten through twelve occasion some variations in wording as well. *Verse 10*: αὐτοῦ (*his*) is inserted between τὴν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ... and χεῖλη αὐτοῦ τοῦ.... The impact is to more clearly say, “*his tongue...and his lips...*”. Again the evidence is overwhelmingly against inserting the pronoun for ‘his.’ One manuscript, P<sup>72</sup>, has the present tense infinitive λαλεῖν rather than the Aorist infinitive λαλῆσαι. *Verse 11*: A few manuscripts omit the conjunction δὲ (*but*), but most of the major manuscripts include it. *Verse 12*: A couple of late manuscripts along with some of the Latin and Syriac versions add the phrase τοῦ ἐξολοθρεῦσαι αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς (“*to destroy them from the earth*”) at the end of the verse in order to extend the quote from Psalm 34:16 (LXX). But again very little manuscript evidence exists in support of this addition.

Again, as we have consistently observed, this passage has been preserved in tact over the centuries of copying and no variation that impacts its meaning to any significant extent has ever surfaced.

**Internal History.** The time and place markers in 3:8-12 are minimal as well as indirect, and thus will be treated in the exegesis of the passage below.

## b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** The literary form of this passage, especially the small genre, falls into two categories. Verses eight and nine are standard *paraenesis* (moral admonition), while verses ten through twelve are a scripture allusion. Verse eight follows a typical structure for an ancient virtue list.<sup>8</sup> These various patterns are brought together by Peter in this summary passage in order to finish out his emphasis on Christian behavior begun in 2:11.

**Virtue Lists** in the ancient world are found among both Greek and Latin philosophers, and especially among the Stoic philosophers who stressed standards of behavior as essential to a stable life and a stable society.<sup>9</sup> Although many of the same virtues will be listed by the pagan philosophers of this time that are found in the New Testament, important differences are present mostly in how and why they are achieved. In general, Stoic philosophers especially saw individual achievement of virtue as a basis for personal pride and necessary for a successful life and for a stable society. In the New Testament, virtue is not something the individual achieves. Rather, it is the product of God’s actions in the believer’s life, e.g., the fruit of the Spirit, and thus stands as an expression of devotion to God for His glory, not for personal achievement before God. Unfortunately, Roman Catholic theology fairly early on adopted the philosophical perspectives into its system of the Christian achieving ‘grace’ before God in order to establish his/her relationship with God. Still to this day, such a definition of grace has impacted streams of Protestant thinking to the point that we must achieve a certain level of ‘good deeds’ before God if we are to maintain our standing with Him. All of this represents a horrific corruption of the biblical concept of vices and virtues, and only serves to twist the understanding of the Christian life into something far less than what God intended.

**Scripture allusion / quotation.** The use of the Old Testament by New Testament writers is an important topic of study.<sup>10</sup> In verses ten through twelve, Peter finds in Psalm 34:13-16 from the Greek translation called

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<sup>6</sup>“Instead of ταπεινόφρονες, the Textus Receptus, following later manuscripts, reads φιλόφρονες (“courteous”). In a few witnesses (including L and some editions of the Vulgate) both words stand side by side—obviously a growing 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), 621.]

<sup>7</sup>Psalm 34:13-16 NRSV: 13 *Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. 16 The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

<sup>8</sup>For a listing of the virtue lists in the New Testament see my “New Testament Virtue Lists,” at cranfordville.com.

<sup>9</sup>In addition to my discussion of this online, Fa. Felix Just has a helpful discussion on his web page, “Virtue and Vice Lists in the Bible,” at catholic-resources.org. A broader discussion of virtue is found at “Virtue,” Wikipedia online.

<sup>10</sup>For a helpful online introduction, see Barry D. Smith, “The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” at abu.nb.ca:

the Septuagint (= LXX) a passage that provides an authoritative support for his admonitions to the believing community.<sup>11</sup> A comparison of the LXX text in Greek in the previous footnote with the Greek text of First Peter quickly reveals that Peter took the Greek text and adapted it to fit his purposes of use; he did not quote it literally as would be expected in a modern context, although here he made only minor adjustments to the LXX text. Peter takes the essential ideas of the Psalm and reapplies them to a Christian setting on the assumption that these words have divine authority behind them and also are relevant to his emphasis on Christian behavior in 3:8-9. What he does here is relatively commonplace among New Testament writers. This 'scripture proof' adds weight to his admonitions, especially for the Jewish Christians among the first readers of this text.

**Literary Context.** The chart on the right highlights what has already been mentioned. First Peter 3:8-12 stands as the third and climatic section of the large section on Obligations in 2:11-3:7. Peter even signals this with the 'finally' (Τὸ δὲ τέλος) in verse 8. But one should also note that this text transitions into the following section on Persecution in 3:13-5:11. In good Jewish scribal fashion, he links suffering abuse in 3:8-12 to suffering persecution in the following section. We have already noted a similar tendency by Peter that when he comes to the end of a topic he uses the final unit to set up the next major section. Thus, what we see here is consistent with his writing style prior to our text, as well as in the remainder of the letter.<sup>12</sup>

### 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*

Even a superficial reading of the New Testament reveals how frequently its authors and those about whom they write quote from the Old Testament. This should come as a surprise to no one familiar with the authoritative role that the scriptures played in Jewish religious life. What may come as a surprise, however, at least to the modern reader, is the variety of ways in which scripture is interpreted and used by Jesus and the early church. In their hands, the meaning of the Old Testament is not restricted to its so-called literal and historical meaning, but has other dimensions of meaning. Moreover, with one exception, the interpretive methods adopted by Jesus and the early church are identical with those used by other Jewish interpreters of the second-Temple and early rabbinic periods.

One can identify three interpretive methods used by Jesus and the early church that have parallels to texts from the second-Temple period and to early rabbinic exegesis. First, a text from the Old Testament can be interpreted literally, according to the author's intended meaning. Second, Jesus and the early church find subtle and not-so-obvious interpretations for Old Testament texts, in some cases, using certain rules of exegesis known from early rabbinic texts. This interpretive approach could be called *midrashic*. Third, one finds what scholars call *pesher* interpretations in the New Testament; these are characterized by finding a second, eschatological (including messianic) meaning for an Old Testament text that is not originally eschatological (or messianic) in meaning. In addition, unique to the New Testament is what is called typological interpretation, in which a person, place, thing or event in the Old Testament is assumed to foreshadow an eschatological reality to which it is analogically or functionally similar.

#### <sup>11</sup>**Psalm 33:13-17:**

- 13 τίς ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος ὁ θέλων ζῶην  
ἀγαπῶν ἡμέρας ἰδεῖν ἀγαθάς; †
- 14 παῦσον τὴν γλῶσσάν σου ἀπὸ κακοῦ  
καὶ χεῖλη σου τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον. †
- 15 ἔκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιήσον ἀγαθόν,  
ζήτησον εἰρήνην καὶ δίωξον αὐτήν. †
- 16 ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους,  
καὶ ὄτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν. †
- 17 πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακὰ  
τοῦ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι ἐκ γῆς τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν. †

By this section of the Psalms, the chapter and verse numbering of the LXX become different from the English Bible which is based upon the Latin Vulgate. Thus, what is chapter 34 in the English Bible is chapter 33 in the LXX with one verse differently numbered.

[Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Ps 33:13–17.]

<sup>12</sup>“The content of this exhortation is similar to the exhortation found elsewhere in the NT and reflects early Christian paraenetic tradition (Selwyn 1947, 407–15; Piper 1979; Goppelt 1993, 229–32) unrelated to the household-management (*oikonomia*) tradition influencing the foregoing instruction. However, the hand of the author is evident in the precise formulation of this tradition: four of



The division of thought in 3:8-12 is clear. Verses eight and nine (statements 31-34) contain a series of admonitions to moral behavior. Verses ten through twelve are taken from Psalm 34:13-16 (#s 35-40) as the scriptural reason for the admonitions. In the first section (#31-34), the admonitions fall into two groups: # 31 and #s 32-34. The first set (#31) is a virtue list of four positive traits needing implementation into church life. These seem more focused in internal relationships inside the Christian community. The second group (#s 32-34) contain two synonymous parallel negative admonitions (#s 32-33) that stand in contrast to the positive admonition in #34. These three admonitions stress more Christian relationship with outsiders who are hostile to Christianity.

The scripture quote in #s 35-40 are structured mostly after the LXX text of the Psalms being used. Peter makes some adaptations of the LXX text, mostly to make the text fit grammatically his expression in verses 8-9 that are linked to the Psalm text. The common subject of all six strophes is ὁ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς.... Anyone wanting to love life and to see good days must incorporate specific patterns of behavior into his living. The six strophes specify what this is. Strophes 35 & 36 are synonymous parallels dealing with speech control; 37 & 38 are antithetical parallels on negative and positive actions; 39 & 40 stress the pursuit of peace. Peter restructures the Psalm by inserting a causal connection (ὅτι) for the final strophes in verse 12. Thus the Psalm both advocates specific behavior and -- in Peter's interpretation of it -- gives a set of reasons for it. These are cast in two synonymous parallels that then stand in antithetical connection to the third strophe. The Lord favors those following the right path, and opposes those who don't.

## II. Message

The above assessment of the structure of the passage provides the organizing structure for our examination of the verses: 1) Live righteously; 2) Scripture reason for doing so.

### a. Live righteously, vv. 8-9

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.  
9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

8 Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχοὶ, ταπεινόφρονες, 9 μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες, ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε.

#### Notes:

These two verses divide out into two natural sections. First, is the virtue list in verse eight. Then comes a set of admonitions with a Hebrew Bible tone in verse nine. Peter opens this section with the unusual expression Τὸ δὲ τέλος, "Finally."<sup>13</sup> The phrase signals a conclusion or ending to a unit of material, but not necessarily a summation of the material in the unit.<sup>14</sup> Instead, just as he had begun in 2:13-17 with admonitions to the entire Christian community, he now closes this section by returning to speak to the entire community of faith.

**Virtue List:** Peter begins with a listing of five virtues to be implemented into the lives of the believers: ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχοὶ, ταπεινόφρονες ("unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind"). Although the basic ideas in these virtues surface elsewhere in the New Testament, most of the Greek words that Peter uses are unique to this letter with words found only here: ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, and ταπεινόφρονες. The remaining word εὐσπλαγχοὶ is found only here and in Eph 4:32. What are these qualities to be put into practice?

<sup>13</sup>τὸ τέλος: (an idiom, literally 'the end') a marker of a conclusion to what has preceded, but not necessarily the conclusion of a text—'finally, in conclusion.' τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες 'finally, all should be of the same mind' 1 Pe 3:8." [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), 611.]

<sup>14</sup>"The opening adverbial phrase (τὸ δὲ τέλος, 'finally')<sup>26</sup> shows this to be the final paragraph of this section (2:13–3:12), and as such brings it to a conclusion.<sup>27</sup> As in the case of the other passages that were addressed to various groups (2:18; 3:1; 3:7), this passage, addressed now to all readers (πάντες),<sup>28</sup> may similarly be understood as dependent on the imperatives of 2:17, and as assuming the participle ὄντες to complete the meaning of the adjectives: 'All of you, [fulfill the commands by being] of one mind.'<sup>29</sup> However the sentence be understood, it is clear that desirable characteristics of the whole Christian community, rather than of a more limited group within it, are here described and recommended." [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), 222.]

ὁμόφρονες (*homophrōn*): “unity of spirit” (NRSV), “of one mind” (NLT), “Haltet in derselben Gesinnung zusammen” (GNB), “sed todos de un mismo sentir” (BdA).<sup>15</sup> Just this sampling of the translations used in the two sets of First Peter studies reflects the diversity of translation wording that surfaces. Vice and virtue lists from the ancient world are very difficult to translate into modern languages. This is mainly because such lists are dominated by adjectives defining attitudes and dispositions that are inward. Modern psychology has redefined much of this terminology with meaning that may or may not overlap with ancient ideas about emotions etc. Consequently, a wide diversity of wording will usually surface in a comparison of various translations of these adjectives in such lists.

The essence of ὁμόφρονες is a spirit of harmony and unity present in a group of people.<sup>16</sup> Peter calls for unity inside the communities of faith. This is similar to Paul’s admonition in Romans 12:16, “Live in harmony with one another” (τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες). This doesn’t demand uniform thinking, but rather respect for one another’s views and a willingness to work together in the church.<sup>17</sup>

συμπαθεῖς (*sympatheis*): “sympathy,” (NRSV), “full of sympathy toward each other” (NLT), “und habt Mitgefühl füreinander” (GNB), “compasivos” (BdA). Closely connected to ὁμόφρονες, this adjective stresses a positive, helpful posture to others.<sup>18</sup> It is closely related to the verb συμπαθέω, which is found in Heb. 4:15<sup>19</sup> and 10:34<sup>20</sup>. The idea is to be able to share similar or the same feelings with another, especially in difficult times.<sup>21</sup> The challenge here is to reach out to others in sincerity and with a desire to experience what they are experiencing.

φιλάδελφοι (*philadelphoi*): “love for one another,” (NRSV), “loving one another” (NLT), “Liebt euch gegenseitig als

<sup>15</sup>“The Greek word is used only here in the whole New Testament (although Paul expresses the same idea in Rom 15:5; Phil 2:2), and means both oneness in opinion (compare NEB ‘one in thought’; NAB ‘like-minded’), and in outlook, attitude (compare Brc ‘one in your attitude to life’), disposition, and sentiment.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 97.]

<sup>16</sup>“ὁμόφρων, ον (ὁμός ‘common’, φρήν; Hom.+; Plut., Mor. 432c; OGI 515, 4; Kaibel adv. ‘in sympathy’ 493, 5f; Ps.-Phocyl. 30, s. ὁμόνοια) **pert. to being like-minded, united in spirit, harmonious** (w. συμπαθής et al.) **1 Pt 3:8** (Strabo 6, 3, 3 ὁμόφρονας ὡς ἂν ἀλλήλων ἀδελφούς).—DELG s.v. φρήν. 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), 709-10.]

<sup>17</sup>“The first two terms, ‘united in spirit’ and ‘sympathetic,’ are unique in biblical literature, but common in Greek ethical discussion. Yet while the words are unique, the ideas are well known in the NT. As Paul repeatedly argues (Rom. 15:5; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:10; Phil. 2:2; 4:2), unity in heart and mind is critical for the Christian community. This is not the unity that comes from a standard imposed from without, such as a doctrinal statement, but that which comes from loving dialogue and especially a common focus on the one Lord. It is his mind and spirit that Christians are to share (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5–11), and therefore have access to a unity that they are to experience. Because humility was the mark of Jesus (Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:8), this unity will revolve around being “humble” (Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 5:5). This does not mean a poor self-concept (‘I’m no good’), but a willingness to take the lower place, to do the less exalted service, and to put the interests of others ahead of one’s own interests. This attitude of Jesus is surely a necessity if a disparate group is to be ‘united in spirit.’” [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), 124-25.]

<sup>18</sup>“**συμπαθής, ἕς** (since Eur., s. below; Aristot. et al.; CIG 9438; OGI 456, 66; LXX, Philo) **sympathetic, understanding** (Eur., TGF 164 ἄριστον ἀνδρὶ κτῆμα συμπαθῆς γυνή=‘the best thing for a husband is an understanding wife’; Polyb. 2, 56, 7; 8, 22, 9; Plut., Eum. 594 [18, 5], Mor. 536a; Jos., Ant. 19, 330) **1 Pt 3:8**.—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), 958.]

<sup>19</sup>**Heb. 4:15, NRSV**: “For we do not have a high priest **who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses**, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.”

<sup>20</sup>**Heb. 10:34, NRSV**: “For **you had compassion for those who were in prison**, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting.”

<sup>21</sup>“They must have the same feelings (literally ‘feel sympathy for one another’). Again, the Greek adjective is used only here in the whole New Testament and may mean sharing in the feelings of others, whether those feelings be of joy or of sorrow. A similar idea is expressed in Romans 12:15 ‘Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep’ (compare Heb 10:34; 1 Cor 12:26). You must all have ... the same feelings may be expressed as ‘you must feel sympathy for what happens to one another,’ or, as expressed idiomatically in some languages, ‘your hearts should go out to one another’ or ‘you should feel pain when others are hurt and feel happy when others rejoice.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 97-98.]

Brüder und Schwestern!" (GNB), "fraternales" (BdA).<sup>22</sup> The idea here is 'brotherly love' expressed by the adjective, rather than the more commonly used noun φιλαδελφία (brotherly love), which is found in 1 Peter 1:22, 2 Peter 1:7, Rom. 12:10, 1 Thess. 4:9, Heb. 13:1. The emphasis continues on developing and expressing genuinely positive postures toward others.<sup>23</sup>

εὐσπλαγχνοὶ (*eusplanchnoi*): "a tender heart," (NRSV), "with tender hearts" (NLT), "Seid gütig...zueinander!" (GNB), "misericordiosos" (BdA). Here the translation is more challenging because of a very different way in the ancient world of associating human feelings and emotions with different body parts.<sup>24</sup> The intestines were understood to be the seat of feeling in the ancient world, not the 'heart' as in modern western society. The idea is one of a deeply felt posture of caring for another person.<sup>25</sup> Although the adjective εὐσπλαγχνος, -ον is only found here and in Ephesians 4:32 in the New Testament, the noun σπλαγχνον<sup>26</sup> and the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι<sup>27</sup> are commonly found in the New Testament, with similar meanings at the figurative level.<sup>28</sup>

ταπεινόφρονες (*tapeinophron*): "a humble mind," (NRSV), "and humble minds" (NLT), "Seid...zuvorkommend zueinander!" (GNB), "y de espíritu humilde" (BdA).<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, the pagan Greek speaking world did not con-

<sup>22</sup>“φιλάδελφος, ον (for the prim. sense ‘loving one’s brother/ sister’ in ref. to siblings s. φιλαδελφία; Soph., X.+; on gravestones [Sb 6234; 6235; 6653]; 2 Macc 15:14; 4 Macc 13:21; 15:10; Philo, De Jos. 218) in our literature only in the transf. sense **having affection for an associate, having brotherly love, having mutual affection** (cp. Socrat., Ep. 28, 12=sociable; 2 Macc 15:14=loving one’s compatriots) **1 Pt 3:8**.—New Docs 3, 87 (ins reff., incl. one fr. Bithynia: TAM IV, 111). 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), 1055.]

<sup>23</sup>“They must *love one another as brothers* (literally ‘love for the brothers’). For this, see 1:22. There may be a difficulty in a literal rendering of *love one another as brothers*, since in at least some societies brothers are expected to be rather competitive. This problem may be overcome by rendering ‘love one another as brothers should.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 98.]

<sup>24</sup>“They must be *kind*. Here the Greek word (*eusplanchnoi*) is derived from the noun *splanchna*, which means the internal organs (for example, liver, kidney, heart, etc.), and in an extended sense, the internal organs as the seat of emotion and feeling. So in the New Testament, to have *splanchna* is to feel deeply for someone, in terms of love, compassion, pity, kindness. Perhaps no English expression is strong enough to capture the impact of such a word, although many translations have tried to do justice to its rich meaning (for example, Brc ‘You must be deeply concerned for others’). In view of the important connotations in the Greek term here translated *kind*, it is frequently not possible to provide an equivalent rendering apart from some rather extensive idiomatic equivalent, for example, ‘feel deeply in your hearts for’ or ‘show how much you are pained on behalf of’ or ‘let your kindness demonstrate how much you feel for others.’” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 98.]

<sup>25</sup>“εὐσπλαγχνος, ον (s. prec. entry; in the mng. ‘with healthy intestines’: Hippocr., Protrrh. 2, 6; Hesych.) **pert. to having tender feelings for someone, tenderhearted, compassionate** (so Prayer of Manasseh [=Odes 12]: 7; TestZeb 9:7; JosAs ch. 13 cod. A [p. 57, 25 Bat. w. φιλόφρονος]; ApcEsd 1:10 p. 25, 2 Tdf. [w. πολυέλεος, so also Cat. Cod. Astr. IX/2 p. 165, 4 of the goddess Selene]; ApcSed 15:1 [w. ἀναμάρτητος]; PGM 12, 283; Just., D. 108, 3) of God (as in the pass. already given) w. ἐπιεικῆς 1 Cl 29:1.—Of humans (TestSim 4:4; Syntipas p. 106, 23; Leontios 46 p. 99, 15; Nicetas Eugen. 6, 193 H.) 54:1. (W. φιλάδελφος, ταπεινόφρων) **1 Pt 3:8**. W. numerous other qualifications: of deacons Pol 5:2 and elders 6:1 (for the mng. *good-hearted* in *1 Pt 3:8* and Pol 6:1 s. ESelwyn, *First Peter* 46, 188f). εὐ. εἰς τινα toward someone **Eph 4:32**.—DELG s.v. σπλήν. 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), 413.]

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Acts 1:18, Luke 1:78, Col. 3:12, Phil. 1:8, 2:1, 2 Cor. 6:12, 7:15, 1 John 3:17, Phlm. 12, 20.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Matt. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 18:27, 20:34, Mark 1:41, 6:34, 8:2, 9:22, Luke 7:13, 10:33, 15:20.

<sup>28</sup>The translations “a tender heart” and “with tender hearts” adopt a legitimate translation method of replacing an ancient figurative expression with a different modern figurative expression that has similar meaning. When confronted with figurative language in the source text, Bible translators have three options for translating it into the receptor language: 1) use the same figurative expression so long as the meaning is the same; 2) translate the figurative expression by a non-figurative direct meaning; 3) use a different figurative expression that has similar, if not the same, meaning as the figurative expression in the source language. For details see Lorin L. Cranford, “Translating the Text,” cranfordville.com.

<sup>29</sup>“ταπεινόφρων, ον (ταπεινός, φρήν) gen. -ονος (in Plut. Mor. 336e; 475e and Iambl., Protr. 21, 15p. 115, 23 Pistelli=‘fainthearted’) in our lit. **humble** (Pr 29:23; Leontios 26 p. 56, 22) **1 Pt 3:8** (v.l. φιλόφρονες); B 19:3; Hm 11:8 (w. πραῦς and other adjs.). πρὸς τὰς μεγαλορημοσύνας αὐτῶν ὑμεῖς ταπεινόφρονες you are to be humble in contrast to their boastfulness IEph 10:2 (w. πραεῖς).—Subst. ὁ ταπεινόφρων 1 Cl 38:2 v.l. τὸ ταπεινόφρον humility 19:1. S. Leivestad s.v. ταπεινός.—DELG s.v. ταπεινός. EDNT. 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), 989-90.]

sider this a virtue, but rather a weakness.<sup>30</sup> Although the adjective ταπεινόφρων, -ov is only found here, the verb ταπεινώω<sup>31</sup> and the noun ταπείνωσις<sup>32</sup> are commonly used expressions in the New Testament. One has to carefully distinguish between the idea of being humble and of suffering humiliation. Both ideas are carried by the verb and the noun. The adjective is used with the sense of ‘humble’ only. The adjective here is closely linked to εὐσπλαγχνοί, which precedes it in this list.<sup>33</sup>

The listing of these five adjectives is done in typical virtue listing fashion without a stated verb: πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχνοί, ταπεινόφρονες.... (= all harmonious, sympathetic, loving brothers, tender hearted, humble...). This, along with only the participle verbal expressions, ἀποδιδόντες & εὐλογοῦντες, in verse nine, reflect the dependency of 3:8-12 on the foundational concepts in 2:11-13.

Peter challenges us to give serious consideration to incorporating these important traits into our living and relationships with others around us, and especially to fellow believers. Unlike in the pagan moral teachings of the Stoicism et als. of Peter’s day, these are not qualities to be incorporated through self-disciplined determination and thus to be viewed as significant personal achievements that make us a superior person. Rather, they are qualities emerging from the very character of our God who through His Spirit in us enables these qualities to be developed in ways that bring glory and honor to God. Thus, we must never wear them as ‘spiritual badges’ that parade our ‘righteousness’ before others!

**Responding to abuse:** μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας, τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε.<sup>34</sup> The focus shifts somewhat here to relations with non-Christians who possess hostility to the believers. The semi-poetic nature of the expression makes use of Hebrew parallelism in the following manner:

- μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ (-1) = actions
- ἢ ----- λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας (-2) = words
- + τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες (+3) = words

The first two strophes are negative in thrust and are synonymous in nature, while as a unit they stand as the opposites of the third strophe, which is in antithetical parallelism to them. The present tense participle ἀποδιδόντες (“giving back”) governs the first two strophes and references seeking revenge.

Believers are not to return κακὸν and λοιδορίαν in kind, following even the OT eye for an eye principle. The concept is about seeking revenge.<sup>35</sup> Instead, for κακὸν and λοιδορίαν they are to give back the actions

<sup>30</sup>“They must be *humble*. Humility was not considered a virtue in the Hellenistic world, but in the New Testament it is spoken of as a good quality of life (compare Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3 and following; Gal 5:23). Perhaps the attitude of Jesus (for example, Matt 11:29) has influenced Christians to think of humility as a virtue rather than as a sign of weakness. An expression equivalent to humble is frequently expressed from a negative standpoint, for example, ‘do not feel proud’ or ‘do not make yourself big’.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 98.]

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Matt. 18:4, 23:12, Luke 3:5, 14:11, 18:14, Phil. 2:8, 4:12, 2 Cor. 11:7, 12:21, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Luke 1:48, Acts 8:33, Heb. 11:20, Phil. 3:21.

<sup>33</sup>“εὐσπλαγχνοί, ταπεινόφρονες ‘have compassion and be humble in your attitudes (toward one another)’ 1 Pe 3:8.” [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), 747.]

<sup>34</sup>“μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ, ‘Do not return evil for evil.’ At the same time that the participial imperative is resumed, the parallel with Rom 12 becomes markedly closer. The whole expression agrees word for word with Rom 12:17, except for μὴ in place of μηδενί (cf. also 1 Thess 5:15; Pol. Phil. 2.2). Though Peter (like Paul) may still have in mind relationships among believers and incidents that could occur even in that context, he now concentrates more (again, like Paul) on relationships with outsiders, in Peter’s case especially with those who slander the Christian community (cf. 2:12, 15). Goppelt rightly observes (225) that although the thought agrees with Jesus’ commands in the synoptic Gospels to love enemies, the terminology is more closely related to catechetical tradition largely preserved in Paul’s letters. The likely purpose of such tradition was to instill among new converts in the simplest way possible the core of Jesus’ teaching on nonretaliation (for similar formulations, cf. Polyaeus, *Strategemata* 5.11 [ed. J. Melber, repr. 1970]; also *Paroemiographi Graeci*: *Apostol.* 18.33: both cited in BGD, 398.3).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 177.]

<sup>35</sup>“The noun λοιδορία is found in the NT only here and in 1 Tim 5:14, where ‘the enemy’ (probably Satan, 5:15) is explicitly in view. The verb λοιδορεῖν is used significantly in a context of nonretaliation, both by Paul (referring to himself) in 1 Cor 4:12 and by Peter (referring to Jesus) in 2:23 (on which see Comment). Paul’s contrast of λοιδορούμενοι and εὐλογοῦμεν in 1 Cor 4:12 (cf. also Diogn. 5.15, characterizing Christians generally) may have been part of an early catechetical formulation (loosely based on a saying of Jesus similar to Luke 6:28) that influenced Peter as well. In any case, the choice of words (both here and in 2:23) is attributable in part to Peter’s apparent fondness for rich and varied vocabulary in describing the sins of speech: cf., e.g., καταλαλεῖν (‘accuse,’

of blessing. Paul had something similar to say in Rom. 12:17, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all” (μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες· προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων). Peter and Paul both echo Jesus’ words in Matt. 5:38-42:

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

A close affinity of wording here with 2:23 in the non-retaliation stance of Christ stands clearly in the background of Peter’s admonition.<sup>36</sup> Christ has set the example that believers must follow when they experience hostility from non-believers.

Thus Peter calls upon believers to implement certain virtues into their living, and by so doing, have their responses to hostile treatment tempered by the non-retaliation that Jesus exemplified when appearing before Pilate during His Passion. Peter skillfully made use of two distinct sets of paraenesis materials, some of which most likely was circulated as an early Christian set of instructions to believers. He stands with the apostle Paul in encouraging similar stances for believers to adopt.

The challenge is incorporating them into our daily living. But the beautiful aspect is that we are not left to our own feeble resources like the pagans of Peter’s day when the philosophers pushed similar sets of virtues off on them. They were called upon to rigidly discipline themselves and their wills in order to live by such rules through sheer determination. The consolation was the pride of personal achievement that lifted them to a superior level over common people without such virtues.

For the believer, however, the incentive is expressed at the end of verse nine: “It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing” (ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο<sup>37</sup> ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε). God has summoned us to live at this higher level of non-retaliation. Why? So that He can bless us.<sup>38</sup> The primary focus of the language of ‘inheriting a blessing’ is eschatological. The blessing is the eternal life granted to us at the coming of Christ. Believers in this life are on a journey headed for home. When others criticize or throw up obstacles to distract them from this journey, believers don’t try to extract revenge either through words or actions. Rather they ‘bless’ such enemies in the manner both taught and exemplified by Jesus. Their focus is on getting home to the Heavenly Father to realize the ultimate blessing of God in eternity. Revenge and retaliation are distractions from this journey that they don’t have time for.

This is our challenge from the apostle Peter!

## **b. Scripture basis for doing so, vv. 10-12**

10 For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; 11 let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is

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2:12; 3:16; cf. 2:1), ἐπιηράζειν (‘denounce,’ 3:16); βλασφημεῖν (‘blaspheme,’ 4:4, 14b); ὀνειδίζειν (‘ridicule,’ 4:14a).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 177.]

<sup>36</sup>ὅς λαιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδορεῖ,  
πάσῃ οὐκ ἠπέλει,  
παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως·

<sup>37</sup>What τοῦτο (‘this’) refers to is debated. Probably, it reaches back to the non-retaliation statements that preceded it. But it can easily be understood also to reach forward to the purpose clause ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε. Alternatively, the pre-position of εἰς τοῦτο may very well be intended by Peter to cover both references.

<sup>38</sup>“The phrase εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε repeats 2:21a, where τοῦτο pointed back to the responsibility of slaves to ‘do good,’ even in the face of unjust suffering, in 2:18–20. The phrase here points back in a similar way to a similar responsibility—i.e., to repay abuse and insult with blessing. Some (e.g., Kelly, 137; Goppelt, 228) have suggested instead a reference forward to the ἵνα-clause that follows: ‘for to this you are called—namely, to inherit blessing’ (cf. εἰς τοῦτο ... ἵνα in 4:6). Both the strong analogy with 2:21 and the immediate highlighting of the virtues of vv 8–9 in the psalm quotation of vv 10–12 support the reference to what precedes (cf. Best, 130; Piper, 224–28). Ethically, Christians are called to holy conduct and nonretaliation (cf. 1:15; 2:21); eschatologically, they are called to God’s ‘marvelous light’ (2:9) or ‘eternal glory’ (5:10). The thrust of vv 8–12 is ethical, even though Peter affords his readers a momentary reminder of their eschatological reward (cf. Luke 6:37b–38: ‘... forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given you.... with the measure that you measure, it will be measured to you in return’; similarly here, the thought is, ‘Bless, and you will be blessed’).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 178-79.]

against those who do evil.”

10 ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον, 11 ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν, ζητησάτω εἰρήνην καὶ διωξάτω αὐτήν· 12 ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὦτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακά.

### Notes:

Peter next gives a reason for his admonitions, taken from Psalm 34:12-16. The conjunction γὰρ introduces this quote from the Old Testament as the basis for what he has just said in verses 8-9. The apostle doesn't follow the standard pattern used by the gospel writers to introduce a quote from the Old Testament, such as Matthew 3:3, οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ῥηθεὶς διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος... (“For this is what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet saying...”). Even more common is that in Mark. 1:2, Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ... (“Just as it stands written in Isaiah the prophet...”).<sup>39</sup> Whatever his reasons, Peter instead opts to weave the OT text directly into his discussion. In order to strengthen the basis for such encouragement Peter turned to the Psalms for a text that advocated something similar to his words. He found it in Psalm 33:13-17 (34:12-16 in English Bible). The apostle adjusts the wording of the LXX to make it fit his use here, as the comparison below illustrates:

Psalm 33:13-17 (LXX)		1 Peter 3:10-12	
13	<i>τίς ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος</i> ὁ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπῶν ἡμέρας ἰδεῖν ἀγαθὰς;†	← 1 →	10 ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν
		← 2 →	καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς
14	παῦσον τὴν γλῶσσαν σου ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη σου τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον.†	← 3 →	παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ
		← 4 →	καὶ χεῖλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον,
15	ἐκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιήσον ἀγαθόν, ζήτησον εἰρήνην καὶ δίωξον αὐτήν.†	← 5 →	11 ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν,
		← 6 →	ζητησάτω εἰρήνην καὶ διωξάτω αὐτήν·
16	ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους, καὶ ὦτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν.†	← 7 →	12 ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους
		← 8 →	καὶ ὦτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν,
17	πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακά τοῦ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι ἐκ γῆς τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν.†	← 9 →	πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιούντας κακά.
		10	
Psalm 33:13-17 (LXX)		1 Peter 3:10-12	
13	<i>Who is the man</i> who is wishing to love life in order to see good days?	← 1 →	10 For the one wishing to love life
		← 2 →	and to see good days,
14	Stop <i>your</i> tongue from evil, and <i>your</i> lips so that they do not speak deceit.	← 3 →	let him stop his tongue from evil,
		← 4 →	and his lips so that he does not speak deceit,
15	Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.	← 5 →	11 and let him turn away from evil and let him do good,
		← 6 →	let him seek peace and let him pursue it,
16	The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are for their petitions.	← 7 →	12 because the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous
		← 8 →	and His ears are for their petitions,
17	But the face of the Lord is against evildoers, in order to banish every remembrance of them.	← 9 →	but the face of the Lord is against evildoers.
		10	

From this comparison, one can more easily note the similarities and differences between the two texts. Although Peter doesn't change the meaning, he does change spellings of words and some words even so that the text flows with the grammar of his writing. What Peter does here is fairly typical for most writers in the ancient world. Modern patterns of citation of sources differs considerably from the ancient world.

The Psalm raises the rhetorical question in verse 13: “Who is the man desiring to love life and to see good days?” (#s 1-2). Then verses 14-17 (#s 3-10) answer this question with a series of affirmations touching on words, actions, and relationships (vv. 14-15; #s 3-6). The affirmation of these admonitions is found in verses 16-17 (#s 7-10) stating that God both watches over and hears the cries of the righteous, but sets his face against the one doing evil so that remembrance of him may be eliminated from the earth.

Peter adjusts the Psalm by inserting the heart of the rhetorical question as the subject of the sequence of the next four verbs in verses 10b-11 (#s 3-6). He interprets the reference to God's actions (v. 12, #s 7-9) as causal and introduces them with ὅτι (because). Also he eliminates the purpose infinitive of the psalm (# 10) from his quote.

<sup>39</sup>“The citation of Ps 33:13–17 [34:12–16] LXX is woven into the argument without formal introduction, linked to what precedes only by γὰρ, ‘for.’ The quote, however, is adapted to its new context (contrast 1 Clem 22.2, where the quote is more formally introduced, and agrees almost verbatim with the LXX).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 179.]

The point of the quote is to show that divine principle revealed to ancient Israel in the psalm supports his admonitions to the Christians of Anatolia to incorporate certain virtues and a stance of non-retaliation into their lives. God promised to every Israelite wanting to love life in order to see good days that he would, if certain behavior were incorporated into his living. The Lord promised to look after such persons to make certain they realized their wish. And He warned that those doing evil would be eliminated from even the memory of others. Peter saw in these promises of God confirmation that what he was encouraging believers to do was completely in line with the divine promises God had already made to His people. And thus they were relevant to believers in Christ, and not just to the Israelites.

The language of both the psalm and Peter's use of it stress the following:

*1 = a person wants to cherish life*

*2 = a person wants to experience good days*

3 = to achieve these he must keep his tongue from speaking evil

4 = also he must keep his lips from speaking deceit (synonymous parallelism 3 // 4)

5 = he must stop doing evil and start doing good

6 = he must seek peace seriously in hard pursuit of it

**7 = God's eyes watch over in protection the righteous**

**8 = God's ears hear the cries of the righteous for help**

**9 = But God sets Himself against those doing evil**

Thus Peter correctly uses the psalm to make his point to his readers. When a believer lives in harmony with God's ways, he will enjoy the watch care and protection of God. This means life is attractive and his days are filled with good things. Such will indeed prepare the believer to inherit God's full blessing at the coming of Jesus back to the earth. And we must not forget the warning that refusal to follow God's ways brings down God's wrath that is overwhelming.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 15**  
**1 Peter 3:13-22**  
**“Suffering Unjustly”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

13 Καὶ τίς ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς ἐάν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε; 14 ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε, 15 κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἔτοιμοι αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαὶν παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος, 16 ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνειδήσιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθῆν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαεῖσθε καταισχυνθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφῆν. 17 κρείττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιοῦντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιοῦντας. 18 ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. 19 ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, 20 ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτώ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος. 21 ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα, οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπτου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 22 ὃς ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

13 Kann euch überhaupt jemand Böses antun, wenn ihr euch mit ganzer Hingabe darum bemüht, das Gute zu tun? 14 Wenn ihr aber trotzdem leiden müsst, weil ihr tut, was Gott will, dann dürft ihr euch glücklich preisen. Habt keine Angst vor Menschen; lasst euch nicht erschrecken! 15 Christus allein ist der Herr; haltet ihn heilig in euren Herzen und weicht vor niemand zurück!

Seid immer bereit, Rede und Antwort zu stehen, wenn jemand fragt, warum ihr so von Hoffnung erfüllt seid. 16 Antwortet taktvoll und bescheiden und mit dem gebotenen Respekt – in dem Bewusstsein, dass ihr ein reines Gewissen habt. Dann werden alle beschämt sein, die euch verleumden, wenn sie sehen, was für ein einwandfreies Leben ihr in Verbindung mit Christus führt. 17 Wenn Gott es aber anders beschlossen hat und es auf sie keinen Eindruck macht, ist es auf jeden Fall besser, für gute Taten zu leiden als für schlechte.

18 Auch Christus hat ja für die Sünden der Menschen gelitten, der Gerechte für die Schuldigen, ein für alle Mal. So sollte er euch – als Mensch getötet, aber durch den Geist Gottes zum Leben erweckt – den Zugang zu Gott eröffnen.

19 In der Kraft dieses Geistes ging er auch zu den Geistern im Gefängnis und verkündete ihnen seinen Sieg. 20 Sie waren ungehorsam gewesen zur Zeit Noachs, als Gott in seiner Geduld mit der Strafe noch wartete, solange Noah die Arche baute. Nur wenige Menschen, nämlich acht, wurden damals in die Arche aufgenommen und durch das Wasser gerettet, das die Arche trug.

21 Das ist ein Hinweis auf das Wasser der Taufe, die euch jetzt rettet. Denn der Sinn der Taufe ist ja nicht, dass der Körper vom Schmutz gereinigt wird. Wer sich taufen lässt, bittet

**NRSV**

13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with

**NLT**

13 Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't be afraid and don't worry. 15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. 16 But you must do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. 17 Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong! 18 Christ also suffered when he died for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners that he might bring us safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. 19 So he went and preached to the spirits in prison -- 20 those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood. 21 And this is a picture of baptism, which now saves you by the power of Jesus Christ's resurrection. Baptism is not a removal of dirt from your body; it is an appeal to God from a clean conscience. 22 Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all

damit Gott, sein Gewissen von aller Schuld zu reinigen. Das ist möglich, weil Jesus Christus von den Toten auferstanden 22 und zum Himmel aufgestiegen ist. Dort hat er den Ehrenplatz an Gottes rechter Seite eingenommen, und die Engel und alle überirdischen Mächte und Gewalten sind ihm unterworfen.

angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

the angels and authorities and powers are bowing before him.

### Quick Links to the Study

#### I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

#### II. [Message](#)

- a. [The question, v. 13](#)
- b. [The answer, vv. 14-22](#)

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### Introduction to Study

With his rhetorical question at the beginning, “Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?,” Peter turns a corner in his letter to the believers in ancient Anatolia. To be sure, he hinted at this new topic in the previous section (3:8-12) that closed out his discussion of “obligations” in 2:11-3:12.<sup>1</sup> But with 3:13 Peter begins a lengthy discussion about “persecution” in 3:13-5:11 that will occupy the remainder of the letter body. Very rich discussion of the Christian experience of suffering under persecution will follow.

In parts of our modern world Christianity is experiencing persecution today. And these words of Peter have particular relevance to believers caught up in hostility to their faith. To the rest of us, suffering hardship does not usually have anything to do with our Christian faith. We simply live in a sinful world and pay the consequences of it with difficulties coming our way. Yet, Peter’s words still have something to say to those who are not being persecuted for their faith.

## I. Context and Background<sup>2</sup>

### a. Historical

**External History.** In the copying of this text during the first eight hundred years of Christian history, some variations of wording have surfaced among the many surviving manuscript copies. The UBS 4th revised edition Greek New Testament lists six variations in wording that the editors considered important for Bible translators to be aware of. The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition Greek text list twenty-six variations of wording in this passage.<sup>3</sup> We will consider the six UBS variations in our discussion.

**Verse 14.** In a few late manuscripts the phrase μηδὲ παραχθῆτε (*neither be intimidated*) is replaced with καὶ οὐ μὴ παραχθῆτε (*and absolutely be not intimidated*).<sup>4</sup> Also a small number of manuscripts completely omit the

<sup>1</sup> Peter 3:9, NRSV, “Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.”

<sup>2</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>3</sup>It is important to note the different goals for the ‘apparatus’ that lists variations in wording for both printed Greek New Testaments. In the 4th revised edition Greek New Testament, “the apparatus includes only those textual variants that involve significant differences in meaning for translators. For each variant, extensive manuscript evidence is cited, and an indication is given of the relative degree of certainty for each textual decision. A separate apparatus provides information on major differences in punctuation.” But in the Nestle-Aland 27th edition Novum Testamentum Graece, “the text of this edition is identical to that of the 26th edition, but the critical apparatus and the appendices have been thoroughly revised. Those textual witnesses that are essential to the constitution and the history of the text are more precisely selected and clearly arranged. A new appendix deals with special information regarding the source material.” These two different goals dictate the amount of material that is listed, as well as the format of the listing. For more details, see “The New Testament,” United Bible Societies online.

<sup>4</sup>These manuscripts are numbers 1292, 1505, 1611, 1852, 2138. All of these are very late and not major witnesses to the original reading of the text.

phrase.<sup>5</sup> As is reflected in the translations of each variation, the meaning of the text remains essentially the same with the difference being on how much emphasis is placed on not being intimidated.

**Verse 15.** Here the variations are between the text reading of κύριον τὸν Χριστὸν (*Christ as Lord*) and the alternative of κύριον τὸν θεόν (*the Lord God*).<sup>6</sup> The text reading of κύριον τὸν Χριστὸν has much greater evidence both externally and internally in its support, and thus should be considered original.

**Verse 16.** The text reading of ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε (*while you are being slandered*) is replaced by ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν (*while they slander you as evildoers*) in the pattern of 2:12, with several variations of this alternative reading in different manuscripts.<sup>7</sup> Again, the weight of the evidence falls on the shorter reading of the printed text: ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε.

**Verse 18a.** Several variations of wording from the printed text, περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν (*for sins he suffered*), surface here. The core alternative reading is περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπέθανεν (*for sins he died*) with numerous variations of the alternative reading.<sup>8</sup> Because the weight of evidence is not heavily favoring one reading over the others, different translations will adopt different readings of the Greek text as the basis for their translation.<sup>9</sup> Although some evidence for ‘died for sins’ exists, the evidence favors ‘suffered for sins.’

**Verse 18b.** A second variation in verse 18 concerns a pronoun. The printed text reads ὑμᾶς προσαγάγη τῷ θεῷ (*he might lead you to God*). Substantial manuscript evidence favors ἡμᾶς (*us*) over ὑμᾶς (*you*).<sup>10</sup> The

<sup>5</sup>“A few witnesses (P<sup>72</sup> B L) lack μηδὲ παραχθῆτε because the eye of the copyist passed from φοβηΘΗΤΕ to παραχΘΗΤΕ, omitting what lies between.” [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), 621.]

<sup>6</sup>“In place of Χριστόν, the Textus Receptus substitutes θεόν (God) with a few later uncial manuscripts and most minuscules. The reading Χριστόν, however, is strongly supported by early and diverse external evidence. It is also more likely that a copyist replaced the less familiar expression κύριον τὸν Χριστόν (Christ as Lord) with the familiar expression κύριον τὸν θεόν (the Lord God) than vice versa.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 487.]

<sup>7</sup>“The shorter reading in the text is supported chiefly by Egyptian (Alexandrian) witnesses. This reading most easily explains the origins of the other readings. Recalling the words ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν (in which they speak evil of you as evildoers) in 2:12, copyists modified the shorter reading by adding ὡς κακοποιῶν (as evildoers) or by changing the second person plural passive verb καταλαλεῖσθε (you are spoken evil of) to the third person plural active verb καταλαλοῦσιν or καταλαλῶσιν and adding the plural pronoun ὑμῶν (you) or ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν (of you as evildoers). In languages where passive verb forms do not exist, it will be natural to say ‘when they speak evil of you,’ regardless of the text followed.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 487.]

<sup>8</sup>“The manuscripts contain a confusing number of different readings. The reading in the text, followed by NRSV, FC [1997], and TOB, is preferred for the following reasons: (1) the verb ‘suffered’ (ἔπαθεν) is a favorite of the author, occurring elsewhere in 1 Peter eleven times, and here it carries on the thought of v. 17, whereas the verb ἀποθνήσκειν (to die) abruptly introduces a new idea (2) in view of the presence of the expression περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν (for sins), copyists would be more likely to substitute ἀπέθανεν (died) for ἔπαθεν (suffered) than vice versa and (3) the readings with the pronouns ἡμῶν (our [sins]) or ὑμῶν (your [sins]) (which in later Greek had the same pronunciation) are natural additions that we would expect copyists to make.

“REB follows the variant reading ‘suffered for our sins,’ while other translations follow the variant ‘died for sins’ (NIV, TEV, FC [1982], Seg, and NJB). Regarding the writer’s use of the verb ἔπαθεν here, Senior (1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter, p. 100) comments that ‘by referring to Christ’s ‘suffering’ the author can more readily use the example of Christ to give meaning to the sufferings of his community. In any case, the formula ‘Christ suffered for sins ...’ surely includes the notion of his redemptive death (which is explicitly mentioned in the latter half of the verse).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 487-88.]

<sup>9</sup>For example: “*suffered for sins*,” NRSV, ASV, HCSB, NCV; “suffered...for sins,” KJV, ESV, NKJV; “suffered when he died for our sins,” NLT; “suffered because of others’ sins,” Message; “también Cristo murió por los pecados una,” BdA; “también Cristo padeció una vez por los injustos,” VR-V; “hat ja für die Sünden der Menschen gelitten,” GNB; “went through pain for sins,” BBE; “hat...für Sünden gelitten,” Elberfelder 1905; “für unsre Sünden gelitten hat,” Luther 1912; “a souffert une fois pour les péchés,” Segond; “*died for sins*.” TEV, NASB, NIV, Nlrv, RSV.

<sup>10</sup>“Both the second person plural pronoun ὑμᾶς (followed by most translations) and the first person plural pronoun ἡμᾶς (followed by RSV, REB, and NJB) have good manuscript support. It is likely that copyists would have changed the pronoun ὑμᾶς (you) to ἡμᾶς (us), in order to make the direct object include all Christians, rather than vice versa.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 488.]

evidence slightly favors ὑμᾶς (you).

**Verse 21.** The relative pronoun ὃ (which) is replaced by ὡς (as) by a few manuscripts, or just omitted completely by some others. These ‘corrections’ seem to be efforts to reduce a grammatical difficulty raised by the relative pronoun.<sup>11</sup> In spite of some uncertainty over what ὃ refers to, the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of it being the original reading.

As can be seen from the above examples, the variations of readings including the additional ones listed in the apparatus of the N-A 27th edition text do not pose major difficulties to understanding the wording of this passage.

**Internal History.** The time and place markers in the passage are fairly numerous. In present time, Peter speaks of his readers going through suffering. The issue here is how extensive was this suffering? And what was its nature? Was it spasmodic and localized persecution? Or, systematic and wide spread? Was it coming from Roman governmental authorities? In Rome? Or from regional governors? Or, was it being generated by hostility locally from city leaders, Jewish synagogue leaders etc.? The answers to these questions are best analyzed in each passage where persecution is referenced, and then an evaluation of the larger picture made at the end.

The reason for the importance of this is mostly coming out of modern studies, where assumptions about governmental persecution of Christians across the empire are sometimes read into these texts as a basis for denying that Peter had any thing to do with the composition of this letter. Widespread systematic persecution of Christians across the Roman empire cannot be documented before the end of the first Christian century and mostly in the second century. Peter had long since died by this time. Additionally, the counter argument of placing this letter in the time of Nero’s reign in the middle 60s wrongly assumes that Nero’s persecution of Christians in the city of Rome at that time was also an empire wide mandate -- something simply not supported by ancient Roman and Christian writings. Thus forming a clearer picture of what Peter means is important to understanding the picture of persecution painted in the letter.

The other time / place markers more directly referenced in this passage allude to Christ’s death on the cross that had happened around thirty years prior to the writing of this letter (cf. vv. 18-20). But very curiously in this description Peter alludes to Christ, while in the grave, having “made a proclamation to the spirits in prison” which seems to be linked to disobedient people alive many hundreds of years before in the time of Noah and the flood. This very obscure reference has occasioned huge diversity of interpretation, along with controversy. Since the issues are doctrinal as much as historical, we will treat them under the exegesis below. The final time / place reference is in verse 22 and refers to Jesus’ ascension to Heaven and being seated at the right hand of God where He exercises authority over “angels, authorities, and powers.” This is also more an exegetical issue than an historical one.

### **b. Literary**

**Literary Form (Genre).** The small genre issues here are centered on a generalized paraenesis for most of the passage that doesn’t exhibit traits of any of the sub categories of paraenesis. Also present is Peter’s use of Isaiah 8:12-13 in verses fourteen and fifteen. How closely does he follow the LXX text of this Old Testament text? How does he use this to refer to Christ? Thirdly, the question of verses 18-19 is whether or not Peter uses a piece of pre-formed Christian tradition or not? The Nestle-Aland 27th edition text places this in poetic form reflecting the editors’ views that it does come from pre-existing Christian writings. But most other printed Greek texts do not format this in poetic structure reflecting the opposite view that Peter was responsible for this material. These genre issues are very oriented toward exegetical concerns, and thus will be discussed in greater detail in the explanation of the text below. Here we just need to know they exist.

**Literary Context.** The literary setting for 3:18-22 is illustrated in the chart on the next page. The passage stands as the first sub-unit of three in 3:13-4:11 where Peter gives **encouragement** to believers who

<sup>11</sup>“This neuter singular relative pronoun has strong and widespread manuscript support. It is, however, grammatically difficult, and for this reason the other readings appear to be attempts to improve this more difficult reading. The relative pronoun is most likely to be taken as the subject of the verb σώφει (saves). The antecedent of ὃ is probably ὕδατος (water; so Michaels, 1 Peter, pp. 213–14; and Achtemeier, 1 Peter, p. 266) and not the entire preceding clause (so Senior, 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter, pp. 104–5). Some interpreters, however, consider βάπτισμα (baptism) to be the antecedent. The interpretation of v. 21 is very difficult, and this textual problem must be considered in connection with grammatical and lexical difficulties also (see Elliott, 1 Peter, pp. 668–82).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 488.]





looks back to ποιούντας κακά in verse twelve, and τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ echoes ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν in verse eleven. This is Peter's way of linking vv. 13-22 to vv. 8-12. Yet, the rhetorical question structure along with the somewhat different meaning attached to these words signals a new topic coming on to the table for consideration.<sup>12</sup> In reality, Peter has already alluded to unjust suffering several times,<sup>13</sup> but without any details of discussion. Now he moves toward a much more detailed discussion of this theme.<sup>14</sup>

The component elements of the question deserve consideration. τίς ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς, "who will harm you," identifies the potential source of opposition.<sup>15</sup> The verb itself, κακῶω, generally specifies physical harm being done to someone.<sup>16</sup> The precise nature of this is not spelled out, although some signals are given in the context with πάσχοιτε (may suffer, v. 14), ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε (while you are being slandered, v. 16), and the example of Christ's death (vv. 18-19).<sup>17</sup> Both the verb meaning and the context allude to persecution, mostly of a hostile physical and potentially violent nature, but can include verbal abuse as well. This does not imply a solely governmental source, although it does not exclude governmental driven hostility to Christianity.

These believers in the provinces of ancient Anatolia certainly lived in an environment that was at best suspicious of this new religious movement. At times the surrounding society, including town leaders along with neighbors, verbally misrepresented this new religion as questionable and very likely on some occasions resorted to physical violence against the believers in order to stamp out its growing influence. How often governmental authorities were brought into the situation and how often simple mob-rule prevailed are not spelled out. No clear indication is given that the Jewish synagogue became the source of such hostility. But the likelihood is that on some occasions it did. Clearly this was the case in Paul's missionary activity in two of these provinces, Galatia and Asia, several years earlier, as is spelled out in Acts 13-14 and 19.

But what was the harm that could be inflicted on the believers? Physically it was being ostracized from the community, imprisonment, and possibly martyrdom. But is that all that Peter has in mind? Very likely Peter was alluding in the question that such 'harm' done physically could in no way do spiritual harm to their

<sup>12</sup>"The previous section called for honorable behavior (2:13–3:12) and concluded with a quotation from Ps 33[34], stressing the importance of 'doing what is right' (cf. also 3:6). Expanding on this point, our author now relates upright behavior to the issue of handling abuse from outsiders and the suffering that it brings. This problem of suffering despite doing what is right was already touched on earlier (1:6; 2:12b, 15b, 19–20, 21–24; 3:9ab) but now becomes the subject of sustained attention." [John H. Elliott, *I Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 618.]

<sup>13</sup>Cf. 1:6; 2:12b, 15b, 19–20, 21–24; 3:9ab. Particularly important is the somewhat similar discussion targeting Christian slaves suffering unjustly from non-Christian owners in 2:18-25. Parallel terms and similar emphases are found between 2:18-25 and 3:13-22. The implication of this is clear: what was applicable to Christian slaves in the first century is also applicable to the entire Christian community. Both will experience persecution because of their Christian faith. Their reaction should be the same, primarily to look to the example of Jesus.

<sup>14</sup>Points touched on elsewhere are here made thematic: Christians are not to give offense (v. 13; cf. 3:9), they are to hold Christ as Lord (vv. 14–15a; cf. 1:3), they are to give the lie to accusations of evil by living a good life (v. 16; cf. 2:12, 15) because it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil (v. 17; cf. 1:6; 2:19–20). Indeed, ideas expressed repeatedly in this letter are concentrated in these verses: (1) Christians regularly suffer rejection and disgrace; (2) they must do what is good even if their goodness is the occasion for suffering; (3) suffering is to be due only to their doing good, not to any evil they do; (4) because they suffer for doing good they are blessed; (5) Christian lives must witness to their hope, because Christ's triumphant resurrection carries with it the promise for the Christians' future." [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *I Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 229.]

<sup>15</sup>"The participial phrase ὁ κακῶσων ('the one who harms') derives from a verb (κακῶω) that is relatively rare in the NT, occurring most often in Acts, where it states or implies persecution of Christians;<sup>18</sup> but the context in which it is used here indicates that more than mere social persecution is meant." [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *I Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 229.]

<sup>16</sup>κακῶω fut. κακῶσω; 1 aor. ἐκάκωσα; pf. 2 sg. κεκάκωκας 3 Km 17:20. Pass.: 1 aor. ἐκακῶθην LXX; pf. inf. κεκακῶσθαι.

**1. to cause harm to, harm, mistreat** w. acc. (Hom.+; PTebt 407, 9 [II A.D.]; LXX; TestSol 8:11; Test12Patr; Philo, Spec. Leg. 2, 135; Jos., Vi. 121; Just., D. 109, 3 [s. Mi 4:6]) **Ac 7:6** (Gen 15:13), **19; 12:1; 18:10; 1 Pt 3:13**. Pass. 1 Cl 16:7 (Is 53:7).

**2. to cause someone to think badly about another, make angry, embitter** τὰς ψυχὰς τινῶν κατὰ τινος poison the minds of some persons against another **Ac 14:2** (cp. Jos., Ant. 16, 10; pass., 16, 205; 262; Ps 105:32).—DELG s.v. κακό. 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), 502.]

<sup>17</sup>The Christian slave in 2:18-25 may suffer unjustly (πάσχων ἀδίκως, 2:19) and suffer while doing good (εἰ ἀγαθοποιούντες καὶ πάσχοντες, 2:20). Believers generally may be slandered as criminals (ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν, 2:12). They may also experience various kinds of grief in suffering (ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον [ἐστίν] λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, 1:6).

relationship with God.<sup>18</sup> Thus the persecution inflicted by non-believers ultimately would have no impact on the believers.

The believers are assumed to have become zealots for good: τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε. This assumption is not presented as universal, but rather as likely in most instances; ἔάν introduces a third class protasis in the conditional sentence structure here.<sup>19</sup> What does τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ mean?<sup>20</sup> The larger context suggests possible references. It is suffering *because of righteousness* (πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, v. 14), *being ready to defend our Christian hope* (ἔτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαὺν παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος, v. 15), *the noble lifestyle in Christ* (τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφήν, v. 16), *doing good* (ἀγαθοποιοῦντας, v. 17). Also included are the Christian traits mentioned in 3:8-12, along with the other moral admonitions in the letter. The unusual phrase τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ, *zealots for good*, underscores the passionate commitment of believers to live according to the God's will in incorporating character traits, speaking words, and doing actions that flow out of God's leadership in our lives.

The point of the rhetorical question is to stress that ultimately no spiritual harm can ever come to those who are following God's leadership in their lives. To be certain, physical harm can happen in persecution, but given the ultimate picture of eternity, such harm doesn't matter and has no ability to impact our relationship with God in a negative manner.<sup>21</sup>

Here is the challenge to pleasure oriented modern society. Persecution can and does happen. Sometimes it can be severe, leading to the death of the believer. But ultimately what harm can the persecutors do? Absolutely none is the bottom line. Nothing they can do will harm our relationship with the Heavenly Father, and thus their hostility to our faith is of no consequence. In this we can rejoice. In this we look beyond the moment of pain and suffering to see the eternal gain. Compromising our faith just to avoid persecution is not an option. The eternal joys of faithfulness to our God far outweigh the momentary pain and suffering of persecution.

#### **b. Remain faithful even when they do oppose you, vv. 14-22**

14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to

<sup>18</sup>“The thrust of the verse is therefore not to deny the presence of social persecution in the lives of Christians, something the author knows as both possibility (e.g., 1:6; 3:14) and reality (4:12–19), but rather to point out that such persecution is not capable of removing them from the divine favor shown them in Jesus Christ. Such awareness will give them courage to remain steadfast in their faith despite suffering at the hands of those who reject the gospel.” [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), 230.]

<sup>19</sup>The third class condition protasis here presents a hypothetical possibility with ἔάν, which is used only here in First Peter out of 329 uses in the New Testament generally. It stands closely with the second class concessive protasis introduced with εἰ καὶ (plus the optative mood verb πάσχοιτε) in verse 14. This stands in contrast to the fourth class conditional protasis εἰ θέλοι... in v. 17 (also w. the optative mood verb), which suggests less likelihood of suffering. The first class concessive protasis καὶ εἴ τινας ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ in 3:1 sets up a greater likelihood of occurrence. The first class conditional protasis εἰ διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πᾶσχω ἀδίκως in 2:19 makes an assumption of occurrence. What this illustrates is that Peter generally assumes that believers will face persecution and abuse, but he doesn't assume that this is automatic for every believer in every hostile situation. It can -- and does -- happen but it isn't automatic that it will.

<sup>20</sup>“The phrase ‘zealots for the good’ (τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ) employs a word (ζηλωτής) that is used in the LXX principally to describe God as ‘jealous,’<sup>19</sup> but that is fairly common in Hellenistic Greek in connection with the pursuit of various moral ideals.<sup>20</sup> It is in the latter sense that it is used here,<sup>21</sup> though the primary meaning is not to be devoted to good behavior that is correct in the eyes of civil authorities,<sup>22</sup> though that of course is not ruled out, but to be devoted to the good (e.g., v. 11) which keeps one under the benevolent gaze of God (v. 12a).” [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), 229-30.]

<sup>21</sup>“καὶ τίς ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς ἔάν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε, ‘who then is going to harm you if you are partisans for what is good?’ The καί, introducing a conclusion to be drawn from the last part of the preceding Scripture quotation, should be rendered ‘then’ or ‘and so’ (see BDF §442.2). If God is on the side of the righteous and against those who do evil, what harm can possibly come to those who do good? The sentiments here expressed can be found across a wide spectrum of biblical literature: e.g., Pss 56:4; 91:7–10; 118:6; Isa 50:9; Matt 10:28–31//Luke 12:4–7; 21:18; Rom 8:31.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 185.]

suffer for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

14 ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε, 15 κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἔτοιμοι αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαὶν παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος, 16 ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνειδησὶν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαεῖσθε καταισχυθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφῇ. 17 κρείττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιοῦντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιοῦντας. 18 ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. 19 ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, 20 ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτῶ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος. 21 ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα, οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ρύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 22 ὃς ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων.

### Notes:

This lengthy answer to the beginning question is divided into two parts: an assertion of the correctness of unjust suffering (vv. 14-16) and two sets of supporting reasons for unjust suffering (vv. 17-22). We will consider each segment separately.

**Be willing to suffer unjustly**, vv. 14-16: “14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.” [14 ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε, 15 κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἔτοιμοι αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαὶν παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος, 16 ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνειδησὶν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαεῖσθε καταισχυθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφῇ.]

*The first answer* to the question in verse 13 is to pronounce a blessing on those who do undergo persecution. Verse 14a contains a beatitude.<sup>22</sup> These ancient literary forms in both Judaism and early Christianity were used to invoke God's blessing upon individuals meeting specified conditions. Peter sets up the beatitude as a concessive idea, that is, something that might happen and if it does in spite of the negative condition something positive is to be gained. Contrast between the negative of suffering physically and the positive spiritual benefit from it is made. This forces us to go deeper than the merely human level in order to see the positive divine benefit to be acquired from the negative human suffering.

Peter very possibly had in the back of his mind the pronouncement of Jesus in Matthew 5:10-12:

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.<sup>23</sup>

Thus he was standing in the tradition of Jesus who saw potential spiritual blessing in suffering unjustly for the

<sup>22</sup>For more details on ancient beatitudes see my “Literary Forms of Beatitudes,” cranfordville.com: <http://cranfordville.com/Beatitudesexplained.htm>. The beatitude in First Peter takes a modified second person form of the beatitude, where the required condition for blessing is defined in the ‘if’ class, which is a second class concessive protasis dependent clause: “even if...” (εἰ καὶ...).

<sup>23</sup>GNT: 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

11 μακάριοί ἐστε ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσιν καὶ εἴπωσιν πᾶν πονηρὸν καθ' ὑμῶν ψευδόμενοι ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ. 12 χαίrete καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· οὕτως γὰρ ἐδίωξαν τοὺς προφήτας τοὺς πρὸ ὑμῶν.

Also see the Lukan parallel in Lk. 6:22-23 and 26:

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets....

26 “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

cause of the Gospel.<sup>24</sup> Peter will essentially repeat this beatitude later in 4:14.<sup>25</sup>

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 the beatitude form is more completely expressed with the causal clause (ὅτι...) defining the content of the blessing. But the use of the first class conditional protasis with the indicative mood verb assumes that his readers are being reviled for the name of Christ.

What Peter affirms to his readers is that unjust suffering for the sake of religious devotion to Christ has positive benefits. We should not just see the negative pain and suffering at the human level. Something deeper and good is taking place at the spiritual level when we endure such unjust suffering. The early church understood this far better than most believers today.

The second answer to the question consists in a set of admonitions found in a single sentence contained in vv. 14b-16; see above Block Diagram for visual effect. The thrust is threefold:

- 1) don't fear their fear,
- 2) neither be intimidated,
- 3) but sanctify Christ in your heart.

These admonitions assume persecution, just like the beatitude does. The first two admonitions are taken from Isaiah 8:12 where Peter follows the LXX Greek text very closely.

1 Peter 3:14b

**τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε**  
**Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated**

Isaiah 8:12

Μήποτε εἶπητε σκληρόν· πᾶν γάρ, ὃ ἐὰν εἶπη ὁ λαὸς οὗτος, σκληρόν ἐστιν·  
**τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ φοβηθῆτε οὐδὲ μὴ παραχθῆτε·**  
Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and **do not fear what it fears, or be in dread.**

The most significant variation is between 'their' (1 Peter) and 'his' (Isa.). But this is due to a shift in context between Isaiah's reference the king of Assyria and Peter's reference to the persecutors of believers.<sup>26</sup> This background is important for understanding the admonition to not fear a fear. The essence of it then is to not be afraid of the persecutors. Although they may possess the ability to inflict severe pain and suffering, believers should not be afraid of them. Additionally the second admonition, μηδὲ παραχθῆτε, repeats the idea of the first with different words: **don't let them shake you up**. Thus the double emphasis of the two admonitions from Isaiah underscore the need of a bold stance in the face of persecution.

In the third admonition, Peter spells out the content of such a response to persecution by believers. The

<sup>24</sup>εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι 'No, even if you should have to suffer in the cause of justice, you are blessed.' = These words probably represent a Petrine adaptation of a saying of Jesus very similar to the eighth beatitude in Matthew: μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης (Matt 5:10; cf. also Pol. Phil. 2.3). πάσχειν, with twelve occurrences, belongs to the characteristic vocabulary of 1 Peter, and the placement of μακάριοι is a characteristic feature of his style. Though μακάριος appears in the apodosis of a conditional clause in John 13:17; Luke 6:5d; and Herm. Man. 8.9, none of these passages exhibits the distinctive beatitude form found here. The closest parallel in thought and structure is 1 Pet 4:14, which similarly reflects Peter's adaptations of a beatitude of Jesus (see Comment). [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 185-86.]

<sup>25</sup>εἰ ὀνειδίξεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, μακάριοι, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται.

[Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Matthew Black et al., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Federal Republic of Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993), 606.]

<sup>26</sup>The only significant change from the LXX of Isa 8:12 is Peter's substitution of αὐτῶν for αὐτοῦ. The meaning of the Hebrew text was 'do not fear what they [i.e., the people] fear' (lit. 'do not fear the fear of them'). The effect of the singular αὐτοῦ of the LXX had been to focus the fear on the king of Assyria as its object: 'do not be afraid of him' (lit., 'do not fear the fear of him'). Formally, Peter's modification of the LXX represents a move back in the direction of the Hebrew, yet Peter's context shows that he follows the LXX in assuming the pronoun to be an objective genitive: 'do not be afraid of them.' The αὐτῶν of 1 Peter (like the αὐτοῦ of the LXX) thus refers to the enemy, anticipating the implicit reference to accusers (καταλαλεῖσθε) and the explicit mention of despisers (οἱ ἐπηρέζοντες) in v 16. Selwyn notes correctly that 'had St. Peter not been quoting, he could have written μὴ φοβηθῆτε αὐτούς' (p. 192). If he had done so, the similarity of his thought to that of certain synoptic passages (e.g., Matt 10:26-33) might have been more obvious. But as it is, his use of the cognate accusative ('to fear a fear') indicates that the Isaiah text is indeed his primary point of departure.' [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 186-87.]

core admonition is κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, “but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord.” Verses 15b-16 expand that core admonition with qualities and actions based on the core expression.

What is meant by κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν? Literally the idea is to make the Lord Christ holy in your heart. But this doesn’t make any logical sense. One clue is that this admonition represents Peter’s interpretive understanding of Isaiah 8:13: “But the LORD of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.”<sup>27</sup> With the κύριον αὐτὸν ἀγιάσατε of the LXX, Peter merely inserted τὸν Χριστὸν for αὐτὸν, and then added several comments. Thus Peter’s point is that when faced with persecution the first line of defense is to focus on the holiness of Christ as Lord. That is, reaffirm Christ as the divine Lord over your life. Make certain that He stands as the first priority and complete authority over your life.

Peter’s extension of Isaiah’s words begin with ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, “in your hearts.” The heart was the choosing / deciding part of humans in the ancient world, rather than the feeling / emotion side as in the modern western world. Thus Peter’s emphasis is that this prioritizing of our life must be a deliberate decision on our part. It won’t happen automatically; we must intentionally choose to put Christ at the top of the list in authority over our life.

Once Christ is in full control of the believer facing persecution, the appropriate response is a defense of the religious faith of the believer to the persecutor: ἔτοιμοι αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος, “Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.” The detaching of this secondary phrase from the core admonition wrongly suggests that defending one’s faith is a separate action from sanctifying Christ. Actually, the constant readiness to defend one’s faith comes out of how we allow Christ to take control. This connection grows out of Christ’s words in Luke 21:12-19,<sup>28</sup> especially verses 14-15: “14 So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; 15 for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.” Jesus had earlier promised His disciples that when they faced bitter persecution He would stand by them through the Holy Spirit to assist them in their defense. Peter recalled this promise and admonishes his readers to be ready to defend their religious hope in Christ.

The defense<sup>29</sup> of one’s religious commitment, however, must be done in a specific manner, which Peter spells out as: ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, “yet do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear.” The defense that Peter alludes to is not limited to a court room situation, but instead covers any situation where individuals ask about our religious commitment.<sup>30</sup> Highly questionable

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<sup>27</sup>κύριον αὐτὸν ἀγιάσατε, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται σου φόβος. The above NRSV is based on the Hebrew text which was considerably shortened by the LXX translation.

[Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Is 8:13.]

<sup>28</sup>NRSV: “12 But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. 13 This will give you an opportunity to testify. 14 So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; 15 for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 You will be hated by all because of my name. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your souls.”

<sup>29</sup>ἀπολογία, ας, ἡ (s. ἀπολογέομαι; Pre-Socr., Thu. et al.; pap, e.g. BGU 531, 21 [I.A.D.]; PLips 58, 18; Wsd 6:10; TestSol; Jos. C. Ap. 2, 147; Ar., Just.) freq. as legal term.

**1. a speech of defense, defense, reply** ἀκούσατέ μου τῆς πρὸς ὑμᾶς νυνὶ ἀπολογίας hear the defense which I now make to you Ac 22:1 (ἅ. πρὸς τινα as X., Mem. 4, 8, 5). ἡ ἐμὴ ἀ. τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν my reply to those who sit in judgment over me **1 Cor 9:3**. Written defense, apology Qua (1).

**2. the act of making a defense, defense**

a. in court (Jos., Bell. 1, 621) ἐν τ. πρώτῃ μου ἀ. at my first defense **2 Ti 4:16** (s. πρώτος 1aακ). τόπον ἀπολογίας λαμβάνειν περὶ τίνος receive an opportunity to defend himself concerning someth. **Ac 25:16**.

b. gener. of eagerness to defend oneself **2 Cor 7:11**. Of defending the gospel **Phil 1:7, 16**. ἔτοιμοι πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι ready to make a defense to anyone **1 Pt 3:15**.

**3. claim of extenuating circumstance, excuse**, οὐκ ἔχειν ἀπολογία εἰπεῖν be unable to say in defense PtK 3 p. 15, 23 (cp. Just., A I, 42, 2 ἀ. παρέχειν).—DELG s.v. λέγω B. 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), 117.]

<sup>30</sup>Occasionally in the NT the noun *apologia* (‘reply’) is used in reference to a personal ‘defense’ before juridical officials

though is the use of this text as justification for the whole discipline of Christian apologetics! Peter isn't talking about anything as complex as this discipline, which depends on Enlightenment rationalism as a primary foundation. Instead, the apostle simply wanted believers to be prepared to explain their religious experience<sup>31</sup> to those who inquired as to why they were Christians.<sup>32</sup>

What Peter recognized was that elaborate, rational based arguments for the existence of God etc. had no persuasive force at all. Instead, what mattered for persuasion purposes was the attitude and manner in which believers explained their Christian commitment. Thus he stresses a series of postures from which an explanation is to be given: ἀλλὰ<sup>33</sup> μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, “with humility and reverence, having a clear conscience.”

First such an explanation of one's hope in Christ is to be given with humility and reverence: μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου. These two important postures must shape the tone of our explanation of our religious commitment.<sup>34</sup> Similar postures were already advocated for Christian wives seeking to influence their husbands toward the Christian faith in 3:4.<sup>35</sup> The non-believer inquiring about the religious faith of the believer must be able to sense a humble reverence toward the God of the believer. Arrogance and boasting of the superiority of one's Christianity will drive away the non-believer. If, on the other hand, the non-believer senses in the believer

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(Acts 22:1; 25:16; 2 Tim 4:16).<sup>238</sup> Elsewhere, however, it denotes a reply to accusations of a general rather than a legal nature (1 Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11; Phil 1:7, 16).<sup>239</sup> The term *apologia* is used here in this latter sense, as the context demonstrates. First, the generalizing expressions ‘always’ (*aei*) and ‘to everyone who requests’ (*panti tōi aitounti*) point to an ongoing state of preparedness for a response to inquiry from any quarter. The situation envisioned is ‘a running debate in everyday life with people who have a different way of thinking’ (Goppelt 1993, 244; so also Selwyn 1947, 193–94; and Michaels 1988, 188). In contrast to Luke 12:11 and 21:12–15, which refer to ‘rulers and authorities,’ ‘kings and governors,’ before whom a defense is to be made, our author speaks of ‘any and all’ (*panti*) who are curious. Second, the verb *aiteō* (‘request,’ ‘ask,’ ‘seek’), occurring with a double accusative of the person asked and of the thing requested,<sup>240</sup> involves the action of requesting (contrary to Beare 1970, 164) rather than of demanding or commanding, as would be the case in official hearings. Third, in this context the question and the reply concern ‘an account (*logon*) of the hope that fills you.’ Curiosity about hope, a personal attitude rather than a legal crime, indicates that the author is referring here not to formal defenses before legal authorities (who would be concerned not with expectation concerning the future but culpable behavior in the present) but rather to replies to informal inquiries concerning the nature and basis of Christian hope, whenever and from whomever they should come.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 627.]

<sup>31</sup>“An account (*logon*). The common term *logos* has a broad range of meanings depending on context (‘word,’ ‘statement,’ ‘speech,’ ‘reckoning,’ etc.); for an ‘account’ given in private, see Plato, *Pol.* 285e. With the accompanying words ‘of the hope that fills you,’ it denotes that which the believers are requested to provide curious inquirers: an account of the hope that fills them. It is employed again with the same sense in 4:5 in reference to the ‘account’ that those who malign the believers will themselves have to give to the One ready (*hetoimōs*, an adverb related to the adjective *hetoimoi* of the present verse) to judge the living and the dead. Together, these two texts point to an eventual ‘turning of the tables,’ when those who once requested an account from the believers will themselves be called to account by God.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 628.]

<sup>32</sup>In no possible way can this text be twisted to argue for a formal persecution of Christians, and thus seen as a confirmation that First Peter is second century in origin when such judicial persecution of Christianity became wide spread. John Knox's argument that the Pliny-Trajan correspondence of the second century stands behind Peter's statement has no basis at all.

<sup>33</sup>“The words involve not a contrast (note the omission of *alla* in P<sup>72</sup>) but a qualification of the manner in which the believers are to reply. Accordingly, the force of the particle *alla* (included in most witnesses) is not adversative as in v 14a but qualitative or asseverative (‘but surely’). The qualification implies some verbal expression such as ‘offer it’ or ‘do so.’” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 629.]

<sup>34</sup>One of the interpretive issues here is whether the humility and reverence is pointed toward God or to the inquirer about one's faith. The context argues that one is humble before God and reverent toward God. But such posture will be noticeable by the inquirer who is treated with proper courtesy. Note Michael's observations:

Peter may simultaneously be urging reverence toward God and gentleness toward human beings (cf. 2:17). But more likely he has in view the same ‘gentle (πραΰς) and quiet spirit’ before God that should characterize Christian women (3:4). If so, *πραΰτης* is an inward quality or attitude of mind (cf. 3:3–4), a profound acknowledgment of the power of God, and of one's own poverty and dependence on Him (cf. Matt 5:5). Yet this God-centered quality of the heart finds expression also in one's behavior toward others.

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 189.]

<sup>35</sup>NRSV: “rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a *gentle and quiet spirit* [πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος], which is very precious in God's sight.”

that God is truly revered<sup>36</sup> and has produced genuine humility<sup>37</sup> in the believer, he will be much more likely to open himself up to the possibility of commitment to this same God. Out of the believer's posture toward God comes proper courtesy toward the non-believer in making his inquiry.

Second, the believer is to give explanation of his faith while having a clear conscience: συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν.<sup>38</sup> In answering questions about our faith, we speak with integrity and honesty, not with inflated exaggerated description. Our response must emerge from a faith genuinely lived out in obedience to God's will. This is the witness to our faith that the Spirit of God can use for convicting the inquirer of his need of God in his life as well.

The purpose of our explanation is given by Peter: ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαεῖσθε καταισχυθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφὴν, "so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame." This expression is very similar to the one in 2:12b: ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσιν τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς, "so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge." When the inquiry about the believer's faith is motivated by hostile intent (ἐν ᾧ καταλαεῖσθε<sup>39</sup>), the changed life of the believer (ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφὴν) that gives foundation to his explanation of his faith will nullify the validity of the hostility. Those hostile to Christianity will have observed the inherently good

<sup>36</sup>2. b. *reverence, respect*

a. toward God (Polyaenus 1, 16, 1; LXX; PsSol 6:5 al.; EpArist 159 ὁ περὶ θεοῦ φόβος; 189; cp. φόβος τὰ θεῖα τοῖσι σώφροσιν βροτῶν TGF, Adesp. no. 356 p. 906) and Christ, w. τρόμος **Phil 2:12** (s. τρόμος). W. ἀλήθεια 1 Cl 19:1; Pol 2:1. W. ἀγάπη 1 Cl 51:2. W. εὐλάβεια Pol 6:3. W. πίστις, εἰρήνη and other good things and virtues 1 Cl 64. W. ὑπομονή B 2:2. W. ἐλπίς: εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν 11:11. W. πίστις and ἐγκράτεια Hm 6, 1, 1. W. objective gen. φόβος (τοῦ) θεοῦ (PLond 1914, 12 φόβον θεοῦ ἔχοντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ; Philo, Spec. Leg. 4, 199; TestLevi 13:7; TestNapht 2:9; Theoph. Ant. 1, 7 [p. 72, 26]) **Ro 3:18** (Ps 35:2); **2 Cor 7:1** (ἀγάπη P46); 1 Cl 3:4; 21:6; cp. 8; B 4:11; 19:5; 20:2; Pol 4:2; Hm 10, 1, 6a; 12, 2, 4bc; D 4:9. φόβος (τοῦ) κυρίου (TestReub 4:1; TestSim 3:4) **Ac 9:31**; 1 Cl 22:1 (Ps 33:12); 57:5 (Pr 1:29); B 11:5 (Is 33:18 v.1.); Hm 7:4b; 8:9; 10, 1, 6b; 12, 2, 4a; 12, 3, 1. Some place here **2 Cor 5:11** (s. 1b above). φόβος Χριστοῦ **Eph 5:21**.—For **1 Pt 1:17** s. 2aα beg.

β. toward humans, **respect** that is due officials (cp. Byzantinische Papyri [Munich], ed. AHeisenberg/LWenger, 1914, no. 2, ln. 13 p. 43: ἔχοντες τὸν φόβον ... τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐνδόξου ὑπεροχῆς=having respect for your esteemed authority) Ro 13:7ab (CCranfield, NTS 6, '60, 241–49: the ref. may be to God); fr. slave to master **1 Pt 2:18**; **Eph 6:5** (w. τρόμος); B 19:7=D 4:11 (w. αἰσχύνῃ); wife to husband **1 Pt 3:2** (cp. SEG XXXV, 1427, 5 [III A.D.]). Gener. **3:16** (w. πραῦτης).—WLütgert, Die Furcht Gottes: MKähler Festschr. 1905, SBerkelbach v. der Sprenkel, Vrees en Religie 1920, 165ff; RSander, Furcht u. Liebe im palästin. Judentum '35.—B. 1153. DELG s.v. φέβομαι I. M-M. EDNT. 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), 1062.]

<sup>37</sup>α. **πραῦτης, ἡτος, ἡ** (πραῦς; Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 123 §518 διὰ πραῦτητα; Aesop, Fab. 168 P.=94b H.//247 Ch.//H-H. 178; CIG 2788; LXX [Thackeray p. 91; 181]; Sextus 545) and older Gk (since Thu., also Appian, Basil. 1 §5; PLond 1912, 101 [41 A.D.]; Philo; Jos., Bell. 6, 383, Ant. 19, 334; IPol 2:1; 6:2), **πραότης, ἡτος, ἡ** (so in Ign. and Hermas, while in the NT πραῦτης is the predom. form and πραότης appears as v.l.; for the lit. s. πραῦς) **the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness** in the older favorable sense (s. πραῦς) w. ἐπιεικεία (Plut., Caesar 734 [57], and, occasionally, other qualities, as Lucian, Somn. 10; s. also Plut., Pyrrh. 398[23, 3]) **2 Cor 10:1** (RLeivestad, NTS 12, '66, 156–64); 1 Cl 30:8; Dg 7:4; cp. **Tit 3:2**; 1 Cl 21:7. W. other virtues (Ps 44:5) **Gal 5:23**; **Col 3:12**; **Eph 4:2**; B 20:2; D 5:2; Hm 12, 3, 1. ἐν π. with or in gentleness (Sir 3:17; 4:8) **2 Ti 2:25**; IPol 2:1; 6:2; with humility **Js 1:21**; **3:13** (ἐν πραῦτητι σοφίας in wise gentleness; cp. Appian, Bell. Civ. 3, 79 §323 ἐπὶ σοφία τε καὶ πραότητι); ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ π. 1 Cl 61:2. Also μετὰ π. (so in PLond above) **1 Pt 3:16**; Hm 5, 2, 6. As a characteristic of a bishop ITr 3:2 (as political virtue, s. LRobert, Hellenica 13, '65, 223). The devil is thwarted by humility 4:2. πνεῦμα πραῦτητος **1 Cor 4:21**; **Gal 6:1**.—AvHarnack, 'Sanftmut, Huld und Demut' in der alten Kirche: JKaftan Festschr. 1920, 113ff; JdeRomilly, La douceur dans la pensée grecque '79; RAC III 206–31.—DELG s.v. πρᾶος. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 861.]

<sup>38</sup>α. συνείδωσιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, 'with a good conscience.' 'Conscience' in 1 Peter involves a moral or spiritual awareness of God, and of oneself before God, whether explicitly (2:19; 3:21) or (as here) implicitly. The phrase 'good conscience' occurs in Acts 23:1; 1 Tim 1:5, 19; 1 Clem 41:1 (and, with καλός, Heb 13:18; 2 Clem 16:4). Along with equivalent expressions such as a 'clean' (1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3; 1 Clem 45:7; cf. Heb 9:14; Ign. Trall. 7:2), or a 'blameless and pure' (Pol. Phil. 5:3) conscience, it denotes personal integrity before God. This is the stance from which Christian believers are urged to make their 'defense.'" [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 189-90.]

<sup>39</sup>By the adverbial temporal relative clause, Peter intends to specify occasional situations when the inquiry may have hostile intention. This clause does not imply that every inquiry has such a negative motivation.

manner of living by believers and thus be ashamed<sup>40</sup> to bring criticisms against believers, even though they have been abusive<sup>41</sup> toward the believers living such a life.<sup>42</sup>

Peter has thus re-focused our attention on unjust suffering. When it does happen, we need to be reminded of how God can bless us in the midst of it. Thus suffering can turn into something good. When it comes, we must not give into fear or intimidation from our enemies. Instead, we must be prepared to explain to everyone why we have hope in Christ Jesus. And we are to give this explanation with humility and reverence for God that produces a courteous reply to those inquiring about our faith. When suffering comes from abusive opponents to our faith, we must exemplify true Christian living as our best defense against criticism. Such a noble manner of living will 'de-horn' the abuse of our opponents!

**Why you should be willing to suffer unjustly**, vv. 17-22. Two reasons are given in v. 17 and vv. 18-22. Peter now turns for two foundations for a willingness to suffer unjustly. The first one in verse 17 is primary, and the second one in vv. 18-22 grows out of the first reason.

**1. God's will, v. 17:** "17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil." [17 κρείττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιῶντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιῶντας.] Peter next adds an explanatory comment about his purpose statement: κρείττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιῶντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιῶντας, "For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil." This axiom<sup>43</sup> is an echo of the earlier one in 2:19-20 offered to Christian slaves suffering unjustly.<sup>44</sup> Later in 4:14-16 a somewhat similar expression will surface as well.<sup>45</sup> The heart of the comparison

<sup>40</sup>“Shame” in the OT and in Jewish literature often connotes utter defeat and disgrace in battle, or before God. To be ‘put to shame’ is to be overthrown and left at the mercy of one’s enemies. A frequent promise is that those who trust in God will not be put to shame or that their enemies will (e.g., Pss 6:11 [10]; 21:6 [22:5]; 24[25]:2,3; 30:2, 18 [31:1, 17]; 34[35]:4; 39:15 [40:14]; 43:8 [44:7]; 69:3 [70:2]; 126[127]:5; Isa 28:16; Jer 6:15; 17:13, 18). Peter has already cited the οὐ μὴ καταιοχνηθῆ of Isa 28:16 and applied it to the believers to whom he is writing (2:6–7). Implicitly, the ones put to shame are ‘those who stumble, disobeying the word’ (2:8).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 190-91.]

<sup>41</sup>ἐπηρέαζω (s. next entry; Hdt.+; ins, pap; Philo, Mos. 2, 199, De Jos. 71; Just. A I, 1, 1) to treat someone in a despicable manner, threaten, mistreat, abuse usu. w. dat. (as Ael. Aristid. 23, 28 K.=42 p. 777 D.; PFlor 99, 10 [I/II A.D.]; Jos., Bell. 1, 13); τινά (OGI 484, 26 [II A.D.]); περὶ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς for those who mistreat you (in something they do, as PFay 123, 7; PLond II, 157, 4f p. 255 [II A.D.]) Lk 6:28, cp. Mt 5:44 v.l. (Just., A I, 15, 9). τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἀναστροφὴν disparage/malign (your) good conduct 1 Pt 3:16.—Schmidt, Syn. IV 275–78. DELG s.v. ἐπήρεια. 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), 362.]

<sup>42</sup>It is possible that Michaels is on target with his contention that the being put to shame is eschatological in nature. That is, the moment of shame for the critics of believers will be the day of judgment. They will be humiliated in final judgment to realize that they were abusing God's people with their slanderous criticisms of the faith of believers.

If he draws on such a tradition here, it is simply to reinforce the preceding καταλαεῖσθε. Instead of turning to God (as in 2:12) these accusers persist in their slander. As a result, instead of “glorifying God on the day of visitation,” they will be “put to shame” (καταιοχνηθῶσιν). Although the “day of visitation” is not mentioned in 3:16, the logic of the parallelism suggests that καταιοχνηθῶσιν, no less than the δοξάσωσιν τὸν θεόν of 2:12, has an eschatological reference.

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 190.]

<sup>43</sup>“The ‘better’-proverb, or *Tobspruch*, was first isolated and studied in OT wisdom literature by W. Zimmerli (ZAW 51 [1933] 192–95), but the form exists in the NT as well, whether with κρείττον (1 Cor 7:9; 1 Pet 3:17; 2 Pet 2:21), καλόν (e.g., Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Matt 18:8, 9; cf. Mark 14:21), or even συμφέρει (e.g., Matt 5:29, 30; 18:6). The most complete form of the *Tobspruch* in the NT includes three elements: a word for “good” or “better,” two infinitives expressing the actions or experiences being weighed against each other, and a word of comparison (ἢ or μᾶλλον). In the synoptic tradition, the *Tobspruch* is characteristically used to set forth eschatological alternatives. It is “better” to enter the kingdom of God minus an eye or a limb than to escape such mutilation and be sent away to eternal fire. It is “better” to drown in the sea than cause an innocent believer to fall into sin. It is “better” never to have been born than to betray the Son of Man. If 1 Pet 3:17 is read as a *Tobspruch* of this kind, it yields a coherent meaning: it is ‘better’ to suffer in this life at the hands of persecutors for doing good, than at God’s hand on the ‘day of visitation’ for doing wrong (for the thought, cf. Matt 10:28).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 191-92.]

<sup>44</sup>NRSV: 19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God’s approval.

<sup>45</sup>NRSV: 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. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. 16 Yet if any of you

is not suffering, but why is suffering occurring? Interpretatively, the suffering for good is unjust suffering in this life. But the suffering for doing evil can be understood as punishment inflicted by human authorities in this world, or as eschatological judgment imposed by God in final judgment. Michaels in identifying the saying as a standard *Tobspruch* sees this as eschatological punishment.<sup>46</sup> But most other commentators see a ‘this world’ comparison, with the implication to believers: make sure your suffering in this world is unjust, rather than justified because of having broken some human law. Peter injects into the saying “if suffering should be God’s will,” εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, to remind his readers that he is dealing with a possibility and not an inevitability.<sup>47</sup> God doesn’t desire His people to suffer unjustly, but on occasion such will indeed happen.

The will of God is the benchmark here: τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ. The phrase expresses God’s pleasure and desire. Here it is linked to suffering, in particular, unjust suffering. Essentially Peter here asserts that God does not find pleasure in His children suffering unjustly.<sup>48</sup> But when believers do suffer unjustly, God is committed to acknowledging such both now and eschatologically. In that believers can find encouragement as Peter will later on declare in 4:19, “Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God’s will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.”<sup>49</sup> One must not mistakenly associate all suffering with God’s will and thus assume divine blessing no matter why the suffering occurs. Peter makes it clear that the will of God is only connected to unjust suffering for our faith; only this kind of suffering will bring divine blessing and affirmation.

**2. Christ’s example, vv. 18-22:** “18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.” [18 ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι· 19 ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, 20 ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχeto ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν ὀκτὼ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι’ ὕδατος. 21 ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα, οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι’ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 22 ὃς ἔστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων.]

This lengthy text is appended to the axiom in verse 17 as an additional reason (ὅτι) for unjust suffering. Here, just as in 2:21-25, the example of Christ in unjust suffering is set forth as the defining model for believers to follow.<sup>50</sup> The emphasis is upon the positive outcome of such unjust suffering, and it stands as encourage-

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suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.

<sup>46</sup>This interpretation finds support in the context. The end of the quotation from Psalm 34 in vv 10–12 had divided all human beings into two groups: the ‘righteous’ (δικαίους) and the ‘evildoers’ (ποιοῦντας κακά). God looks with favor on the one, but sets his face in judgment against the other. The readers of the epistle are invited to pursue the good and to claim the promises of the psalm for their own. The ‘evildoers’ are anonymous at first (e.g., the αὐτῶν of v 14b), but assume definite shape in the οἱ ἐπιπράζοντες of v 16. Seen in this light, the distinction of the ἀγαθοποιῶντας and κακοποιῶντας of v 17 is not (as in 2:13–20) between good and bad citizenship in Roman society as two options for the Christian, but is rather a distinction between two groups that comprise the whole human race: ‘doers of good,’ who may have to suffer in this age, and ‘doers of evil’ who surely will suffer in the next. It is ‘better’ (i.e., more advantageous) to belong to the first than to the second. V 17 is thus to be taken not as a word of admonition (i.e., make sure, when you suffer, that it is for doing good and not for doing evil), but as a word of assurance (i.e., remember, when you suffer, that you are infinitely better off than the evildoers who oppress you). This is why it follows so naturally on vv 13–14a, and helps to frame the admonitions of vv 14b–16 (cf. Michaels, 398–400).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 192.]

<sup>47</sup>The fourth class conditional protasis here sets up a highly remote possibility, rather than something likely to happen.

<sup>48</sup>Here, as in the qualifying formulation of 1:6 (‘if it must be,’ *ei deon*), Christian suffering is viewed in relation to the will of God. In 1:6, as in 4:12, moreover, suffering is interpreted as a means of the divine testing (*peirasmos*) of faith and fidelity. In the present context the author twice makes it clear (vv 14, 17) that God’s will involves not suffering for suffering’s sake but suffering for doing what is right. It is innocent suffering for doing what is right, as modeled by Christ himself (2:21–24; 3:18; 4:1) in obedience to the Father’s will,<sup>252</sup> that has God’s approval (2:20) and that ultimately will be vindicated by God (5:10), as Christ himself was vindicated (3:18–22).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 634-35.]

<sup>49</sup>ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιᾷ.

<sup>50</sup>One should note that 2:21-25 and 3:18-22 mostly complement one another, rather than mirror each other. In 2:21-25 the

ment to believers that God can accomplish good from the unjust suffering of all His children as well. This point should not be lost in the midst of deep and controversial statements by Peter in these verses.<sup>51</sup> Was Peter alluding here to an *descensus ad inferos*, a descent into Hell, by Christ between His death and resurrection? Christian tradition has often assumed as much, although careful examination of the text raises serious objections to such an understanding.

Has Peter drawn extensively on pre-formed Christian tradition here? Opinion is seriously divided on this issue.<sup>52</sup> The formatting of the Nestle-Aland 27th rev. edition Greek text assumes that verses 18-19 reflect traditional material in their poetic formatting of these two verses, while verses 20-22 are Peter's comments on it, assumed by the narrative format of the text. But no consensus on any reconstruction can be found, and thus conclusions must at best remain highly subjective. The better option is to see Peter alluding to pieces of tradition but feeling no need for incorporating extensively them into his expression while retaining their original forms. Thus the better approach can be seen in the UBS 4th revised Greek New Testament that uses only narrative format for all of these verses, thus avoiding the highly speculative assumptions about sources.

What then was Peter saying about the unjust suffering of Christ as an example for believers to follow? The structure of vv. 18-22 is complex, but many of the ideas present are more difficult to grasp than the grammar structure:

Verse 18: Christ's redeeming death.

Verses 19-21: Christ's strange preaching trip as a symbol of baptism

Verse 22: Christ's exaltation in Heaven

The first and the last of these three units are not that difficult to understand, and represent beautiful affirmations of the significance of Christ as Savior and as Lord. It's the middle unit that is extremely obscure and difficult to grasp. And as one might expect, this is the unit that typically receives more attention, and also serves as the foundation of some really screwballish theology. The surrounding context must not be lost in the process, since it provides important correctives to interpretive conclusions about vv. 19-21.

**Christ's redeeming death, v. 18:** ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα

dominant emphasis was upon Jesus' suffering, especially in connection to His Passio experience of the cross. The second passage, 3:18-22 moves to the next stage of resurrection and exaltation as the dominating emphasis in Christ's experience. His suffering is mentioned at the beginning (v. 18) but resurrection and exaltation dominate verses 19-22.

<sup>51</sup>“On the long history of the interpretation of these verses, see Selwyn, 314–62; Reicke, *Spirits*, 7–51; Dalton, *Proclamation*, 15–41. Many of the issues raised over the centuries have resulted from a widespread tendency to read certain NT passages simultaneously instead of one at a time. In particular, vv 18–22 are frequently read in the light of 4:6, so that the ‘spirits’ to whom Jesus made a proclamation are understood as the spirits of the dead—usually as the spirits of the evil generation that perished in the flood. At the same time, these verses are read in the light of Eph 4:8–10 so that Jesus’ proclamation is set in the context of a descent to ‘the lower parts of the earth,’ thus a ‘descent into hell’ (a phrase that found its way into certain forms of the creed). Because it was inconceivable that Jesus would have descended into hell after ascending to heaven (v 22), the descent into hell to preach to the dead—either to assure the salvation of OT believers or to give the wicked a second chance for salvation—was assigned to the three days Christ is said to have spent in the tomb between his death and resurrection. When vv 18–22 are read by themselves, however, they speak neither of a ‘descent’ nor of ‘hell.’ Their relationship to 4:6 can be assessed only after interpreting that verse in its proper sequence, and their relationship to other NT passages can be assessed only in connection with particular words and phrases. In this commentary, the question of the place of vv 18–22 in the structure and argument of 1 Peter itself will be given precedence over the question of their place in the later history of Christian doctrine.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 196.]

<sup>52</sup>“Because most of the characteristics of traditional material are found in 3:18 and 22,<sup>31</sup> and because they appear more hymnic in form than vv. 19–21,<sup>32</sup> one can argue that they alone are drawn from the tradition.<sup>33</sup> Yet there is a strong possibility of an allusion to traditions about Enoch in v. 19,<sup>34</sup> and the reference in vv. 20–21 to baptism has led to the suggestion that they originated in a baptismal catechisms, and were inserted here by the author.<sup>35</sup> Attempts to reconstruct the original form of a hymn from which part or all of material in this passage was drawn have led to no conclusive results. Proposals have ranged from seeing here a coherent Christ hymn<sup>36</sup> or a baptismal hymn<sup>37</sup> to a more extensive hymn from which the author has excerpted elements.<sup>38</sup> Lack of agreement about the reconstructed form indicates that such attempts owe at least as much to the imagination of those reconstructing them as they do to evidence in the text itself. The best conclusion remains to see traditional elements underlying these verses, traditions that were probably familiar to the readers and hence needed only allusive reference (thus contributing to our difficulty in determining their precise meaning), but whose original form must necessarily elude us.<sup>39</sup> Whatever their origin, however, and whatever their original meaning, they now constitute part of the text of 1 Peter, and hence must be understood within the overall context and argument of that letter.” [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), 242-43.]

ὁμᾶς προσαγάγη τῷ θεῷ θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, “For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit...” This passage does overlap 2:24-25 although the wording is distinct for each passage.<sup>53</sup>

**2:24-25**

24 ὃς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον,

ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὗ τῷ μύλωπι ἰάθητε.

25 ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

**3:18**

18 ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων,

ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγη τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι·

Both passages focus on the suffering of Christ on the cross for the sins of humanity. “Christ carried our sins in His body on the tree” becomes “Christ suffered once for all for sins, the just for the unjust.” The purpose statement (ἵνα...) shifts from “so that having been set free from sins we might live in righteousness” to “so order that He might lead you to God, having been put to death in the flesh but having been made alive in the spirit.” Chapter two verse twenty-five has no counterpart in chapter three. While most scholars agree that Isaiah 53 underlies the ideas in 2:24-25, no known source can be produced for 3:18, even though the formal language of the text strongly suggests that Peter is using a pre-formed text of some sort here. The point of such use would have been to employ ideas already common and accepted in the various Christian communities.

Peter’s emphasis in 3:18 is on the one-time suffering of Christ on the cross.<sup>54</sup> The cross was a one time event that would not be repeated again. And as such the huge load of human sinfulness was piled on Jesus’ shoulders on that cross, intensifying His sufferings immensely.<sup>55</sup> The theme of unjust suffering receives special emphasis in 3:18 with the δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, “just for unjust,” phrase. Thus Peter stresses the example of Christ suffering for believers suffering unjustly for their religious faith. The intention of Christ’s suffering in 2:24 was that “we might live in righteousness.” In 3:18, the intention of Christ’s suffering was that “He might lead us to God.”<sup>56</sup> The cross / resurrection contrast, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, is

<sup>53</sup>NRSV: 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. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

<sup>54</sup>“ἅπαξ adv. (Hom.+; Tat. 6, 1 [Hb 9:26?]) ‘once’.

1. as a numer. term **pert. to a single occurrence, once**, ἅ. ἐλιθάσθην I was stoned once **2 Cor 11:25**. ἅ. πεφανέρωται **Hb 9:26**. ἅ. ἀποθανεῖν vs. **27** (Proverbia Aesopi 141 P.: «πλέον ἢ ἅπαξ οὐδεις ἄνθρωπος θνήσκει»); cp. **1 Pt 3:18**. ἅ. προσενεχθεὶς **Hb 9:28**. W. gen. foll. ἅ. τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ (Hdt. 2, 59; Ex 30:10; Lev 16:34) once a year **Hb 9:7**. ἔτι ἅ. (2 Macc 3:37; Judg 16:18, 28; TestAbr A 85, 15 [Stone p. 18] al.) once more=for the last time (Aeschyl., Ag. 1322; Judg 6:39) 12:26f (Hg 2:6). ἅ. καὶ δὶς (Dionys. Hal. 8, 56, 1 οὐχ ἅ. ἀλλὰ καὶ δὶς; Ael. Aristid. 36, 91 K.=48 p. 474 D.: ἅ. ἢ δὶς; Anna Comn., Alexias 3, 3 ed. Reiff. I 102, 17 καὶ ἅ. καὶ δὶς; 1 Km 17:39; 2 Esdr 23:20; 1 Macc 3:30) again and again, more than once (LMorris, NovT 1, ’56, 205–8) **Phil 4:16; 1 Th 2:18; 1 Cl 53:3** (Dt 9:13). W. weakening of the numer. idea ἐπεὶ ἅ. (Thu. 7, 44, 7; X., An. 1, 9, 10; Menand., PDidot 36 S. p. 329; Menand., Dyscolos 392; Chion, Ep. 14, 1; POxy 1102, 8 ἐπεὶ ἅ. προσῆλθε τῇ κληρονομίᾳ) since for once Hv 3, 3, 4; m 4, 4, 1.

2. **pert. to a single occurrence and decisively unique, once and for all** (Hippocr., Ep. 27, 41; Aelian, VH 2, 30; Philostrat., Ep. 7, 2; PLips 34, 20; 35, 19; Ps 88:36; PsSol 12:6; TestAbr 20 p. 103, 1 [Stone p. 54]; Philo, Ebr. 198; Jos., Bell. 2, 158, Ant. 4, 140; Just., A I, 61, 5) **Hb 10:2; Jd 3, 5**.—Sim. once (Alciphron 1, 8, 4; 1, 10, 2) **Hb 6:4**.—DELG s.v. πάξ and πήγνυμι. EDNT. 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), 97.]

<sup>55</sup>“The reason Christ suffered was ‘on behalf of sins.’ This formula was well known from the sin offerings of the OT (Lev. 5:7; 6:23; Ps. 39:7; Isa. 53:5, 10; Ezek. 43:21–25) 18 and NT explanations of the death of Christ (Rom. 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Thess. 5:10; Heb. 5:3; 10:6, 8, 18, 26; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). It is the formula of substitutionary atonement, the death of the victim on behalf of the sins of another. Thus the traditional formula expresses the fact that Christ also suffered innocently, and not just innocently, but on behalf of others’ sins.” [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), 135.]

<sup>56</sup>“This expression is unusual, but while there is a large number of OT expressions that are similar (leading animals to God for sacrifice, Exod. 29:10; Lev. 1:2; 1 Clem. 31:3, bringing a person to trial or to court, Exod. 21:6; Num. 25:6; Acts 16:20, or leading a person to God for ordination to some office, Exod. 29:4; 40:12; Lev. 8:14; Num. 8:9) as well as similar NT phrases (‘access to God’ in Paul, Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:18; 3:12, and ‘way’ in Hebrews, 4:16; 10:19–22, 25; 12:22), 21 Peter is creating a new metaphor, for no other NT writer has this active picture of Jesus leading the Christian to God. But it fits with Peter’s usual conception of the

the means of Christ leading us to God. Both His death and His resurrection are essential to believers coming to God in salvation. Thus the redemptive work of Christ on the cross also stands as an inspirational example to believers to endure suffering. Just as God was able to bring good out of Jesus' suffering, He likewise will bring good out of the unjust suffering of believers.

**Christ's strange preaching trip and a symbol of baptism, vv. 19-21:** 19 ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, 20 ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτώ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος. 21 ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα, οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, "19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,..." The first statement ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν introduces us to the extremely obscure idea expressed here.<sup>57</sup> The remainder in vv. 20-21 is Peter's comments on this introductory statement. The chart to the right illustrates alternative views of key elements in the passage.



A huge number of interpretive questions arise from these verses.<sup>58</sup> We will try to address these problems in a summary manner, so as to not get lost in a sea of technical details.<sup>59</sup>

Christian life as an active close following of Jesus (2:21; 4:13).” [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), 136.]

<sup>57</sup>“Martin Luther, that master biblical expositor, when struggling with v 19 exclaimed: ‘This is a strange text and certainly a more obscure passage than any other passage in the New Testament. I still do not know for sure what the apostle meant’ (Luther 1967 [1523], 30:113 = *Weimarer Ausgabe* 12:367). Subsequent scholars likewise viewed this passage as one of the most perplexing and vexatious texts in all of Holy Scripture.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 647.]

<sup>58</sup>John Elliott in the Yale Anchor Bible commentary has list most of them: “(1) the Greek text of *en hōi kai*; (2) the antecedent or sense of *en hōi*; (3) the place of the pause between v 19 and v 20; (4) the event to which Christ’s ‘having gone’ refers, including its occasion, time, and direction; (5) the identity of the disobedient spirits in prison and the occasion and nature of their disobedience; (6) the location and nature of this prison; (7) the content of Christ’s announcement to them, the time of this announcement, and the relation between 3:19 and 4:6; (8) the nature of the relation between the Flood and baptism, and between Noah’s family and present believers; (9) the sense of the explanation of baptism; (10) the syntactic and semantic coherence of vv 19–21 and their relation to vv 18 and 22; (11) the possible sources underlying this material; (12) the relation of vv 18–22 as a whole to both the foregoing (3:13–17) and following (4:1–6) units; and (13) the theological and rhetorical function of this passage in the broader context of the letter.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 648.]

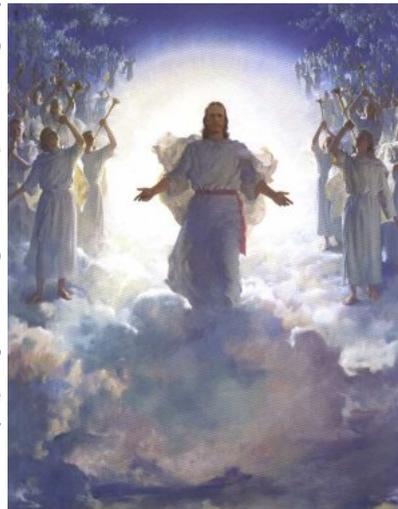
<sup>59</sup>The following solutions have surfaced over time, as summarized by Elliott:

“*View 1.* When Christ descended (*poreutheis*) to the realm of the dead in conjunction with his death and prior to his resurrection (i.e., during the so-called *triduum mortis*), he, ‘in the spirit’ (*en pneumati*), made an announcement (*ekēryxen*) to the deceased humans (‘spirits’) whose souls were imprisoned in the lower world (*infera*), the realm of the dead (*Hades*, hell). Frequently this view also assumes a direct relation between 3:19 and 4:6.

“Among the many scholars espousing this view, however, opinions diverge regarding the more precise identity of the spirits and the content of Christ’s announcement. Some (1A) hold that Christ’s spirit preached to the spirits of the deceased of Noah’s generation to convert them and bring them to salvation. Others (1B) view Christ as offering good news only to those of Noah’s generation who were converted before death (or to all of the OT righteous and patriarchs who died prior to Christ). Still others (1C) claim that Christ announced condemnation to the unbelieving contemporaries of Noah, who presumably died without conversion....

“*View 2.* Christ, in his preexistent nature, went to Noah’s contemporaries during their lifetime, particularly through the person of Noah, and preached repentance to these human spirits who were imprisoned in sin. Augustine (Ep. Eud. 64, chs. 14–17) proposed this allegorical interpretation only hesitatingly. Nevertheless, eventually it became the dominant view in the Western Church.<sup>274</sup> Although abandoned by the majority of modern commentators, this view, in various nuanced forms, still finds occasional supporters.<sup>275</sup>

Crucial to establishing a viewpoint is the meaning of ἐν ᾧ καὶ. Clearly it introduces a relative clause with the sense of ἐν ᾧ καὶ Christ preached to the imprisoned spirits. Two possibilities grammatically exist. It can function as an adjective modifying relative clause with ᾧ as a simple relative pronoun referring back to πνεύματι.<sup>60</sup> The sense then is that while Christ was “in the spirit” He did also this preaching. Such allows for the understanding of Christ, while in the grave and before His resurrection, preached to the imprisoned spirits that are connected to Noah’s day (view 1 in above footnote). It also allows for an understanding of Christ as pre-existent and thus in His spiritual existence having worked through Noah to have preached to these imprisoned spirits (view 2 above). This requires a shift in meaning for ‘imprisoned spirits.’ In view 1, they are in the grave awaiting final judgment, but in view 2 they are the disobedient living on earth in bondage to sin. But Michaels persuasively argues for the ἐν ᾧ καὶ expression to allude to the third segment of the triad:



death - resurrection - journey to Heaven by Christ. Thus Christ’s proclamation was the triumphant declaration of the ascension that God’s power over evil prevails without challenge.<sup>61</sup> The imprisoned spirits can be understood as the disobedient people of Noah’s day or disobedient angels who brought on the divine judgment. The alternative understanding of ἐν ᾧ καὶ is adverbial temporal with the sense of ‘in the time which...’. This would allow for the relative clause to define the preaching action of Christ during the time of His being put to death and being made alive. Or, alternatively if the emphasis is on ζῶσποιοηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, then the preaching took place once Jesus arrived in Heaven after the ascension as stressed in verse 22; cf. πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν.

In summary of verse 19, the following points should be understood: **1.** By the Spirit Christ ascended into Heaven where His declaration of triumph was made. **2.** This declaration included but was not limited to the fallen spirits<sup>62</sup> of

<sup>60</sup>“View 3. In order to resolve some of the obvious difficulties involved in the Augustinian view, the Roman Catholic scholar Robert Bellarmine (1586) advanced the view that after Christ died his soul descended to the realm of the dead and announced salvation to those humans of Noah’s generation who, he conjectured, had repented of their sins just prior to their death (Disp. R. Bellarmini de Controversiis, Tom. 1, Cont. 2, Lib. 4, ch. 13). This theory was adopted subsequently by various Roman Catholic commentators (listed by Holzmeister 1937, 315; Reicke 1946, 42–44; and Dalton 1965, 30–31). The notion that these humans had undergone a purging of sin has been argued in recent time by Vogels (1976).

<sup>61</sup>“View 4. Pioneered by the study of F. Spitta (1890), this view is based on the recognized proximity of the thought in 1 Pet 3:19–20 to early Israelite tradition concerning the Flood and in particular the widely influential book of 1 Enoch. Here the ‘spirits in prison’ are regarded as the sinful angelic spirits whose transgression, according to Genesis 6 and subsequent tradition, preceded and instigated the evil that was destroyed in the Flood. To them Christ announced some form of his triumph over death and their condemnation.”

[John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 648-649.]

<sup>62</sup>The Greek πνεύματι can refer to Christ’s spirit or to the Holy Spirit. It is taken both ways in the various understandings.

<sup>63</sup>“The decisive link between ‘made alive in the Spirit’ and ‘gone to heaven’ is accomplished first by the use of ἐν ᾧ καὶ at the beginning of v 19, and second by moving πορευθεὶς up to v 19 so as to anticipate the complete expression, πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν, in v 22. The much-discussed ἐν ᾧ (see Comment) establishes continuity by connecting πνεύματι (implicitly at least) with the third as well as the second element in the traditional three-part sequence; not only the ‘making alive,’ but the subsequent ‘journey’ of Christ as well is understood to be ‘in the Spirit.’ The two events are viewed almost as one continuous divine act. Peter’s apparent intent in vv 19–22 is to answer the question. What did this heavenly journey in the Spirit entail, and what did it accomplish for Christian believers? Specifically he wants to show what it meant for ‘you,’ the readers of his epistle, in the situations in which he imagines them in the provinces of Asia Minor.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 199-200.]

<sup>64</sup>“Two questions remain: (a) what was the proclamation?; (b) where did it take place? The alternatives as usually stated are: either a proclamation offering forgiveness and redemption to the ‘spirits,’ or a proclamation of judgment and of Christ’s victory

Gen. 6<sup>63</sup> who are imprisoned<sup>64</sup> awaiting final judgment. Note the similar emphasis in Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4.<sup>65</sup> The declaration of Jesus' triumph means the doom of the fallen angels, for Satan has been decisively defeated in the resurrection - ascension of Jesus. **3.** The triumphant proclamation of Jesus is blessed assurance to believers suffering unjustly. Christ has subdued all powers and authorities under His control, as verse 22 affirms.

The imagery of Noah awaiting the flood and deliverance from God in vv. 20-21 becomes Peter's amplification of the assertion in verse 19 of Christ's proclamation. What was Peter's point with the reference to Noah? Beyond Jesus proclaiming His triumph over the evil spirits that brought divine judgment upon the world in Noah's day, Peter saw the deliverance of a small group of people, "a few, that is, eight persons," as comparable to his readers in the first century. The building of the ark became the vehicle of deliverance; remember that God is building His house among believers. The waters of the flood were the channel of deliverance (δῖ' ὕδατος) for these eight people. For the unrighteousness in Noah's day, the waters meant death as divine judgment, but for the small group they were deliverance from the corruption that God was

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over them. κηρύσσειν in the NT usually refers either to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God or his disciples' proclamation of the good news of his death and resurrection. Yet in 1 Peter, the characteristic word for the message of redemption is εὐαγγελίζεω (1:12, 25; 4:6); κηρύσσειν is found only here. The question of what the proclamation was cannot be separated from that of who 'the spirits' were. One major difficulty with interpreting them either as the fallen angels of Gen 6:1-4 or as the generation that perished in the flood is that these interpretations do not explain why Christ was so vitally interested in events that happened several millennia before he began his ministry. Or rather, why would Peter have thought he was vitally interested in such traditions? If 'the spirits' are the 'evil' or 'unclean spirits' against which Jesus directed the power of the Kingdom of God to set free those who were demon-possessed, the connection is not at all difficult to see." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 209.]

One difficulty of distancing 'imprisoned spirits' in v. 19 from the fallen angels in Gen. 6 is the defining reference in v. 20a ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε, "who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah,..." This seems to clearly mean 'spirits' at the time of Noah as the primary reference. Michaels' interpretation has merit but lacks clear persuasiveness:

"His choice of words is not accidental, but suggests a close connection in the author's mind between the 'spirits' and the flesh-and-blood opposition he and his readers faced in the Roman Empire. Although there is a historical analogy in vv 20-21 between "then" and "now" (ποτε in v 20, and νῦν in v 21), the fact that Christ went and made proclamation, long after Noah's time, to these same 'spirits' points to something more than just an analogy. The 'disobedient spirits' of long ago still exist, and it is not unlikely that Peter sees their influence behind the ridicule and slander of pagans actively opposed to the Christian movement in his day (cf. Eph 2:2, where 'the ruler of the power of the air' is further identified as 'the spirit now at work among the children of disobedience' [ἀπειθεία]). If Christ has visited the spirits, violated their sanctuaries, and brought them under subjection, then Christians have nothing to fear from the interrogation and insults of those who denounce their way of life (cf. vv 14, 16)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 211.]

**63Gen. 6:1-7, NRSV:** 1 When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. 3 Then the Lord said, "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years." 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown. 5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

<sup>64</sup>"Where did the proclamation take place? Where was the 'prison,' or 'refuge,' of the unclean spirits? Dalton argues at length (*Proclamation*, 177-84) that it was not under the earth, but somewhere in the heavens, appealing especially to 2 Enoch 7.1-3, where Enoch is taken 'to the second heaven' and shown 'a darkness greater than earthly darkness' and 'prisoners under guard, hanging up, waiting for the measureless judgment' (OTP, 1:112; cf. also T. Levi 3.2). Although Dalton here demonstrates that Jewish traditions about the fallen angels were by no means uniform, he has not demonstrated that the traditions locating their imprisonment and punishment in the heavens were the dominate ones. He is, in any case, still working from the assumption that the 'spirits in refuge' in 1 Peter are the fallen angels of Gen 6 rather than the evil spirits on earth which their sin produced." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 210.]

**65Jude 6, NRSV:** And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day.

**2 Peter 2:4, NRSV:** 4 For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 and if he did not spare the ancient world, even though he saved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood on a world of the ungodly;...

punishing.<sup>66</sup> Encouragement comes from the emphasis on the small group in Noah's time. Believers in Peter's day represented but a very small segment of known humanity at that time. Thus majority domination gives no clue as to correctness of lifestyle! The remnant of the people of God will be the ones experiencing God's deliverance.

The mentioning of water as a symbol of deliverance for Noah prompts linking it to baptism in verse 21: ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα, "And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you." The water baptism of the believer represents God's deliverance now just as the waters of the flood did for Noah and his companions. One clear implication of this statement is that following Christ in believer's baptism is absolutely critical for a genuine profession of faith to happen. Unwillingness to obey Christ's command here raises serious questions about the sincerity of any profession of faith in Him. This Peter clearly assumes.

Peter is quick to qualify his assertion about baptism saving: οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεις ρύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, "not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,...". The act of going down into the baptismal waters does not cleanse of our sins as though we are taking a bath. Instead, it represents the culmination of a faith commitment made sincerely to Christ. It is the appropriate 'follow through' to that commitment. The 'saving power' of baptism is not the water but the resurrection of Christ. For believers in the apostolic age this act of submitting to baptism was the open, official declaration of commitment to Christ. Serious commitment was reflected in it, because at that point the surrounding world realized that one was serious in his determination to follow Christ as Lord.

Thus Peter's readers found encouragement in that they had submitted to believer's baptism in open commitment, and this may very well have occasioned much of the opposition to them that they were experiencing. Peter affirms that they have done correctly, and have not made a mistake in being baptized. The OT example of Noah encourages them to stand fast in suffering unjustly for their faith.

Peter concludes in verse 22 with a powerful affirmation of the full triumph of Christ, which he anticipated at the beginning in verse 19: ὃς ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ [τοῦ] θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων, "who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him." This is the ultimate affirmation of encouragement. Jesus, who suffered unjustly, was crowned with triumph before Almighty God and given authority over not just human powers but over all supernatural powers in existence. This exaltation to the position of ultimate power, the right hand of the Heavenly Father, is the ultimate affirmation that God will acknowledge the rightness of suffering unjustly on this earth.

What we have hopefully noticed here is what Peter seems to be doing in verses 19-22. In Jesus' triumphal ascension into Heaven a message comes to the demonic world: "You are doomed to eternal damnation!" Although these evil spirits have been around causing havoc since the days of Noah, Jesus has defeated them and their days are numbered. God delivered just eight people when the world was first destroyed. Believers represent but a small segment of world population and will be the sole survivors of the destruction of the world in the end. Evil could not defeat God in Noah's day, nor will it be able to defeat God's people who follow Christ. Affirmation of this victory is to be found in baptism as a symbol of deliverance and victory over evil. We as believers move every day closer to that wonderful day when Christ's ultimate power will be revealed at the end of time.

In this we rejoice. In this we have encouragement to endure unjust suffering -- just as did the first readers of this letter.

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<sup>66</sup>The eight were Noah and his wife, along with his three sons and their wives, cf. Gen 7:13.



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



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

4.1 Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκί και ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκί πέπταται ἁμαρτίας, 2 εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκί βιώσαι χρόνον. 3 ἀρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἔθνῶν κατειργάσθαι, πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις, καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας. 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 σαρκί ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

4 1 Christus also hat gelitten, und zwar körperlich. Darum rüstet auch ihr euch mit seiner Gesinnung aus, wenn ihr seinetwegen leiden müsst! Denn wer einmal wegen Christus körperlich zu leiden hatte, in dem ist die Sünde abgestorben, 2 und er wird sich für den Rest seines Lebens in dieser Welt nicht mehr von menschlichen Leidenschaften fortreißen lassen, sondern nur noch tun, was Gott will. 3 Ihr habt euch ja lange genug an dem Treiben der Menschen beteiligt, die Gott nicht kennen; ihr habt euch hemmungsloser Gier und Ausschweifung hingegeben, habt an wüsten Fress- und Saufgelagen teilgenommen und an einem abscheulichen Götzendienste. 4 Jetzt wundern sich die anderen, dass ihr bei ihrem zügellosen Treiben nicht mehr mitmacht, und beschimpfen euch deswegen. 5 Aber sie werden sich vor dem verantworten müssen, der schon bereitsteht, um über die Lebenden und die Toten das Urteil zu sprechen. 6 Deshalb wurde sogar den schon Verstorbenen die Gute Nachricht verkündet, damit sie wie alle Menschen für ihre Taten zur Rechenschaft gezogen werden können, aber auch die Möglichkeit erhalten, zum Leben bei Gott zu gelangen.

**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.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Adopt Christ's intention, vv. 1-2](#)
  - b. [Two reasons to do so, vv. 3-6](#)

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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 Background<sup>1</sup>

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").<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> No substantial

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>2</sup>"The reading that best explains the origin of the others is παθόντος, which is strongly supported by P<sup>72</sup> B C Ψ 330 1739 it<sup>65</sup> vg cop<sup>sa</sup> al. In order to express the idea more fully some copyists added ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (so the Textus Receptus, following κ<sup>c</sup> A K P 33 81 614 Byz Lect syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>bo</sup> arm eth al) while others added ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (κ 1505 2495 syr<sup>p</sup> 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.]

#### <sup>3</sup>1. Petrus 4,1

- \* π. υπερ ημων σ. κ<sup>c</sup> A P M sy<sup>h</sup> bo; Did Augpt Cyr
- | π. υπερ υμων σ. 69. 1505 pc (vgms) sy<sup>p</sup>
- | π. εν σ. 049(c) (z) vg sa?
- | αποθανοντος υπερ υμων σ. κ<sup>\*</sup>
- | txt P72 B C Ψ 0285. 323. 1739 pc sa?; Nic
- \* εν K P 69 m z vgmss
- \* -ταις κ<sup>c</sup> B Ψ pc lat<sup>t</sup>
- | απο -ταις 049. 1881 pc; Hier
- | txt P<sup>72</sup> κ<sup>\*</sup> A C P 1739 M

#### 1. Petrus 4,2

- \* 2 1 C; Hier
- | ανθ. αμαρτιας Ψ
- \* ανθρωπου κ<sup>\*</sup>
- \* σωσαι P<sup>72</sup>

#### 1. Petrus 4,3

- \* υμιν κ<sup>\*</sup> 630 p<sup>m</sup> bo; Augpt
- | ημιν C K L P 049. 69. 623<sup>c</sup>. 2298 p<sup>m</sup>; Hier
- | txt P72 κ<sup>c</sup> A B Ψ 81. 323. 614. 945. 1241. 1505. 1739 al lat<sup>t</sup> sy sa; Cl (33 illeg.)
- \* του βιου P 049 M
- | txt P72 κ<sup>c</sup> A B C Ψ 33. 81. 323. 614. 630. 1241. 1505. 1739 al latt sy co; Cl
- \* θελημα P M
- | txt P<sup>72</sup> κ<sup>c</sup> A B C Ψ 81. 323. 630. 945. 1241. 1739 al; Cl
- \* πορευομενους κ 1881 pc co?; Aug<sup>pt</sup>

#### 1. Petrus 4,4

- \* και βλασφημουσιν κ<sup>\*</sup> C\* 81. 323. 945. 1241. 1739 al
- | txt P<sup>72</sup> κ<sup>c</sup> A B C<sup>2</sup> P Ψ 049 m lat<sup>t</sup> sy<sup>h</sup>

#### 1. Petrus 4,5

- \* 1 2 P<sup>72</sup>
- | - κ<sup>\*</sup>
- | txt κ<sup>c</sup> A B C P Ψ 33. 1739 M lat<sup>t</sup> sy co; Clat
- \* ετ. κρινοντι B (C\*vid) Ψ (81). 614. 630. 1852 al sy<sup>h</sup>

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:

<b>Past:</b>	<b>Present:</b>	<b>Future:</b>
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 παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπταται 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 P<sup>72</sup> 945. 1241. 1739. 1881 pc co?  
| txt κ A C<sup>2</sup> 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.

```
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.
```

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 ἔννοιαν<sup>4</sup> that Jesus had in His suffering. The point of ἔννοια is "a way of thinking."<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> The frequent used military image presented is more than just adopting or accepting

<sup>4</sup>ἔννοια, **αδ, 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.]

<sup>5</sup>Note 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).

<sup>6</sup>ὀπλίζω (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. τὶ *with someth.* 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.<sup>7</sup> The incorporating of this way of thinking into our life serves to prepare us to face conflict.<sup>8</sup> 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."<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> From what Peter has already indicated, this mind set of Christ at least included **1)** submission of God's will, cf. 1:2c; 2:21-23<sup>11</sup>; **2)** conviction that good would come

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*some*. (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.]

<sup>7</sup>"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 philosophers<sup>425</sup> and occurs frequently in the NT as well.<sup>426</sup>" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 712.]

<sup>8</sup>Not 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);

<sup>9</sup>"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.<sup>423</sup> The simple *pathontos sarki* (supported by P<sup>72</sup> B C Ψ 323 1739 a few other MSS, cop<sup>sm</sup>?; 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.<sup>424</sup> 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.]

<sup>10</sup>"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.<sup>429</sup>" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 713.]

<sup>11</sup>**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. 3:17-18<sup>12</sup>; **3**) refusal to retaliate against His persecutors, cf. 2:22-23b<sup>13</sup>; **4**) entrusting His cause to God, cf. 2:23c.<sup>14</sup> Here is the heart of Christ's way of thinking, *ἐννοίαν*, 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.<sup>15</sup> 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 ἐννοίαν, "the same way of thinking."<sup>16</sup> Or, 2) the conjunction introduces a reason for the admonition.<sup>17</sup> Most translations and commentators adopt the second understanding in rejection of the first, largely because of substantial problems attached to the first understanding.<sup>18</sup>

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

<sup>12</sup>**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."

<sup>13</sup>**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;"

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

<sup>15</sup> "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);<sup>4</sup> (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;<sup>5</sup> (3) when a person decides to suffer, he has chosen decisively to break with sin;<sup>6</sup> (4) when Christ suffered, he finished with sin (i.e., the phrase does not refer to the Christian at all);<sup>7</sup> or (5) when a Christian suffers (dies), he will, like Christ (3:18), be freed from sin."<sup>8</sup> [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.]

<sup>16</sup> Cf. 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.]

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

<sup>18</sup> These 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.

<sup>19</sup> The 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 μῶλωπι 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

*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.

<sup>20</sup>“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.]

<sup>21</sup>“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, οἴνοφλυγίαις, 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), οἴνοφλυγίαις (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.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup>For 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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

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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.

<sup>23</sup>Matthew 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.

<sup>24</sup>The 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.

<sup>25</sup>ἀσέλγεια, 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 παραδίδοναι 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.]

<sup>26</sup>2 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.<sup>27</sup> Peter often alludes to the dangers of ἐπιθυμία in both his letters.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> It belongs to a group of words describing excessive drinking that causes improper behavior.<sup>30</sup> The beverages implied here were not distilled alcoholic drinks, but rather fermented fruit juices with alcoholic content.<sup>31</sup> 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.**

<sup>27</sup>Also 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.]

<sup>28</sup>1 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.”

<sup>29</sup>“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.]

<sup>30</sup>For 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.]

<sup>31</sup>“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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> The adjective ἄθεμιτος, ον is used only twice in the New Testament and specifies something

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<sup>32</sup>Whereas 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.

<sup>33</sup>κῶμος, 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.]

<sup>34</sup>πότος, 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.]

<sup>35</sup>Peter’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.’<sup>36</sup> Expressions of idolatry, εἰδωλολατρίαις,<sup>37</sup> clearly stood outside the boundaries of legitimate activity for Christians.<sup>38</sup> Because virtually all the pagan religions of the ancient made absolutely no connection between religious devotion and ethical standards of conduct,<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

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.]

<sup>36</sup>“ἀθέμιτος, ον (Hom. and other early wr. ἀθεμιστος; 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 it is forbidden 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.]

<sup>37</sup>The 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 εἰδωλολατρεῶ (verb, ‘to worship idols’).

<sup>38</sup>“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.]

<sup>39</sup>The only exceptions were Christianity, Judaism, and Mithraism.

<sup>40</sup>“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.<sup>469</sup> 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’),<sup>470</sup> 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 shocked<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> Their response to the urgings being rejected<sup>43</sup> 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."<sup>44</sup> 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..."<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> They are similar also to Paul's words

<sup>41</sup>In 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.]

<sup>42</sup>ἀσωτία, 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.]

<sup>43</sup>Interestingly, 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.'

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

<sup>45</sup>Selwyn (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.]

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

<sup>47</sup>NRSV, 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).<sup>48</sup>

Peter depicts the Day of Judgment<sup>49</sup> in terms of God<sup>50</sup> who is τῷ ἐτοίμῳ<sup>51</sup> ἔχοντι κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, “the one ready to judge the living and the dead.”<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup> 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 ἄνθρωπους 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.”<sup>54</sup> 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.

<sup>48</sup>NRSV, So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

<sup>49</sup>For 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>.

<sup>50</sup>“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).<sup>481</sup> However, the more traditional Israelite view of God as judge also occurs in the NT<sup>482</sup> 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.]

<sup>51</sup>“Some manuscripts (B [C] Ψ [81] 614 630 1852 others sy<sup>th</sup>) 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’) (P<sup>72</sup> 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.]

<sup>52</sup>“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>]

<sup>53</sup>“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.]

<sup>54</sup>“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.<sup>55</sup> 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)<sup>483</sup> and another rejecting any relationship between the two verses.<sup>484</sup> [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.

<sup>55</sup>In 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.<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.”<sup>58</sup> 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!

<sup>56</sup>“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.<sup>487</sup> [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 733-34.]

<sup>57</sup>BBE: 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.

<sup>58</sup>“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.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 17**  
**1 Peter 4:7-11**  
**“The End is Near”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

7 Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν. σωφρονήσατε οὖν καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς· 8 πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν· 9 φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ· 10 ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα, εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ· 11 εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ· εἴ τις διακονεῖ, ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός· ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζηται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

7 Das Ende der Welt ist nahe. Seid besonnen und nüchtern, damit nichts euch am Beten hindert. 8 Vor allem lasst nicht nach in der Liebe zueinander! Denn die Liebe macht viele Sünden wieder gut. 9 Nehmt einander gastfreundlich auf, ohne zu murmeln.

10 Dient einander mit den Fähigkeiten, die Gott euch geschenkt hat—jeder und jede mit der eigenen, besonderen Gabe! Dann seid ihr gute Verwalter der vielfältigen Gnade Gottes. 11 Wenn jemand die Gabe der Rede hat, soll Gott durch ihn zu Wort kommen. Wenn jemand die Gabe der helfenden Tat hat, soll er aus der Kraft handeln, die Gott ihm verleiht.

Alles, was ihr tut, soll durch Jesus Christus zur Ehre Gottes geschehen. Ihm gehört die Herrlichkeit und die Macht für alle Ewigkeit! Amen.

**NRSV**

7 The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. 8 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 11 Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

**NLT**

7 The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. 8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. 10 God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God’s generosity can flow through you. 11 Are you called to be a speaker? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Are you called to help others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then God will be given glory in everything through Jesus Christ. All glory and power belong to him forever and ever. Amen.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [The end is near, v. 7a](#)
  - b. [What that implies, vv. 7b-11](#)

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**Introduction to Study**

“The end of the world is coming!” We are accustomed in western society to seeing cartoons with a strange looking fellow making this announcement. We read it and laugh. And perhaps remember the excitement created by a few preachers over the years who have predicted a date for the end of the world; something that has not happened. Such phoney predictions have made huge fortunes for most of these supposed preachers, and have made Christianity a laughing stock in the eyes of most non-believers.



But when someone like the Apostle Peter announces the end is near, we need to take a serious look at what he is saying. Through divine inspiration he has insights that we don't have. So there's much to profit from examining his words to understand the idea of the end of the world.

## I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>

Background issues do play an important role in interpreting these verses, both the historical and the literary.

### a. Historical

**External History.** In the UBS 4th rev. edition of the Greek New Testament no text variant readings are listed. This indicates that in the minds of the editorial committee of this printed Greek text none of the variations of readings were considered important enough to impact the translation of these verses. In the Nestle-Aland 27th rev. edition of the Greek text eight variations of readings are listed, reflecting mostly stylistic changes to make the text more contemporary and easier to understand.

These include the following. *In verse seven* εἰς προσευχάς ('for prayers') is changed to εἰς τὰς προσευχάς ('for prayers'), but this doesn't change the meaning. *In verse eight*, πρὸ πάντων ('above all') is changed to πρὸ δὲ πάντων ('but above all'). Also εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ('for one another') is changed to εἰς αὐτοὺς ('for them'). Additionally, καλύπτει ('covers') is switched to καλύψει ('will cover'). *In verse nine*, γογγυσμοῦ ('complaining') is changed to γογγυσμῶν ('complaints'). *In verse eleven*, ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός ('which God supplies') is re-written ὡς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός ('as God supplies'). Also δοξάζεται ὁ θεός ('God may be praised') becomes ὁ θεός δοξάζεται, without changing the meaning. Finally, ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος ('glory and power') is re-written by dropping one or the other nouns. As is clear from the above these are minor changes that do not alter the meaning of the text, and these changes were made several centuries after the original writing of the text.

Thus we can interpret the text in the confidence that it reflects the original writing by Silas from Peter's dictation.

**Internal History.** The paraenetical nature of these verses does not stress directly any spatial / time issue. Indirectly the opening declaration that "the end of everything is near" raises a temporal issue and possibly a spatial issue. But the primary thrust of this statement is more theological than purely temporal or spatial. So we will treat it in detail under the exegesis section below.

### b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** The literary genre of vv. 7-11 is multi-layered. The text begins with a theological declaration (v. 7a) and then uses a series of admonitions (vv. 7b-11) to draw implications from the declaration (οὖν).<sup>2</sup> Thus the dominant pattern is *paraenesis* as found in vv. 7b-11, but the form here doesn't develop into any recognizable sub-genre form. The ideas expressed are common to ancient Christian exhortation, but Peter has shaped these into his

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>2</sup>"The form (a series of staccato-like injunctions) and content of these verses suggest reliance on a broad stream of early Christian hortatory tradition (Goppelt 1993, 293-94), which, however, is structured and theologically grounded in a fashion unique to 1 Peter. The connection and unity of these injunctions are created by means of an internal series of link-words (*pantōn/pantōn* [vv 7a/b]; *agapē/philoxenoi* [vv 8/9]; *eis autous/eis allēlous/eis autous* [vv 8/9/10]; *diakonountes/diakonei* [vv 10/11]; *theou/theou/theos/theos* [vv 10c/11a/11b/11c]; *doxazetai/doxa* [vv 11b/c]) as well as by the symmetry of vv 11a and 11b. A comprehensive stress on "all" (vv 7, 8, 11) frames the unit as a whole, and a final doxology marks a minor conclusion to this part of the letter." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 743-44.]

### 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*

own distinct pattern of expression.

**Literary Context.** The literary setting of vv. 7-11, as charted on the previous page, reflects Peter's continuing words of encouragement to his readers begun in 3:13 (cf. 3:13-4:11). But whereas 3:13-4:6 mainly focus on believers responsibilities to 'outsiders', our text in vv. 7-11 stresses internal relationships inside the community of faith. The brief doxological expression in verse 11b (**ὡς ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.**) brings the text, and this part of the letter body, to a climax. At first this would seem to signal the end of the letter, but such is not the case. The end of the letter will wait for the second doxological expression in 5:11, **αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.**

The ability of believers to successfully endure unjust suffering depends on relationships. In 3:13-4:6, the emphasis was upon positive relationships with non-believers who are not a part of the community of believers. But in 4:7-11, the stress is upon positive relationships with fellow believers in the community of faith. This 'internal' focus will dominate the remainder of the letter body down to 5:11. But Peter will alternate between admonitions -- 4:7-11 and 5:1-11 -- and affirmations of spiritual reality (4:12-19). This alternating pattern, however, has been typical of the entirety of the letter body.

**Literary Structure.**

The block diagram below highlights the arrangement of ideas in the text, based on the original Greek text of the passage:

4.7           And  
                  of all things  
53   **the end is near.**

                  Therefore  
54   **be serious**  
                  and  
55   **be sober**  
          for prayers,  
4.8           most importantly  
          having fervent love for one another  
          because love covers a multitude of sins;  
4.9   being hospitable  
          to one another  
          without complaining;  
4.10   each one  
          just as he has received a gift,  
          to one another  
          serving it  
          as good stewards  
                                  of the many faceted grace of God;  
4.11           if one speaks,  
56   **(let him speak)**  
          as the oracles of God;  
          if one serves  
57   **(let him serve)**  
          as from the strength  
                                  which God supplies;  
                                  in everything  
          so that...God may be praised  
                                  through Jesus Christ,  
          to whom is glory and power  
          forever and ever;  
          amen.

The structure of the ideas revolves around two core ideas: **1)** the declaration of the nearness of the end (# 53), and **2)** the implications of that for Christian living (#s 54-57). Statements 54 and 55 are a tandem unit of one idea expressed two ways. The serious posture for praying is further qualified by a series of secondary

qualifiers reflected in the three participles, “having fervent love,” “being hospitable,” and “serving.” The last one becomes the point of a twofold designation of serving in statements 56 and 57.

## II. Message

The above twofold layout of the passage thus serves as the organizing structure for the exegesis.

### a. The end is near, v. 7a

7a The end of all things is near;

7a Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν.

#### Notes:

This very brief declaration opens up a Pandora’s box of confusion and conflicting views. To get at Peter’s idea clearly, we need to take a look at the similar statements found in the New Testament as a backdrop to Peter’s word here. This way we can tell whether Peter was simply echoing what others had said, or whether he had a distinct perspective on the topic.<sup>3</sup>

#### Similar statements from Jesus:

**Matthew 10:22.** (NRSV), 22 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures **to the end** will be saved

22 καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου· ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας **εἰς τέλος** οὗτος σωθήσεται.

**Mark 13:13.** (NRSV), 3 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures **to the end** will be saved.

13 καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου· ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας **εἰς τέλος** οὗτος σωθήσεται.

**Matthew 24:13-14.** (NRSV), 13 But the one who endures **to the end** will be saved. 14 And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then **the end** will come.

13 ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας **εἰς τέλος** οὗτος σωθήσεται. 14 καὶ κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τότε ἔξει **τὸ τέλος**.

#### Similar statements from Paul:

**1 Cor. 10:11.** (NRSV), 11 These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom **the ends of the ages** have come.

11 ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς **τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων** κατήντηκεν.

**1 Cor. 15:24.** (NRSV), 24 Then comes **the end**, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

24 εἶτα **τὸ τέλος**, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν.

#### Similar statements from John:

**Rev. 2:26-28.** (NRSV), 26 To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works **to the end**, I will give authority over the nations; 27 to rule them with an iron rod, as when clay pots are shattered — 28 even as I also received authority from my Father.

26 Καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν **ἄχρι τέλους** τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν 27 καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ ὡς τὰ σκεύη τὰ κεραμικὰ συντριβεται, 28 ὡς κάγω εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρῶτον.

Peter clearly implies by ‘the end’ what he alluded to in 4:5, οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμῳ ἔχοντι κρίναι

<sup>3</sup>“Talking about the final judgment and their vindication at it is far from wishful thinking for Peter, for ‘the end of all things is near.’ The phrase itself is unique, but its sense is clear. Jesus in the Gospels says that ‘the one enduring to the end will be saved’ (Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13) and that before this end certain events must happen (Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9). Similar terminology for the close of the age is echoed by Paul (1 Cor. 10:11; 15:24) and John (Rev. 2:26). The phrase used here points to this linear concept of history in the NT and therefore the end of this historical age with all that is associated with it (therefore, ‘the end of all things’).<sup>23</sup> This end is ‘near,’ that is, about to happen (cf. Matt. 26:45–46; Mark 14:42, where the term is used for an event that happened within a few minutes or hours). This sense of the impending eschaton (with all the suffering and deliverance associated with it) is well known in the NT, whether the end is expressed in terms of the kingdom (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:45; Luke 10:9, 11) or in other terms (Luke 21:28; Rom. 13:12; Phil. 4:5; Heb. 10:25; Jas. 5:8; Rev. 1:3; 22:10). This expectation of the imminent inbreaking of God’s full and final rule conditions all NT teaching, and without grasping it one can hardly understand the radical ethical stance taken within any of the NT literature.<sup>24</sup>” [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), 155-56.]



ζώντας και νεκρούς, “they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.” Also, this phrase implies the conclusion to “the rest of your earthly life” (τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον) in 4:2. In First Peter, the eschatological references about ‘the end’ center on two themes: the completion of salvation for believers, and divine judgment of everyone including both believers and non-believers.<sup>4</sup> Peter describes this in terms of a last time (1:5, 5:6), the last of the ages (1:20), a day of visitation (2:12), divine judgment (2:12, 23; 4:5), the appearance of Christ (5:4), the disclosure of the divine presence (4:13, 5:1), salvation (1:5, 4:18, 5:4), and the end (4:7, 5:6).<sup>5</sup>

Peter’s use of the term ‘the end’ seems to be consistent with the rest of the New Testament.<sup>6</sup> Peter does

#### <sup>4</sup>Other eschatological references in First Peter:

**1 Peter 1:5**, a salvation ready to be revealed *in the last time*, εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ.

**1 Peter 1:20**, He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed *at the end of the ages* for your sake, προεγνωσμένον μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, φανερωθέντος δὲ ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων δι’ ὑμᾶς.

**1 Peter 2:12**, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God *when he comes to judge*, ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσι τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς.

**1 Peter 2:23**, but he entrusted himself *to the one who judges justly*, παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως·

**1 Peter 4:13b**, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy *when his glory is revealed*, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι.

**1 Peter 4:17-19**, 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*?” 19 Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God’s will *entrust themselves to a faithful Creator*, while continuing to do good.

17 ὅτι ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ δὲ πρῶτον ἀφ’ ἡμῶν, τί τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀπειθούντων τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ; 18 καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβὴς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται; 19 ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ.

**1 Peter 5:1**, one who shares in *the glory to be revealed*, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός.

**1 Peter 5:4**, And *when the chief shepherd appears, you will win* the crown of glory that never fades away, καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιερέως κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.

**1 Peter 5:6**, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you *in due time*, Ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ.

#### <sup>5</sup>The eschatological terminology of Second Peter includes:

**2 Peter 2:11**, *entry into the eternal kingdom* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

**2 Peter 2:4**, For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness *to be kept until the judgment*; Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ σειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένους,

**2 Peter 2:9**, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous *under punishment until the day of judgment*, οἷδεν κύριος εὐσεβεῖς ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι, ἀδίκους δὲ εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους τηρεῖν,

**2 Peter 3:7**, But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept *until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless*, οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπολείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων.

**2 Peter 3:10**, But *the day of the Lord* will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

ἦξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς, ἐν ἣ ὁ οὐρανοὶ ροιζήδον παρελεύσονται, στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται, καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται.

**2 Peter 3:12**, waiting for and hastening *the coming of the day of God*, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire?

προσδοκῶντας καὶ σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας, δι’ ἣν οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται καὶ στοιχεῖα καυσούμενα τήκεται·

Second Peter stresses also the two central themes of salvation and judgment connected to the end-time, while using some of the same terminology as First Peter and also expanding the vocabulary to include more traditional terms such as the Day of the Lord and the Day of God, among others. Much more descriptive detail is given in Second Peter than in First Peter.

“In the NT, *to telos*, meaning ‘the end,’ can have various senses depending on the context: ‘termination’ or ‘cessation’; ‘consummation’ or ‘fulfillment’; ‘close’ or ‘conclusion’; ‘maturity,’ ‘goal,’ or ‘intended outcome’ (BAGD 811). The semantic range in other Greek literature includes such meanings as ‘achievement,’ ‘power,’ ‘perfection,’ ‘obligation,’ ‘offering’ (for the gods), ‘tax,’ ‘tribute,’ ‘toll,’ and ‘detachment’ or ‘group’ (Delling 1972b). Elsewhere in 1 Peter, *telos* denotes ‘goal’ (of faith, 1:9) or ‘end result’ of disobedience (4:17) or ‘finally,’ in an adverbial sense (3:8). Here, however, in conjunction with the verb *eggizō*, it is used in an eschatological sense and refers to the end of the ages that is now viewed as being at hand.

“In Israel’s history, anticipation of an eventual moment in time when justice and God’s rule would once again be established accompanied the gradual corruption and decay of the monarchy. Following the collapses of both the Northern and Southern

not go into much detail about the nature and actions associated with this event, since that would have taken him beyond his intent in referencing it. But the rich expressions that are present in his letter provide considerable insight into his understanding of the end of human history.<sup>7</sup> For Peter, when the end comes two things will be critical. All humanity will face divine judgment. Non-believers will then face eternal separation from God and punishment for their sinful lives. Believers will experience the climax of the divine deliverance from sin begun in their conversion. But their faithfulness to live by God's principles as believers will also be scrutinized thoroughly in divine judgment with punishment of an unspecified nature being imposed for lack of faithfulness. At the center of this experience of end time will be the disclosing of the Divine Presence of God that will be overpowering to all creation. Absolutely no one will be able to resist this overwhelming presence of God that will subject all creation to the complete authority of God.

Peter's term here Πάντων τὸ τέλος, 'the end of all things,' stresses the termination of human history. Life, as it has existed since creation on earth, will come to an end and exist no longer. Peter's term here is backward looking. No where in First Peter does he indicate what will happen after that, apart from divine judgment and the completion of salvation for believers. To be sure, Second Peter does engage in some broad declarations of what will happen after the end comes.<sup>8</sup> But this is not found in First Peter.

monarchies in 722 and 587 BCE, respectively, attention began to focus increasingly on a future, final epoch of history as the time of the divine punishment of evil, reestablishment of justice, and the salvation of the just.<sup>495</sup> This expectation was nurtured defiantly in the face of Judah's ongoing control by foreign powers and comprised a cluster of events associated with this final age referred to variously as the 'latter days,'<sup>496</sup> or the 'day' of the Lord,<sup>497</sup> or the 'end' (*synteleia*).<sup>498</sup>

"Early Christianity, in its perception of God, of time, of Jesus as the messianic agent of the end time, and of its own role in history's final phase, was fundamentally inspired and shaped by this eschatological perspective (Bowman 1962; Schüssler Fiorenza 1976b; Nickelsburg 1992). And as the content of 1 Peter illustrates, this is true of our author as well. Thus *to telos* has the same eschatological sense that it bears elsewhere in the early Church.<sup>499</sup> The verb accompanying *to telos*, namely *eggiken*, is likewise a stock term in early Christian eschatological thought,<sup>500</sup> expressing the imminence or nearness of the end."

[John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 744-45.]

"On the whole, however, our author refers to no portents or cosmic signals of the end time and indulges in no apocalyptic calculation concerning its occurrence.<sup>506</sup> His sense of the imminence of the end of the ages is rooted Christologically in the conviction of the Messiah's first appearance (1:12, 20), inaugurating the end time, and of the imminence of his final manifestation (5:4; cf. also 1:7, 13; 4:13; 5:1), bringing this age to a close. The interval between these first and final appearances is accompanied by the tribulations and sufferings of the just (1:6; 2:19-20; 3:14, 17; 4:1, 6, 12-19; 5:10), otherwise known as the "messianic woes," and the divine judgment of humankind now in process (4:17-18, cf. 1:17; 4:5) as a prelude to the final manifestation of Christ (1:7; 5:1), salvation (1:5b, 9; cf. 2:2), and the glorious vindication of the faithful (1:8; 5:1, 4, 10). His view of the end appears to involve not an eradication of the world but a termination of the current order of life and a transition to a new and glorious future. This intense eschatological consciousness, which our author shares with primitive Christianity in general,<sup>507</sup> serves here as elsewhere as a compelling motivation for behavior that is consonant with the conduct of Christ, the inaugurator of salvation, and the will of God, the judge." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 746-47.]

<sup>8</sup>The eschatological terminology of Second Peter stresses divine judgment and the destruction of the existing heavens and earth:

**2 Peter 2:11**, *entry into the eternal kingdom* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,  
*ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν* τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

**2 Peter 2:4**, For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness *to be kept until the judgment*;

Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἀμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ σειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν *εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένους*,

**2 Peter 2: 9**, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous *under punishment until the day of judgment*,

οἶδεν κύριος εὐσεβεῖς ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι, ἀδίκους δὲ *εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους τηρεῖν*,

**2 Peter 3:7**, But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept *until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless*,

οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ τηρούμενοι *εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπολείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων*.

**2 Peter 3:10**, But *the day of the Lord* will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

ἦξει δὲ *ἡμέρα κυρίου* ὡς κλέπτης, ἐν ἣ ὁ οὐρανὸς ροιζήδον παρελεύσεται, στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται, καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται.

**2 Peter 3:12**, waiting for and hastening *the coming of the day of God*, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire?

One of the seemingly problematic aspects of Peter's declaration in 4:7 centers in the verb ἤγγικεν, "is near." The most natural reading of it suggests that in Peter's mind the end of all things was very close by when this letter was penned.<sup>9</sup> The verb ἐγγίζω defines something being either close by spatially or temporally; that is, a person is close to something or someone, or an event is just about to happen.<sup>10</sup> With Πάντων τὸ τέλος as the subject of the verb, clearly Peter has the end of human history in mind. Without serious debate, Peter reflects here a common expectation in apostolic Christianity that the return of Christ to this world was going to happen in their life time, as is also reflected in James 5:8, μακροθυμήσατε καὶ ὑμεῖς, στηρίξατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν ("You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for *the coming of the Lord is near*"). It is this return of Christ that will bring human history to a close.

Was Peter wrong? Actually, yes, he was. Christ did not return to the earth before the end of the first Chris-

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προσδοκῶντας καὶ σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας, δι' ἣν οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται καὶ στοιχεῖα καυσούμενα τήκεται·

<sup>9</sup>"Peter's immediate intent is neither to console nor to threaten his readers but simply to state a reality. The present order of things will soon come to an end, and they must be ready for whatever comes. Whether the end is viewed as salvation or as retributive judgment it is always the same event, the object of both hope and warning. The announcement, or rather the reminder, that this event is 'near' (ἤγγικεν, lit., 'has come near') echoes the proclamation of John the Baptist (Matt 3:2) and Jesus (Mark 1:15; Matt 4:17; Luke 10:9, 11) that 'the Kingdom of God is near' (also consistently ἤγγικεν). Peter's adoption of this terminology from the Gospel tradition corresponds to that of James, except that James's reminder that 'the coming of the Lord is near' (James 5:8) is more a word of comfort to the oppressed than a call to alertness or action. Although some have urged that Jesus' proclamation be understood to mean 'the Kingdom of God has come' (see, e.g., C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* [1961] 29–30), this is hardly an option either in James or 1 Peter (for other NT examples of 'nearness' terminology in relation to the coming of Christ or the end of the age, cf. Rom 13:11–12; Phil 4:5; Rev 1:3; 22:10). Peter's meaning is neither that the present age has reached its end nor that the end lies somewhere in the indefinite future. His meaning is that the end will be very soon, although he has no interest in setting dates. There is time for action, but no time to waste. Peter sees a continuity between the present situation and the last decisive intervention of God through Jesus Christ (cf. vv 12, 17). In a sense the end-time events are under way; the 'end of all things,' although still in the future, is very close at hand." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 245.]

<sup>10</sup>ἐγγίζω (fr. ἐγγύς) Att. fut. ἐγγιῶ; 1 aor. ἤγγισα; Att. reduplication ἐνήγγισα and ἠνήγγισα GJs (deStrycker 242 and 299f); pf. 3 pl. ἤγγικασιν Dt 31:14. In our lit. only intr. *approach, come near* (so in Aristot., Polyb., Diod S, Epict. et al., pap, LXX, En; OdeSol 11:6; TestSol, TestAbr B, TestJob, Test12Patr, JosAs 3:2; GrBar 12:6; MartIs, ApcMos, Philo, Joseph.; Tat. 37, 1; s. Nägeli 36; Anz 344f; KClark, JBL 59, '40, 367–74)

**1. to move in space and so draw closer to a reference point, draw near, come near, approach** of humans and transcendent beings.

a) abs. of someone approaching (Gen 18:23; 27:27) **Ac 23:15**; ἤγγικεν ὁ παραδιδούς με *my betrayer is near* **Mt 26:46**; **Mk 14:42**; thief **Lk 12:33**; the tribune **Ac 21:33**; blind man **Lk 18:40**; Jesus **19:41**; **24:15**.

b) modified

α. without prep.: W. gen. of thing (Gen. 33:3; Jdth 13:7; En 14:9) ἐγγίσαντες αὐτοῦ *when they came near it* (the grave) **AcPl Ha 11, 19**. W. dat. of pers. (Gen 27:21; TestAbr B 2, p. 106, 4 [Stone p. 60]) or thing (Polyb. 18, 4, 1; Ex 32:19; Jos., Bell. 5, 408 τ. πόλει) τῷ παιδί B 6:1 (Is 50:8); τῆ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως the city gate **Lk 7:12**; the house **15:25**; Damascus **Ac 9:3**; **22:6**; cp. **10:9**; the grave **GpT 9:36**.—Jesus **Lk 15:1**; **22:47**. τῷ θεῷ *draw near to God* (Philo, Leg. All. 2, 57, Deus Imm. 161; Theodor. Prodr. 7, 475 H. θεοῖς ἐγγ.) of priestly service (Ex 19:22; 34:30; Lev 10:3 al.), fig. of the spiritual service of Christians **Hb 7:19**; **Js 4:8**; **Mt 15:8** v.l. (cp. Jdth 8:27; Ps 148:14; Is 29:13 al.).

β. w. prep.: W. εἰς, only with indications of place (Tob 11:1; En 14:10): Jerusalem **Mt 21:1**; **Mk 11:1**.—**Lk 18:35**; **19:29**. εἰς τὴν κώμην to the village **24:28**; εἰς συναγωγὴν Hm 11:13.—W. πρὸς and dat. to show place (Pr 5:8; OdeSol 11:6 πρὸς τὰ χεῖλη μου) **Lk 19:37**. W. ἐπί, τινα **Lk 10:9** (cp. Ps 26:2; 68:4 v.l.; ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν **AcPl Ha 3, 30**; ἐπὶ μίλιον τρίτον for three miles GJs 17:2).

**2. to draw near in a temporal sense, draw near, come near, approach** (POxy 1202, 8; w. dat., Epict. 3, 10, 14; Tat. 37:1). W. indications of time (KClark, JBL 59, '40, 367–83) the hour **Mt 26:45**; the day (Ezk 7:4; 12:23) **Ro 13:12**; **Hb 10:25**; the (feast) day GJs 1:2; 2:2; ὁ καιρὸς (La 4:18; 1 Macc 9:10) **Lk 21:8**; cp. **Mt 21:34**; ὁ χρόνος **Ac 7:17**; the Passover **Lk 22:1**; the end **1 Pt 4:7**; the final stumbling-block B 4:3; cp. ending of Mk in the Freer ms. 8; the judgment **GpT 7:25**; destruction of the temple **Lk 21:20**; redemption vs. **28**. μέχρι θανάτου ἔ. come close to dying **Phil 2:30** (cp. Job 33:22; Sir 51:6 ἤγγισεν ἕως θανάτου). PKatz, TZ 5, '49, 7; ADebrunner, Mus. Helv. 11, '54, 58f.—Esp. of the approaching Reign of God: ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (or τοῦ θεοῦ) **Mt 3:2**; **4:17**; **10:7**; **Mk 1:15**; **Lk 10:9, 11** (WHutton, ET 64, '52/53, 89–91: *has come* for the Lk passages); **AcPl Ha 8, 31=BMM verso 2f**. Of the Lord's return **Js 5:8**.—On 'realized eschatology' s. CDodd, Parables of the KgdM.3 '36, 44–51, ET 48, '36/37, 138–42; JCampbell, ET 48, '36/37, 91–94; RFuller, The Mission and Achievement of Jesus '54, 20–25; RBerkey, JBL 82, '63, 177–87; MBlack, An Aramaic Approach3, '67, 208–11.—DELG s.v. ἐγγύς. 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), 270.]

tian century, and in fact, twenty centuries later He still has not returned to the earth. Efforts to explain away this are unconvincing and fly straight in the face of the plain meaning of Peter's words, along with several other similar statements elsewhere in the New Testament. Does this then mean that Peter didn't know what he was talking about? Hardly.

The expectancy of the immanent return of Christ was a powerfully motivating factor for early Christians. They lived in the belief that Christ could return at any moment. Thus, believers should always live prepared for that moment. Jesus Himself had urged such a stance, as is reflected in Matthew 24:1 - 25:46. The key concept in Jesus' teaching is ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι, "you must be ready" (24:44), because the suddenness of this event will not allow anyone to get ready when Jesus makes His appearance. Only those who live in continual preparedness will be ready for that moment. The early church understood this and thus sought to live in such readiness. This is the background for declarations such as Peter's in 4:7.

This is how Peter uses the expectation of an immanent return of Christ. This theological declaration in 4:7a will become a call to action to live fully prepared. That preparation will include what he stresses in 4:7b-11.

Here is where Peter's word becomes vitally relevant to believers in the modern world. The delay of Christ's second coming leads some to put the idea on a 'back burner' and not seriously consider it, just as some evidently did in the first century, as 2 Peter 3:1-13 reflects. The essence of preparedness for the return of Christ has absolutely nothing to do with speculative setting of dates, nor a correct reading of 'the signs of the times.' Rather, as in the teaching of Jesus as well as the apostles, readiness for the coming of Christ centers in obedient living moment by moment to the will of God. This also will avoid being duped by scoffers (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3-4) and false prophets predicting the time of His coming (cf. Mt. 24:4-5, 23-26).

#### **b. What that implies, vv. 7b-11**

7b therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. 8 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 11 Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

7b σωφρονήσατε οὖν καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς· 8 πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν· 9 φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ· 10 ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα, εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ· 11 εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ· εἴ τις διακονεῖ, ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός· ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζηται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

#### **Notes:**

As is reflected in the Block Diagram above, the arrangement of this series of admonitions is unique and distinct to First Peter. First, these exhortations are linked to the theological affirmation in verse 7a by οὖν, an inferential coordinate conjunction making explicit something understood as implicit in a previous statement. The responsibilities put on the table in verses 7b-11 are understood as inherent to the spiritual reality of the approaching end of all things.

The linking of moral behavior to the expected return of Christ is rather common in the New Testament.<sup>11</sup> Jesus' emphasis on 'watchfulness' in Matthew 24-25 as preparation for the coming of the Son of Man set the standard. Most of the apostolic writers of the New Testament develop this link of eschatology and morality as a motivation for believers to live in obedience as they anticipate the return of Christ and the ensuing judgment of believers connected to it.

While the paraenetical emphasis typically may often be general in nature by defining obedience to Christ

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<sup>11</sup>"Reference to the impending end is often used, as it is here, as the basis for paranesis,<sup>24</sup> since knowledge that there is an end of time and a judgment gives to the present its seriousness and its meaning.<sup>25</sup> Although the phrase πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν is unique to 1 Peter, therefore, the point belongs to common Christian tradition." [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), 294.]

*Footnote 24 above:* "Closest is Mark 1:15, where the perfect ἤγγικεν is used with a double imperative; see also Rom 13:11-14; Phil 4:4-6; Heb 10:23-25; Jas 5:7-11; for such paraenetic use but without the stem ἐγγ-, see Matt 24:45-25:13; Mark 13:33-37; 1 Thess 5:1-5; 1 John 2:18-19; Rev 22:12; Barn. 4.9; 21.3; 2 Clem. 12.1; 16.3; Ignatius Eph. 11.1. On this point cf., e.g., Goppelt, 281; Kelly, 177."

inclusively,<sup>12</sup> Peter's emphasis here is more specific and centers on internal relationships inside the community of believers.<sup>13</sup> For his readers that were suffering unjustly simply because of their faith the pressures to compromise loomed rather large. Tension always accompanies persecution, and that tension can turn outward into retribution, which Peter ruled out in the previous section of 3:13-4:6. And / or, it can turn inward with unloading on fellow church members, especially when they are perceived to not be as faithful as you consider yourself to be. Now Peter addresses this temptation with a series of demands for healthy relationships with fellow believers.

He begins with the vertical emphasis σωφρονήσατε καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς, “**be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers.**” Two Aorist imperative verbs issue the admonition, and both verbs are linked to prayer. The use of the Aorist tense for commands intensifies the urgency of the admonitions. The verb σωφρονέω stresses self control and sound thinking.<sup>14</sup> This verb is a part of a set of related words<sup>15</sup> used in the New Testament to emphasize that believers are to be people ‘who use their minds well with rigid self-disciplined behavior.’ The second verb νήφω is very close in meaning with emphasis upon self-control through being clear headed;<sup>16</sup> see 1:13<sup>17</sup> and 5:8<sup>18</sup> for the two other uses of this verb in First Peter.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup>“This sense of the impending eschaton (with all the suffering and deliverance associated with it) is well known in the NT, whether the end is expressed in terms of the kingdom (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:45; Luke 10:9, 11) or in other terms (Luke 21:28; Rom. 13:12; Phil. 4:5; Heb. 10:25; Jas. 5:8; Rev. 1:3; 22:10). This expectation of the imminent inbreaking of God's full and final rule conditions all NT teaching, and without grasping it one can hardly understand the radical ethical stance taken within any of the NT literature. <sup>24</sup>” [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), 156.]

<sup>13</sup>“The Christian traditions reflected in these verses also point to their emphasis on the inner life of the community. The reference to mutual hospitality (φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους) is echoed in the NT, both in relation to the community itself (Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2) and to its leaders (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7), as is the centrality of love and the call to love one another (ἀγαπ-, 4:8; see John 13:34; 15:12; Rom 12:9; 13:8; 1 Cor 13:13; 1 John 2:10; 2 John 5), and the reference to various spiritual gifts (χαρισμ-, 4:10; see 1 Cor 12:4–6, 11) to be used for the common good (4:10; see 1 Cor 12:7).<sup>14</sup> Other common themes include the call to be of sound thought (σωφρον-, 4:7; see Rom 12:3; 1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 1:7, 8; Titus 2:2, 5, 6, 12), to be sober (νήφ-, 4:7; see 1 Thess 5:6, 8, mentioned in the context of 5:1–3 and the impending end; 1 Tim 3:2, 11; 2 Tim 4:5; Titus 2:2), and the importance of ministering (or serving: διακον-, 4:11; see Mark 10:45; Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:5; cf. 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1). There are also some linguistic parallels with James (the use of ἡγγικεν in eschatological context, 1 Pet 4:7a; Jas 5:8b; the phrase καλύπτει/καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν; 1 Pet 4:8b; Jas 5:20b) that probably also reflect common dependence on earlier Christian tradition.<sup>15</sup> On the whole, while common Christian traditions are in evidence, it is all but impossible to locate direct literary, or even traditional, dependence.<sup>16</sup> Our author swims in the mainstream of Christian tradition, a situation that he shares with the other, especially the later, authors of NT letters.” [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), 293.]

<sup>14</sup>σωφρονέω (σώφρων, via σῶς + φρήν) 1 aor. ἐσωφρόνησα (Trag., X., Pla. et al.; pap) the thematic semantic note in this and cognate terms is the Hellenic ideal of μηδὲν ἄγαν (‘nothing to excess’).

“**1. to be able to think in a sound or sane manner, be of sound mind. of mental health** (in contrast to μαίνεσθαι; Pla., Phdr. 22, 244a, Rep. 331c; Ps.-Apollod. 3, 5, 1; 6; Philo, Cher. 69) to be in one's right mind, of a demoniac who was healed **Mk 5:15; Lk 8:35**. Sim., 2 Cor 5:13 (opp. ἐκστηναι; s. ἐξίστημι 2a).

“**2. to be prudent, with focus on self-control, be reasonable, sensible, serious, keep one's head** (X., Cyr. 3, 2, 4; TestSol 8:8; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 114; Jos., Ant. 2, 296; Just., Tat.; Ath. 32, 2; Orig., C. Cels. 2, 8, 16) **Tit 2:6**. W. νήφειν **1 Pt 4:7**. Esp. of women *be chaste, virtuous* (Musionius p. 14, 12ff H.; Arrian, Anab. 4, 20, 2; Alciphron, 4, 17, 3; Jos., Ant. 18, 66.—σωφοροσύνη 2) 1 Cl 1:3; Pol 4:3.—In contrast to ὑπερφορονεῖν and in a play on words w. it and w. φρονεῖν twice **Ro 12:3** (cp. Plut., Mor. 776d φρονεῖν κ. σωφ.; Socrat., Ep. 36 σωφρονέω ... συσσωφρονέω; Iren. 1, 16, 3 [Harv. I, 164, 3])—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), 986.]

<sup>15</sup>σωφρονέω (to be prudent), σωφρονίζω (to instruct in prudence), σωφρονισμός (the teaching of prudence), σωφρόνως (prudently), σωφοροσύνη (prudence), σώφρων, ον (prudent).

<sup>16</sup>“The verb from which the second imperative is formed (νήφω) means literally the opposite of drunkenness, but is probably used here, as elsewhere in the NT, in the metaphorical sense of remaining alert and in full possession of one's ‘sound mind,’ particularly in light of the imminent eschatological events.” [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), 294.]

<sup>17</sup>NRSV: “13 Therefore prepare your minds for action; **discipline yourselves** [νήφοντες τελείως]; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.”

<sup>18</sup>NRSV: “8 **Discipline yourselves** [νήψατε], keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.”

<sup>19</sup>νήφω 1 aor. ἐνήψα (Soph., Pla., X. et al.; ins, pap) prim. ‘be sober’; in the NT only fig. = be free fr. every form of mental and spiritual ‘drunkenness’, fr. excess, passion, rashness, confusion, etc. *be well-balanced, self-controlled* (Aristot. et al.; Epicurus

The primary implication (οὖν) of eschatological expectation of the second coming of Christ is clear headedness!<sup>20</sup> This runs counter to the wild speculative thinking that often surrounds the doctrine of the coming of Christ in today's world. Such ideas represent the very opposite of what Peter demanded of his readers. Predictions of the end of all things in the modern world usually prompt individuals to do absolutely dumb things and to engage in some of the weirdest thinking imaginable. But Peter demands just the opposite response. Believers must clear their heads of dumb, fuzzy thinking. Through clear, sound thinking they are then to exercise self-control and restraint over their behavior.<sup>21</sup> The community emphasis in this passage impacts the meaning in the direction of thinking and behavior by individual. This leads to a stable well functioning community of believers.

The purpose for this sound reasoning? εἰς προσευχάς, “for prayers.” Clear headedness with disciplined behavior in the community of faith is closely related to how believers are to pray.<sup>22</sup> Already in 3:7 we have seen how interaction with one's wife can impact prayer. Now in the community of faith, clear headedness is critically important for effective praying. As Michaels notes,

Alertness or wakefulness in prayer is a common NT theme, above all in the accounts of Jesus and his disciples in Gethsemane (cf. Mark 14:38//Matt 26:41). Although Polycarp in the early second century integrates a command similar to Peter's and possibly derived from it (νήφοντες πρὸς τὰς εὐχάς, “giving attention to the prayers”) with the terminology of traditions about Jesus in Gethsemane (Pol. Phil. 7.2b), there is no evidence that Peter himself is directly influenced by such traditions. Such passages as Luke 21:36; Col 4:2; and Eph 6:18, however, do suggest a rather broadly based NT interest in prayer (especially alert, clear-headed prayer) as an essential ingredient in spiritual warfare and in meeting the things associated with the end of the age (cf. νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε, “Pay at-

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in Diog. L. 10, 132 νήφων λογισμός=sober reasonableness; Περὶ ὕπνου 16, 4; Lucian, Hermot. 47 νήφε; Herodian 2, 15, 1; Achilles Tat. 1, 13 v. ἐκ τοῦ κακοῦ; Herm. Wr. 7, 1; BGU 1011 III, 9 [II B.C.]; POxy 1062, 13 ἵνα αὐτὴν [sc. τ. ἐπιστολὴν] ἀναγνοῖς νήφων κ. σαυτοῦ καταγνοῖς; EpArist 209; Philo; Jos., Bell. 2, 225; 4, 42; SibOr 1, 154) **1 Th 5:8; 1 Pt 1:13.** [Ἰερώνυμος ἡδ]η νήψας νυκτὸς | ἐν ὁδῷ[ις] *Hieronymus, in pain* (because of an injury to his ear during a violent storm) *now came to his senses* (concerning his animosity toward Paul) during the night AcPl Ha 5, 29f. v. ἐν πᾶσιν *be self-possessed under all circumstances* (M. Ant. 1, 16, 15) **Ti 4:5.** W. γρηγορεῖν (cp. Plut., Mor. 800b ἀγρυπνῶν κ. νήφων κ. πεφροντικῶς) **1 Th 5:6; 1 Pt 5:8.** W. σωφρονεῖν (Lucian, Nigrin. 5f): v. εἰς προσευχάς *exercise self-restraint, to help you pray* **1 Pt 4:7;** Pol 7:2 has v. πρὸς τὰς εὐχάς. v. ἐπὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν *exercise self-control for* (your own) *good* 2 Cl 13:1. W. allusion to the self-control practiced by athletes: νήφε ὡς θεοῦ ἀθλητῆς IPol 2:3.—HLevy, *Sobria ebrietas* 1929.—DELG. 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), 672.]

<sup>20</sup>“*exercise sound judgment (sōphronēsate).* The imminence of the end is no cause for eschatological fever but requires clear-mindedness, sound judgment, and vigilance. Here the verb *sōphroneō* means not so much ‘keep sane’ (as an alternative to being deranged [Mark 5:15/Luke 8:35; 2 Cor 5:13]) as ‘exercise sound, balanced judgment and self-discipline’ (see Plato, Gorg. 491d). The related noun *sōphrosynē* likewise denoted self-control governed by moderation and a sense of balance and proportion. This self-control was made possible by self-knowledge and was reckoned by the Greeks as one of the four cardinal virtues (along with prudence, justice, and courage) characterizing the honorable person (cf. Danker 1982, 361–62). Self-control and avoidance of excess were regarded as essential for social harmony and group concord (Dio Chrys., Orat. 77–78; Thraede 1994). While in the Classical period *sōphrosynē* denoted the middle way in politics as a means for balancing conflicts, especially between commoners and elites, in the Hellenistic period it came to mean an individual's self-mastery, especially in regard to desire (for food, drink, sex), and was stressed by moralists as the antithesis to love of luxury, greed, and sexual immorality. In Israelite literature, the *Testament of Joseph*, as its assigned title (*peri sōphrosynēs*) indicates, was considered a treatment of this theme and Joseph its exemplar (*sōphrosynēs*, T. Jos. 4:1, 2; 6:7 9:2, 3; 10:2, 3; sōphrōn, T. Jos. 4:2; cf. also T. Benj. 4:4; and for *sōphronōs*, T. Jud. 16:3).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 748.]

<sup>21</sup>“Early Christianity likewise stressed the necessity of sound judgment and mastery of appetites and desires (1 Tim 2:9; 3:2; 2 Tim 1:7, 15; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 5, 6) as an expression of personal holiness. But *sōphrosynē* was also used in the older Classical sense as an antithesis to *hybris*, the breach of social limits and of one's assigned status that was so detrimental to the unity of the community (Rom 12:3; cf. Dio Chrys., Orat. 3.80). Since the addressees have already abandoned the excesses of the Gentiles (4:3–4), it is more likely that here the author is urging sound judgment rather than moderation. As in the occurrence of the verb in Rom 12:3, the focus is on the Christian community rather than the individual, its harmony and well-being, and *sōphronein* in both instances involves a behavior contributing to communal solidarity.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 748.]

<sup>22</sup>“The word for ‘prayer’ (προσευχή) is, along with its verbal form (προσεύχομαι), common in the NT, and is here used in its basic meaning of calling upon God.<sup>32</sup> The same concern for mutuality as a condition for effective prayer, described in relation to husband and wife in 3:7, is reflected here in the emphasis on mutuality found in the succeeding verses.” [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), 294.]

tention! Wake up!" in 5:8).<sup>23</sup>

Biblical based praying is not connected to non-thinking, nonsensical thought! Just the opposite is true.<sup>24</sup> When we pray to God, we are to engage our minds in clear thinking. And the motivation of the nearness of the return of Christ should prompt such clear headed praying! We can learn much from Peter.

The next several aspects enlarge and expand this twin admonition, as the block diagram illustrates:<sup>25</sup>

54 **be serious**

and

55 **be sober**

for prayers,

4.8 most importantly

having fervent love for one another

because love covers a multitude of sins;

4.9 being hospitable

to one another

without complaining;

4.10 each one

just as he has received a gift,

to one another

serving it

as good stewards

of the many faceted grace of God

Coming out of clear headedness are some obligations to the community of believers that are touched upon in verses 8-11: brotherly love, hospitality, and gifted service. The list of duties is not long, and is representative rather than exhaustive.

Peter begins with *πρὸ πάντων* which lays particular importance on brotherly love in the community of believers.<sup>26</sup> Although *πρὸ πάντων* is capable of several nuances of meaning,<sup>27</sup> the sense of the prepositional

<sup>23</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 246.

<sup>24</sup>"This will lead to prayer<sup>27</sup>—not the prayer based on daydreams and unreality, nor the prayer based on surprised desperation, but the prayer that calls upon and submits to God in the light of reality seen from God's perspective and thus obtains power and guidance in the situation, however evil the time may be. This is what Jesus meant when he said, 'Watch and pray' (Matt. 24:41–42; Mark 13:35, 38; cf. Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2), for proper prayer is not an 'opiate' or escape, but rather a function of clear vision and a seeking of even clearer vision from God. It is only through clear communication with headquarters that a soldier can effectively stand guard." [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), 156-57.]

<sup>25</sup>The lack of a finite verb in verses 8 through 10 in a core clause leads to much confusion in most commentaries about the syntax of the Greek. Amazingly, commentators without knowing what to make of the syntax create 'phantasy' grammar terms in order to give credibility to their interpretive conclusions. A similar tendency was earlier observed in 2:13-3:7 where Peter used a standard pattern in ancient Greek with a core verb (2:13) and participles subsequently (2:18, 3:1, 7) to signal structural connection. On a smaller scale Peter does a similar thing in vv. 7-11 with the core verbs *σωφρονήσατε* and *νήψατε* in verse 7, followed by a series of participles etc., *ἔχοντες* (v. 8), *φιλόξενοι* with *ὄντες* implied (v. 9), and *διακονοῦντες* (v. 10). In verse 11, the 1st conditional sentences only contain a verb -- *λαλεῖ* and *διακονεῖ* in the dependent protasis clause. The main clause verbs *λαλεῖτω* and *διακονεῖτω* are implied from these stated verbs. Because modern western languages are not well equipped to do these sorts of things, many commentators stumble over themselves in trying to make sense from the Greek text. But in the original language everything is inner connected to the core admonitions in verse seven.

<sup>26</sup>"The love that is so important is that for fellow-Christians. As in the whole NT (Mark 12:30–33; John 13:34–35; 15:12–17; 1 Cor. 13:1–13; Gal. 5:13–14, 22; Col. 3:14; Jas. 2:8; 1 John), unity with and practical care for other Christians is not seen as an optional extra, but as a central part of the faith. Communal unity (the product of love in the Johannine literature) is the topic of whole epistles (especially Philippians and James). Thus it is no wonder that Peter first underlines this virtue with 'above all' and then adds 'earnestly maintain,' a term he also used to describe love in 1:22. The root idea of this term is to be stretched or in tension. Thus when applied in situations such as this it means not to slack off on love, to keep it going at full force, to be earnest about it. Unlike the Ephesians who did slack off (Rev. 2:4–5), these Christians are to maintain their devotion to one another." [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), 157.]

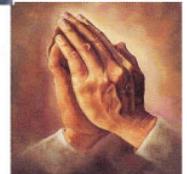
<sup>27</sup>"Above all," NRSV, RSV, HCSB, ESV, LEB, NASB, NIV, TNIV, Wey; "above all things," KJV, ASV, NKJV; "Above everything," TEV; "Most important of all," NLT; "Most importantly," NCV; "most of all," BBE, NIRV, Message; "before all things," D-R; "Sobre todo," BdlA, BR-V; "Vor allem," GNB; "Vor allen Dingen," Luther Bibel 1912, Elberfelder 1905; "Avant tout,"

### 1 Peter 4:7

Important links between three aspects of Christian community



Interaction of  
1. Second Coming  
2. Clear Headedness  
3. Praying



phrase is not to elevate brotherly love to a higher level than the other traits. More likely, the sense here is that brotherly love is foundational to the other traits.<sup>28</sup> Believers should begin with brotherly love since it undergirds and supports the other obligations.

The responsibility of loving fellow believers is expressed in terms of τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, “maintain constant love for one another.” Already Peter has put this topic on the table in 1:22: “Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth **so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.**”<sup>29</sup> Brotherly love is linked closely to obeying the true Gospel; it is to flow out of one’s conversion commitment to Christ. Again in 2:17 the admonition “Love the family of believers” (τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε) is repeated as a part of the responsibilities for presenting a positive witness to the outside world.<sup>30</sup> Peter is very much in the center of early Christian tradition with this emphasis.<sup>31</sup> A distinctive angle here is that believers are to ἔχοντες this love. That is, love for one another is to be ‘possessed’ and integrated into their everyday life experiences. It is not something just to talk about, not something to express on just Sunday, not idealistic theory. Rather, it is to saturate our thinking and living continually. This single usage of the adjective ἐκτενῆς, ἔς stresses constant quality.<sup>32</sup> In the first century world, such an ongoing display of devotion and commitment to the welfare to others inside a community of faith made up of widely diverse ethnic and racial members would have been highly unusual.

A basis for this obligation to brotherly love is provided in a paraphrase of Proverbs 10:12, taken more directly from the Hebrew text than from the Greek LXX, unlike the other OT references in First Peter. Peter says, “for love covers a multitude of sins” (ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν). What is meant here? The Proverbs passage “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses” simply affirms that love will overlook wrongs done against the individual and keep strife from continuing.<sup>33</sup> This is the point of Paul’s use in 1 Cor. 13:7 as well. But the use of Prov. 10:12 in James 5:20 is clearly with a different meaning: “you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner’s soul from death and **will cover a multitude of sins.**”<sup>34</sup> Important to note here is that, while the repentance of the wayward sinner covers his sins in James 5:20,

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Segond 1910; “Surtout ayez,” Ostervald; “ante omnia,” Vlg.

<sup>28</sup>πρὸ πάντων shows up in James 5:12, 1 Peter 4:8; Colossians 1:17. Compare Πρὸ δὲ τούτων πάντων, (‘before all these things’) Luke 21:17. The preposition πρὸ meaning ‘before’ can refer to time, degree, place among other designations. The problem with translation into any of the modern western languages is the mutually exclusive nature of the three categories of time, place, and degree. Most translators opt for ‘degree’ as the category for 4:8, but such may impose unintended limitations on the Greek expression.

<sup>29</sup>GNT: Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον, ἐκ [καθαρᾶς] καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς

<sup>30</sup>“The obligation of mutual love among Christian believers was stated already in 1:22, where the adverb ἐκτενῶς, “unremittingly,” corresponds in meaning to the adjective ἐκτενῆ, ‘constant,’ used here (cf. as well 2:17, ‘love the brotherhood’). The phrase εἰς ἑαυτοὺς, ‘for each other’ (lit., ‘for yourselves’), both here and in v 10, denotes mutuality (cf. BGD, 212.3), no less than the εἰς ἀλλήλους, ‘to one another,’ of v 9, (cf. 1:22; 5:5). Peter’s emphasis on constancy in the fulfillment of this obligation is traceable to his assumption that his readers’ love is being tested by the thais they are facing and will face (1:6; 4:12; cf. the prediction attributed to Jesus in Matt 24:12 in connection with coming trials that ‘the love of many will grow cold’). They must be as constant and enduring in their love as the message they have received, the word of God that lasts forever (cf. 1:23–25).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 246.]

<sup>31</sup>“Love lay at the heart of Jesus’ teaching;<sup>516</sup> Paul reckoned love as “the more excellent way” (1 Cor 12:29; 13:1–13); and its indispensability is stressed continually in the NT.<sup>517</sup>” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 750.]

<sup>32</sup>ἐκτενῆς, ἔς (Aeschyl.; Polyb. 22, 5, 4; ins [s. on ἐκτένεια]; PTebt 24, 45; 3 Macc 3:10; 5:29; Philo; Just., D. 107, 2 ἐκτενοῦς ὀλολογμοῦ) **pert. to being persevering, with implication that one does not waver in one’s display of interest or devotion, eager, earnest**, comp. ἐκτενεστερος (IGR IV, 293 II, 38) **Ac 12:5** v.l. ἐκτενῆ τὴν δέησιν ποιῆσθαι make earnest supplication 1 Cl 59:2 (UPZ 110, 46 [164 B.C.] τὴν ἐκτενεστάτην ποιήσασθαι πρόνοιαν). ἐκτενῆ ὑπὸ πάντων προσευχῆν γενέσθαι AcPl Ha 6, 6f. τὴν ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχειν **keep affection constant 1 Pt 4:8** μετ’ ἐκτενοῦς ἐπιεικείας w. constant gentleness 1 Cl 58:2; 62:2.—DELG s.v. τανυ- etc. E p. 1092. 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), 310.]

<sup>33</sup>“In the OT it means that love will pass over wrongs done to a person rather than continue a dispute: ‘Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.’ Paul teaches similarly in 1 Cor. 13:7 (cf. 1 Cor. 6:7 and the use of Prov. 10:12 in 1 Clem. 49:5).” [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), 158.]

<sup>34</sup>GNT: γινώσκέτω ὅτι ὁ ἐπιστρέψας ἁμαρτωλὸν ἐκ πλάνης ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου καὶ **καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.**

brotherly love is what covers sins in First Peter. Most likely, however, Peter is using the generalized proverb in Prov. 10:12 more in the sense of its OT meaning; brotherly love is the best preventative medicine to keep down strife and discord inside a community of believers. To cover (καλύπτει) is essentially to overlook and not take note of; brotherly love lays a covering blanket over the offenses of fellow believers so that grudges and revenge seeking don't take over.

Out of brotherly love naturally flows hospitality: φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ, “Be hospitable to one another without complaining.”<sup>35</sup> When believers from other congregations came through a city they needed a place to stay, and local inns were usually brothels. Thus, providing a place to lodge along with food became very important in early Christianity. This was particularly true for the traveling missionaries such as Paul and Silas who largely depended in local support for their basics so they could evangelize and minister. Since most believers lived on the lower economic scale, providing food and lodging would mean considerable sacrifice, and could lead to complaining very easily.<sup>36</sup> When brotherly love has taken deep roots in the hearts of believers, such sacrifices will be a source of joy rather than griping. And it represents one aspect of sharing considered by Luke as characteristic of the first community of believers in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 4:32-37).

Additionally, service to others flows out of brotherly love: ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα, εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ, “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” This basic obligation in v. 10 is then amplified in verse 11 with some detail: εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ· εἴ τις διακονεῖ, ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός· ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζηται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, “Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.”

The broad obligation is put forth in verse ten and built around the core idea of ἕκαστος...εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες, “each one...serving it for one another.” Again the doing of ministry is an expression of clear headed thinking, since the participle διακονοῦντες is an expansion element of the two verbs σωφρονήσατε and νήψατε in verse 7b. Additionally it flows out of the emphasis on brotherly love in verse eight.

What is it that believers are to do? The verb διακονέω, with its 37 uses in the New Testament, has a wide

<sup>35</sup>“Another important form of love in the early church was love for traveling Christians, not members of the local body, but part of the wider family of Christ. Thus Peter writes, ‘Offer hospitality to one another ungrudgingly.’ Hospitality is mentioned explicitly five times in the NT (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9) and implied in a number of other passages (e.g., Matt. 10:11–14; 25:35, 38, 43–44; 1 Tim. 5:10; Jas. 2:21, 25; 2 John 10; 3 John 5).<sup>33</sup> One notes that giving hospitality was a qualification for eldership or being enrolled as a widow in the Pastorals. Matthew uses it as a criterion for rejection or acceptance at the final judgment. And it continued important in the postapostolic period (e.g., Did. 11:1–6; 12:1–5). What it consisted of was offering to traveling Christians (including traveling teachers, prophets, and apostles) free room and board while they were legitimately in an area. We learn that by A.D. 100 in Asia the expectation had been codified due to abuses; that is, food and housing would be provided for a maximum of three days (or four if one included the food that was given for the first day’s journey onward), after which the person was expected to move on or to get a job and be self-supporting. The provision of hospitality was important because of both the limited means of many Christians and the questionable character of such public places as there were to stay in; it was valuable in that it tied the churches together through this mutual service and provided a means of communication among them. But even with all its value, the practice was often a costly act of love for Christians who themselves often lived on a hand-to-mouth basis. Thus Peter does not simply call for hospitality (a virtue that they knew about and that would be even more in demand as persecution forced believers to flee their native villages), but for it to be offered ‘ungrudgingly.’ This term, which means ‘grumbling’ or ‘complaining’ (Acts 6:1; Phil. 2:14; cf. Matt. 20:11; John 6:41, 43; 1 Cor. 10:10), aptly captures the quiet ‘I don’t know why we get all the travelers’ or ‘I wish Paul would move on’ whispered in a corner to a spouse when a family was on short rations or its housing was cramped due to a visitor. Peter urges the Christians to a level of love that would transcend such negative attitudes; he knows there will be sacrifice, but wants it made with a willing and cheerful heart (cf. 2 Cor. 8–9).” [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), 158-59.]

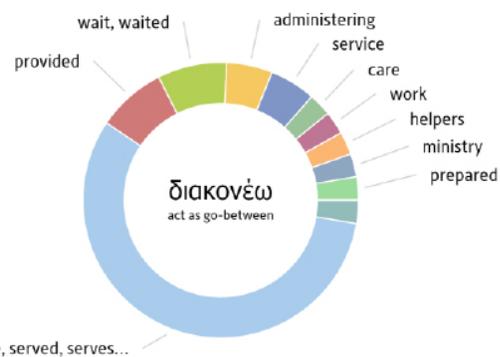
<sup>36</sup>“**γογγυσμός, οὗ, ὅ** (s. γογγύζω; γογγυσμός since Anaxandrides Com. [IV B.C.] Fgm. 31; M. Ant. 9, 37, 1; Cat. Cod. Astr. VII 139, 11; PRossGeorg III, 2, 11 [III A.D.]; PCairMasp 159, 27 [VI A.D.]; LXX; TestJob 14:5; GrBar) **utterance made in a low tone of voice** (the context indicates whether the utterance is one of discontent or satisfaction), **behind-the-scenes talk**.—Negative aspect: *complaint, displeasure*, expressed in murmuring: ἐγένετο γ. τιнос πρὸς τινα complaints arose fr. someone against someone **Ac 6:1** (cp. PRossGeorg above: μή τις γογγυσμός καθ’ ἡμῶν γένηται). χωρὶς γογγυσμῶν (ἄνευ γ. PsSol 5:13) without complaining **Phil 2:14**; cp. **1 Pt 4:9** (on the topic of ungrudging hospitality s. Athen. 8, 364). ῥῆμα γογγυσμοῦ grumbling speech B 3:5 (Is 58:9).—In ref. to both discontent and satisfaction: secret talk, whispering γ. περὶ αὐτοῦ ἦν πολὺς there was much secret discussion about him **J 7:12** (some say Jesus is ἀγαθός; others, πλανᾷ τὸν ὄχλον).—Field, Notes 92. M-M. New Docs 4, 143f. 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), 204.]

range of meanings essentially built off the core idea of serving or helping someone.<sup>37</sup> A common secular meaning of the term was to designate a household slave who had the responsibility of preparing and serving food to the family. The sense here is that of delivering up something that has been received from God, the αὐτὸ, “it.” This personal pronoun refers back to χάρισμα, “gift,” which each member has received from God, ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν. This gift is subsequently defined as the ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ, “varied grace of God.” Thus each believer has been ‘gifted’ by God with an expression of His grace. And this grace gift is to be a channel of ministry εἰς ἑαυτοὺς, “for one another,” inside the community of faith. The manner of giving such service is comparable to ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι, “as good stewards,”<sup>38</sup> an image of a household slave charged with the administrative responsibilities of the estate for the owner.<sup>39</sup> Through the graphic image of family as a picture of the community of faith, Peter portrays the responsibility of each member to carry out their divinely given tasks to the rest of the community in faithful service.

In this text, Peter utilizes the idea of gifted service to the believing community somewhat in the same way that Paul set forth in 1 Cor. 12 - 14, Eph. 4:11-16, Rom. 12:3-8 etc. But Peter does not develop a detailed presentation of ‘gifts.’ And he will illustrate what he means in verse eleven with only two examples: τις λαλεῖ and τις διακονεῖ, the second of which repeats the general concept of διακονοῦντες in verse ten.<sup>40</sup> Both of these ‘individual gifts’ are general and broad in scope rather than specific in the manner that Paul lays out the individual gifts in his writings.<sup>41</sup>

What can we conclude from Peter’s teachings about gifts?

**First, gifts** are not talent or inherited abilities. Instead they



<sup>37</sup>διακονέω is part of a group of words built off the same root stem: διακονία (service, ministry), διάκονος, ου, ὁ, ἡ (servant, male & female).

<sup>38</sup>“An *oikonomos* was a domestic steward (usually a reliable slave [*oiketēs, doulos, diakonos*], Plut., Lib. ed. 7; Mor. 4B; Xen., Oec. 1.2; cf. Matt 24:45–51) who managed a household (*oikos*) with authority delegated by the householder (*oikodespotēs*; cf. Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; Gal 4:2). In a transferred sense the term could also designate a public official, such as a city treasurer (e.g., Erastus as *oikonomos* in Corinth, Rom 16:23), steward of the grain supply or, within the Mystery cults, a person in charge of household management and food distribution (Reumann 1958, 342–49).<sup>55</sup> Jesus used the example of a household steward to encourage in his listeners the virtues of both reliability (Luke 12:42–43, in conversation with Peter, 12:41) and shrewdness (Luke 16:1–8) at the present eschatological hour (cf. also Matt 24:45–51). Paul described himself, Apollos, and Cephas figuratively as ‘servants (*hyperētas*) of Christ and household stewards (*oikonomos*) of the mysteries of God’ (1 Cor 4:1–2), who as such were obliged to be trustworthy. In Titus 1:5–10, community leaders (elders, overseers, vv 5, 6) were urged to serve as ‘stewards in God’s household,’ possessing the qualities that would ensure sound household management: blameless character, respect for order, integrity, humility, patience, hospitality, not given to greed, and so on.<sup>56</sup> The term was not reserved for leaders alone, as Ignatius illustrates. In his letter to Polycarp of Smyrna, he applies the term to all of the Symrneans: ‘Labor with one another, struggle together, run together, suffer together, rest together, rise up together as God’s household stewards and assessors and servants’ (Ign. Pol. 6:1).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 756.]

<sup>39</sup>“Christians, then, cannot control how God has gifted them (although according to Paul one can pray for gifts, 1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1, 13), but can and do control if and how the gift is used. Spiritual gifts are not autonomous entities outside a person’s control, but abilities that the Spirit gives and that a person must grow in and use, putting them into service.<sup>36</sup> Thus the Christian is a ‘steward’ of a gift. The steward was the person in a household (often a slave) who was responsible for managing the householder’s business and property, including providing what was needed for the family members, slaves, and hired laborers.<sup>37</sup> Jesus used the image in Luke 12:42 and 16:1–8, and Paul took the term as a description of proper service in the church (1 Cor. 4:1–2; Gal. 4:2; cf. Tit. 1:7). Thus the Christian in Peter’s view is simply a household slave who has control over a certain part of God’s property, a gift. The shape of this gift will not be like that of another Christian, for it comes from ‘God’s varied grace’ (cf. 1:6 where the Greek term for ‘varied’ occurs in another context).<sup>38</sup> But all alike are simply administrators of that which belongs to God; it is not theirs, but they are responsible for how it is used. They ought to be ‘good stewards.’” [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), 160-61.]

<sup>40</sup>Peter only uses διακονέω three times in this letter: twice in 4:11-12 and once in 1:12 (οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτά, ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς [ἐν] πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ, “they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.” Here the OT prophets were doing the serving.

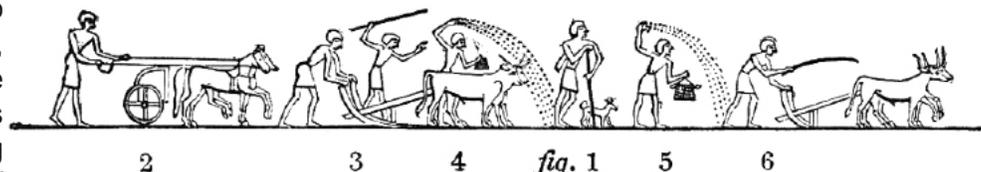
<sup>41</sup>Perhaps Peter knew of the more detailed thinking of Paul since First Corinthians was written before First Peter. But this is not certain, and also it’s not certain whether Peter understood the idea of ‘gifts’ in the same detailed way of Paul. But to speculate from 1 Pet. 4:10-11 a rejection of the teaching of Paul on gifts has no real basis, and thus is to be rejected. To the contrary, the broad contours of gifted service in First Peter are consistent with the teaching of Paul in his writings.

are a χάρισμα which Peter then defines as an individual expression of the ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ. These are ministry assignments given to believers in conversion, and possibly afterwards as well. Paul's conversion experience stands as the primary example of this, as per his own testimony in Gal. 1:15-16.<sup>42</sup>

**Second**, gifts are not for personal accomplishment or elevation. They are εἰς ἑαυτοὺς, "for one another." The use of these gifts is defined as διακονοῦντες, 'ministering,' which characterizes the use of gifts to help and to serve other members of the community of faith. The image of the humble servant in Matt. 20:25-28 lies in the background.<sup>43</sup>

**Third**, gifts as an ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ must be discovered in the midst of ministry involvement. They come as divine empowerment for service to others and will be actualized only in service. In following the leadership of God's Spirit, we will discover ways of contributing to the welfare of the community of believers.

**Fourth**, believers are to serve as καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι, "as good stewards." The background imagery of slaves functioning in a family setting is significant. Not the least of which is the accountability



Steward overlooking the tillage of the lands. Thebes

The household master held the steward strictly accountable for proper management of what had been entrusted to him. Jesus underscored this in some of his parables, such as "the unjust steward" in Luke 16:1-8.

**Fifth**, gifted service comes in two broad areas, that of speaking (εἶ τις λαλεῖ) and serving (εἶ τις διακονεῖ). In contrast to Paul's material in 1 Cor. 12-14 and Romans 12 where a large number of χαρίσματα are discussed,<sup>44</sup> Peter only alludes to two types, both of which are labeled χαρίσματα and both are implemented as διακονοῦντες.<sup>45</sup> Peter did not see the need of any further detailing of gifts, evidently because the churches addressed in the letter had no issues with specific gifts, as was true at Corinth and possibly also at Rome which Paul addressed.

What did concern Peter was *the use of the gifts* given by God: "Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies," εἶ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ· εἶ τις διακονεῖ, ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός. When a believer seeks to speak religious truth, he or she must be absolutely certain that they are speaking what God has revealed and not what they have dreamed up themselves.<sup>46</sup> Also when a believer serves, it must be empowered by the strength of God, and not by his

<sup>42</sup>NRSV, "15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son to me, *so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles,*"

<sup>43</sup>NRSV, "25 But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 26 It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'"

<sup>44</sup>1 Cor. 12:4-11, NRSV: "4 Now there are varieties of gifts [Διαιρέσεις χαρισμάτων], but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services [διαιρέσεις διακονιῶν], but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities [διαιρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων], but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit *the utterance of wisdom* [λόγος σοφίας], and to another *the utterance of knowledge* [λόγος γνώσεως] according to the same Spirit, 9 to another *faith* [πίστις] by the same Spirit, to another *gifts of healing* [χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων] by the one Spirit, 10 to another *the working of miracles* [ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων], to another *prophecy* [προφητεία], to another *the discernment of spirits* [διακρίσεις πνευμάτων], to another *various kinds of tongues* [γένη γλωσσῶν], to another *the interpretation of tongues* [ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν]. 11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses."

**Rom. 12:6-8**, NRSV: "6 We have *gifts that differ* according to the grace given to us [χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν *διάφορα*.]: prophecy [προφητεῖαν], in proportion to faith; 7 *ministry* [διακονίαν], in ministering; *the teacher* [ὁ διδάσκων], in teaching; 8 *the exhorter* [ὁ παρακαλῶν], in exhortation; *the giver* [ὁ μεταδιδούς], in generosity; *the leader* [ὁ προϊστάμενος], in diligence; *the compassionate* [ὁ ἐλεῶν], in cheerfulness."

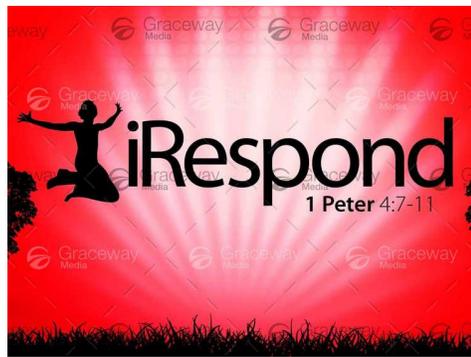
<sup>45</sup>Paul, on the other hand, laid out in 1 Cor. 12:4-6 three grouping of 'gifts' to the Corinthians: varieties of gifts [Διαιρέσεις χαρισμάτων], varieties of services [διαιρέσεις διακονιῶν], and varieties of activities [διαιρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων].

<sup>46</sup>First, 'if someone speaks' covers the whole range of speaking gifts, that is, *glossolalia* (the second half of which comes from the verb Peter is using), prophecy, teaching, and evangelism (or preaching). It is not referring to casual talk among Christians, nor is it referring only to the actions of elders or other church officials (to whom it will be restricted in the Apostolic Fathers), but

/ her own strength.<sup>47</sup> The focus is simple and clear: ministry must come from God and just flow through the believer. The challenge to the believer is to not get in God's way or to clog up the divine pipeline in producing ministry by human effort.

Wow! No wonder then that this kind of ministry can reflect the very presence of God in the midst of a congregation, and create keen interest by outsiders to know why these Christians are so different than the rest of the world. Everything in gifted ministry originates in God, not in human effort.

And its sole purpose and goal is ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζεται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, "so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ." To the Jewish synagogue communities located near these churches, there would be recognition that the God of Abraham was dynamically alive and active in the Christian churches. To the pagan neighbors of these believers, there would be curiosity and fascination that this God of the Christians was alive and was doing things in the churches that no Roman, Greek, or local deity had ever been known to do.



Peter concludes then with a doxological praise of God: ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν, "To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen."<sup>48</sup> The praise goes to God the Father whose actions of grace have produced such a unique and different community of people, who belong to Him and who seek to praise only Him.



to each Christian who may exercise one of these verbal gifts. Such speech is not to be simply his or her own good ideas, nor even good exegesis, but 'as ... the very words of God.' This phrase refers to the words God speaks (cf. Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12).<sup>39</sup> Paul was very conscious of his own words being those of God (1 Cor. 7:40; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2, 13; 10:3-6; 11:17), and our author is telling his readers to be sure that they also are speaking 'in the Spirit' (as in 1:12). While the 'as' allows a slight distancing between their speaking and God's words (does any spiritual gift ever operate in a 100 percent pure form without contamination from fallen humanity?), that is no excuse for substituting mere intellect or rhetorical skill for God's inspiration: neither the counterfeit nor the diluted is good stewardship of God's grace." [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), 161.]

<sup>47c</sup>The other broad class of gifts referred to is 'if someone serves.' While the verb is the same as that in 4:10, a narrower meaning is taken up here, much like the distinction between 'the word of God' and 'serving tables' in Acts 6:2 or Paul's sense in Rom. 12:7. It probably covers all those deeds one Christian does to or for another: administration, care for the poor and sick (including contributing funds, distributing funds, and physical care), healing, and similar acts that express God's love and mercy in concrete form.<sup>40</sup> These are to be done from 'the strength that God supplies.' The word 'supplies' appears only here and in 2 Cor. 9:10 in the NT. It originally meant 'to pay the expense for training a chorus' for a Greek theater or 'to defray the expenses for something.'<sup>41</sup> In 2 Corinthians it indicates a God who 'will supply and multiply your resources' (RSV). Here the Christian sees a service that God wants done. One can try to do it out of one's own zeal and strength (which might appear effective in some ministries, but not in others, e.g., healing), a recipe for ultimate ineffectiveness and burnout, or one can depend on that strength which God provides; God has ordered the job done; God will pay the expenses, be they material, physical, or emotional. He 'backs up the act' of the Christian who is being a good steward of his gifts in dependence on him." [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), 161-62.]

<sup>48c</sup>Mentioning the glory of God leads our author into a doxology that closes the section, 'To him belong glory and power forever and ever. Amen.' To whom do these belong? Both comparison with other doxologies (e.g., Luke 2:14; Rom. 11:36; Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 4:20; Heb. 13:20-21; Jude 24-25; 1 Clem. 20:12; 50:7) and the earlier reference in this verse to God's being glorified point to the 'him' being God, not Christ. God is to be glorified, for glory belongs to him. This is not a wish (thus the RSV and NIV translations are misleading), but a statement of fact (Greek indicative) as in all NT doxologies (e.g., Rom. 1:25; 2 Cor. 11:31, where, as here, the verb is explicitly present): God possesses glory by right. To glory this doxology, along with 1 Tim. 6:16, Jude 24-25, and Rev. 1:6 and 5:13, adds 'power,' which fits well in our wider context in which it underlines God's ability to put down evil and bring justice in the end (cf. 4:5, 7). Power in the NT is ascribed solely to God or Christ with but one exception (Heb. 2:14, yet there the devil who has the power of death is said to be destroyed by Christ). God is indeed the 'Almighty' (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8; 4:8; plus seven more times in Revelation). And this glory and power is his 'unto the ages of ages' (a more woodenly literal translation of Peter's words) or, more simply, 'forever.' This brings on the proper liturgical response to such a confession: 'Amen,' the Aramaic (or Hebrew) word meaning 'sure,' a fitting answer to such an exalted ascription (Rom. 1:25; Gal. 1:5; and frequently in doxologies such as those noted above)." [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), 162-63.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 18**  
**1 Peter 4:12-19**  
**“Understand Suffering”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

12 Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος, 13 ἀλλὰ καθὼς κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν χαίρετε, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι. 14 εἰ ὀνειδίξεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, μακάριοι, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται. 15 μὴ γάρ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος· 16 εἰ δὲ ὡς Χριστιανός, μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦτῳ. 17 ὅτι ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ δὲ πρῶτον ἀφ' ἡμῶν, τί τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀπειθούντων τῷ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ; 18 καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβὴς καὶ ἀμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται; 19 ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

12 Meine Lieben, wundert euch nicht über die harte Probe, die wie ein Feuersturm über euch gekommen ist. Sie kann euch nicht unerwartet treffen; 13 denn ihr leidet ja nur etwas von dem mit, was Christus gelitten hat. Freut euch vielmehr darüber, denn wenn er in seiner Herrlichkeit erscheint, werdet ihr erst recht von Freude und Jubel erfüllt sein. 14 Ihr könnt euch glücklich preisen, wenn ihr beschimpft werdet, nur weil ihr euch zu Christus bekennt; denn dann ist der Geist Gottes bei euch, in dem Gottes Herrlichkeit gegenwärtig ist.

15 Natürlich darf es nicht sein, dass jemand von euch als Verbrecher leidet, als Mörder oder Dieb oder Aufrührer. 16 Aber wer einzig wegen Christus leidet, soll sich nicht schämen, sondern sich ohne Scheu zum Christennamen bekennen und Gott dadurch ehren.

17 Denn jetzt ist die Zeit, in der das Gericht Gottes bei seiner Gemeinde den Anfang nimmt. Wenn es aber bei uns anfängt, wie wird es dann am Ende denen ergehen, die Gottes Gute Nachricht ablehnen? 18 Ihr wisst doch: »Sogar wer Gott gehorcht, wird nur mit knapper Not gerettet. Was wird dann aus dem Sünder, der Gott verachtet?« 19 Darum sollen alle, die nach dem Willen Gottes zu leiden haben, sich ganz ihrem Schöpfer anvertrauen und nicht davon ablassen, das Rechte zu tun.

**NRSV**

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 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. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. 16 Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. 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?" 19 Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

**NLT**

12 Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. 13 Instead, be very glad -- because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory when it is displayed to all the world. 14 Be happy if you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God will come upon you. 15 If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs. 16 But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his wonderful name! 17 For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin first among God's own children. And if even we Christians must be judged, what terrible fate awaits those who have never believed God's Good News? 18 And "If the righteous are barely saved, what chance will the godless and sinners have?" 19 So if you are suffering according to God's will, keep on doing what is right, and trust yourself to the God who made you, for he will never fail you.

## Quick Links to the Study

### I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

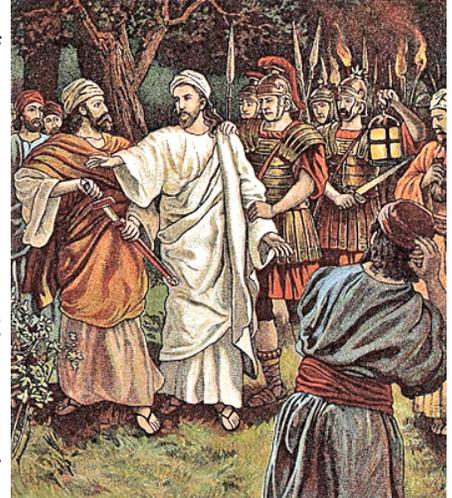
### II. [Message](#)

- a. [Suffer unjustly with joy, vv. 12-14](#)
- b. [Two sets of reasons for this, vv. 15-19](#)

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### Introduction to Study.

Peter keeps on coming at us about being willing to suffer unjustly. Perhaps out of his own experiences he realized that this could be one of the hardest challenges to believers. He certainly learned about this from Christ who rebuked him in the garden when the temple soldiers came to arrest Jesus and Peter wanted to lead the defense charge to fight them: "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"<sup>1</sup> Christ saw beyond what Peter could see, the will and purposes of God in unjust suffering. Although it took Peter a while to learn to see the 'bigger picture' on things, he did discover how to do that under the leadership of God's Spirit. And so in writing to the believers in Anatolia almost three decades later, he presses them somewhat like Christ had pressed him that night in the garden.



Most of us today need to be pushed at this point as well. When faced with having to endure injustices, we want either to run or to fight. But our Lord will give us neither option. Instead, his word to us is, "Endure!" We can learn a lot from Peter's wise counsel to believers in this text.

### I. Context and Background<sup>2</sup>

Once more, the importance of the historical background and the literary aspects of the passage cannot be under emphasized. Failure at just this point with this particular text has contributed substantially to a false reading of the passage to imply the existence of intense, wide spread persecution being assumed by Peter here. This in turn has generated substantial debate over the dating of the letter. In the early modern era, this assumption often led to the conclusion that the generalized persecution of Christians toward the end of the Flavian dynasty in the late 80s to the end of the century was the earliest possible allusion in the passage. Many even contended that the reference to a 'fiery ordeal' was talking about the later persecution of Christians in the 130s. The clear implication of such linkages is that Peter could not have had anything to do with the writing of the letter, since he was martyred in the mid 60s.

The reaction from some to this denial of Petrine authorship has been to falsely counter with a contention that the persecution of Christians by Nero in Rome in the mid 60s actually was an empire wide persecution of Christians and thus was the point of Peter's reference. The falseness of this contention was clearly obvious on two accounts. First, ancient Roman and Greek documents are very clear that persecution of Christians by Nero was temporary and limited primarily to the city of Rome, and hardly extended beyond the city. Second, if Peter was referring to a moment of persecution that ultimately led to his own death, the dating of the letter would have to be so close to the time of his execution by Nero that no time would be possible for a second letter to have been written by him. Clearly the tone of Second Peter is similar to that of Second Timothy by Paul: both apostles are facing immanent death and are very aware of it. But no such tone is present in First Peter.

Thus identifying the historical setting for Peter's words in 4:12-19 takes on greater importance. Understanding the literary aspects of the text assign us at this very point of historical concern, as the exegesis below will attempt to illustrate.

<sup>1</sup>See John 18:1-12 with the Synoptic parallels in Matthew 26:45-57 // Mark 14:41-50 // Luke 22:47-54.

<sup>2</sup>Serious 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.

## a. Historical

**External History.** In the UBS 4th revised edition Greek New Testament only two listings of variant readings of the text are presented. Both of these occur in verse fourteen.

The rather unusual Greek construction τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα (literally, ‘the of the glory and the of God Spirit’) caused some problems for copyists. A wide range of alternative readings of the text shows up both in ancient copies of the Greek text and the early translations of the Greek into Latin, Syriac, Coptic and other languages. Three alternative patterns dominate the variations. First, a number of ancient translations<sup>3</sup> simply translate from an understanding of the text in Greek to be τὸ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα, “the of the glory of God Spirit.” This pushes the idea into an even more unusual expression, while trying to simplify the wording of the text. Second, τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ δυνάμεως τοῦ θεοῦ ὄνομα καὶ καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα, “the name of the God of glory and power and the Spirit of God.” But these changes come very late in the copying process.<sup>4</sup> Third, τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα is modified to read τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα, “the of the glory and power and the of God Spirit,” with some variations.<sup>5</sup> The earliest and most important manuscripts apart from Sinaiticus (κ) support the text reading, although exactly how it should be translated is not that clear.<sup>6</sup>

Also in verse fourteen a variation of wording surfaces at the point of the verb ἀναπαύεται, “rests upon.” Here five different trajectories of expression are found in the copies of the text. First, ἀναπαύεται is replaced with ἐπαναπαύεται, a more intense expression of the same idea, ‘rests upon.’<sup>7</sup> Second, ἀναπαύεται, present tense is replaced by ἀναπέπαυται, perfect tense, “has come to rest upon.”<sup>8</sup> Third, alternatives one and two are combined with ἐπαναπέπαυται, perfect tense of compound verb, “has come indeed to rest upon.”<sup>9</sup> Fourth, an extension of the text shows up: ἀναπαύεται· κατὰ μὲν αὐτοὺς βλασφημεῖται, κατὰ δὲ ὑμᾶς δοξάζεται, “rests upon, on the one hand it is blasphemed by them but glorified by you.” The issue of the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit is injected into the text with clear assertion that the persecutors of these believers are who are doing it.<sup>10</sup> Fifth, a variation of the fourth pattern with the same essential point shows up in a lectionary manuscript: ἀναπέπαυται· κατὰ μὲν αὐτοὺς βλασφημεῖται καὶ ὀνειδιζόμενον φέρει, κατὰ δὲ ὑμᾶς δοξάζεται, “rests upon, on the one hand it is blasphemed by them and endures being reviled, but on the other hand is glorified by you.”<sup>11</sup> The first three patterns of copying simply attempt to strengthen the wording of the text, but the last two are trying to inject the issue of blaspheming the Holy Spirit into the words of Peter, but these reflect later theological modification of the words of Peter and clearly were not a part of the original wording of the text.

The text apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition of the Greek New Testament includes ten additional places of variations beyond the two mentioned above. As an example, P<sup>72</sup> inserts the preposition ἐπὶ in the phrase τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει so that the text reads ἐπὶ τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει.... This does not alter the meaning; instead, it seeks to make explicit what is already implicit: the case function of τῇ πυρώσει as a locative of sphere or dative of place usage. The translation remains the same either with or without the stated preposition ἐπὶ. These variations represent later efforts to a) update the language to the text to more current spellings and style, b) make the text clearer for current readers, and / or c) failure to correctly copy one word

<sup>3</sup>it<sup>ar, t</sup> vg<sup>ww, st</sup> (syr<sup>p</sup>) geo.

<sup>4</sup>1292 1505 1611 1852 2138 syr<sup>h</sup> (arm)

<sup>5</sup>(κ\* τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ) (κ<sup>2</sup> τῆς δυνάμεως) A 33 81 322 323 436 945 1067 1175 1241 1243 1409 1735 1739 1881 2298 2344 2464 Byz<sup>pt</sup> [P] Lect it<sup>z</sup> (vg<sup>cl</sup>) vg<sup>mss</sup> cop<sup>bo</sup> slav Athanasius Theodoret; (cop<sup>sa</sup> Didymus<sup>dub</sup>; Cyprian omit καὶ τὸ)

<sup>6</sup>“The reading of the text is supported by diverse witnesses. However, a considerable number of witnesses, some of them early, read καὶ δυνάμεως (and of power) after the noun δόξης. Since the additions exist in several different forms, the longer readings appear to be homiletic additions to the original text. It is not entirely clear how the reading in the text is to be understood and translated. Compare ‘the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God’ (NRSV); ‘the Spirit of glory and of God’ (NAB); ‘the Spirit of God, the Spirit of glory’ (NJB); and ‘the Spirit of God in all his glory’ (REB). Elliott (1 Peter, p. 782) writes, ‘since both of glory and of God qualify Spirit, this pleonastic construction can also be rendered more smoothly as the divine Spirit of glory.’” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 489.]

<sup>7</sup>A 81 1243 1292 1735 1852 2138

<sup>8</sup>33 945 1175 1241 1739<sup>ext</sup> 1881 2344 2464 l596 Didymus<sup>dub</sup> Cyril

<sup>9</sup>P<sup>72</sup> κ<sup>2</sup>. This kind of pattern is very common when copyists are looking at two different readings of a text and can’t decide which one is more accurate. So they merely incorporate both into their copy.

<sup>10</sup>(Ψ 1505 1611 ἐπαναπαύεται) 2298 Byz [K L P] l 590 (Lect ἀναπέπαυται) it<sup>ar, q, t, z</sup> vg<sup>ww</sup> syr<sup>h</sup> with \* cop<sup>sa</sup>, (bo<sup>ms</sup>) slav Cyprian.

<sup>11</sup>l 921

after the other and thus skipping over a word, or a line of text visually in the copying process.

Again as we have consistently noted, over the centuries of thousands of people copying the text, it has remained stable and without serious variation of wording. Thus we can confidently interpret this text as the original words of Peter and Silas.

**Internal History.** The central historical issue relates to what is meant by τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει, “the fiery ordeal among you.” The noun πύρωσις is used only three times in the New Testament, with the other two instances in Rev. 18:9 and 18:18 in reference to the predicted destruction of Babylon (Rome) at the last day: τὸν καπνὸν τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς, “the smoke of her burning.”<sup>12</sup> More important, however, is the use of the noun form πῦρ in 1:6-7,

6 ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον [ἐστίν] λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις **πειρασμοῖς**, 7 ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ **πυρὸς** δὲ δοκιμαζομένου, εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

6 In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various **trials**, 7 so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by **fire**—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

The language and theme emphasis of 1:6-7 and 4:12-13 are very close to one another, and both presuppose the same situation.<sup>13</sup> The first passage raises the inevitability of such ‘testings’ by fire while the second passage assumes their occurrence. The use of the image of fire in connection to persecution does not signal the use of literal fire as a means of persecution, such as Nero used on Christians in Rome in the mid-60s when he made human torches out of many of them. In both passages, the image of fire is figurative, not literal. In the first text, the illustration of refining gold through a process of burning is the metaphor for believers suffering persecution that could be inflicted on them using any kind of means. In the second text, the figurative use of fire calls attention to any kind of persecution that inflicts pain like putting a burning torch to the skin would cause pain. Peter’s image in 4:12 simply designates any type of unjust suffering that would produce severe pain in the individual.

Consequently neither 1:6-7 nor 4:12-13 can be correctly interpreted to allude to Nero’s persecution nor the later systematic persecution of Christians either by emperor Domitian (51 - 96 AD) nor by Trajan (53-117 AD) or Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD). Both passages allude to individual incidents of suffering unjustly from non-believers, who ever they might have been. Therefore, no legitimate use of 4:12-19 for the dating of the letter is possible, contrary to the attempts of some over the years.

## b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** The literary patterns in vv. 12-19 do not follow any specific literary genre, apart from verse eighteen which contains a quote from Proverbs 11:31 (LXX).

<sup>12</sup>πύρωσις, εὖς, ἦ (πυρῶ; Aristot., Theophr. et al.; PGM 2, 110; Am 4:9; TestSol 18:29 P; TestJud 16:1; Just., D. 116, 2)

1. **process of burning, burning** (Jos., Ant. 1, 203) lit. in pass. sense τὸν καπνὸν τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς **Rv 18:9, 18.**

2. **an intense degree of some painful occurrence or experience, burning ordeal** fig. ext. of 1 ἢ π. τῆς δοκιμασίας the fiery test D 16:5. π. πρὸς πειρασμὸν γινομένη *fiery ordeal to test you* **1 Pt 4:12** (cp. the πύρωσις for testing metals Pr 27:21). In this sense the focus is on degree of intensity of the trial, but a component of suffering is indicated by the context, and some would prefer to render: severe suffering.—DELG s.v. πῦρ. 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), 900.]

<sup>13</sup>“The repetition of the same word in 1:6 (*peirasmōis*) is a further indication of the close relation of these two passages. The terminological and thematic similarities between 4:12–13 and 1:6–7 indicate the presupposition of a similar situation, so that 4:12 cannot be said to introduce a new, actual crisis, even though 1:6–7 refers to the potentiality of suffering and 4:12–13 to its actuality. Beare’s contention to the contrary (1970, 26–27, 188–93) is now rejected by virtually all subsequent commentators. Both passages and their similar terms (*pyrōsis/pyr*, *peirasmōs/dokimazō*) qualify the nature of innocent suffering and indicate its constructive functions. 1 Peter 4:12–19 differs from 1:6–7 only in describing more fully the circumstances of this suffering and the Christian behavior required. Given the traditional nature of this language and the absence of any accompanying mention of organized persecution, there is no reason for seeing in *peirasmōs* any reference to a ‘persecution’ initiated by Rome or *pyrōsis* as an allusion to Nero’s execution of the Christians of Rome by fire (*pyr*) as arsonists (against Beare 1970, 190; Leaney 1967, 65; and others). The terminology and images employed here and in 1:6–7 are instead traditional means<sup>570</sup> for depicting the tribulations and testing of God’s people. The divine test of faith (trust in God and commitment to Jesus Christ) through suffering proves faith’s genuineness and durability.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 773.]

**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*

1 Peter 4:12-19  
Literary Function



LXX: εἰ ὁ μὲν δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἀμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται;

1 Peter: καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἀμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται;

Peter opts to closely use the rather free Greek translation of the original Hebrew text that applied to Jews (righteous and unrighteous) with a Christian re-application of the Old Testament text. And the quote serves to support a similar contention stated in the preceding verse seventeen. Thus the use of Proverbs 11:31 is as a ‘scripture proof’ but without an introductory signal of quoting the OT text. Both verses draw a strong contrast between Christians and non-Christians in terms of divine judgment, using the traditional Jewish “lessor to greater” principle of analysis: if judgment is difficult for the righteous, it will be much more difficult for the unrighteous.

**Literary Context.** The literary function of 4:12-19 has been understood in different ways by scholars. Clearly it forms a self-contained unit of text, and general agreement exists at this point. The vocative form in verse 12 Ἀγαπητοί, “beloved,” signals the beginning of a new topic. And the conclusion introduced by ὥστε, “so then,” signals a climatic ending of the pericope. The unclear issue then revolves around the role of the passage itself to the rest of the letter, and the body section of the letter in particular. The language and theme expression in the passage echo materials presented in 1:6 - 4:6.<sup>14</sup> Older approaches recognized this but insisted that it signaled a later, separate source for the material in 4:12 - 5:11 dealing with a more urgent, different situation than was treated in

the first part of the letter. But this understanding has largely been rejected by more recent scholarship on First Peter. Clearly the section of 4:12-5:11 continues the emphasis on unjust suffering, by presupposing the same situation. But it introduces new aspects to the discussion not found earlier in the letter. Additionally, 4:12-19 sets up the next unit of 5:1-11. Michaels proposes an interesting image to describe the role: interlocking. That is, 4:7-11 anticipates 4:12-5:11 and 4:12-19 summarizes 2:11-4:11. There is truth in this analogy, although it does not fully explain everything that is taking place literarily here.

**Literary Structure.**

The block diagram below highlights the organization of ideas in this text through visual presentation of **primary** and secondary concepts.

4.12 Beloved,

among you

58 **don't be shocked at the fiery ordeal**

for testing

coming at you

as though a strange thing were happening to you

4.13 but

just as you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ,

59 **rejoice,**

<sup>14c</sup>The structure of his letter at this point is best described as interlocking: if 4:7–11 looks ahead, anticipating the themes of 4:12–5:11, 4:12–19 pauses to look back, resuming for one last time the themes of 2:11–4:6. These are the themes of how to respond to one’s enemies and how to face hostility and the prospect of suffering. At the start (vv 12–13) the section looks even farther back, to the cryptic references to ‘various ordeals,’ to being ‘tested by fire,’ and to final ‘joy’ in 1:6–8. Now at last Peter describes in fuller, although rather similar language, what he had in mind there. The rhetoric is reminiscent of 1:6–8, but the actual situation to which it refers is simply the accumulation of the grievances and social pressures either sketched or hinted at throughout 2:11–4:6.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 258.]

also  
 at the revelation of His glory  
 in order that...you may have occasion to rejoice  
 while being overjoyed.

4.14 If you are being reviled  
 because of the name of Christ,  
 60 **(you are) blessed,**  
 because the Spirit of His Glory and of God rests upon you.

4.15 **For**  
 61 **let no one of you suffer**  
 as a murderer,  
 or  
 a thief  
 or  
 a criminal  
 nor  
 as a mischief maker;

4.16 but  
 if as a Christian,  
 62 **let him not be ashamed,**  
 but  
 63 **let him praise God,**  
 because of this name.

4.17 **Because**  
 64 **the time (is)**  
 for judgment to begin  
 starting with the house of God;  
 and  
 if first with us,  
 65 **what is the outcome**  
 of those disobeying the Gospel of God?

4.18 And  
 if the righteous is hardly saved,  
 66 **how will the impious and sinner show up?**

4.19 Consequently  
 also  
 67 **let those suffering...entrust their lives to a faithful Creator**  
 according to the will of God  
 in doing good.

The text is organized around two central groups of ideas. In statements 58-60, the readers are encouraged to take a positive stance toward unjust suffering. The negative (#58) / positive (#59) admonitions to rejoicing are affirmed by the pronouncement of blessing in the form of a beatitude (#60).

In the second segment (#s 61-67), two sets of reasons are given as support and amplification of the first segment. The first set of reasons in #s 61-63 admonish believers to not suffer for improper conduct (#61), but for right conduct and as a Christian we are not to be ashamed (#62) but to praise God (# 63). The negative (#62) / positive (#63) pair follow a pattern similar to those in #s 58 and 59.

The second set of reasons in #s 64-67 are presented by ὅτι rather than by γάρ as with the first set in #s 61-63. This unusual use of the subordinate conjunction ὅτι as a coordinate conjunction signals the secondary role of this set of reasons. The first set introduced by γάρ is more important, but the second set maintains importance, just not quite at the same level.

The content of the four affirmations in #s 64 - 65 centers on eschatological judgment. Divine judgment

starts with the 'house of God' and thus casts into serious question the possibility of those rejecting the God successfully getting through divine judgement. The point is repeated with different words in # 66. The text ends with drawing the conclusion (# 67) that those suffering unjustly should entrust themselves to God as a dependable Creator while continuing to do good.

The theme of this passage is not distinct from the emphasis on unjust suffering in 3:13 - 5:11. But the language and grammatical patterns do shift considerably from the style of writing thus far in the letter.

## II. Message

In this passage, Peter approaches the subject of unjust suffering with an appeal for believers to understand what is genuinely happening beyond the merely human perspective. That understanding should lead to joy and rejoicing even in the midst of the suffering. Here is the challenge to us in the modern western world. Understanding unjust suffering is not just assessing the actions of evil people in their treatment of us as measured against the standards of either governmental law and principles of morality, or even a combination of both. The modern western quest for understanding is usually seeking some sense of fairness or equity. Is God playing fair with us in allowing this to happen? Is He really a God of justice, if He can let evil people treat His children so wrongly? On and on we usually go, trying somehow to put God on the spot in terms of His character and integrity.

But Peter reflects early Christianity's very different way of handling such matters. It's not why God allows such things to happen. They understood clearly that life in an evil world is full of injustices. So rather than blaming God for evil, they opted to probe the experience of unjust suffering to see how God was working in their behalf in the midst of the suffering. If they could understand injustices from God's viewpoint, how much better they would be able to successfully manage the suffering of unjust treatment from others. We could learn a lot from them!

### a. Suffer unjustly with rejoicing, vv. 12-14

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 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.

12 Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος, 13 ἀλλὰ καθὼ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν χαίρετε, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι. 14 εἰ ὄνειδίζεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, μακάριοι, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται.

#### Notes:

What we encounter here is a couple of linked admonitions (do not .... / do ....) followed by a beatitude that invokes God's blessings on unjust suffering. The two literary forms of antithetical parallelism and beatitude become Peter's vehicles of conveying the proper Christian approach to unjust suffering.

**Antithetical parallel, vv. 12-13.** This first sentence contains two main clauses with the negative / positive admonitions balancing one another in antithetical parallelism to each other. Such devices in the ancient world functioned so that the second line re-enforced the point of the first line by stating its opposite. Thus Peter's point that believers should not be shocked by unjust suffering is underscored by the opposite responsibility to rejoice in unjust suffering. The conjunction ἀλλὰ emphasizes the strong contrast between these two points.

**The negative command:** μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος. This admonition to not be surprised echoes the earlier admonition in 3:14b, τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ ταραχθῆτε (**Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated**).<sup>15</sup> Even more, a play off the verb ξενίζω<sup>16</sup> (ξένος, strange) exists between the admonition here and the statement in 4:4: ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται

<sup>15</sup>The present prohibitive imperative Greek verb μὴ ξενίζεσθε carries with it the sense of "stop being shocked."

<sup>16</sup>**2. to cause a strong psychological reaction through introduction of someth. new or strange, astonish, surprise** (Polyb. 3, 114, 4; Diod S 12, 53, 3; Jos., Ant. 1, 45) ξενίζοντά τινα *astounding things* **Ac 17:20**.—Pass. *be surprised, wonder* (Polyb.; M. Ant. 8, 15; PStras 35, 6; Pland 20, 1; Ath., R. 16 p. 67, 9) w. dat. of the thing causing surprise (Polyb. 1, 23, 5; 3, 68, 9) μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει *do not be surprised (upset, ESelwyn, 1 Pt 46, 212) at the fiery ordeal among you* **1 Pt 4:12**; v.l. ἐπὶ τῇ κτλ. (corresponding to Polyb. 2, 27, 4; UPZ 146, 4; 6 [II B.C.]; Jos., Ant. 1, 35). Also ἐν τινι vs. 4 (B-D-F §196; s. Rob. 532). Abs. 2 Cl 17:5.—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), 684.]

μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν (*They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation*). Their pagan neighbors were shocked that these new Christians would not join them in an immoral lifestyle any longer. Now the new believers should not be shocked by the opposition they are facing by living true to Christ.<sup>17</sup> To the Jewish Christians in the congregations, facing opposition would not have seemed so unusual, since as Diaspora Jews they had faced hostility from non-Jewish neighbors for a couple or so centuries. But to the Gentile converts in the churches, to be faced with such intense hostility could well have seemed shocking, since they had not encountered this before.<sup>18</sup>

The suffering these first readers were experiencing is described as τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος (*at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you*). It is first τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει, “the fiery ordeal.”<sup>19</sup> The persecution was like having to walk through an intense fire. It also was πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν (*to test you*). The suffering was designed to establish the genuineness of the faith commitment of these believers.<sup>20</sup> The image put before us here is the same as the earlier one in 1:6-7,

6 ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις *πειρασμοῖς*, 7 ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου *διὰ πυρὸς* δὲ δοκιμαζομένου εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

6 In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various *trials*, 7 so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, *is tested by fire* — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Believers should face their sufferings as an opportunity to demonstrate that their faith is real and made of deep conviction. Additionally these sufferings were γινομένη, “*happening*.” They were not theoretical nor remote

<sup>17c</sup>Although he does not say so explicitly, it is evident from the reference in v 13 to ‘the sufferings of Christ,’ and from the allusion in v 14 to Jesus’ beatitude on those ridiculed for his sake, that the words and the example of Jesus are the reasons Peter believes a ‘fiery ordeal’ should come as no surprise. If Jesus himself suffered and predicted suffering for his followers, they have no reason to think it strange when his experiences are repeated and his predictions fulfilled (cf. Matt 10:24–25; Luke 6:40; John 13:16; 15:18–21; 16:1–4; 1 John 3:13). Within 1 Peter itself, the inevitability of suffering was intimated already in the εἰ δέον, ‘must’ or ‘by necessity,’ of 1:6, based possibly on the conspicuous use of δεῖ, ‘it is necessary,’ in the Jesus tradition (see Comment on εἰ δέον in 1:6).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 260.]

<sup>18c</sup>Unlike the Jews who had for generations been a foreign and culturally distinct minority in the diaspora (and suffered as all such minorities suffer) and since the persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (cf. 1 and 2 Maccabees) had had a developed theology of suffering and martyrdom, these Gentile converts had no experience of being a cultural minority. Before their conversion they were perfectly at home in their city. And instead of rebelling against God they had accepted the gospel message. But now they were experiencing cultural isolation and personal hostility, not what they might have expected as the blessing of God. Well might they have wondered if something had not gone wrong. Thus our author reassures them: persecution is not something ‘strange’ or foreign to their existence as Christians.<sup>1</sup> What is happening is right in line with Christ’s predictions (Matt. 5:11–12; 10:34; Mark 13:9–13; John 15:18–20).” [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), 164.]

<sup>19c</sup>πύρωσις, ‘fiery ordeal,’ is used of Sodom’s destruction in Josephus, *Ant.* 1.203, and of the eschatological destruction of evil ‘Babylon’ by fire in Rev 18:9, 18. The latter parallel may be significant in view of Peter’s own claim in 5:13 to be writing from ‘Babylon.’ πύρωσις is also eschatological in Did. 16:5: ‘Then the human creation shall come to the fiery ordeal for testing (εἰς τὴν πύρωσιν τῆς δοκιμασίας), and many shall be offended and be lost, but those who endure in their faith shall be saved by the curse itself.’ In 1 Peter, however, the present participle γινομένη, ‘breaking out,’ locates the ‘fiery ordeal’ in the contemporary situation of the writer and his readers. Although a present participle can have a future reference in 1 Peter (cf. 1:13), the contrast in v 13 between present suffering and future rejoicing makes it clear that a future meaning is not intended in v 12.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 260.]

<sup>20c</sup>The term *pyrōsis* (‘fiery ordeal’) is related linguistically to *pyr*, ‘fire,’ and has a range of meanings in the Bible and extrabiblical literature,<sup>563</sup> the most relevant of which is the ‘fiery process’ by which metal ore is separated from dross, freed of its impurities and refined; see Prov 27:21, ‘the fiery ordeal is the test of silver and gold’ (*dokimion argyrōi kai chrysōi pyrōsis*); Did. 16:5, ‘the fiery ordeal of testing’ (*hē pyrōsis tēs dokimasias*). Its related verb, *pyrōō*, is often used in this same sense of ‘testing, refining by fire.’<sup>564</sup> Since our author has already used this metaphor in 1:6–7 in speaking of faith as more precious than ‘perishable gold tested by fire,’ this sense of *pyrōsis* is clearly implied here as well. In both passages the analogy of a metallurgical process is used to provide a positive interpretation of innocent suffering (*pathēmasin*, v 13; cf. *lypēthentes*, 1:6) as a divine testing of faith’s constancy. In the context of this letter, fiery ordeal thus serves as a graphic comprehensive image for all of the hostility, slander, and abuse directed against the faithful and the suffering it has caused.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 771-72.]

possibilities. Rather, the believers were experiencing this suffering as Peter dictated this letter to Silas. Finally, this suffering was not to be regarded ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαινόντος, “as though something strange were happening to you.” Always when persecution comes the very human response is to question why: “Why is God letting this happen to me?” Peter’s repeated use of the example of Christ’s suffering unjustly in chapters two and three have clearly established that since such happened to Christ, His followers should expect it to happen to them as well. Thus no surprise, no shock should come to believers.

**The positive command:** ἀλλὰ καθὼ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν χαίρετε, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι. The core admonition here is simply χαίρετε, “be rejoicing.”<sup>21</sup> The sense of joy is to be ongoing, as is expressed by the present tense imperative verb.

The admonition has two qualifications. *First*, it is καθὼ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν. That is, rejoicing is appropriate only to the extent that one’s sufferings are a participation in the sufferings of Christ. Persecution for one’s religious faith must be the nature of the suffering. What Peter is indicating here is that no blank check for any kind of suffering should prompt rejoicing. It is only by our suffering having a profound connection to what Christ suffered that we can rejoice. Why? Only that kind of suffering has a positive future, and can claim the blessing of God. When we make God’s will primary as did Christ, the suffering that comes from it identifies our suffering with that of Christ. *Second*, the outcome of our suffering will be ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι. When the divine Presence is disclosed in the second coming of Christ we will have an unbelievable occasion for rejoicing. The combining of verb and participle here, χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι, heightens the level of joy on that eschatological day. One hears echoes of Luke 6:23

<sup>21c</sup>χαίρω mid. by-form χαίρεται TestAbr s. below; impf. ἔχαιρον; fut. χαρήσομαι (B-D-F §77; Mlt-H. 264); 2 aor. pass. ἐχάρην (Hom.+).

**1. to be in a state of happiness and well-being, rejoice, be glad** opp. κλαίειν **J 16:20; Ro 12:15ab** (Damasc., Vi. Isid. 284 χαρίεις πρὸς τοὺς χαριέντας); **1 Cor 7:30ab**; Hv 3, 3, 2. Opp. λύπην ἔχειν **J 16:22**. W. ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι (Hab 3:18; TestJob 43:15; ParJer 6:20; cp. TestAbr A 11 p. 89, 17 [Stone p. 26]) **Mt 5:12; 1 Pt 4:13b**; cp. **Rv 19:7**; GJs 17:2. W. εὐφραίνεσθαι (Jo 2:23 al. in LXX) **Lk 15:32; Rv 11:10**. W. σκιρτᾶν **Lk 6:23**. W. acc. of inner obj. (B-D-F §153, 1; Rob. 477) χ. χαρὰν μεγάλην *be very glad* (Jon 4:6; JosAs 3:4 al.) **Mt 2:10**. τῇ χαρᾷ ἧ (by attraction for ἦν) χαίρομεν **1 Th 3:9**. Also χαρᾷ χ., which prob. betrays the infl. of the OT (Is 66:10), **J 3:29** (B-D-F §198, 6; Rob. 531; 550). The ptc. is used w. other verbs *with joy, gladly* (Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 40 §169 ἄπιθι χαίρων; 3 Km 8:66; Eutecnius 4 p. 43, 7 ἄπεισι χαίρουσα; Laud. Therap. 12 χαίρων ἐστέλλετο) ὑπεδέξατο αὐτον χαίρων **Lk 19:6**; cp. vs. **37; 15:5; Ac 5:41; 8:39**.—The obj. of or reason for the joy is denoted in var. ways: w. simple dat. τοῖς τὰ πολλὰ λέγουσιν those who are (merely) garrulous Papias (2:3) (Aristonous 1, 45 [p. 164 Coll. Alex.]; Just., A I, 5, 3 al.; Orig., C. Cels. 8, 69, 20; s. also below on **Ro 12:12**) or prep. χαίρειν ἐπὶ τινι *rejoice over someone or someth.* (Soph. et al.; X., Cyr. 8, 4, 12, Mem. 2, 6, 35; Pla., Leg. 5, 729d; Diod S 1, 25, 2; Plut., Mor. 87e; 1088e; BGU 531 I, 4 [I A.D.]; POxy 41, 17; Tob 13:15ab; Pr 2:14; 24:19; Bar 4:33; JosAs 4:4; Jos., Ant. 1, 294; 3, 32; Ar. 15, 7; Just., D. 28, 4; Iren. 1, 16, 3 [Harv I 163, 9]) **Mt 18:13; Lk 1:14; 13:17; Ac 15:31; Ro 16:19; 1 Cor 13:6; 16:17; 2 Cor 7:13; Rv 11:10**; Hs 5, 2, 5 and 11; 8, 1, 16; 8, 5, 1 and 6; Dg 11:5. Also διὰ w. acc. (Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 102 §428; EpArist 42) **J 3:29**; 11:15 the ὅτι-clause gives the reason, and δι’ ὑμᾶς is *for your sakes = in your interest*; cp. **1 Th 3:9**. ἐν τινι (Soph., Trach. 1118; Pla., Rep. 10, 603c; En 104:13) Hs 1:11. ἐν τούτῳ *over that* **Phil 1:18a** (for other functions of ἐν s. below). περί τινας in someth. (Pla., Ep. 2, 310e.—περί πλοῦτον Did., Gen. 150, 8) 1 Cl 65:1. ἵνα μὴ λύπην σχῶ ἀφ’ ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν (either ἀπὸ τούτων ἀφ’ ὧν or ἀπὸ τούτων οἷς) **2 Cor 2:3**. The reason or object is given by ὅτι (Lucian, Charon 17; Ex 4:31; Just., A II, 2, 7) **Lk 10:20b; J 11:15** (s. above); **14:28; 2 Cor 7:9, 16; Phil 4:10; 2J 4**. χ. ἐν τούτῳ ὅτι **Lk 10:20a**. χ. ὅταν **2 Cor 13:9**. χ. ... γάρ **Phil 1:18b (19)**. The reason or obj. is expressed by a ptc. (X., Cyr. 1, 5, 12; Pla., Rep. 5, 458a; Dio Chrys. 22 [39], 1 al.; PGM 4, 1212 χαίρεις τοὺς σοὺς σφῶζων; 1611; Just., D. 114, 4): ἰδόντες τὸν ἀστέρα ἐχάρησαν **Mt 2:10**; cp. **Lk 23:8; J 20:20; Ac 11:23; Phil 2:28**; Hv 3, 12, 3. ἀκούσαντες ἐχάρησαν *they were delighted by what they heard* **Mk 14:11**; cp. **Ac 13:48**; Hv 3, 3, 2.—1 Cl 33:7; Dg 5:16. λαβόντες τὰ ἐδέμματα ἐχάρησαν Hs 5, 2, 10. W. gen. and ptc. (as Just., D. 85, 6) 9, 11, 7. If χαίρειν is also in the ptc., καὶ comes betw. the two participles: χαίρων καὶ βλέπων (and) *it is with joy that I see* **Col 2:5**. ἐχάρην ἐρχομένων ἀδελφῶν καὶ μαρτυρούντων *I was glad when some fellow-Christians came and testified* **3J 3**.—τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίρ. **Ro 12:12** is not ‘rejoice over the hope’ (the dat. stands in this mng. X., Mem. 1, 5, 4; Theopompus [IV B.C.]: 115 Fgm. 114 Jac.; Epict., App. D, 3 [p. 479 Sch.] ἀρετῇ χ.; Iambl., Vi. Pyth. 28, 137 οἷς ὁ θεὸς χ.; Pr 17:19), but rather *rejoice in hope* or *filled with hope* (B-D-F §196). τὸ ἐφ’ ὑμῖν χαίρω as far as you are concerned, I am glad **Ro 16:19** v.l. In the majority of cases in our lit. ἐν does not introduce the cause of the joy (s. above): χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν *I rejoice in the midst of* (though *because of* is also poss.) *(the) suffering(s)* **Col 1:24** (the Engl. ‘in’ conveys both ideas). χαίρ. ἐν κυρίῳ **Phil 3:1; 4:4a, 10** (the imperatives in **3:1; 4:4ab** are transl. *good-bye* [so Hom. et al.] by Goodsp., s. Probs. 174f; this would class them under 2a below). Abs. **Lk 22:5; J 4:36; 8:56** (EbNestle, Abraham Rejoiced: ET 20, 1909, 477; JMoulton, ‘Abraham Rejoiced’: ibid. 523–28); **2 Cor 6:10; 7:7; 13:11; Phil 2:17f; 4:4b** (s. Goodsp. above); **1 Th 5:16; 1 Pt 4:13a**; cp. **13b**; GPt 6:23; Hv 3, 3, 3f; Hs 1:11; 5, 3, 3; GJs 16:3.—On the rare mid. χαίρομενος (TestAbr A 11 p. 89, 21 [Stone p. 26] χαίρεται καὶ ἀγάλλεται) **Ac 3:8** D, s. Mlt. 161 w. note 1; B-D-F §307.” [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), 1074-75.]

in this: **χάρητε** ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ **σκιρτήσατε**, ἰδοὺ γὰρ ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (*Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven*). The passive voice verb *χαρήτε* underscores a dramatic difference between the ‘then’ and ‘now’ experiences of joy. In the present suffering believers must reach deep down inside their faith in order to rejoice. But in the eschatological joy of the Second Coming the circumstances of God’s clear and complete victory over evil and evil people prompts much greater rejoicing (cf. 1:7). The believer then realizes experientially what his faith has told him all along: enduring unjust suffering with joy rather than shock was indeed the right approach.

Most Christians in the western world would have more in common with the Gentile believers in ancient Anatolia than with the Jewish Christians. We have seldom experienced real hostility to us simply because we are committed Christians. We sometimes talk about hostility in terms of verbal sarcasm and perhaps job penalties because we don’t “run with the crowd” at the office or elsewhere. But Peter was writing to believers facing real persecution in terms of legal actions taken against them, confiscation of property, imprisonment, and even execution, among a variety of hostile actions. Should such be thrown at us, shock and bewilderment would be the most common response, simply because we haven’t prepared ourselves for such. Some believers in ethnic minority groups with a history of discrimination against them would be better able to cope than the rest of us.

But the real challenge is not in just avoiding shock but in finding joy in the face of such persecution. Some religious cult groups such as “Christian Science” offer phoney solutions that claim that material pain is not real, just dismiss it by mind control over the body. This has greater affinity with many of the Eastern religions that stress mind over matter. There is nothing Christian in any of this, and it is severely contradicted by the biblical stance of Peter in line with Jesus and the other apostles. In the Christian approach, there is no denial of the very real pain and suffering experienced in religious persecution. These are real and they hurt bad. But in the midst of them the believer, by reaching deep down into his having entrusted his life to Christ, finds joy through realizing that this experience is bonding him/her ever so closely to the Lord in His sufferings. Out of that union with Christ will come an unbelievable eschatological joy at the return of Christ, since complete vindication of taking this approach will be experienced. This is where our focus should be.

**Beatitude, v. 14.** The second device Peter used to encourage joy in suffering is a beatitude. The ancient Jewish beatitude was the invoking of God’s blessing upon an individual who met certain conditions. Already Peter has used this device in his previous discussion of unjust suffering in 3:14. The beatitude here in 4:14 is a fuller expression of the form with all the core elements of a beatitude of Jesus:

**4.14** εἰ **ὀνειδίζεσθε** ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, **μακάριοι**, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται.

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.

**3.14** εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, **μακάριοι**,

Even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are **blessed**.

**Luke 6:22**, **μακάριοί** ἐστε ὅταν μισήσωσιν ὑμᾶς οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ ὅταν ἀφορίσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ **ὀνειδίσωσιν** καὶ ἐκβάλωσιν τὸ ὄνομα ὑμῶν ὡς πονηρὸν ἕνεκα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου·

**Blessed are you** when people hate you, and when they exclude you, **revile** you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

**Matthew 5:11**, **μακάριοί** ἐστε ὅταν **ὀνειδίσωσιν**

ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσιν καὶ εἴπωσιν πᾶν πονηρὸν καθ’ ὑμῶν [ψευδόμενοι] ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ.

**Blessed** are you when people **revile** you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Peter’s expression in 4:14 actually is structured somewhat along the lines of the ‘third-person’ wisdom be-

**Literary Structures of Ancient Beatitudes**

**Third Person:**

Blessed are \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Designation

|

'Because' Clause

**Second Person:**

Blessed are \_\_\_\_\_ (You)

|

'Whenever' Clause

**Jewish Literary Types**

**Wisdom Beatitude:**  
Focus on present world realization of blessing.

**Eschatological Beatitude:**  
Focus on eschatological realization of blessing.

attitude found in Matthew 5:3-10, and is especially close to 5:10.<sup>22</sup> In the two admonitions, Peter projected eschatological joy based on divine vindication of suffering unjustly. But in the beatitude the divine blessing is realized in the present and is defined by the ὅτι-clause as the presence of God's Spirit upon us, which is the eternal divine Presence residing in our lives now.<sup>23</sup>

Thus he has reassured his readers that rejoicing in suffering is the best response to persecution. Not only will such be vindicated in the eschatological return of Christ, but also this response opens up the Presence of God through the Holy Spirit to assist and sustain the believer through his suffering.

Wow!

### b. Two sets of reasons for this exist, vv. 15-19

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. 16 Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. 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?" 19 Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

15 μὴ γάρ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος· 16 εἰ δὲ ὡς Χριστιανός, μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτου. 17 ὅτι ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ δὲ πρῶτον ἀφ' ἡμῶν, τί τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀπειθούντων τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ; 18 καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβὴς καὶ ἀμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται; 19 ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ.

#### Notes:

In this second segment of the passage Peter offers amplification of the situation of suffering persecution. The thought flow moves from primary reasons (γάρ in vv. 15-16) to secondary reasons (ὅτι in vv. 17-18) to reaching a conclusion (ὥστε in v. 19). The amplification continues to make extensive use of admonitions (μὴ...πασχέτω, μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, παρατιθέσθωσαν) along with declarations (v. 17a) and rhetorical questions (vv. 17b-18) in order to communicate Peter's thoughts. But these function together as expressed reasons for the encouragements given first in verses 12-14.

**The Primary Reasons, vv. 15-16:** 15 μὴ γάρ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος· 16 εἰ δὲ ὡς Χριστιανός, μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτου. Peter begins with a caution that none of the believers should allow themselves to get into situations where their suffering is due to having broken the law. Then he focuses on genuine Christian suffering with a couple

<sup>22</sup>Matthew 5:3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.

5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.

6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.

7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.

8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.

9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.

10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

<sup>23</sup>“Peter’s interest in the sayings of Jesus clustered at Matt 5:11–12 continues, although in this instance his language is as close to Luke 6:22 as to Matt 5:11. The parallel consists of a beatitude combined with the verb ὀνειδίζειν, ‘ridicule,’ plus some expression linking the ridicule specifically to a person’s commitment to Jesus: ‘for my sake’ (Matt); ‘for the sake of the Son of Man’ (Luke); ‘for the name of Christ’ (1 Peter). In adapting the beatitude form to his own argument, Peter follows the precedent already set in 3:14 (see Form/Structure/Setting) except that the introductory conditional clause (εἰ with the indicative) is a condition presuming reality rather than a remote contingency (i.e., εἰ with the optative in 3:14, 17). It is unlikely that the difference reflects any heightened urgency or intensity in our passage in comparison with 3:13–17 (as I once thought: Michaels, 399–400; cf. Beare, 165). Nor is the indicative chosen because Peter is speaking only of verbal abuse as distinguished from physical suffering or death (the ‘if’-clause of v 16 refers at least by implication to the latter). Rather, the indicative is the construction he normally uses in reference to persecution: cf. εἰ δέον (with ἐστὶν implied) in 1:6 (‘must’ or ‘by necessity’; lit. ‘as it must be’); also the ‘if’-clauses with the indicative, present in 2:19 and future in 2:20. It is the optative in 3:14, 17 that requires explanation in its own rhetorical context (see Comment on 3:14). At several points in his letter, Peter examines different possible cases or scenarios, some more remote and more drastic than others. Knowing that none of these will apply to all his readers and that some may not apply to any of them, he makes no attempt to distinguish levels of probability with the use of different types of conditional clauses.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 263.]

of admonitions.

**First, don't break the law and then have to suffer.** Suffering for the wrong reason doesn't bring God's help as described in vv. 12-14. Peter lists four categories of wrong suffering: ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος, "as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker." The first three of the categories are relatively self-explanatory.<sup>24</sup> The fourth category, ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος, catches attention because of the way it is attached to the list. It is not just a fourth item; it is an additional item attached to a list of three items, as ἢ ὡς signals. This word ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος<sup>25</sup> did not exist in ancient Greek prior to the writing of First Peter; perhaps Silas coined the word, which would not have been unusual in that world.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, the precise meaning of the word is not certain, although "busybody" is the more commonly adopted understanding.<sup>27</sup> How such actions could lead to the individual suffering are not difficult to imagine, given developing tensions between Christians and their pagan neighbors with growing suspicion of them.

24 "On the other hand, no Christian should even consider risking suffering as a common criminal (unless, of course, the charge is a cover-up for the real charge of being a Christian, as often happens under some regimes). To underline his point Peter mentions two specific categories of criminals, murderer and thief, which would receive a knowing 'of course not' nod from his readers, and then adds the summary term 'criminal' to cover other types of evil activity condemned by law." [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), 168-69.]

<sup>25</sup> ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος (v.l. ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος, s. Mlt-H. 272; B-D-F §124), ου, ὁ (elsewh. only Dionys. Areop., Ep. 8: MPG III 1089c ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος; cp. Epiphanius of Constantia [Salamis], Ancoratus 12; s. Lampe s.v.) a word whose meaning has not yet been determined w. certainty; w. φονεὺς, κλέπτης, κακοποιός **1 Pt 4:15**. EZeller, SBerLAK 1893, 129ff, referring to the claim by Cynic preachers to be overseers (ἐπίσκοποι) of all men (Epict. 3, 22, 97 οὐ τὰ ἀλλότρια πολυπραγμονεῖ ὅταν τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἐπίσκοπῇ ἀλλὰ τὰ ἴδια), interprets the word as mng. **one who meddles in things that do not concern the pers., a busybody** (sim. REB. NRSV: *mischief maker*; s. PWendland, Kultur2 1912, 82, 1; Zahn, Einl. II 39f; ESelwyn, Comm. '46 ad loc. Cp. ἀλλοτρίους ἐπίσκοπος **1 Pt 4:15** P72, 'meddling in other people's affairs'=Lat. 'alienis custos'). But it is questionable whether such behavior would merit the kind of reprisal suggested by the context. Therefore a more serious type of crime has been suggested, and the proximity of κλέπτης has led to the conjecture **concealer of stolen goods**. For **spy, informer** (Lat. delator) s. AHilgenfeld, Einl. 1875, 630. Dssm., NB 51, 5=BS 224, 4 (BGU 531 II, 22 [II A.D.] οὐτε εἰμὶ ἄδικος οὐτε ἀλλοτρίων ἐπιθυμητής) suggests **revolutionist** (s. A Bischoff, ZNW 7, 1906, 271-74; 9, 1908, 171; PSchmidt, ZWT 50, 1908, 26ff). KERbes, ZNW 19, 1920, 39-44; 20, 1921, 249 considers it a Christian coinage, aimed at neglectful bishops. Tertullian, Scorp. 12 'alieni speculator'. Cyprian, Test. 3, 37 'curas alienas agens'. Vulg. 'alienorum adpetitor'.—JBauer, BZ n.s. 22, '78, 109-15.—DELG. 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), 47.]

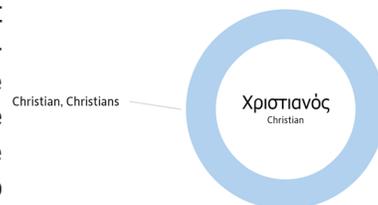
<sup>26</sup>"But then our author tacks on a fourth term, 'meddler,' repeating the 'as' to underline it as an addition. This may be his real concern in the list. It is an unusual term, appearing here for the first time in Greek, perhaps a coinage of Peter. The word *allotriepiskopos* comes from two root words, *allos*, 'belonging to another,' and *episkopos*, 'overseer.' The meanings suggested include 'one who has an eye on others' possessions,' 'the unfaithful guardian of goods committed to him,' 'one who meddles in things that do not concern him,' and an 'informer.'<sup>13</sup> The Christian writers who later use this term (probably picking it up from 1 Peter) appear to prefer the third of these meanings, 'one who interferes in someone else's business.'<sup>14</sup> That also seems the most likely meaning considering the roots from which the word is formed. Thus it is probable that our author is concerned that Christians in their rejection of idolatry and pagan morality or their zeal for the gospel not put their noses (or worse) into situations in which they ought not to be involved and thus justly earn the censure of pagan culture for transgressing culturally approved limits. Gentle persuasion is one thing; denouncing idolatry in a temple courtyard is another, as might also be interfering in the affairs of another family, however well meaning it might be. No Christian should disgrace Christ by being guilty of such things." [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), 169.]

<sup>27</sup>The attempt to define its meaning based on three much later church father uses in two separate sources lacks credibility:

"Peter's concern in the passage centers on the much-discussed ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος, 'busybody' (cf. KJV/AV), set off from the epithets that precede it by the repetition of ὡς 'as.' This word, found only here in the NT and unattested in earlier Greek literature, occurs three more times in later Christian texts (cf. Lampe, 77): twice in Epiphanius in the fourth century (Ancoratus 12, PG 43.37C; Panarion, 66.85, PG 42.165B), and once in Dionysius the Areopagite in the fifth (Epistle, 8.1, PG 3.1089C; BGD, 40, lists only this one). Since none of these is directly dependent on 1 Peter, it is unlikely that the word is Peter's coinage. The reference in Dionysius is to bishops who encroach on another's diocese. The first text in Epiphanius is part of an exposition of 1 Cor 2:10, to the effect that the Holy Spirit is not probing into alien matters in searching out the 'deep things of God,' but into that which is his proper concern; the second makes the point that Jesus, when he broke the Sabbath, was not abrogating the work of another, but was, as God, doing his own proper work." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 267.]

Peter cautions believers, don't engage in foolish actions that lead to suffering, and then expect God to bail you out of their consequences.

**Second, with authentic suffering take heart.** Verse 16 introduces a first class conditional sentence in the Greek that assumes believers are suffering. The experience of suffering is described as centering around the name Χριστιανός, "Christian."<sup>28</sup> The label was not commonly used to designate Christians in the first century, and thus is used only three times in the entire New Testament.<sup>29</sup> The name, evidently coined by non-Christians, seems to have been used on rare occasions as a label that could quickly bring down governmental persecution on individuals since Christianity was not yet a legalized legitimate religion.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the name at this period of time would not have been popular among Christians, and one can easily see how believers could have been ashamed to be so labeled. By the beginning of the second century, Christians had



<sup>28</sup>“Χριστιανός, οὗ, ὁ (formed like Ἡρωδιανοί [q.v.] or Καισαριανοί Epict. 1, 19, 19; s. TMommsen, Her 34, 1899, 151f; Dssm., LO 323 [LAE 377]; Hahn 263, 9; B-D-F §5, 2. On the Pompeian ins CIL IV 679, the reading of which is quite uncertain, s. VSchultze, ZKG 5, 1881, 125ff. On the spelling Χρηστιανός **Ac 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pt 4:16** [all v.l.]; AcPl Ha 9, 19 [cp. Just., A I, 4, 5]; s. FBlass, Her 30, 1895, 465ff; Harnack, SBBerlAk 1915, 762; B-D-F §24; Mlt-H. 72) **one who is associated w. Christ, Christ-partisan, Christian** (so also Lucian, Alex. 25; 38, M. Peregr. 11; 12; 13; 16; Tacitus, Ann. 15, 44; Suetonius, Nero 16; Pliny the Younger, Ep. 10, 96, 1; 2; 3 al., also in Trajan’s reply; ApcSed prol.; Ar., Just., Ath.; s. Hemer, Acts 177) **Ac 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pt 4:16** (JKnox, JBL 72, ’53, 187–89); IEph 11:2; IMg 4; IRo 3:2; IPol 7:3; MPol 3; 10:1; 12:1, 2; D 12:4; PtK 2 p. 15, 8; τῶν Χρ. Dg 1:1. Without the art. 2:6, 10; 4:6; 5:1; 6:1–9. πολλοὺς Χρ. ActPl Ha 9, 19.—As an adj. χριστιανός, ἡ, ὄν: ἡ χριστιανὴ τροφή ITr 6:1.—For inscriptions s. esp. EGibson, The ‘Christians for Christians’ Inscriptions from Phrygia ’78; New Docs 128–39.—RLipsius, Über den Ursprung u. ältesten Gebr. des Christennamens, Prog. Jena 1873; Zahn, Einl. II3 41ff; FKattenbusch, Das apostol. Symbol II 1900, 557ff; JDaniels, De Naam ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΙ: De Studiën 76, 1907, 568–80; JLeCoultré, De l’étymologie du mot ‘Chrétien’: RTP 40, 1907, 188–96; AGercke, Der Christenname ein Scheltnamen: Festschr. z. Jahrhundertfeier d. Univers. Breslau 1911, 360ff; Harnack, Mission I4 1923, 424ff; EPeterson, Christianus: Miscellanea Giov. Mercati I ’46, 355–72; EBickerman, HTR 42, ’49, 109–24; JMoreau, La Nouvelle Cléo 4, ’50, 190–92; HMattingly, JTS 9, ’58, 26–37 (cp. the term Augustiani); CSPicq, StTh 15, ’61, 68–78 (cp. the adj. Ciceronianus=of or belonging to Cicero: Sen., Con. 7, 2, 12).—DELG s.v. χριῶ. M-M. EDNT. 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), 1090.]

<sup>29</sup>Acts 11:26, καὶ εὗρων ἤγαγεν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν. ἐγένετο δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν ὅλον συναχθῆναι ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ διδάξαι ὄχλον ἱκανόν, χρηματίζουσα τε πρῶτως ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τοὺς μαθητὰς **Χριστιανούς**.

and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians.”

Acts 26:28, ὁ δὲ Ἀγρίππας πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον· ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις **Χριστιανὸν** ποιῆσαι.

Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you so quickly persuading me to become a **Christian**?”

<sup>30</sup>“The identification of the reader as ‘Christian’ (Χριστιανός), following a common practice of forming a description of followers that included the name of the leader,<sup>112</sup> employs a word rare in the NT<sup>113</sup> and apparently coined by outsiders.<sup>114</sup> Followers of Christ used other names for themselves in the NT, for example, ‘disciple’ (μαθηταί, Acts 6:1; 9:19), ‘saints’ (ἅγιοι, Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2), ‘brothers’ (ἀδελφοί, Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 1:26).<sup>115</sup> Yet while the word ‘Christian’ continued to be the way outsiders characterized the followers of Christ,<sup>116</sup> it was soon adopted by the church as its own self-designation as well.<sup>117</sup> The association of this title with such sobriquets as ‘murderer’ and ‘thief’ can be construed to mean our author here refers to penalties imposed on Christians by courts of law simply because they were Christians.<sup>118</sup> It is surely true that there were occasions when Roman officials did impose the death penalty on Christians simply for being Christians, most notably under Nero and Pliny. Yet both of those instances were limited in scope and time, Nero’s to Rome following the fire,<sup>119</sup> and Pliny’s to Pontus upon his discovery of their beliefs.<sup>120</sup> Those two instances do indicate that the threat of confrontation with governmental authorities constantly hung over the Christian communities,<sup>121</sup> not only as followers of one executed as a criminal<sup>122</sup> but as members of what in Roman eyes appeared to be a collegium characterized by superstition<sup>123</sup> in a time when all collegia were subject to investigation.<sup>124</sup> Yet Christianity was not declared formally illegal until 249 CE under the emperor Decius,<sup>125</sup> and Pliny’s description of the extent of inroads made by the Christians in Pontus<sup>126</sup> as well as his need to consult the emperor on the correct course to be followed indicate that Christianity had not been generally considered illegal, at least in that part of Asia Minor. Such an indication is confirmed by Trajan’s unwillingness to make any general rule about the punishment of Christians, and his prohibition of seeking them out.<sup>127</sup> Nor is there any indication in our letter that Christians faced a possible death penalty or that our author was preparing them for martyrdom.<sup>128</sup> What they must endure is reproach and obloquy (v. 14) for their ‘hostility to human society’ demonstrated by their unwillingness to take part in normal social events (4:4). Such verbal abuse and social ostracism, as our letter indicates, came more from their neighbors than as the result of any legal action taken by the authorities.<sup>129</sup>” [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), 313-14.]

adopted the name Χριστιανός and turned it into a positive label.<sup>31</sup>

The two admonitions serving as the core expression move in a negative / positive sequence: **don't be ashamed, rather praise God**: μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν. The present tense imperative verbs used here emphasize these as continuing responsibilities, not as a momentary action. The sense is “**stop being ashamed, and constantly be praising God.**” When opposition was expressed against the believers because they were followers of Christ (= the meaning of Χριστιανός), some believers (τις ὑμῶν) evidently tended to pull away from public identification with this new religion. Peter could well have remembered his own experience years before of denying Christ in the courtyard of the high priest (cf. Mt. 26:69-75 // Mk. 14:66-72 // Lk. 22:54-62 // Jhn. 18:15-18, 25-27). Peter has already affirmed that believers will never experience shame because of Christ (2:6, οὐ μὴ καταισχυνοθῆ), but that their pagan neighbors who have slandered them will be put to shame on the day of judgment (3:16).<sup>32</sup> Now he urges his readers to not yield to the human instinct of pulling back in the face of hostility. Rather, they should be praising God because of this name Christian.<sup>33</sup>

**The Secondary Reasons, vv. 17-18:** 17 ὅτι ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ δὲ πρῶτον ἀφ' ἡμῶν, τί τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀπειθοῦντων τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ; 18 καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται; The causal conjunction ὅτι here used instead of γάρ in verse 14 introduces a second reason but at a secondary level of importance rather than at a primarily level as signaled by γάρ.<sup>34</sup>

Thus the incentives for enduring unjust suffering put on the table in vv. 12-14 have an additional basis that in part is motivated by the first reason mentioned in vv. 15-16. There should be no shock that the testing of the ‘fiery ordeal’ causing suffering is happening (v. 12). The test, a πειρασμὸν, is intended to disclose authentic commitment, and thus is a judgment, τὸ κρίμα. Therefore if the suffering comes ὡς Χριστιανός, as a Christian, our reaction will reflect how well we stand up under the test. Praising God reflects successful examination; feeling shame raises serious questions.

The thought flow in these two verses is ‘stair-casing’ in the sense that the next idea builds on the previous one in order to reach the climatic point in the final idea. Peter begins with ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ, “**the time has come for judgment to begin with the house of God.**” The moment of suffering begins (τοῦ ἄρξασθαι) the divine examination of God’s people in anticipation of final judgment still ahead. Whereas the outside world labeled believers as Χριστιανούς, Peter labels them as τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ, the house of God (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15<sup>35</sup>).



<sup>31</sup>“By the second century, Χριστιανός had been adopted by ‘Christians’ themselves as a self-designation (Ign. Eph. 11.2; Magn. 4; Rom. 3.2; Pol. 7.3; Mart. Pol. 3, 10.1, 12.1–2; Did. 12.4).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 268.]

<sup>32</sup>“μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, ‘don’t be ashamed’ (lit., ‘let him not be ashamed,’ with the τις ὑμῶν, ‘any of you,’ v 15a, still presupposed as the subject). Peter’s conviction is that believers in Christ ‘will never be put to shame’ (οὐ μὴ καταισχυνοθῆ, 2:6, citing Isa 28:16), while those who slander them will (cf. 3:16). Yet he writes here in the imperative, not the indicative mood. His emphasis is not on what will objectively be the case (i.e., that Christians will be vindicated) but on what his readers’ attitude should be subjectively when faced with verbal abuse and physical danger. Peter’s aspiration for them corresponds to Paul’s aspiration for himself in the wake of imprisonment and the possibility of death (Phil 1:20; cf. 2 Tim 1:12; cf. also the warnings of Jesus in Mark 8:38//Luke 9:26).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 269.]

<sup>33</sup>A few manuscripts (P<sup>049</sup> M) read ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ (“**in this matter**”) instead of ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ (“**because of this name**”), in an effort to clarify the reference. But the overwhelming manuscript evidence favors ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ. Michaels’ arguments (WBC) for the originality of ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ are unconvincing.

<sup>34</sup>It is interesting to observe how many commentators miss this simple point of ancient Greek grammar. As a subordinate causal conjunction ὅτι sometimes introduces sentences rather than dependent clauses inside sentences. A simple switch γάρ from to ὅτι would clearly signal that the second reason introduced by ὅτι is not on the same level of importance as those introduced by γάρ. “There is no doubt about the consecutive use of ὅτι in the later Greek.” [A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos, 1919; 2006), 1001.] It seems to me that many commentators cannot think outside the categories of English grammar, and thus have difficulty grasping grammar concepts that cannot be exactly reproduced in English.

<sup>35</sup>NRSV: **if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.**

ἐὰν δὲ βραδύνω, ἵνα εἰδῆς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, ἣτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἐδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας·

Some debate exists over the background of this image.<sup>36</sup> Is τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ but another way of saying God's family? Some contend so, and the translation "household of God" reflects this. The other possible background meaning is that this phrase assumes the temple in Jerusalem. Peter plays off the judgment of God on the temple as set forth in Ezek. 9:6-7<sup>37</sup> and Mal. 3:1, as well as the gospel accounts of Jesus' cleansing of the temple in His earthly ministry. This latter understanding is consistent with Peter's designation of the community of faith as a spiritual house in 2:5.

*The next step* in his thought is εἰ δὲ πρῶτον ἀφ' ἡμῶν, τί τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀπειθούντων τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ; ("and since it begins first with us, what will be the outcome for those disobeying the Gospel of God?"). Peter assumes that we believers face divine examination first. Given the thoroughness of this process for believers, what would be the expected outcome of the divine exam of those having rejected the Gospel that God has provided? Not a pretty picture, to be sure!

*The third step* is καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται; ("And 'if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?") Here Peter appeals to Proverbs 11:31 (LXX) almost word for word in the Septuagint text.<sup>38</sup> This builds on the first two expressions in verse 17 in order to make even clearer that the outcome of the ungodly will be spiritual disaster.<sup>39</sup> Thus, facing unjust suffering signals the beginning of a divine judgment with believers that will ultimately extend to unbelievers in final judgment. And this judgment on unbelievers will be the vindication that believers have made the correct choice in following Jesus.

**The Conclusion, v. 19:** ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῷ κτίστῃ παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιῶν, "Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good." The conjunction ὥστε signals a conclusion to be drawn from the preceding discussion. Peter then sums up with an admonition to believers in light of everything that he has described in vv. 12-18. The heart of the admonition is πιστῷ κτίστῃ παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν (to the faithful Creator let them turn their lives over).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>1) "the household of God" - RSV, NRSV, NASB, ESV, HCSB, LEB, ; "God's household" - TNIV; "God's family" - NCV; "the family of God" - NIV, NIrV, NIV (1984); "God's own children" - NLT; "la propia familia de Dios" - Dios Habla Hoy; "la familia de Dios" - Nueva Versión Internacional; "den Kindern Gottes" - Neues Leben Bibel.

2) "the house of God" - KJV, ASV, Douay-Rheims, NKJV, Wey; "God's house" - Wycliffe; "His own house" - Phillips; "de domo Dei" - Vulgate; "la casa de Dios" BdA, BR-V, Nueva Biblia Latinoamericana de Hoy, Nueva Traducción Viviente, Reina Valera Contemporánea, Reina-Valera (1960, 1995); "su propio pueblo" - Traducción en lenguaje actual; "dem Hause Gottes" Luther (1912, 1984), Elberfelder (1905), Menge-Bibel; "Haus Gottes" - Einheitsübersetzung, Zürcher Bibel, Elberfelder (2006), Schlachter Bibel; "seinem eigenen Haus" - Neue Genfer Übersetzung; "la maison de Dieu" - Segond (1910), Ostervald.

<sup>37</sup>NRSV: 6 Cut down old men, young men and young women, little children and women, but touch no one who has the mark. And begin at my sanctuary (ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων μου ἄρξασθε). So they began with the elders who were in front of the house. 7 Then he said to them, "Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain. Go!" So they went out and killed in the city.

<sup>38</sup>NRSV: If the righteous are repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!

Prov. 11:31, εἰ ὁ μὲν δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται;

1 Pet. 4:18, καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται;

[Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Pr 11:31.]

<sup>39</sup>Peter reinforces the rhetorical question of v 17b with another, formulated similarly and taken verbatim (except for the omission of the particle μέν) from Prov 11:31 LXX. It is more likely that the text from Proverbs helped to shape Peter's rhetoric already in v 17b than that he added it as an afterthought, ὁ δίκαιος, 'the just person' (corresponding both to 'us' in v 17b, and to 'those who suffer when God requires it' in v 19), is the Christian believer (cf. ἐπὶ δικαίους in 3:12). μόλις here means 'barely' or 'with difficulty' (BGD, 526.1;) rather than 'scarcely' (526.3). In the context of 1 Peter, the emphasis of the words μόλις σώζεται ('is barely saved') is on σώζεται: whatever the difficulty, and whether or not they suffer physical death, the 'just' will be saved (cf. 1:5, 9-10; 2:2; 3:21). The sure hope of final vindication dominates the entire epistle. Yet this salvation is not necessarily an easy thing or without cost (cf. the Gospel tradition: e.g., Mark 8:35; 13:13, 1920, 22). The terms, 'godless' and 'sinner,' although not used elsewhere in 1 Peter, refer clearly enough to the 'disobedient' of the preceding verse, the enemies of the Christian movement. Their fate Peter leaves grimly in question (cf. his vague but ominous language in 2:8, 3:16b-17, and at the end of his psalm quotation in 3:12b). [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 272.]

<sup>40</sup>The inner attitude in doing this, then, is one of trust. The image of entrusting appears frequently in the NT (e.g., Luke 12:48; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:2), including that of entrusting people to God (Acts 14:23; 20:32). It means 'to hand over something of value to the care of another.'<sup>23</sup> In our context one is handing over one's most valuable possession, one's very self, to God. The image is likely drawn from Ps. 31:5 (30:5 in Greek), 'Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.' Following Christ (who quoted this psalm during his persecution in Luke 23:46), they are to commit themselves to God, for he is 'a

The qualification of proper suffering continues here with οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, those suffering according to the will of God. This captures the essence of the previous qualifications: v. 13, κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασι, sharing Christ's sufferings; v. 14, ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, for the name of Christ; v. 16, ὡς Χριστιανός, suffers as a Christian. The inward action is a deliberate decision to entrust one's very life to God: πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν. The outward expression of having done that is ἐν ἀγαθοποιῶν, while doing good.<sup>41</sup>

This is what we believers need to understand about unjust suffering. When a pagan world inflicts harm on us simply for being a committed Christian, shock and resentment have no place in our reaction. Rather rejoicing and praising God are our responses. We have entrusted ourselves to a faithful God!

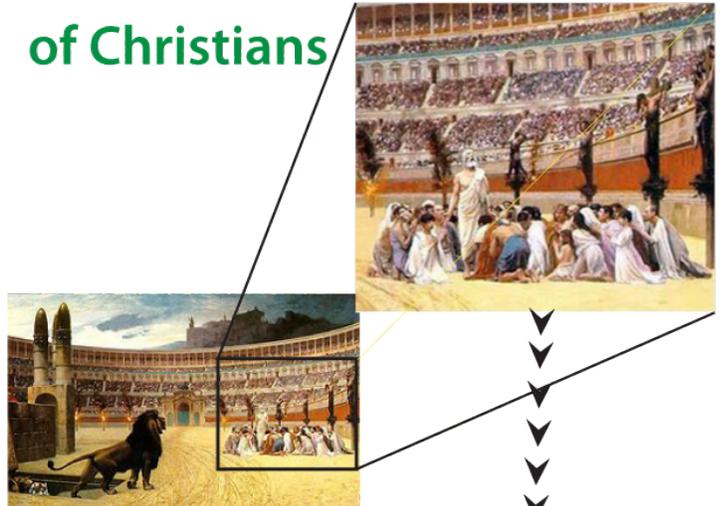
Our prayer and hope is that we will be spared such harmful treatment. But such is not certain even in our world. Countless numbers of believers in many countries are experiencing exactly what Peter talked about to his initial readers. Persecution of Christians is not just a subject of history!

In the 20th century, Christians have been persecuted by Muslim and Hindu groups inter alia, and by atheistic states such as the USSR and North Korea.

Currently (as of 2010), as estimated by the Christian missionary organisation Open Doors UK, an estimated 100 million Christians face persecution, particularly in North Korea, Iran and Saudi Arabia.<sup>2</sup> A recent study, cited by the Vatican, reported that 75 out of every 100 people killed due to religious hatred are Christian.<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, such continues to take place. The human rights organization, *Persecution.org: International Christian Concern*, tracks this activity and posts updated figures etc. at their web site <http://www.persecution.org/> regularly. We must pray for fellow Christians going through such trials and difficulties.

## Persecution of Christians



faithful Creator.” [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), 173.]

<sup>41</sup>“This noun occurs four times in 1 Clem (2.2.7; 33.1; 34.2), but only here in the NT. It is difficult to decide whether the preposition ἐν is to be taken instrumentally as ‘by’ (BGD, 260.3.1a) or temporally as ‘while’ (BGD, 260.2.3]). Is it the author’s point that believers ‘entrust their lives’ to God precisely by doing good, or that when they do good they should trust God to protect their lives from danger? The logic of the sentence favors the latter, with ‘while doing good’ as the better translation.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 274.]

<sup>42</sup>“Persecution of Christians,” Wikipedia.org.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 19**  
**1 Peter 5:1-5**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

**“Develop the Right Atmosphere”**

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**Greek NT**

5.1 Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 2 ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν, μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως, 3 μηδ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κληρῶν ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· 4 καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον. 5 ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις. πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, ὅτι Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιπάσσειται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

5 1 Ich wende mich nun an die Ältesten unter euch. Ich bin selbst Ältester der Gemeinde, und ich habe teil an den Leiden von Christus wie an seiner Herrlichkeit, die bald offenbar werden wird. Deshalb ermahne ich euch: 2 Leitet die Gemeinde, die Herde Gottes, die euch anvertraut ist, als rechte Hirten! Kümmert euch um sie, nicht weil es eure Pflicht ist, sondern aus innerem Antrieb, so wie es Gott gefällt. Tut es nicht, um euch zu bereichern, sondern aus Hingabe. 3 In eurem Verantwortungsbereich führt euch nicht als Herren auf, sondern gebt euren Gemeinden ein Vorbild. 4 Dann werdet ihr, wenn der oberste Hirt kommt, den Siegeskranz erhalten, der nie verwelkt. 5 Euch Jüngeren aber sage ich: Ordnet euch den Ältesten unter! Überhaupt müsst ihr – das sage ich allen – im Umgang miteinander jede Überheblichkeit ablegen. Ihr wisst doch: »Gott widersetzt sich den Überheblichen, aber denen, die gering von sich denken, wendet er seine Liebe zu.«

**NRSV**

1 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, I exhort the elders among you 2 to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it — not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. 5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

**NLT**

1 And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share his glory and his honor when he returns. As a fellow elder, this is my appeal to you: 2 Care for the flock of God entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly -- not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your good example. 4 And when the head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honor. 5 You younger men, accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for “God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble.”

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Leaders, set the example, vv. 1-4](#)
  - b. [Young men, be respectful, v. 5](#)

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**Introduction to Study**

When believers face intense and dangerous hostility because of their faith, who should they turn to? First of all, they should turn to God for wisdom and help in successfully coping with suffering. But additionally, Peter knew the central role that a community of faith could and should play in helping members cope. Pivotal to the success of the community is the quality of leadership in that community. If the church leaders are spiritual minded and are

following Christ's leadership, members can find encouragement and assistance from them in understanding how to respond to persecution. Thus Peter turns his attention to the leaders of the communities of faith with some very pointed instruction to help them position themselves for genuine ministry to the members.

This passage is somewhat related to a couple of passages in Paul's writings:<sup>1</sup>

**Titus 1:5-9.** 5 I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint **elders** in each town as I instructed you. 6 An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious. 7 An elder must live a blameless life because he is God's minister. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money. 8 He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must live wisely and be fair. He must live a devout and disciplined life. 9 He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

5 Τούτου χάριν ἀπέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ, καὶ καταστήσῃς κατὰ πόλιν **πρεσβυτέρους**, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διαταξάμην, 6 εἴ τις ἐστὶν ἀνέγκλητος, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ, τέκνα ἔχων πιστά, μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνυπότακτα. 7 δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμον, μὴ αὐθάδῃ, μὴ ὀργίλον, μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ, 8 ἀλλὰ φιλόξενον, φιλάγαθον, σώφρονα, δίκαιον, ὄσιον, ἐγκρατῆ, 9 ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου, ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾦ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν.

**1 Timothy 3:1-7.** 1 It is a true saying that if someone wants to be **an elder**, he desires an honorable responsibility. 2 For an elder must be a man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must be able to teach. 3 He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, peace loving, and not one who loves money. 4 He must manage his own family well, with children who respect and obey him. 5 For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? 6 An elder must not be a new Christian, because he might be proud of being chosen so soon, and the Devil will use that pride to make him fall. 7 Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not fall into the Devil's trap and be disgraced.

3.1 Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· εἴ τις **ἐπίσκοπις** ὀρέγεται, καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιθυμεῖ. 2 δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνδρα, νηφάλιον, σώφρονα, κόσμιον, φιλόξενον, διδασκικόν, 3 μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, ἀλλὰ ἐπιεικῆ, ἄμαχον, ἀφιλάργυρον, 4 τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος· 5 (εἰ δὲ τις τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου προστῆναι οὐκ οἶδεν, πῶς ἐκκλησίας θεοῦ ἐπιμελήσεται;) 6 μὴ νεόφυτον, ἵνα μὴ τυφωθείς εἰς κρίμα ἐμπέσῃ τοῦ διαβόλου. 7 δεῖ δὲ καὶ μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὀνειδισμόν ἐμπέσῃ καὶ παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου.

First Peter touches on the role of spiritual leaders in the communities of faith. The three related passages by Paul also emphasize this responsibility.

In a world where pastors and other spiritual leaders are frequently getting into trouble by breaking the laws of the land and/or by moral failure, these texts have a vitally important message. And this is not only just for them, but is equally important for the rest of the church to understand as well.

## I. Context and Background<sup>2</sup>

As always, the background issues play an important role in the interpretive process. This is especially true for 5:1-5.

### a. Historical

**External History.** The UBS 4th revised edition Greek New Testament lists two places where significant variations of readings occur that could impact the work of Bible translators.

In verse two, the phrase ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν (*seeing after not grudgingly but willingly according to God*) is varied in several ways by different copyists. The presence of the participle ἐπισκοποῦντες seems almost redundant to the thrust of ποιμάνατε (*pastor while seeing after...*).<sup>3</sup> And the evi-

<sup>1</sup>Also related is Paul's speech to the Ephesian leaders in Acts 20:17-38, and especially vv. 28-30.

<sup>2</sup>Serious 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.

<sup>3</sup>"It is difficult to decide if one should follow the authority of important witnesses such as  $\aleph^*$  ( $\aleph^*$  = original copyist's handwriting before the manuscript was corrected) and B, which do not have the participle ἐπισκοποῦντες, and regard the participle's presence in

dence is so divided that the UBS editors give inclusion of the participle a {C} rating indicating considerable uncertainty over whether or not it is original. Also uncertain is the inclusion of the prepositional phrase κατὰ θεόν (*according to God*).<sup>4</sup> Solid evidence for its inclusion is present especially in the earlier manuscripts, but not in the later ones, which most likely reflects later difficulty in understanding the meaning of the phrase that literally is “*according to God’s will.*”

In verse 3, one early and very important manuscript, Codex Vaticanus (*B*), has accidentally omitted the entire verse. No apparent explanation for this omission can be found beyond that the original copyist of *B* must have skipped over the phrase μηδ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου thinking that he had already copied all the μη... ἀλλὰ expressions here.

The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition Novum Testamentum Graece adds five more variations to those listed above. In verse one, a few manuscripts (P<sup>33</sup> 1739 M) add the definite article τοὺς to πρεσβυτέρους, without altering the meaning; in some instances τοὺς replaces οὖν, thus detaching 5:1-4 from the preceding statements.<sup>5</sup> In five ἀλλήλοις is varied from “to one another” to “among one another” (ἐν ἀλλήλοις). But the shorter reading has much greater support and should be preferred.<sup>6</sup> These two examples illustrate the minor impact that these variations have on the meaning of the text.

Thus the process of copying this passage over the centuries has remained stable and the text is certain.

**Internal History.** In the background of this passage is the issue of labeling spiritual leaders. This in turn raises some questions about how congregations in the first century world functioned and were organized.<sup>7</sup> most witnesses as an exegetical expansion (made perhaps in accordance with 2:25). Alternatively, the shorter text, followed by RSV and Seg, may be the result of a deliberate omission, prompted either by stylistic considerations (namely, that after ποιμάνετε [*tend the flock*], the word ἐπισκοποῦντες is unnecessary) or by ecclesiastical conviction (namely, that Peter could never have admonished presbyters [v. 1] to exercise the function of bishops). In order to represent the balance of external evidence and of the uncertainty of whether copyists may have added or omitted this participle, ἐπισκοποῦντες has been put in brackets to indicate a certain doubt that it belongs in the text. If the longer reading is followed, the presence of ἐπισκοποῦντες serves to show that ‘shepherding the flock’ means that the elders are to oversee and care for the needs of the congregation (Michaels, 1 Peter, p. 283). As Jobs correctly states, ‘Fortunately, neither omission nor inclusion substantially changes the meaning of Peter’s admonition’ (1 Peter, p. 310).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 490.]

<sup>4</sup>“The phrase κατὰ θεόν, which is read by a variety of witnesses representing several types of text, is omitted in a few uncials and in most minuscules, perhaps because copyists had difficulty understanding its precise meaning (that is, “according to [the will of] God”). Other renderings of this phrase include “as God would have you do it” (NRSV) and “as God wants” (NJB).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 490-91.]

<sup>5</sup>“MS variations reflect scribal questions about the connection of this statement with what immediately precedes (i.e., the significance of οὖν, ‘therefore’). The majority of later MSS (including P and Ψ) substitute τοὺς for οὖν (i.e., ‘To the elders who are among you’), while a few others (including κ) conflate the two readings (i.e., ‘To the elders, therefore, who are among you’). The effect of the substitution is to eliminate the necessity of seeking any real connection to the preceding context. Yet the earliest and best MSS (including P<sup>72</sup> A B) retain the more difficult reading οὖν, and even the conflated text of κ bears witness to its presence at an early stage of the tradition. οὖν, ‘therefore,’ is clearly original and raises the pointed question of how the appeal of 5:1-4 follows logically from 4:19 in particular or from 4:17-19 or 4:12-19 more generally.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 276.]

<sup>6</sup>“Instead of ἀλλήλοις, ‘toward each other,’ some MSS (P<sup>72</sup> and others) have ἐν ἀλλήλοις, ‘among each other,’ while the majority (including P) insert ὑποτασσόμενοι after the pronoun, yielding the translation, ‘clothe yourselves with humility, being subject to each other’; cf. Eph 5:21). The simple ἀλλήλοις (κ B OL most vg MSS and others), however, is the most strongly attested reading and is clearly to be preferred.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 277.]

<sup>7</sup>“*The Service and Organization of the Church.* We conclude the topic of the biblical teaching on the church by briefly calling attention to its service and organization. Five observations emerge from the relevant data. First, the ministry of the church centers on its usage of spiritual gifts (*charismata*), which are given to believers by God’s grace and for his glory, as well as for the good of others ( Rom 12:3 ; Eph 4:7-16 ; etc.). Second, every believer possesses a gift of the Spirit ( 1 Cor 12:7 ; Eph 4:7 ; etc.). Third, it is through the diversity of the gifts that the body of Christ matures and is unified ( Rom 12:4 ; 1 Cor 12:12-31 ; Eph 4:17-18 ). Fourth, although there was organized leadership in the New Testament church (elders, 1 Tim 3:1-7 ; [also called pastors and shepherds, see Acts 20:17 Acts 20:28 ; 1 Peter 5:1-4 ; etc.] and deacons, 1 Tim 3:8-13 ), there does not seem to have been a gap between the ‘clergy’ and ‘laity.’ Rather, those with the gift of leadership are called to equip all the saints for the work of the ministry ( Eph 4:7-16 ). Fifth, spiritual gifts are to be exercised in love ( 1 Cor. 13 ).” [C. Marvin Pate, “Church, the,” *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical*

This issue has importance because most church organizational charts today would not resemble one drawn up from first century Christian practice.

Several dynamics were at work in apostolic Christianity that are not present in Christianity today, as well as the opposite.

a) *Congregations until the fourth century did not meet in their own buildings designed for Christian worship.*<sup>8</sup> Most 'churches' met in private homes in small groups of one to four dozen people.<sup>9</sup> Thus in large cities such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome and other places, the Christian movement would be composed of numerous such groups meeting all around the city and the nearby region. Romans 16:1-20 reflects the presence of several such groups in the city of Rome by the mid-50s of the first century. The primary term for church or congregation, ἐκκλησία,<sup>10</sup> can be used to refer to individual house church groups such as

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*Theology]*

<sup>8</sup>The Edict of Milan in 313 AD was a decisive turning point when Roman emperor Constantine issued the decree in the western empire and also by Licinius, who ruled in the East, authorizing Christian churches to own and construct their own property and building.

<sup>9</sup>“Three great events in the early history of Christianity took place in a Jerusalem house: the Lord’s supper (Mark 14:12–26), the appearances of Jesus to the Apostles after His Resurrection (John 20:14–29), and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). These events are so important that we must want to know more about that house. Let us do some detective work upon it.

“First, do we know that all three passages refer to the same house? Mark describes it as having a guest-room (Mark 14:14), large and upstairs (v. 15), for Jesus and His Apostles. According to Acts 1:12, 13, after the Ascension, the Apostles ‘returned ... and went up to the upper room where they were staying’. And it was a very big room, because 120 people gathered with the Apostles there (v. 15). Acts 2 begins with the Twelve ‘all together in one place’. No change of place is mentioned, and John merely says, ‘the doors being shut where the disciples were’ (John 20:19), which seems to mean ‘where they were staying’. So the three passages may well refer to the same house.....

“Other house-churches are mentioned in the New Testament, with the names of the people in whose houses they met, e.g. at Philippi (Acts 16:40), Corinth (Acts 18:7), Rome (Rom. 16:5; 16:14; 16:15), Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19), Laodicea (Col. 4:15), Colossae (Philemon 1 and 2) (see p. 99). Such phrases as ‘the brethren who are with them’, ‘the saints’ (i.e., fellow Christians) ‘who are with them’ seem to mean ‘who are in their house-church’. Several of these house-churches, like the one in Jerusalem, were in the homes of women, probably widows. In some cases both husband and wife are named. Where other names are added, they probably represent grown-up members of the family. In one house-church only men are mentioned.”

[John Foster and W. H. C. Frend, *The First Advance: Church History 1, AD 29-500*, Rev. ed. with additions (London: SPCK, 1991-), 20-21.]

<sup>10</sup>This word ἐκκλησία, literally means “called out ones” and designates an assembly of people gathered together for some specific purpose. These purposes can range from a regularly summoned legislative body (cf. Acts 19:39), to a casual gathering of people (Acts 19:32, 40) to a religious gathering of people that can designate a gathering of Israelites in the Old Testament (Heb. 2:12; Acts 7:38) or a gathering of Christians (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:18). This Christian gathering can take place in the home of a patron (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philm. 2). The word can designate a congregation as the totality of Christians living and meeting in a particular locality or larger geographical area, but not necessarily limited to one meeting place: Ac 5:11; 8:3; 9:31 11:26; 12:5; 15:3; 18:22; 20:17; 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:16 etc. Often the geographical location is specified:

More definitely of the Christians in **Jerusalem** Ac 8:1; 11:22; cp. 2:47 v.l.; 15:4, 22; **Cenchreae** Ro 16:1; cp. vs. 23; **Corinth** 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Cl ins; 47:6; AcPlCor 1:16; **Laodicea** Col 4:16; Rv 3:14; **Thessalonica** 1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:1; **Colossae** Phlm subscr. v.l. Likew. w. other names: Rv 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7; IEph ins; 8:1; IMg ins; ITr ins; 13:1; IRO 9:1; IPHld ins; 10:1; ISm 11:1; Pol ins. Plural: Ac 15:41; 16:5; Ro 16:16; 1 Cor 7:17; 2 Cor 8:18f, 23f; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Rv 2:7, 11, 17, 23, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 22:16; the Christian community in **Judea** Gal 1:22; 1 Th 2:14; **Galatia** Gal 1:2; 1 Cor 16:1; **Asia** vs. 19; Rv 1:4, and cp. vss. 11 and 20; **Macedonia** 2 Cor 8:1. κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν in each individual congregation or assembly Ac 14:23 (on the syntax cp. OGI 480, 9 [s. 1 above]: ἵνα τιθῆνται κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν in order that they [the statues] might be set up at each [meeting of the] ἐ.). On κατὰ τ. οὐσαν ἐ. Ac 13:1 cp. εἰμί 1 end.” [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), 304.]

It should not be surprising that in the expanding geographical specification that these boundaries could be extended to include the known world.

**c. the global community of Christians, (universal) church** (s. AvHarnack, *Mission* I4 420 n. 2 on **Ac 12:1**): **Mt 16:18** (OBetz, ZNW 48, '57, 49–77: Qumran parallels; s. HBraun, *Qumran I*, '66, 30–37); **Ac 9:31** (but s. 3bβ); **1 Cor 6:4; 12:28; Eph 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23ff, 27, 29, 32** (HSchlier, *Christus u. d. Kirche im Eph 1930*; also ThBl 6, 1927, 12–17); **Col 1:18, 24; Phil 3:6; B 7:11; Hv 2, 2, 6; 2, 4, 1** (with the depiction of the church as an elderly lady cp. Ps.-Demetr. 265 where Hellas, the homeland, is represented as λαβοῦσα γυναικὸς σχῆμα); 3, 3, 3; IEph 5:1f and oft.—The local assembly or congregation as well as the universal church is more specif. called ἐ. τοῦ θεοῦ or ἐ. τ. Χριστοῦ. This is essentially Pauline usage, and it serves to give the current Gk. term its Christian coloring and thereby its special mng.:

the one Philemon led in his home at Colossae, τῆ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ, (Philm. 2). Or, the noun can refer collectively to all the house church groups in a city as the Christian community, as ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ (the church of the Laodiceans) in Col. 4:16.

b) *Leadership models in early Christianity were evolving out of a beginning Jewish model.*<sup>11</sup> Spiritually a congregation belongs to Christ as a visible expression of His body (cf. Rom. 16:16). From the human standpoint the beginning model was the Twelve Apostles, as commissioned by Christ (cf. Luke 6:13-16). The early chapters of Acts (chaps 1-7) make this very clear when the ἐκκλησίᾳ was centered in Jerusalem. When others began coming to Christ and forming their assemblies elsewhere, the apostles felt compelled to investigate these groups in order to insure they were following the teachings of Christ, as Acts chapters 8-11 specify in the provinces of Judea and Samaria.

Acts 12 signals a key turning point. With Roman government persecution coming from Herod Agrippa, the role of the apostles began shifting from leadership over the church in Jerusalem to a broader regional leadership role based in Jerusalem. But one would be mistaken to view this in terms of a hierarchical structure. Their leadership over churches outside Jerusalem was by mutual agreement, as Paul makes abundantly clear in Gal. 2:1-14 when he traveled to Jerusalem to secure the apostles support for the Gentile ministry and then later at Antioch severely reprimanded for his hypocrisy toward Gentile believers at Antioch. The opposition to the apostolic gospel evidenced in many of Paul's later writings along with the letters of John and Jude clearly reflect that not all the churches accepted the leadership role of the apostles.

Very likely local leaders in the house church groups even in Jerusalem emerged earlier, but Luke does not provide clear indication of this in this part of Acts; 11:30 is the first reference to local leaders in Jerusalem. But clearly by the Jerusalem council meeting in the late 40s, as described in Acts 15, a local leadership had emerged along side the regional leadership of the apostles. James speaks as the leader of the "elders" who are leaders of the various house church groups in Jerusalem, while Peter speaks as the leader of the apostles.

The nature and role of local church leaders at this point (as referenced in Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4) seems to have been modeled on their Jewish heritage, especially in the synagogue, as Luke's earlier use of the term 'elders' for Jewish leaders signals: cf. Acts 4:5 (*their rulers and elders and scribes*), 4:8 (*Rulers and elders of the people*), 4:23 (*the chief priests and the elders*), and 6:12 (*the elders and the scribes*).<sup>12</sup> The

α. ἐ. τοῦ θεοῦ (Orig., C. Cels. 1, 63, 22) **1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13; 1 Th 2:14; 2 Th 1:4; 1 Ti 3:5, 15; Ac 20:28**; ITr 2:3; 12:1; IPHd 10:1; ISm ins al.

β. ἐ. τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Orig., C. Cels. 5, 22, 14) **Ro 16:16**.

γ. both together ἐ. ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ **1 Th 1:1**.

δ. ἡ ἐ. ἡ πρώτη ἡ πνευματικὴ the first, spiritual church (conceived in a Platonic sense as preexistent) 2 Cl 14:1; ἐ. ζῶσα the living church the body of Christ vs. 2; ἡ ἁγία ἐ. Hv 1, 1, 6; 1, 3, 4; ἡ καθολικὴ ἐ. ISm 8:2; ἡ ἁγία καὶ καθολικὴ ἐ. MPol ins; ἡ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην καθολικὴ ἐ. 8:1; 19:2; ἐν σῶμα τῆς ἐ. ISm 1:2.

[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), 304.]

One should note that the 'universal' church in New Testament thought is not a vague abstraction, but rather the envisioning of all the believers in all the house church groups over the world as a single body anticipating coming together in Heaven as the bride of Christ. One cannot 'belong' to the universal church, except by being a part of a local believing community.

<sup>11</sup>The synagogue model grew out of the earlier Jewish community governance pattern during the interbiblical period, as is noted: "The older communal order of the local Jewish community is continued in the constitution of the synagogue, → συναγωγή. To the local board, usually made up of 7 members, there corresponds in places with a separate Jewish cultic community the synagogal council. The title πρεσβύτεροι is also perpetuated for the leaders of the community and the disciplinary body of the synagogue, cf. Lk. 7:3.<sup>55</sup> Yet it is worth noting that the titular use of πρεσβύτεροι is much less prominent in the synagogue of the diaspora in the first centuries A.D. The more frequent are titles common in Gk. constitutional usage (γερουσία, γερουσιάρχης, ἄρχοντες, φροντιστής, γραμματεὺς, προστάτης).<sup>56</sup>" [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:660-61.]

<sup>12</sup>The peculiar problem of the use of πρεσβύτερος in Judaism and Christianity arises out of the twofold meaning of the word, which can be employed both as a designation of age and also as a title of office. The two meanings cannot always be distinguished with clarity, though age is plainly the only sense in Gn. 18:11 f.; 19:4, 31, 34; 24:1; 35:29 and many other passages. The word can still be used for this in Christian writings, Jn. 8:9; Ac. 2:17 (Jl. 2:28 opp. νεανίσκοι); 1 Tm. 5:1, 2; 1 Pt. 5:5 (opp. νεώτερος) etc.; cf. also πρεσβύτεροι for the forefathers in Hb. 11:2. On the other hand, passages like Mt. 15:2; Mk. 7:3, 5 (παράδοσις τῶν πρεσβυτέρων) show that πρεσβύτεροι can be bearers of the normative doctrinal tradition, and 1 Pt. 5:5; 1 Cl., 1, 3 are evidence that the term can denote a place of dignity in the community. The titular significance is no less clear when πρεσβύτεροι are members of a local



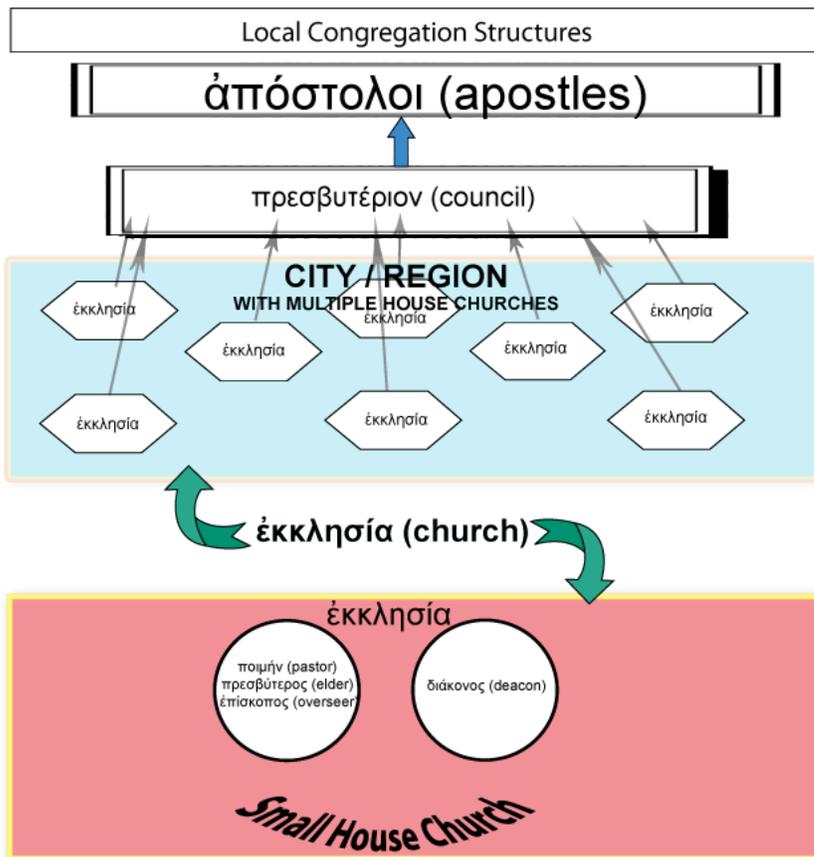
their role mostly from a second century AD onward perspective as focused on protecting the Torah and the scribal traditions from misinterpretation. The ultimate group of elders was the Jewish Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, although evidence suggests that ‘elders’ were distinguished from the priests and referred to representatives of the leading aristocratic families with influence on the Sanhedrin mostly as advisors to the priests who made the decisions under the leadership of the high priest.<sup>15</sup>

c) *In the Pauline churches with both Jews and Gentiles, the influence of the Greco-Roman culture is present in the evolution of church leadership models certainly by mid-first century.* The two sets of local leadership terms πρεσβύτερος (elder), ἐπίσκοπος (overseer), and ποιμήν (pastor), along with διάκονος (deacon), all had backgrounds in the non-religious world of the first century. By the end of the first Christian century this influence is unmistakable, and ultimately corrupting to the earlier models in the church. With the expansion of Christianity into the non-Jewish world largely through the ministry of the apostle Paul in the middle of the first century, the Jewish heritage of the synagogue model began merging with influences from the surrounding Greco-Roman culture. Given the growing impact of local congregations being led by non-Jews the meaning of the leadership terms naturally gravitated away from their Jewish definitions and toward the Greco-Roman definitions.

What were those influences? In the Greco-Roman culture, the adjective πρεσβύτερος (comp. of πρέσβυς, old) was used as a noun for a title to denote the president of an assembly of citizens in the constitution of Sparta and in Egypt and elsewhere the plural πρεσβύτεροι shows up in inscriptions as a title of a committee or group of leaders. The leadership of trade guilds along with other social and business organizations were often designed as πρεσβύτεροι.<sup>16</sup> Thus the non-Jewish Christians coming into the churches would naturally important to note that a distinctive ‘synagogue building’ did not emerge as the central meeting place of Jews until about a century after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (70 AD). Prior to that some buildings were designated as synagogues but often large private homes were the gathering places for Jews and were designated as synagogues.

<sup>15c</sup>In the course of the fluctuating history of this body, which was dominated by party conflicts, the term πρεσβύτεροι undergoes a clear change. At the outset it is used for all the members of the γερουσία.<sup>43</sup> Only gradually does it become the special term for lay members as distinct from the representatives of the priestly families, from whom the high-priest and president of the Sanhedrin was chosen, and also from the theological group of the γραμματεῖς. It is obvious that the direction of the Sanhedrin never lay in the hands of the πρεσβύτεροι. Yet one may assume that the elders, as representatives of the privileged patrician families in Jerusalem, usually followed the lead of the priestly Sadducees.<sup>44</sup> Certainly the many synonyms used to describe the elders in Jos., NT and Talmud make it plain beyond question that the elders had a seat and a voice in the Sanhedrin as lay nobles.<sup>45</sup> Their weakness in relation to the other two groups may be seen from the NT, which usually calls the members of the Sanhedrin the ἀρχιερεῖς, γραμματεῖς, πρεσβύτεροι in this order (the ἀρχιερεῖς were still put first even when they had lost actual control to the γραμματεῖς).<sup>46</sup> [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:659.]

<sup>16c</sup>Esp. important for bibl. usage is the fact that in the constitution of Sparta πρέσβυς occurs as a political title to denote the president of a college: τῶν ἐφόρων, IG, 5, 1, 51, 27; 6, 552, 11; νομοφυλάκων, 6, 555b, 19; βιδέων (ephebes), 6, 556, 6; συναρχίας



Notes:

1. The term ἐκκλησία means 'assembly' at different levels: a) house church; b) city/regional; c) all believers.
2. Two leadership groups gradually emerge: a) Pastor/Elder/Overseer (synonyms), and b) Deacon.
3. At the city/region level the individual house church leaders collectively make up the leadership of the Christian community in the city and are called the πρεσβύτεριον (council). James in Acts 15 illustrates this.
4. The terms ποιμήν (pastor), πρεσβύτερος (elder), ἐπίσκοπος (overseer) διάκονος (deacon) could apply to individuals at any of these levels.
5. Leadership labels were functional rather than positional. Spiritual gifts (τὰ πνευματικά / τὰ χαρίσματα) for leadership focus on communicating spiritual concepts (teaching / preaching) and ministry actions to help others. Thus a great deal of overlapping occurs in terms of what leaders do. As 1 Peter 5:1-5 makes clear, they don't 'boss' others around.

have understood out of their non-Christian background that the term πρεσβύτεροι was a leadership designation title, as such it probably had little to do with age. Specific duties would have to be determined by the ἐκκλησία. In their heritage, the nature and decisions of the group determined specific duties whether the group was one of τῶν ἐφόρων, νομοφυλάκων, βιδέων, συναρχίας etc.

The noun ἐπίσκοπος, along with its derivatives,<sup>17</sup> had extensive use outside of Judaism and Christianity in the ancient world. The noun took on the title of caretaker, protector, out of its etymological background.<sup>18</sup> When new Gentile Christians came into church life and heard the label ἐπίσκοπος, they naturally identified the person with this title as one charged with the responsibility of seeing after them in their needs. When they read 1 Timothy 3:1-2 that anyone seeking a ἐπισκοπῆς, 'role of caregiver,' must then be a good ἐπίσκοπος, 'caregiver,' the nature of this leadership role in the local congregation would have had a definite meaning. Not until well into the second century did the title switch meanings and become a title of regional authority over a group of churches.

Closely related to this term is ποιμήν, 'shepherd,' 'pastor.'<sup>19</sup> Here the noun in religious usage specifies a leader of a group within Jewish and Christian usage. Because shepherds and shepherding did not play as significant a role in the central and western Mediterranean world as it did in the eastern Mediterranean, this leadership label is not used as often. But the image of a shepherd taking care of his flock was well understood all across the Mediterranean world. In the Semitic background of the eastern Mediterranean, a ποιμήν was often the title for the ruling king as well as for the gods.<sup>20</sup> Because this term was not commonly used to (assembly of magistrates), 6, 504, 16. Quite independent is the use of πρεσβύτεροι as a title in Egypt inscr. and pap. (Ptolemaic and imperial period).<sup>4</sup> Here committees and colleges of various kinds are entitled πρεσβύτεροι: the freely elected board of associated national husbandmen (πρεσβύτεροι γεωργῶν), BGU, I, 85, 9 ff.; P. Tebt., I, 13, 5; 40, 17 f.; 43, 8; 50, 20; P. Gen., 42, 15; P. Lond., II, 255, 7, also corporations: πρεσβύτεροι τῶν ἀλλυροκόπων (guild of millers in Alexandria, 6 πρεσβύτεροι with a ἱερεὺς at their head, 3rd cent. B.C.).<sup>5</sup> πρεσβύτεροι also appear in village government: πρεσβύτεροι τῆς κώμης.<sup>6</sup> They have administrative and judicial functions. Their number varies (2, 4, even more than 10). Their period of office is limited to a year. It is important that πρεσβύτεροι is also a title among the priests of the "great god Socnopaios" (BGU, I, 16, 5 f.). The ref. is to an executive committee of 5 or 6 members alternating each yr. and charged with supervision of the finances and negotiations with the authorities. The members are not old men (the text speaks of presbyters of 45, 35 and 30 yrs. of age).<sup>7</sup> Rather different are the richly attested πρεσβύτεροι of Gk. societies.<sup>8</sup> Here the word is not a title; the πρεσβύτεροι are not office-bearers but senior groups of various kinds (as distinct from junior groups), cf. the ὕμνωδοὶ πρεσβύτεροι of an inscr. found in Radanovo<sup>9</sup> and the many clubs of men belonging to the senate.<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere πρεσβύτεροι is used to denote the age of one guild as compared to a younger one:<sup>11</sup> σύνοδο· τῶν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ πρεσβυτέρων ἐγδοχέων (carriers), Ditt. Or., I, 140, 7 ff.: πρεσβύτεροι γέρδιοι (weavers)<sup>12</sup> or τέκτονες πρεσβύτεροι.<sup>13</sup> [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:653.]

<sup>17</sup>ἐπίσκοπος - overseer; ἐπισκοπή - visit; ἐπισκέπτομαι / ἐπισκοπέω - I look after, visit.

<sup>18</sup>“The word ἐπίσκοπος is best rendered ‘overseer’ or ‘watch.’ From this original sense there develops a twofold use which only reunites in a stronger form on Christian soil. In Gk. ἐπίσκοπος is first used a. with a true understanding of the ‘onlooker’ as ‘watcher,’ ‘protector,’ ‘patron.’ His activity then takes the form of the different senses of ἐπισκέπτομαι, and esp. ἐπισκοπέω, in a gracious looking down upon the one protected and in care for him. Therewith the word ἐπίσκοπος comes to be used b. as a title to denote various offices. The official activities thus described vary, and are usually not too important. In this sense, the word has no religious significance, but is used almost exclusively for very secular appointments with technical and financial responsibilities. On the other hand, behind the sense of ‘watcher’ or ‘protector’ is a religious conception expressed in the fact that it is usually gods who bear this designation.” [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:608-09]

<sup>19</sup>Derivative words are ποιμήν (shepherd), ἀρχιποίμην (chief shepherd), ποιμαίνω (I shepherd), ποίμνη (flock), ποίμνιον (flock).

<sup>20</sup>“Already on Sumerian royal inscr. the king (from Lugal-zaggisi) is described as the shepherd appointed by deity.<sup>6</sup> In Babylonian and Assyrian *re’û* (‘shepherd’) is a common epithet for rulers and the verb *re’û* (‘to pasture’) is a common figure of speech for ‘to rule.’<sup>7</sup> Courtly style honours the king with this title, which is combined with a whole number of recurrent attributes; on inscr. the king also uses it of himself as the one divinely chosen to bring salvation. Gathering the dispersed, righteous government and care for the weak are marks of the shepherd function of the ruler. Gods, too, bear the title of shepherd.<sup>8</sup> In Egypt<sup>9</sup> the image of the ruler of the world to come (usually Osiris or the dead king as Osiris), who, as a herd tends his flock, protects his subjects (as stars), is already common in the royal funerary (or pyramid) texts of the ancient kingdom, e.g., ‘thou hast taken them up in thine arms as a herd his calves,’<sup>10</sup> or the god of the underworld is said to be ‘thy herd who is behind thy calves.’<sup>11</sup> From the early Middle Kingdom (in the first interim period) the image of the king as the shepherd of his subjects is then a favourite one in literature; he is, e.g., a ‘herd for all the people’ or the ‘herd who watches over his subjects.’<sup>12</sup> The same metaphor is used for the gods; thus Amun is ‘the strong drover who guards his cattle’ (hymn of the 18th dynasty).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, it is said of men as subjects: ‘Men are well cared for,

designate leaders in a Christian congregation during the first century,<sup>21</sup> the title would not have been heard as often as the others, but the verbal expression ποιμαίνω “to shepherd” in the sense of taking care of the congregation as the flock of God would have been heard, and easily understood from the background image of a shepherd.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps one reason for the limited use of this label is the negative image that shepherds had acquired by the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>23</sup> The Jewish romanticized role of king David as a shepherd from a bygone Israelite rural culture stands as the primary basis for the positive image of a shepherd in the New Testament, despite the very negative image of contemporary shepherds in the first Christian century. In a growing Gentile oriented Christianity with diminishing connections to its Jewish roots, the contemporary negative image would have been the initial image when Gentiles heard a spiritual leader called a ποιμήν, a term equated with crook and thief.

d) *With the death of the last apostle, John, at the close of the first century a real turning point arrived. No longer were there members of the original Twelve or the apostle Paul still living.* The apostles had served not as bosses of the various Christian communities, but as standard setters who defined the boundaries of the Gospel and how to do Christianity. How to continue that influence of the apostles became a critical issue. Two methods were adopted beginning in the second century Christian churches. The development of these processes would take several centuries before they fully evolved into what we know today in Roman Catholic Christianity.

First, the concept of Apostolic Succession gradually came into place.<sup>24</sup> In this concept, church leadership the cattle of God,<sup>14</sup> or: ‘Let us crown a king, for we are a herd of oxen without a herd.’<sup>15</sup> Thus far there is no attestation of the transf. use of the title in Canaan.<sup>16</sup> [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:486-87.]

<sup>21</sup>“Only once in the NT are congregational leaders called shepherds, namely, in the list of offices in Eph. 4:11 (→ II, 158, 23 ff.). The absence of art. before the διδασκάλους which follows (τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους) shows that the pastors and teachers form a single group, obviously because they both minister to the individual congregation. The term ‘shepherd,’ however, is not yet an established title in Eph. 4:11;<sup>122</sup> this is obvious once the usage of Eph. 4:11 is set in a broader framework. Thus examples from the following period<sup>123</sup> give evidence that there is always a sense of the metaphor when congregational leaders are called shepherds; the same is true of passages in which the verb ποιμαίνειν is used for the work of such leaders (1 Pt. 5:2; Ac. 20:28; Jn. 21:16) or the noun ποιμνιον is used for the congregation, → 501, 23 ff. These shepherds are the leaders of the local church (πρεσβύτεροι in 1 Pt. 5:1; Ac. 20:17; ἐπίσκοποι in Ac. 20:28), or the bishop in Ign. (Phld., 2, 1; R., 9, 1); only in Jn. 21:15–17, which describes the appointment of Peter as a shepherd by the Risen Lord, does the whole church seem to have been in view as the sphere of activity. The pastor’s task is to care for the congregation (Ac. 20:28; 1 Pt. 5:2–4; Ign. Phld., 2, 1; R., 9, 1),<sup>124</sup> to seek the lost (Mt. 18:12–14; 125 cf. 12:30 par. Lk. 11:23), and to combat heresy (Ac. 20:29 f.). The fulfilment of this task by the pastor is to be an example for the flock, 1 Pt. 5:3. The chief Shepherd (→ 494, 5 ff.) will recognise the ministry of the pastors on His appearing, v. 4.

“The closest analogy to the comparison of congregational leaders with shepherds is not in the Hell. sphere<sup>126</sup> but in Damascus. 13:9f. (16:2f.) → 489, 18 ff. The task of the *mebaqqer* here is to show fatherly mercy to those entrusted to him, to liberate them from guilt, to loose their bands as a shepherd does. This corresponds materially to the task of the primitive Chr. ποιμήν. At other pts., too, Eph. in particular gives evidence of many contacts with the Essene group of writings, → V, 300, 23 ff.

[Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:497-98.]

<sup>22</sup>The English word ‘pastor’ comes through French from Latin with the literal meaning of shepherd:

“Middle English pastour, from Anglo-French, from Latin pastor herdsman, from pascere to feed” [Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).]

<sup>23</sup>“a. In a Rabb. list of thieving and cheating occupations we find that of the shepherd.<sup>38</sup> This classification of shepherds as notorious robbers and cheats means that like the publicans and tax-gatherers they were deprived of civil rights, i.e., they could not fulfil a judicial office or be admitted in court as witnesses.<sup>39</sup> This discrimination against shepherds on the part of Pharisaic Rabbinitism is best understood if one realises that the independence of the shepherd, who during the summer was on the move with the flock for months at a time with no supervision (→ 486, 5 ff.), constituted a serious temptation to steal some of the increase of the flock. It is worth noting that to buy wool, milk, or a kid from a shepherd was forbidden on the assumption that it would be stolen property.<sup>40</sup> The Rabb. ask with amazement how, in view of the despicable nature of shepherds,<sup>41</sup> one is to explain the fact that God is called ‘my shepherd’ in Ps. 23:1.<sup>42</sup>” [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:488-89.]

<sup>24</sup>The earliest expression of this comes in a letter written about 96 AD by Clement, leader of the church at Rome, to the church in Corinth that was struggling with a variety of issues (I Clement 42:1-5): “42:1 The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. 2 So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. 3 Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the

roles are focused on authority and position and who can legitimately claim them. A “chain of command” system develops: God ==> Christ ==> Apostles ==> Bishops ==> Priests. In “proper ordination” of bishops and priests proper succession is to be guaranteed to protect the Christian church from heresy.<sup>25</sup> Thus the leadership level of bishop became critical to exercising authority over local congregations and their priestly leaders in order to insure adherence to the ‘orthodox’ teaching of the apostles. In time, four or five regional bishops came to dominate Christianity in the Mediterranean world, and their clashes with one another are notorious in church history. Eventually in the west the bishop in Rome won out over the others and by following the governmental structure of the Roman empire with emperor and senate, Roman Catholic church structure emerged with a pope and a college of cardinals made up of representatives from the various regional structures of western Christianity.

*Second*, by the end of the first Christian century all of the writings of the apostles had been completed and a process of slowly adopting these writings as sacred scripture was in place by the beginning of the second century. It would take over two hundred more years for this process to reach a conclusion, which was marked by the Easter letter of Athanasius in 367 AD. The ‘canon’ of the New Testament scriptures was now settled for the vast majority of Christians in the ancient world. One of the guidelines for adopting a particular document as authoritative was the tracing of the origin of that document back either directly or indirectly to one of the Twelve apostles or to the apostle Paul. Thus the authoritative scriptures for the Christian church rested upon the writings of the Apostles who were commissioned directly by Jesus.

The relationship between these written documents and the religious leaders of the church was based on what came to be called *regula fidei* in Latin (Rule of Faith). The bishops established a ‘sacred tradition’ or *magisterium* defining orthodox belief for the church and the authority of the bishops to teach and guard it. As those with direct authority from Christ (via apostolic succession) they alone had proper authority to both interpret the teachings of Christ and the apostles, and to establish the practices of the church. In western Christianity by the fifth century, the bishop of Rome, now the pope over all of the western church primarily by Roman governmental decree, had assumed that authority exclusively.

These two basic dynamics along with a few others created the necessity for a carefully structured hierarchy of leaders, a ‘chain of command’, which was top down in nature. With sacramentalism came a division of the church into laity and clergy, and within the clergy group then a carefully delineated structure beginning with deacon (as the beginning priesthood), priest, bishop, archbishop (some of whom would become cardinals in the college of cardinals) and pope.

e) *With the Protestant Reformation beginning in the 1500s the newly developing alternative branches of Christianity restructured church organization, mostly in reaction to the centralized control of the pope in Rome.* But not wanting to do it the way Roman Catholics had done it was about the only thing they held in common. The traditional reformers of Luther on the Lutheran side and Calvin and Zwinglii on the reformed church side moved toward the concept of synods, a term that has different meanings inside each denominational tradition. The radical reformers rejected a ‘top down’ approach to leadership and moved toward local church independency from outside authorities. At the local church level, organizational patterns have varied considerably.<sup>26</sup>

Baptists historically have followed a congregational pattern of church organization with pastor and deacon as the two basic expressions of leadership in a local church.<sup>27</sup> A review of the Baptist confessions of faith from

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resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come. 4 So preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their firstfruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe. 5 And this they did in no new fashion; for indeed it had been written concerning bishops and deacons from very ancient times; for thus saith the scripture in a certain place, I will appoint *their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith.*”

<sup>25</sup>Ordination by proper bishops of priests also became critical because at the same time the concepts of sacramentalism were taking shape in which these sacraments became the channel through which divine grace flowed from God into the life of individual Christians. Only properly ordained priests could legitimately administer the sacraments which were essential to salvation.

<sup>26</sup>Modern patterns tend to fall into one of three categories: 1) episcopal polity, with bishops governing the churches; 2) presbyterian polity, with councils either within or external to the local church at the denominational level governing the churches; or 3) congregational polity where the membership of each church is the final authority, portions of which may be assigned to pastor and/or councils inside the church.

<sup>27</sup>“Most Baptists hold that no church or ecclesiastical organization has inherent authority over a Baptist church. Churches can

the early 1600s to the present will reflect a consistent pattern of acknowledging but two leadership roles in a local church, that of pastor and deacons. The label of 'pastor' is relatively recent and replaced the label 'elder' dominantly used for this leadership responsibility during the first two hundred years of Baptist history.<sup>28</sup>

The International Baptist Convention "Summary of Basic Beliefs" does not contain a statement on church governance, and the confession of faith by the IBC Church in Costa Rica alludes to the offices of pastor and deacon as the two scriptural leadership models, in article VI. The Church.<sup>29</sup> The IBC Church Costa Rica Church Constitution is more specific regarding church organization under article III. THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE (page 1):

The Membership is the body of Believers, who have been duly accepted and registered, and who form the International Baptist Church. **The Membership is the sovereign organization within the Church.** This group will elect the members of the Church Council, nominate Deacons, select the Pastor, and ratify the acceptance of new members.

It will receive the reports of the Church Council and Board of Deacons and has the authority to accept or reject those reports. It is also vested with the authority to amend the Church Constitution.

The leadership of the church is assigned by the constitution to a) the church council; b) the pastor; and c) the deacons with specific purposes and duties spelled out for each group. Essentially this church by its legal documents follows a congregational polity pretty much within the historical tradition of Baptists.

All of this stands in the background of the modern patterns where spiritual leaders in different churches are labeled by a wide diversity of terms. The term 'pastor' was largely unused for many centuries until John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli revived it in the 1500s in order to distinguish spiritual leaders in their churches from 'priests' in the Roman Catholic churches. But minister, priest, vicar, rector, bishop are among the alternative labels found in present day Christian traditions.<sup>30</sup>

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properly relate to each other under this polity only through voluntary cooperation, never by any sort of coercion. Furthermore, this Baptist polity calls for freedom from governmental control.<sup>5</sup> Most Baptists believe in 'Two offices of the church' — pastor-elder and deacon — based on certain scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1–2). Exceptions to this local form of local governance include a few churches that submit to the leadership of a body of elders, as well as the Episcopal Baptists that have an Episcopal system." ["Diocese: Baptists," Wikipedia.org]

<sup>28</sup>Note the very first Baptist confession of faith by Thomas Helwys (1611) in article 20: "That the Officers of every Church or congregation are either Elders, who by their office do especially feed the flock concerning their souls, (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2, 3) or Deacons Men, and Women who by their office relieve the necessities of the poor and impotent brethren concerning their bodies, (Acts 6:1-4)"

<sup>29</sup>"A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of saved baptized Believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. **Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.** While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."

<sup>30</sup>This article from Wikipedia summarizes in a helpful, although limited way, the current confusion over what to call a spiritual leader:

#### **Current usage**

##### **Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican**

Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches typically refer to their local church leaders as "parish priests". The term pastor may be used, in a more casual way, particularly in North America. However, Anglican churches do not formally use the term "pastor"; rather, they frequently use the terms "rector" or "vicar" as alternatives to "parish priest".

Each Catholic parish is normally entrusted to the care of a single pastor, who must be a priest according to the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The associate pastor is called a parochial vicar and also must be a priest. In U.S. Catholic parishes, a lay ecclesial minister who fulfills many of the non-sacramental functions of an associate pastor is often called a "pastoral associate", "parish minister", or "pastoral assistant".

A bishop is canonically given full-fledged pastoral responsibilities within his diocese, and a priest is held to pastoral obedience with regards to his bishop. The term universal pastor refers to the pope, per the declaration Pastor aeternus of the First Vatican Council.

Jesus Christ is commonly referred to as the "Good Shepherd" or "Good Pastor", the former a phrase found in the Gospels.

##### **Protestantism**

Many Protestants use the term pastor as a title (e.g., Pastor Smith) or as a job title (like Senior Pastor or Worship Pastor). Some



5.3           nor as one lording it over your portion,  
                   but by becoming a good example to the flock;  
 5.4           and  
                                   when the chief Shepherd appears,  
 70    **you will be rewarded with the never ending crown, the Glory.**

5.5           Likewise,  
                   young men,  
 71    **be submissive to the elders.**

                  And  
 72    **all of you put on humility toward one another,**  
                                   because God resists the proud  
   but  
                                   --- gives grace to the humble.

The passage easily divides into two sections: 1) the admonitions given to spiritual leaders (#s 68-70, vv. 1-4), and 2) admonitions to the young men (# 71) and to everyone (# 72) in verse five. In the first section, Peter begins by identifying himself with these leaders (# 68), then admonishes them (# 69), and concludes with a promise (# 70). The admonition (# 69) encourages the leaders to pastor their flock by taking care of them. How this is to be done is set forth in three sets of “don’ts but do’s.”

The second section begins with an admonition to the young men (# 71) to respect the leadership of the elders, and expands the demand for humility to the entire Christian community (# 72).

## II. Message

Based on the above analysis of thought structure in the passage, the two natural divisions of text will be the organizing structure of our exegesis: a) the leaders and b) the younger men.

### a. Leaders, set the example, vv. 1-4

1 And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share his glory and his honor when he returns. As a fellow elder, this is my appeal to you: 2 Care for the flock of God entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly -- not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your good example. 4 And when the head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honor.

5.1 Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 2 ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν, μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως, 3 μὴ δ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κληρῶν ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· 4 καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.

#### Notes:

The link of this passage to the preceding one in chapter four is set up by οὖν, an inferential conjunction that draws out an implication from the preceding to make it explicit in the following statements. The significance of this becomes clear with studying the contents of verses 1-5. When leaders are properly leading, everyone else can be rightly prepared to face persecution and suffering. If not, then the congregation is ill equipped to face persecution. So Peter turns to address spiritual leaders in the churches with some important insights about effective leadership. What becomes very clear from his words is that leadership is a matter of character and example, not a matter of authority and pushing that authority. This is a largely forgotten lesson among spiritual leaders in our world today.

Peter offers his advice by using two strategies. First he identifies himself with the leaders (v. 1) and then he appeals to them with wise council (vv. 2-4).

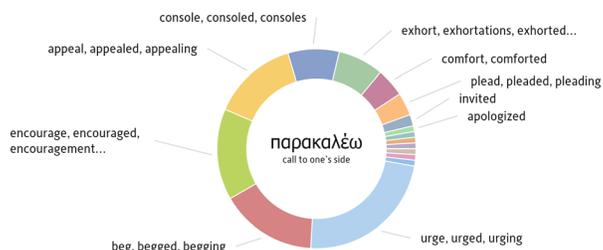
**Peter's identity with the leaders.** Central to this identity is the term πρεσβύτερος. The term here is used not as an age identifier but as a title of spiritual leadership in the house church groups, as discussed at length above in the Internal History section. The contrast with νεώτεροι (young men) in verse five is sometimes mis-

takenly taken to suggest that πρεσβύτεροι were older men in the churches. The context here clearly favors πρεσβύτερος as a title of leadership.

Also, then it is crucial to remember that such leadership titles as found in the New Testament are not ‘positional’ labels. Rather, they are functional labels stressing aspects of ministry to others. There was no such thing as “the office of pastor” or “the office of elder” in the New Testament church! Amazingly a large number of biblical scholars overlook this fundamental point and then subsequently struggle severely with the highly fluid and often overlapping meanings of the several leadership terms found in the New Testament. The functional meaning of πρεσβύτερος here is the only way that one can understand how Peter as an apostle could also consider himself to be a πρεσβύτερος as well. This is further confirmed by the thrust of the admonitions he proceeds to give to these leaders.

These leaders are identified as Πρεσβυτέρους ἐν ὑμῖν, “elders among you.” These individuals were a part of each congregation located in the cities and towns scattered through the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1, Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας). Assuming that Romans 16:1-15 reflects a rather typical situation of numerous house church groups in a city or region, then many of these leaders could have been husband-wife teams, some of them women and some of them men.<sup>31</sup> Whether each group had one πρεσβύτερος or multiple πρεσβύτεροι, most likely depended upon the size of each congregation and also the presence or absence of individuals with leadership skills. Very likely in the sparsely populated, rural oriented provinces like Cappadocia with no large cities fewer individuals served as leaders in each group, whereas in the heavily populated urban oriented provinces especially Asia the house church groups likely were more numerous in each city and with more educated and skilled present. One should not assume a “set in concrete” pattern followed universally. This passage does not justify such and the larger context of the New Testament picture certainly doesn’t.

Peter gives admonitions (παρακαλῶ<sup>32</sup>) to these leaders as a συμπρεσβύτερος (fellow elder), as a μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων (a witness of Christ’s sufferings), and as ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεισθαι δόξης κοινωνός (a participant in the coming revelation of the divine Glory). Peter makes it clear that he is not “ordering” them to adopt his advice; rather, he appeals to their commitment as spiritual leaders to want to follow the correct path in helping their congregations be prepared to face persecution.



The strength of his appeal comes from who he is, not from being an apostle with high authority to order

<sup>31</sup>It would be completely false to interpret the masculine plural Πρεσβυτέρους as a male only designation. The masculine gender designated both males and also inclusive male-female designations in ancient Greek.

<sup>32</sup>**2. to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage** (X. et al.; LXX) w. acc. of pers. **Ac 16:40; 2 Cor 10:1; 1 Th 2:12** (but s. 5 below); **5:11; Hb 3:13; ITr 12:2; I Ro 7:2**. The acc. is found in the immediate context **Ac 20:1; 1 Ti 5:1** (but s. 5 below). Pass. **1 Cor 14:31**. τινὰ λόγῳ πολλῶ *someone with many words* **Ac 20:2**; also τινὰ διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ **15:32**. τινὰ δι’ ὀλίγων γραμμάτων IPol 7:3. W. acc. of pers. and direct discourse **1 Cor 4:16; 1 Th 5:14; Hb 13:22; 1 Pt 5:1**; direct discourse introduced by λέγων (B-D-F §420) **Ac 2:40**. W. acc. of pers. and inf. foll. (SIG 695, 43 [129 B.C.]) **11:23; 27:33f; Ro 12:1** (EKäsemann, Gottesdienst im Alltag, ’60 [Beih. ZNW], 165–71); **15:30; 16:17; 2 Cor 2:8; 6:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:2; Tit 2:6; 1 Pt 2:11** (cp. Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36 II, 4 Jac. p. 1172, 19; ELohe, ZNW 45, ’54, 68–89); **Jd 3** (the acc. is found in the immediate context, as Philo, Poster Cai. 138); ITr 6:1; IPhd 8:2; IPol 1:2a; Pol 9:1 al. W. inf. (acc. in the context), continued by καὶ ὅτι (s. B-D-F §397, 6; Rob. 1047) **Ac 14:22**. W. acc. of pers. and ἵνα foll. (PRyl 229, 17 [38 A.D.]; EpArist 318; Jos., Ant. 14, 168.—B-D-F §392, 1c; Rob. 1046) **1 Cor 1:10; 16:15f; 2 Cor 8:6; 1 Th 4:1** (π. w. ἐρωτάω as BGU 1141, 10; POxy 294, 29) 2 Th 3:12; Hm 12, 3, 2; AcPl Ha 7, 32. The ἵνα-clause expresses not the content of the appeal, as in the pass. referred to above, but its aim: πάντα παρακαλεῖν, ἵνα σώζονται IPol 1:2b.—Without acc. of pers.: w. direct discourse foll. ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα *since God as it were makes his appeal through us*: ‘We beg’ **2 Cor 5:20**. Paul serves as God’s agent (like a ‘legate of Caesar’ Dssm. LO 320 [LAE 374]) and functions as mediator (like Alexander the Great, Plut., Mor. 329c διαλλακτής; cp. also the mediatorial role of a judge IPriene 53, esp. 10f; s. also CBreytenbach, Versöhnung ’89, 64–66). W. inf. foll. **1 Ti 2:1**. Abs. **Ro 12:8** (mng. 4 is also poss.); **2 Ti 4:2; Tit 1:9; Hb 10:25; 1 Pt 5:12** (w. ἐπιμαρτυρεῖν); B 19:10.—W. acc. of thing *impress upon someone, urge, exhort* πολλὰ ἕτερα **Lk 3:18**. ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει **1 Ti 6:2**. ταῦτα λάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγχε **Tit 2:15**. In the case of several of the passages dealt with in this section, it is poss. that they could as well be classed under 3.” [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), 765.]

people around. The appeal is based on three experiences that he considers sources of important insight. *First*, he identifies himself with them as a συμπρεσβύτερος. That is, he understands their responsibility to help their congregations prepare themselves. His prior experience of facing persecution through preaching the Gospel (Acts 3-4, 5) and being arrested with plans for execution in place (Acts 12) gave him personal understanding of having to face danger in being true to Christ. This experience helped him realize that spiritual leaders will often be the first target of persecutors; something that could easily make a leader hesitate to give proper leadership to a congregation.

*Second*, he mentions that he was a μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων (a witness of Christ's sufferings). This first hand personal experience gave him tremendous insight into how the Lord coped with persecution. To be sure, the gospel accounts suggest that Peter had difficulty grasping this at the beginning with his denial of Christ in Jerusalem etc. But with time and spiritual reflection Peter began to realize just what Christ was doing and why He did it. Already in chapters two and four we have seen the results of that reflection in his use of the example of Christ in suffering.

*Third*, Peter was absolutely convinced<sup>33</sup> that, with the return of Christ which would disclose Christ as the Divine Presence (τῆς...δόξης) of Almighty God, he Peter would participate in that experience.<sup>34</sup> The language of Peter in the letter reflects that in his thinking the revelation of τῆς...δόξης (the Glory) was essentially the revelation of σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ (1:5, a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time). This certainty gave him confidence to offer his advice to these spiritual leaders.

What can we learn from this? Probably as much as anything, the lessons of verse five. When spiritual leaders offer us advice we should give it careful attention, rather than arbitrarily dismiss it. As a spiritual leader, we can learn much from Peter here. Peter didn't order these leaders to do anything. Nor did he threaten them. He appealed to them out of who they were as spiritual leaders. And then his appeal was based on his character and his religious experiences, not on any claimed position.

**Peter's admonitions to the leaders.** One should note at the outset that Peter doesn't presume to tell these spiritual leaders what to do, in terms of spelling out duties (as in a job description). Rather his focus is on how they should lead in the congregations, in terms of manner and character.

What he had to say to these leaders is expressed in a single sentence (vv. 2-4). And the single core admonition is given at the beginning of the sentence in verse two: ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, "pastor God's flock among you." This is then followed by the future indicative κομιεῖσθε ('you will gain for yourselves') in verse four. This compound sentence structure follows an ancient Jewish thought structure know as command / promise. Peter issues an admonition that is supported by the divine promise of blessing for adhering to the admonition.

Some aspects of the core admonition need noting. The Aorist imperative verb ποιμάνετε contains a sense of urgency, underscoring the importance of these leaders taking the responsibility seriously. The flock, τὸ ποίμνιον,<sup>35</sup> belongs to God, not to these leaders. The pastor shepherds don't own their flocks, God does. Im-

<sup>33</sup>"The phrase τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης reflects complete certainty in the future occurrence of the disclosure of the Glory."

<sup>34</sup>"ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός, 'and a sharer as well in the glory to be revealed.' Peter supplies a new definite article for the third self-designation, κοινωνός, 'sharer.' κοινωνός refers here to one who 'shares in' something (BGD, 439.1b), namely 'the glory to be revealed,' not one who "shares with" someone (BGD, 439.1a), namely the elders. There is no ὑμῶν, 'of you,' to link Peter's own hope explicitly to that of the elders. Implicitly, however, the link is there because of the preceding designation, 'fellow elder.' Just as μάρτυς is virtually equivalent to συμμάρτυς, 'fellow witness,' so κοινωνός is virtually equivalent to συγκοινωνός, 'fellow sharer' or 'partner' (cf., e.g., Phil 1:7; Rev 1:9). That 'the glory to be revealed' holds a particular reward for elders, and thus for Peter himself, is clear from v 4, but this does not change the fact that it is also the common hope of the entire Christian community (cf. 1:7, 13; 4:13). The distinctive terminology used here corresponds to that of Paul in Rom 8:18, weighing 'the sufferings of the present time' against 'the glory to be revealed to us' (πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς). Whether Paul's language impressed itself on the memory of the Roman church or whether Romans and 1 Peter are both dependent on a common turn of phrase used by Jews and early Christians to contrast 'present sufferings' and 'future glory' is difficult to say (cf., e.g., 2 Apoc. Bar. 15.8; 4 Ezra 7.16; 2 Cor 4:17). The latter is perhaps more likely because Peter's present infinitive (ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι) appears to represent a more vulgar idiom than Paul's aorist (BDF §338.3). It is hard to see why Peter would not have retained the aorist if he were writing with Romans before him (cf. Peter's use of the aorist with 'salvation' in 1:5)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 281-82.]

<sup>35</sup>Note the play on words which cannot be reproduced in modern language expression: ποιμάνετε τὸ...ποίμνιον. This heightens the intensity of the expression.

plicit in this is accountability by these leaders for how they take care of the flock. Also the flock these leaders are responsible for is the ἐν ὑμῖν flock, that is, the one they have been given responsibility for, not the flocks of other shepherds. This core admonition echoes very closely a similar command given to Peter by Jesus in John 21:16, (ποιμαίνε τὰ πρόβατά μου, “pastor my sheep.”<sup>36</sup>)

In the original text reading (cf. External History above), the participle of manner ἐπισκοποῦντες (“seeing after”) becomes the anchor for all of the subsequent expansions. As such it defines how the pastoring (ποιμάνετε) is to be carried out.<sup>37</sup> The literal meaning is ‘to see after’ in the sense of taking care of.<sup>38</sup> As spiritual shepherd of the flock, these leaders are to take care of the spiritual welfare of their congregations. This was understood functionally in the apostolic era, but during the second century when both the verb ἐπισκοπέω and especially the noun ἐπίσκοπος (‘overseer’) become separated from pastor and deacon and became a regional designation rather than a local congregation label, the meaning shifts to a term of authority and ruling (cf. above discussion under Internal History). From the expansion elements that Peter attaches to the participle it is clear that such an idea of authority is not in his definition of the term.

How are the leaders to take care of their flocks? Three sets of don’t do / but do expressions define the manner of leadership to be given to the congregations (vv. 2b-3). Each set plays off the two internal elements as opposites:<sup>39</sup>

μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν,  
 μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως,  
 μηδ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου·  
 not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it  
 not for sordid gain but eagerly.  
 not lording it over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

First, the leaders should serve not because they have to, but freely out of divine assignment to the task.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36c</sup>“The command to ‘shepherd the flock of God’ echoes the command of Jesus to Peter himself according to John 21:16: ‘Shepherd my sheep’ (ποιμαίνε τὰ πρόβατά μου; cf. ‘Feed my lambs’ in 21:15, and ‘Feed my sheep’ in 21:17). The ‘flock’ belongs neither to the elders nor to Peter. The emphasis of John’s Gospel is that the flock belongs to Jesus, or at least to Jesus and the Father jointly (cf. John 10:11–18, 26–27, as well as 21:15–17). The characteristic phrase in 1 Clement is ‘the flock of Christ’ (see especially 1 Clem 54.2: ‘only let the flock of Christ have peace, with the elders set over it’; cf. 44.3, 57.2). To Peter, however, it is ‘the flock of God’ (cf. ‘the church of God’ in Acts 20:28), in keeping with the God-centered character of the material in 1 Peter on worship and ministry (e.g., vv 5–7; 4:10–11). His emphasis recalls that of the biblical prophets (e.g., ‘the Lord’s flock,’ Jer 13:17; ‘the Lord God the Almighty will watch over his flock,’ Zech 10:3 LXX). Although Peter regards Christ as ‘the chief shepherd’ (v 4), the ‘flock’ belongs finally to God (cf. ‘people of God,’ in 2:10). τοῦ θεοῦ, ‘of God,’ makes this unmistakably clear in a way that even τοῦ κυρίου, ‘of the Lord,’ would not (for the Messiah ‘shepherding the Lord’s flock,’ cf. Pss. Sol. 17.40).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 282–83.]

<sup>37c</sup>ἐπισκοπέω fut. ἐπισκοπήσω; 1 aor. ἐπεσκόπησα; pf. pass. ptc. ἐπεσκοπημένος (s. σκοπέω and next entry; Aeschyl. et al.).

**1. to give attention to, look at, take care, see to it** w. μὴ foll. (Philo, Decal. 98) with implication of hazard awaiting one **Hb 12:15**.

**2. to accept responsibility for the care of someone, oversee, care for** (Pla., Rep. 6 p. 506a τὴν πολιτείαν; Dio Chrys. 8 [9], 1 of Diogenes the Cynic’s mission in life; LBW 2309; 2412e; pap [Witkowski 52, 12; cp. 63, 18; 71, 43]; 2 Ch 34:12), hence in a distinctively Christian sense of the activity of church officials **1 Pt 5:2**, esp. of one entrusted with oversight: *be an overseer* τινὰ over someone of Jesus, the ideal overseer/supervisor IRo 9:1. In a play on words w. ἐπίσκοπος: ἐπισκόπων μᾶλλον ἐπισκοπημένον ὑπὸ θεοῦ the overseer/supervisor, who is rather overseen/supervised by God=‘the bishop who has God as his bishop’ IPol ins (ἐπισκοπέω of God: Jos., C. Ap. 2, 160). Abs. serve as overseer Hv 3, 5, 1.—DELG s.v. σκέπτομαι. 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), 379.]

<sup>38c</sup>“The verb ἐπισκοπεῖν, used in the NT only here and (differently) in Heb 12:15, has not yet taken on the technical meaning, ‘to serve as bishop’ (as, e.g., in Ign. Rom. 9.1; Ign. Pol. Inscr. and in Herm Vis. 3.5.1). More simply, its effect is to interpret the metaphor of ‘shepherding the flock’ as the responsibility to oversee and care for the needs of a Christian congregation.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 283.]

<sup>39c</sup>“Though partially reflecting early Christian tradition (v 3), the triad as a whole is unique in the NT and corresponds in its triadic form to the author’s threefold identification of himself in v 1. The repeated term ‘flock’ (*poimnion*, v 3b; cf. v 2a) forms an inclusion framing vv 2–3. The point of vv 2–3 in general is that pastoral leadership must be freely undertaken and devoid of self-serving and domination.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 828.]

<sup>40c</sup>“First, they should watch over the flock ‘not because you must, but voluntarily in a godly manner.’<sup>13</sup> It is true that elders did not volunteer or select themselves but were selected by others (e.g., Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5), yet they were not to think of their work as

How they came into this leadership role is not specified. It could have been by election or appointment. Most likely this arose from within the house church group. Peter wants to stress that the responsibility not be undertaken as a burden to be carried but as a privilege to be fulfilled.<sup>41</sup> God's will and leadership play the decisive role in this.<sup>42</sup> A leader ministering to the flock out of joy will be an effective leader.

*Secondly* a monetary motivation is ruled out in favor of eager desire to give of themselves, as Elliott says, "not an itch to get but an eagerness to give."<sup>43</sup> In a very real sense, the phrase "a rich pastor" is an oxymoron,

something forced upon them.<sup>14</sup> Even if they had wanted the job (as 1 Tim. 3:1 encourages people to do), the stress of pastoring (often while supporting themselves with long days of work) and the added danger in which it put them and their families (for who but the elders would be the first targets of persecution?) could well make the ministry an unwanted burden. Like the author of Hebrews (Heb. 13:17), our author wants elders to do their work 'with joy and not with groaning' or, as he puts it, 'voluntarily.' In Judaism the volunteer was a person who placed himself at God's disposal, either in terms of military service (Judg. 5:2, 9; 1 Macc. 2:42) or of sacrifice (Ps. 54:6 [53:8 LXX]). The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls spoke of themselves thus as 'volunteers' (1QS 1:7, 1QS 1:11; 1QS 5:1–10, 1QS 5:21–22). And Philemon is told, 'I did not want to do anything without your knowledge so that your good work might not [be done] out of necessity but voluntarily' (Philem. 14). Thus also in northern Asia Minor the elders are to act voluntarily, for that is what it means to act 'in a godly manner.' After all, none of God's acts for humanity was done out of necessity, but voluntarily, out of grace." [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), 178–79.]

<sup>41</sup>Responsibility is to be taken on willingly (*hekousiōs*) rather than because of compulsion to do so. Similar contrasts between compulsion and willingness are made by Philo and Paul. Philo (*Contempl.* 68) describes aged virgins of the contemplative Israelite Therapeutae, who kept their chastity not because of compulsion ... but of their own free will; (*ouk anagkēi ... mallon ē kath' hekousion*). Paul in his letter to Philemon (v 14) hopes that Philemon's compliance with his request 'might be not by compulsion ... but of your own free will' (*mē hōs kata anagkēn ... alla kata hekousion*).<sup>675</sup> The Petrine mention of willingness may indicate that the function of leadership 'was conferred by designation or election' (Senior 1980, 87; cf. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Clem. 42:1, 44). In this case, even if selected by others as leaders, the elders were not to feel that this responsibility was foisted upon them but were to accept it willingly." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 828.]

<sup>42</sup>"The phrase *kata theon*,<sup>676</sup> as in 4:6c (see NOTE), means literally, 'in accord with God' or 'with respect to God'; for *kata* with God with the sense of 'according to' or 'in accord with,' see also 1:1, 3, 15; 4:19. The phrase disturbs the structural balance of the first two qualifications and appears to have been added intentionally by the author to underline the divine orientation of this willingness. The looser translation 'as God would have you do it' (NRSV) aptly captures its sense. In the context of this letter, it indicates that to which Christian volition is fundamentally oriented; namely, the will of God (cf. 2:15; 3:17; 4:2, 19; cf. also Ign. Eph. 2:1; Phld. 4:1)." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 828.]

<sup>43</sup>"This second antithetical qualification touches on motive and contrasts calculation with spontaneity. The elders are not to be leaders for lucre or ministers for mammon. The adverb *aischrokerdōs* appears only here in the Bible, but the adjective *aischrokerdēs* appears in 1 Tim 3:8 and Titus 1:7, also in connection with 'servants' and 'overseers,' respectively (cf. also Titus 1:11 concerning the 'shameful gain' [*aischrou kerdous*] of greedy teachers).<sup>678</sup> This family of terms expresses the conventional opinion that the gaining (*kerdainō*) of wealth for oneself alone is highly shameful (*aischros*).<sup>679</sup> Thus, Luke's description of the Pharisees as 'lovers of money' (*philargyroi*, 16:14) constitutes a shaming condemnation. Such love of money (*philargyria*), 'money-grubbing,' would be shameful for Christians as well and thus is regularly proscribed, especially where leaders are involved (*philargyria*, 1 Tim 6:10; 2 Tim 3:2; 2 Clem. 6:4; Pol. Phil 2:2; 4:1, 3; 6:1; *philargyros*, Did. 3:5; *aphilargyros* ['not avaricious'], 1 Tim 3:3; Heb 13:5; Did. 15:1; Pol. Phil 5:2).<sup>680</sup>

"The warning is appropriate, given the fact that Christian leaders generally received some form of compensation for their labors on behalf of the community, be it meals and shelter (Matt 10:10; 1 Cor 9:7b, 9–10, 13; Did. 11:4–6; 13:1–3, 5–6), clothes (Acts 20:33; Did. 13:7), or some other material form of 'wages' or honor (Luke 10:7; 1 Cor 9:7a; 2 Cor 11:9; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17–18; Did. 12:2–3). It is in this light that Paul asks, 'Who shepherds a flock without drinking some of its milk?' (1 Cor 9:7), and advises the Galatians, 'Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches' (Gal 6:6). Presbyterian oversight could also entail some responsibility for community finances and common property (Acts 4:32; 5:1–5 [Peter]; see also 2 Cor 8:20; and Acts 6:1–3). Such compensation and involvement with funds could invite a quest for leadership out of greed; hence, the warning against 'love of money' and 'shameful gain' — that is, personal gain from apparent godliness (1 Tim 6:5) or, as Didache put it, 'making business on Christ' (*christemporos*, 12:5) and being prophets for profit (cf. chs. 11–13).

*but eagerly (alla prothymōs)*. Elders are to be motivated not by an 'itch to get' but by a spontaneous eagerness to give. The adverb *prothymōs* means 'eagerly,' 'readily,' 'enthusiastically willing.'<sup>681</sup> In Tob 7:8 it describes hospitality offered 'cheerfully.' Its kindred noun *prothymia* (Acts 17:11; 2 Cor 8:11, 12, 19; 9:2) and adjective *prothymos* (Matt 26:41/Mark 14:38; Rom 1:15) likewise convey the sense of eagerness, readiness, and willingness. Philo's description of the Therapeutae employs a contrast similar to that of our verse. At their banquets, he notes, their members serve at table 'not under compulsion nor yet waiting for orders, but with deliberate goodwill, anticipating with attentiveness and eagerness (*meta spoudēs kai prothymias*) the demands that may be made'

i.e., a contradiction of terms. Religion is not ever to be 'a money making business' and the New Testament is very clear on this point, in contrast to most of the contemporary TV evangelists.

Thirdly, the pastor is not to 'lord it over' his flock; instead, he is to lead by example.<sup>44</sup> Humility, not control is to guide the spiritual leader in relating to his flock. Clearly with the following reference to Christ as the Chief Shepherd (v. 4), the example of Christ is ultimately in Peter's mind as the ultimate model.<sup>45</sup> One point needing clarification because of gross misinterpretation is the phrase τῶν κληρῶν, "those in your charge." This is referring to the flock, τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον, in verse two. And not to ministers of lower authority being dominated by regional bishops! This is to inject either a third century or a modern hierarchical church structure back on to the first century model Peter is working from, which is utterly different.

The portrait that Peter paints here of the idealized spiritual leader is challenging. There is joy in his serving, his motivation is not making money but giving of himself to others, and the strength of his leadership is not by a domineering leadership style but the inspiration of a godly character modeled after the example of Christ Himself. Spiritual leadership given to a congregation in this manner will be leadership that prepares the congregation to face the toughest of times when persecution comes.

**The promised blessing for proper leadership.** The 'promise' side of the command/promise structure is in verse four. Peter who is certain of his participation in the eschatological Glory of God at the second coming (v. 1) now assures the spiritual leaders in these churches that they can anticipate sharing in that same Glory at the coming of Christ the Chief Shepherd. This image of Christ as τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος underscores that the leaders' accountability is not to Peter or to any other human leader. Instead, they are -- and will be -- answerable to

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(*Contempl.* 71). In this thought, the spontaneity implied in eagerness comes to expression. In a similar vein, Danker (1982, 321) observes the synonymy of the nouns *prothymia* and *spoudē* as noted qualities of benefactors and patrons and notes that *prothymōs* here in v 2c implies 'spontaneous interest and enthusiasm.' In this light, the point of the Petrine contrast appears to be that what should motivate the elders/shepherds is not a calculating quest for personal gain but a spontaneous eagerness to serve the needs of God's flock." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 829-30.]

<sup>44</sup>“This third and final qualification<sup>682</sup> mirrors the negative-positive sequence of the two preceding qualifications and proceeds from a warning against love of money to a warning against love of power. Elders are not to exercise oversight as domineering lords (*kyrioi*) of the flock but as its influencing exemplars (*typoi*). The antithesis as a whole contrasts a hierarchical exercise of authority to a horizontal demonstration by example.

“The particle *hōs* (“as”) is part of a negative injunction (*med'*), as in 4:15 and 2:16, indicating here in 5:3 how shepherding and oversight (v 2ab) are not to be discharged; namely, as an act of domination. The composite verb *kata-kyrieuō* (lit., ‘lord it over,’ ‘have dominion over’) has the sense of ‘dominate’<sup>683</sup> or ‘domineer’ (ruling with insolence or arbitrary sway, especially over the poor, Pss 9:26[10:5]; 9:31[10:10]). Paul used the simple *kyrieuō* to express a similar thought: ‘Not that we domineer (*kyrieuomen*) your faith; we work with you for your joy’ (2 Cor 1:24). Given their recognized position of authority, elders, like other leaders, could be tempted to exploit it.

“Aside from Acts 19:16, where *katakyrieuō* is used of an ‘overpowering’ evil spirit, the only other NT appearances of this composite verb are in a saying by Jesus recorded in Mark 10:42–45/Matt 20:25–28/Luke 22:25–27. Hence, the first half of the bicolon is likely a Petrine reminiscence of Jesus’ critique of a preoccupation with precedence on the part of his disciples and his holding up the ideal of service as exemplified by himself as servant. The Petrine verse and the Jesus saying are close in language (*katakyrieuousin*, Mark 10:42/Matt 20:25; compare Luke 22:25, *kyrieuousin*; *hōs*, Luke 22:26; *neōteros*, Luke 22:26; cf. 1 Pet 5:5a), form (contrast between negative and positive), and point (model of conduct: Jesus, Mark 10:45/Matt 20:28/Luke 22:27; elders, 1 Pet 5:3; see Elliott 1970). These similarities, which cannot be traced to literary dependence, indicate the influence of an early Christian tradition on ministry (concerning rank, humility, example, eschatological reward) going back to the teaching of Jesus, a tradition perhaps also echoed in John 13:1–20 and 21:15–23. Use of elements of this tradition in a letter ascribed to Peter indicates a tendency, already apparent in the NT, to associate issues of ministry, leadership, and shepherding with the Apostle Peter.<sup>684</sup>” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 830-31.]

<sup>45</sup>“The alternative to leading by high-handed authoritarianism given in v. 3b is leading by example. The idea of the leader of a Christian community functioning as an example for other Christians is limited in the NT to this reference in 1 Peter, and to the letters of Paul, where it occurs with some frequency.<sup>106</sup> The supreme instance of one who provided the example for Christian conduct is of course Jesus himself,<sup>107</sup> an example our author has used earlier.<sup>108</sup> The immediately following verse, where Christ is identified as the ‘chief shepherd,’ makes clear that once again he is the example to be followed, this time by the shepherd/elders. Elders are therefore to exercise their authority by showing through their conduct how Christians are to live their own lives.<sup>109</sup>” [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), 328.]

Christ in final judgment for how they have led their congregations. Faithful leadership in the manner outlined by Peter will gain for them τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον. Most of the commentaries struggle here with an inadequate understanding. Peter says the reward is an unfading crown, τὸν ἀμαράντινον...στέφανον. Then he further defines crown by τῆς δόξης, ‘of Glory.’ The traditional Catholic heritage of rewards for good works stands so deeply entrenched in most Protestant thinking that commentators find it hard to reject. And reject it they certainly should! The key is to define δόξης as it is mostly used in the New Testament from the heritage of the LXX, as the divine Presence of God in Christ (cf. Jh. 1:14). Just as God manifested His presence dramatically over the Tabernacle in the wilderness and at the dedication of the temple by Solomon, that same Presence has been disclosed in Christ. When He returns, the privilege believers and spiritual leaders receive is the indescribable blessing of standing in the very presence of God, not just for a moment but for all eternity. This privilege is described in terms of the image of an ancient Olympic crown that symbolized significant honor and privilege, and was something very tangible that folks in that world could readily understand, given the hero worship granted to the victorious athletes in the games. Just as successful completion of the athletic race brought special blessing, leading a congregation following the example of Christ will bring much greater privilege and blessing.

### b. Young men, be respectful, v. 5

5 You younger men, accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for “God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble.”

5 ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέρους. πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, ὅτι Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

#### Notes:

This final verse contains a pair of admonitions, one addressed to the νεώτεροι, “younger men,” and the other to πάντες, “everyone.” The identity of these two groups, and in particular the first one, has been controversial, resulting in numerous different views being put on the table.<sup>46</sup> The difficulty here rests in the two terms,

<sup>46</sup>“The identity of these *neōteroi* of 1 Peter is not immediately clear, and the term has been interpreted in a variety of ways.<sup>705</sup>

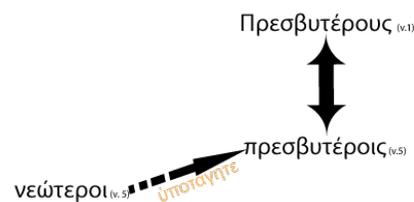
“(1) Some take the terms *presbyteroi* and *neōteroi* in v 5a to refer to persons older and younger in age, respectively.<sup>706</sup> This requires that *presbyteroi* here has a different sense from v 1, where it clearly designates elders as leaders of the community and not simply those older in age. The author, however, gives no indication of such a sudden shift in the sense of *presbyteroi*. Nor does the variation in the sense of *presbyteros* in 1 Tim 5:1, 17 offer an apposite analogue. J. N. D. Kelly (1969, 204) attributes a difference in the senses of *presbyteroi* in vv 1, 5 to the likelihood that v 5a is ‘a detached fragment of the community code paraphrased in ii.13–iii.9 which the writer has transferred here for reasons of his own’ but fails to clarify what these reasons might have been. It is indeed conceivable that the instruction of elder and younger persons once belonged to a traditional instruction for households, akin to the exhortation for parents and children (cf. Eph 6:1–2 within the household instruction of 5:21–6:9, and Col 3:20 within 3:18–4:1) and that 1 Pet 5:1–5a represents an adaptation of this part of the household tradition for instructing community elders/leaders and younger persons.<sup>707</sup> It is also possible that 1 Peter represents an early stage of development, when civic and domestic instructions was expanding into community instruction, a development evident also in the Pastorals (1 Tim 3:1–15; 5:1–6:2; Titus 1:7–9; 2:1–10; 3:1–2), 1 Clement (1:3; 21:6–8; 37:1–4; 57:1–2), and Polycarp (Phil 4:1–6:3). Kelly might have suggested that it was the address of *presbyteroi* as elders in vv 1–4 that attracted the reference to *presbyteroi* in the ‘fragment,’ but this would undermine the likelihood that the same term had different meanings in these connected verses and thus would defeat his point. Consequently, whatever the connection between 5:1–5a and 2:13–3:9 might have been, it sheds no light on the meaning of *presbyteroi* and *neōteroi* in 5:5a. With no indication given that the *presbyteroi* in v 5a are different from those in v 1, the proximity of both terms requires the sense of ‘elders’ (as leaders) for both verses.

“(2) Others regard *presbyteroi* in both vv 1 and 5a as identifying community leaders and the *neōteroi* simply as those who are ‘young in age’ (e.g., Leconte 1961, 115; Bornkamm 1968, 66). In this case, however, it is not clear why it is younger persons alone who are urged to be subordinate to the elders. It is true that the impetuosity and rebelliousness of youth were proverbial in antiquity (see Philo, *Sobr.* 16, 23; Plut., *Virt. mor.*; Mor. 450F).<sup>708</sup> In a forecast of anarchic times, Isaiah warned that ‘the youth will be insolent to the elder and the base fellow to the honorable’ (3:5). 1 Clement 3:4 appears to allude to this Isaian verse in a description of the rebelliousness against elders that arose in the church of Corinth (cf. also 44:3–6; 47:6). However, no such problem of youthful insubordination is evident elsewhere in 1 Peter, and it is more likely that the call for subordination of the *neōteroi* belongs to the more conventional pattern of household instruction followed earlier in the letter.

“(3) Still others regard the *neōteroi* as comprising all community members other than the elders (e.g., Windisch and Preisker 1951, 79; Reicke 1964, 130; Goppelt 1993, 351). While the pairing of *presbyteroi* and *neōteroi* allows this possibility, such a collective use of *neōteroi* would be without parallel in the NT; see also 1 Clement and the letter of Polycarp (Philippians), where in all cases *neōteroi* or *neoi* designates youth within the larger community. Furthermore, this theory would not fit the present context,

νεώτεροι and πρεσβυτέρους, in the first admonition having a natural age based distinction from each other (younger & older). But such a distinction doesn't work well in the context of vv. 1-5 where the second term Πρεσβυτέρους is clearly a leadership title in verse one. For the second use in verse five πρεσβυτέρους to become age based means a sudden, unexpected shift in meaning that is in contradiction with the correlative adverb ὁμοίως in verse five that clearly links the two passages closely together as a part of a series.<sup>47</sup> Clearly the two instances of πρεσβυτέρους in verses one and five have the same meaning of spiritual leaders.

The Connection of νεώτεροι to πρεσβυτέρους in First Peter 5:5



Thus who are the νεώτεροι? From the views set forth (illustrated in the chart on the right), they are either younger men (age based) or new converts. The more natural meaning is age based but the Greek term can also designate a new convert, as Elliott in the *Anchor Bible* commentary has argued. The uncertainty with both options is that the admonition seems to imply some problems with this group following the leadership of the community leaders. But nothing in First Peter suggests any such problem either with young men or with recent converts. So the assumption behind the admonition has to work off the presupposition that some kind of issue was present that Peter chose not to identify. Or else, that Peter is only issuing a generalized admonition without supposing any particular problem was present. To be sure, the first century world had its issues with 'generation gaps' between the young and the old as Philo and Plutarch clearly signal. But whether these cultural issues had found their way into the communities of faith in ancient Anatolia is very uncertain.<sup>48</sup>

since it is v 5b that first introduces an appeal to 'all' (*pantes*) members of the community. Thus, the *neōteroi* must constitute a specific group within the larger community.

"(4) Yet other scholars, pointing to Acts 5:6, take the *neōteroi* as 'minor officials,' corresponding to the elders regarded as 'major officials.'<sup>709</sup> But the fact that elders themselves were not yet 'officials' occupying some defined 'office' applies all the more to the *neōteroi*, who are not even assigned a discernible function here or elsewhere in the NT. The young men who carried out the corpses of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:6, 10) were performing a menial ad hoc task and hardly formed an institutionalized group. The differentiation in 1 John among 'children' (2:12, 13), 'fathers' (2:14a), and 'young persons' (2:14b) concerns distinctions according to age, not function. Nothing, moreover, in 1 Peter suggests an equation of *neōteroi* with *diakonoi*; in fact, the two groups are explicitly distinguished by Polycarp (Phil 5:2-3); against this view, see also Beare 1970, 201; and Davids 1990, 183.

"(5) It is also highly unlikely that these younger persons formed a particular group analogous to associations of *neoi* ('young men') in Hellenistic society (against Spicq 1969, 518-27) or that these persons had 'belonged lately to a Gymnasium and were regarded as now in training for the responsibilities attaching to citizenship of the Church' (against Selwyn 1947, 436). Clubs of younger males (*neoi* between 20 and 30 years of age) who trained in the gymnasia did exist among groups of urban citizens,<sup>710</sup> and an inscription from Hypaepa in Lydia (CII 755, 2d-3d century CE) mentions also young Judean males (*Ioudaiōn neōterōn*) who were active in the local gymnasium. But nothing in the literature of early Christianity indicates recruitment of these young club members or the existence of analogous formations within the messianic movement.

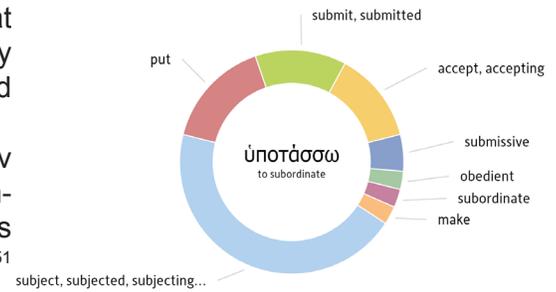
"(6) There is, however, evidence to suggest that *neōteros* here is similar in sense to 'neophyte' (*neophytos*), with both terms designating someone 'young or younger in the faith' and hence a recent convert (see Elliott 1970). The terms *neos* and *neōteros* can mean 'new,' 'fresh,' 'not long there,' 'recent,' as well as 'young' (Behm 1967, 896). A 3d-century BCE inscription from Ptolemais draws a distinction between *hoi neōteroi* and *hoi alloi p[olit]ai*; the former appear to be 'citizens recently introduced into the city, but not yet officially enrolled in the demes' (MM 425-26). At Qumran, persons seeking membership formed a specific group under the tutelage of the 'overseer' (*mēbaqqēr*), a man senior in years and eminent in status. These novices underwent a two-year period of instruction in the Mosaic Law and testing prior to their admission to the community (IQS VI 13-23; CD XIII 7-13). Appropriate behavior during this period included a display of humility and respect for order and for men older in age and rank (CD XIV 3-12), the person of lesser rank obeying his superior (IQS V 23-25), as was required of the membership in general (IQS II 20-24; VI 8-13). The process of admission began with the person's twentieth year (IQSa I 1-19), thereby indicating that these novices were relatively young in age. In terms of their association with the Qumran community, however, they were also recent initiants. Determination of status according to one's seniority of membership in the community was, according to Philo, also typical of the *Therapeutae*, a contemplative Israelite group in Egypt. At their banquets, he reports, 'the seniors/elders (*presbyteroi*) recline according to the order of their admission (to the community)' (Philo, *Contempl.* 67), indicating that status here too was determined by longevity of membership." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 836-39.]

<sup>47</sup>"The adverb *homoiōs* ('in turn'), is used not with the meaning 'likewise' (as in 3:1)<sup>700</sup> but as a connective term joining related but distinct items in a series, as in 3:7 (see the NOTE). Here it connects the exhortation to younger persons with the foregoing instruction to elders." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 836.]

<sup>48</sup>Note Paul's advice to Timothy at Ephesus in the province of Asia in 1 Tim. 5:1-2, "Do not speak harshly to an older man," Bible Study: Page 264

What Peter encourages the νεώτεροι to do is specified as ὑποτάγητε. From the verb ὑποτάσσω, the core meaning is to accept with respect the leadership role of another.<sup>49</sup> This group of individuals, whether younger men or new converts, needed to come to this point of giving the community leaders the proper respect they deserved. Keep in mind the kind of leadership by example that Peter has described in the first four verses, and one can easily see why these individuals needed to be given such respect and acceptance.

The second admonition, πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, appeals to the entire congregation to clothe<sup>50</sup> themselves with humility toward one another. This includes both leaders and the rest of the congregation. Humility is τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην<sup>51</sup>



but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, 2 to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity.” (5.1 **Πρεσβυτέρω** μὴ ἐπιπλήξης, ἀλλὰ παρακάλει ὡς πατέρα, **νεωτέρους** ὡς ἀδελφούς, 2 πρεσβυτέρας ὡς μητέρας, νεωτέρας ὡς ἀδελφὰς ἐν πάσῃ ἀγνεΐα.)

His words to Titus in Tit. 2:1-6 are instructive as well: “1 But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. 2 Tell **the older men** [πρεσβύτας] to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. 3 Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited. 6 Likewise, urge **the younger men** [Τοὺς νεωτέρους] to be self-controlled.”

<sup>49c</sup>β. *subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey* abs. (Jos., Bell. 4, 175) **Ro 13:5; 1 Cor 14:34** (cp. δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις Gal 5:13); 1 Cl 2:1a; 57:2. Of submission involving recognition of an ordered structure, w. dat. of the entity to whom/which appropriate respect is shown (Palaeph. 38 p. 56, 15; 57, 2): toward a husband (s. Ps.-Callisth. 1, 22, 4 πρέπον ἐστὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τῷ ἀνδρὶ ὑποτάσσεσθαι, s. 1a above; cp. SEG 26, 1717, 26 [III/IV A.D.] in a love charm) **Eph 5:22** v.l.; **Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1 Pt 3:1** (on an alleged impv. sense s. Schwyzer II 407), 5; parents **Lk 2:51**; masters **Tit 2:9; 1 Pt 2:18**; B 19:7; D 4:11; secular authorities (1 Ch 29:24; Theoph. Ant. 1, 11 [p. 82, 14]) **Ro 13:1** (CMorrison, The Powers That Be—Ro 13:1–13, diss. Basel ’56; EBarnikol, TU 77, ’61, 65–133 [non-Pauline]); **Tit 3:1; 1 Pt 2:13**; 1 Cl 61:1; church officials 1 Cl 1:3; 57:1; IEph 2:2; IMg 2; 13:2; ITr 2:1f; 13:2; IPol 6:1; Pol 5:3; νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις **1 Pt 5:5**. To God (Epict. 3, 24, 65 τ. θεῷ ὑποταταγμένος; 4, 12, 11; Ps 61:2; 2 Macc 9:12) **1 Cor 15:28b; Hb 12:9; Js 4:7**; 1 Cl 20:1; IEph 5:3; to Christ **Eph 5:24**. To the will of God, the law, etc. **Ro 8:7; 10:3**; 1 Cl 34:5; Hm 12, 5, 1; τῆ ἐπιθυμῖα τῆ ἀγαθῆ 12, 2, 5.—Of submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love **1 Cor 16:16; Eph 5:21; 1 Pt 5:5b** v.l.; 1 Cl 38:1.—The evil spirits must be subject to the disciples whom Jesus sends out **Lk 10:17, 20**. Likew. the prophetic spirits must be subject to the prophets in whom they dwell **1 Cor 14:32**.—HMerklein, Studien zu Jesus und Paulus (WUNT 105) ’98, 405–37.” [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), 1042.]

<sup>50c</sup>Ἐγκομβοῦσθαι is derived from κόμβος, which, according to the glossaries, means ‘a knot,’ or ‘anything tied on with a knot’. Hence ἐγκόμβωμα is used of a garment tied on over others. Pollux, Onomasticon, iv. 18, describes one form of it as ἱματίδιον τιλευκὸν τῆ τῶν δούλων ἐξωμίδι προσκείμενον, a little white garment, which slaves wore over their ἐξωμίς; and from Longus, Pastoralia, ii. 60, we learn that it was of such a nature that a shepherd, who wanted to run his fastest, would cast it off. The ἐξωμίς was a sleeveless tunic, and from the definition which Suidas gives of κόμβος—ὁ κόμβος τῶν δύο χειριδίων, ὅταν τις δῆσῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἴδιον τράχηλον—we may infer that this form of ἐγκόμβωμα was a pair of sleeves, which were fastened and held in place by a knot behind the neck. But κόμβος might also mean the knot of a girdle; hence κομβολύτης, according to Hesychius, is synonymous with βαλαντιοτόμος, ‘a cutpurse,’ purses being carried on the girdle. In another place, s.v. κοσσύμβη, Hesychius uses ἐγκόμβωμα as equivalent to περιζώμα Αἰγύπτιον, a kind of apron such as that used by black smiths. It would seem that any article of dress, that was attached by laces, might be called ἐγκόμβωμα. The verb was used by Epicharmus (Fragment 4 in Ahrens, de dialecto Dorica, p. 435). The words of the fragment are εἴ γε μὲν ὅτι κεκόμβωται καλῶς; but Ahrens notes on the authority of Photius, Epist. 156, that the right reading is ἐγκεκόμβωται. The meaning is, ‘If, indeed, because she is bravely apparelled.’ Hesychius makes κομβώσασθαι equivalent to στολίσασθαι, and ἐγκεκόμβωται to ἐνείληται, as if they were used of putting on garments of a certain amplitude and dignity. This is probably St. Peter’s meaning. Humility, like ‘a meek and quiet spirit,’ is an ornament of price, a beautiful robe. The R. V. has ‘gird yourselves with humility,’ as if the metaphor were derived from tying an apron round the waist, so as to be ready for service (cf. John 13:4). But, upon the whole, the facts given above appear to make against this rendering.” [Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1901), 190-91.]

<sup>51c</sup>ταπεινοφροσύνη, ης, ἥ (s. prec.; Epict. 3, 24, 56; Jos., Bell. 4, 494, both in a pejorative sense) in our lit. only in a favorable sense (τὸ τῆς τ. δόγμα Orig., C. Cels. 6, 15, 23; ταπεινοφροσύνης σωτήριον Did., Gen. 70, 26) **humility, modesty Phil 2:3** (in dat. of the motivating cause); **1 Pt 5:5**; 1 Cl 21:8; Hs 5, 3, 7 (of humility that expresses itself in fasting; Leutzsch, Hermas 425f, n. 441). W. ἐπιείκεια 1 Cl 56:1; cp. 58:2. W. ἐπιείκεια and πραῦτης 30:8. W. πραῦτης, μακροθυμία, and other virtues **Col 3:12**; cp. **2:23**. μετὰ πάσης ταπ. in all humility **Ac 20:19; Eph 4:2** (+ καὶ πραῦτητος); without πάσης 1 Cl 31:4; 44:3. *πᾶσα ἐρώτησις ταπεινοφροσύνης*

with the idea of respectful submission and regard for the other person. The admonition here is similar to the earlier one in 3:8.<sup>52</sup>

The basis for this admonition is taken from Proverb 3:34.<sup>53</sup> The principle of God blessing those with humility and rejecting those with the opposite is extensive in the New Testament and underscores Peter's point here.<sup>54</sup> One should also note that this OT quote will open the door for the next subunit of 5:6-11 in this letter.

Thus when the Christian communities are being properly led by their leaders (vv. 1-4) and the members are showing respect and considerate regard for one another (v. 5), they will indeed be moving toward fortifying themselves to face unjust suffering in a Christ honoring fashion. Such an atmosphere will be created inside the congregations that can strengthen the resolve of everyone to remain true to Christ even when pressure is loaded on them to abandon their Christian commitment. Peter paints an idealized picture here of a close knit community of faith that God can bless and use in powerful ways to affirm the presence and power of God Himself.

What can we learn from this in our day? A lot! Here is how 'church' should function at its best. With many pastors more concerned about 'occupying an office with power and authority' Peter shreds such false thinking to pieces by his words here. Leadership that works well spiritually is leadership by example and by strength of character. The 'servant leader' model advocated by Jesus<sup>55</sup> is re-enforced and affirmed by Peter here. What a revolution would take place were the spiritual leaders in the churches to take these words of Peter seriously. Weak and struggling churches could find renewed spiritual strength to faithfully carry out the commands of Christ.

But the burden also falls on the entire congregation to show humility and respect for everyone else, including its leaders. With 'pastor burn out' chewing up perhaps a third or more ministers so that they 'leave the ministry' a long time before retirement,<sup>56</sup> such an atmosphere of mutual consideration for one another is critical. Out of past pastoral experiences, I have observed that when a church moves toward this ideal, renewed spiritual life transforms the congregation. When it moves away from this goal, disaster looms for the congregation. And one final observation: the mutual respect must be genuine and deeply rooted, not formal or shallow. Here is the true meaning of being a "New Testament church."

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χρήζει every prayer requires humility Hv 3, 10, 6. Humility can also be wrongly directed **Col 2:18, 23**.—Lit. s.v. πραΰτης and ταπεινῶ 4. Also KDeissner, D. Idealbild d. stoischen Weisen 1930; Vögtle (s.v. πλεονεξία) word-list; LGilen, Demut des Christen nach d. NT: ZASzMyst 13, '38, 266–84; LMarshall, Challenge of NT Ethics '47, 92–96; ADihle, Demut: RAC III '56, 735–78 [lit.]; SRehol, Das Problem der Demut in der profan-griechischen Literatur im Vergleich zu Septuaginta und NT '61.—DELG s.v. ταπεινός. EDNT. 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), 989.]

<sup>52</sup>"Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind."

Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχοὶ, ταπεινόφρονες,

<sup>53</sup>"Our author reinforces this teaching here (as in 2:21; 3:18; 4:8) by adding an OT citation, Prov. 3:34, which was likely a favorite in the early church, for it also appears in Jas. 4:6 (and later in 1 Clem. 30:2 and Ignatius, Eph. 5:3). This is reversal-of-fortunes language, of which both the NT (e.g., Luke 1:51–53; 6:24–26; Jas. 2:5) and the OT (1 Sam. 2:7–8; Pss. 28:27; 31:23; Ezek. 17:24; Zeph. 2:3; Sir. 10:14–15) make use. Those who are powerful and self-sufficient God rejects and destroys, while those who are humble and submitted to God (e.g., Num. 12:3; Judg. 6:15) he enriches with his gifts and exaltation. This teaching, which in the NT was supremely seen in the teaching of Jesus, is surely reason enough for any Christian humbly to serve another. And if this is the case, the church will operate effectively even under the stress of persecution." [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), 185.]

<sup>54</sup>"This image fits well with what is tied on: humility. Peter has already referred to it in 3:8, for it is a cardinal Christian virtue (Acts 20:19; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; cf. Mark 10:42–45), indicating a servant's attitude toward others. It is something the NT values highly, in contrast to either Judaism or Hellenistic culture, due to the example of Jesus." [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), 185.]

<sup>55</sup>See Matthew 20:17-28 (// Mark 10:35-45); Matthew 23:1-12 (// Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:37-52, 20:45-47); Mark 9:33-37 (// Matt. 18:1-8; Luke 9:46-48).

<sup>56</sup>One important study on this topic is H.B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors At Risk* (Portland, OR: Victor Press, 1993), based on a 1991 extensive survey of pastors across the US. The numbers are rather shocking: some 1,600 ministers are forced to resign their churches monthly in the US. Over the past 20 years the average length of a pastorate has declined from seven years to just over two years.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 20**  
**1 Peter 5:6-9**  
**“Standing up to Opposition”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

6 Ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ, 7 πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ’ αὐτόν, ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν. 8 νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε. ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν· 9 ὧ ἀντίστητε στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει, εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῇ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

6 Beugt euch also unter Gottes starke Hand, damit er euch erhöhen kann, wenn die Zeit gekommen ist.  
 7 Alle eure Sorgen werft auf ihn, denn er sorgt für euch.  
 8 Seid wachsam und nüchtern! Euer Feind, der Teufel, schleicht um die Herde wie ein hungriger Löwe. Er wartet nur darauf, dass er jemand von euch verschlingen kann.  
 9 Leistet ihm Widerstand und haltet unbeirrt am Glauben fest. Denkt daran, dass die Gemeinschaft eurer Brüder und Schwestern in der ganzen Welt die gleichen Leiden durchzustehen hat.

**NRSV**

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. 8 Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

**NLT**

6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and in his good time he will honor you. 7 Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you. 8 Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour. 9 Take a firm stand against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Be humbled, vv. 6-7](#)
  - b. [Be alert spiritually, vv. 8-9](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

What more could be said about Christians facing persecution than what Peter has already said in 3:13-5:5? The next passage of 5:6-9 adds an additional perspective on this subject that has not yet been treated, except for mentioning in passing at one or two previous points earlier in the letter. Peter does not repeat himself in this discussion with his words in 5:6-9. For that reason alone we need to give careful consideration to what he has to say. Additionally, he injects the role of the Devil into the discussion of unjust suffering and presents some concepts not found anywhere else in the New Testament. Interesting? We need to explore these ideas and their implications for daily living as a believer. Thus the passage is a valuable text for better understanding of how to face opposition day by day as Christians.

**I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>**

As is almost always the case, consideration of contextual issues is important to interpreting this passage.

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

## a. Historical

**External History.** The early centuries of copying this passage as a part of the Greek text of the New Testament reflects little tendency for variation in the wording of these verses.

The United Bible Societies 4th revised edition *Greek New Testament* lists two variant readings considered significant enough to impact Bible translation of this passage. In verse six after ἐν καιρῷ, several mostly later manuscripts add ἐπισκοπῆς so that the phrase becomes ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς, “in a time of visitation” rather than ἐν καιρῷ, “in due time.”<sup>2</sup> But the balance of manuscript evidence favors the shorter reading, although the essential meaning is the same for both readings.

In verse eight, the phrase [τινα] καταπιεῖν, “someone to devour,” has greater uncertainty to the wording.<sup>3</sup> The two main variations, τίνα καταπίη “[seeking] whom he may devour” and καταπιεῖν “[seeking] to devour,” express the same essential meaning as the text reading, but just with different wording. Although the external manuscript evidence is divided, the internal transcriptional evidence favors the shorter reading of [τινα] καταπιεῖν with some uncertainty about the pronoun τινα reflected by putting it in brackets. But all three readings contain the same basic idea that the devil as a roaring lion is seeking to devour humans if at all possible.

The Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition *Novum Testamentum Graece* will reflect a larger number of variations that are oriented toward stylistic ‘improvements’ on the original wording of the text.<sup>4</sup> But none of these

<sup>2</sup>“After καιρῷ the Textus Receptus adds ἐπισκοπῆς, with A P (Ψ) 5 28c 33 104 181 326 436 623 913 1827 1898 vg syr<sup>h</sup> with \* cop<sup>bo</sup> eth Ephraem Bede. The word, which is absent from P<sup>72</sup> & B K L 0206 most minuscules syr<sup>p</sup>, h txt cop<sup>sa</sup> Origen, appears to be a scribal addition derived from 2:12.” [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), 626.]

<sup>3</sup>“After ζητῶν there are three main variant readings: (a) τίνα καταπιεῖν ‘[seeking] someone to devour’; (b) τίνα καταπίη ‘[seeking] whom he may devour’; and (c) καταπιεῖν ‘[seeking] to devour.’ (The reading τίνα καταπίη is a transcriptional error either for the infinitive, written ΚΑΤΑΠΙΕῖ, or, by itacism, for the subjunctive.) On the one hand, it can be argued that (c), which is supported by B Ψ Origen<sup>lat</sup>, is the original reading, and that the others are scribal attempts to alleviate the difficulty of the absolute use of καταπιεῖν. On the other hand, it can be argued that the constancy of position of τίνα (however accented) in the overwhelming bulk of the manuscripts makes it probable that it is original and that its absence from a few witnesses is the result of accidental oversight. In either case reading (b), which is supported by P<sup>72</sup> A 614 Byz most early versions (whose evidence, however, may count for little, being merely idiomatic), appears to be a secondary development, arising when the colorless indefinite τίνα was taken as the interrogative τίνα. In the light of such considerations a majority of the Committee voted to represent the divergent textual evidence by adopting the reading (a), which is supported by & (K P 049) 81 181 326 1739 cop<sup>bo</sup> Origen, but to enclose τίνα within square brackets.” [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), 626-27.]

### <sup>4</sup>1. Petrus 5,6

- (2,12) επισκοπησ A P (Ψ) 33. 623. 2464 al (it) vg syh<sup>\*\*bo</sup>; (Spec)

### 1. Petrus 5,7

- αποριψαντες P<sup>72</sup>  
| (Ps 55,23) επιριψατε 0206<sup>vidpc</sup>; Aug  
| ημ- &\* 33<sup>pc</sup> vg<sup>ms</sup>

### 1. Petrus 5,8

- οτι P<sup>72</sup> &<sup>g</sup> L Ψ 049<sup>c</sup>. 69. 323. 614. 630. 945. 1241. 1505. 1739 al lat<sup>t</sup> sy co  
| txt &\* A B P 049\* m  
- ό P<sup>72</sup> 33  
- τίνα L P 322. 323. 614. 630. 945. 1243. 1739. 2298 al lat sy (P<sup>72</sup> & A 33<sup>vid</sup> sine acc.)  
| - B Ψ 0206<sup>vidpc</sup>; Hierpt  
| txt m sy<sup>h</sup> et \*καταπιη P<sup>72</sup> A (33). 614. 630. 945. 2298 p<sup>m</sup> sy

### 1. Petrus 5,9

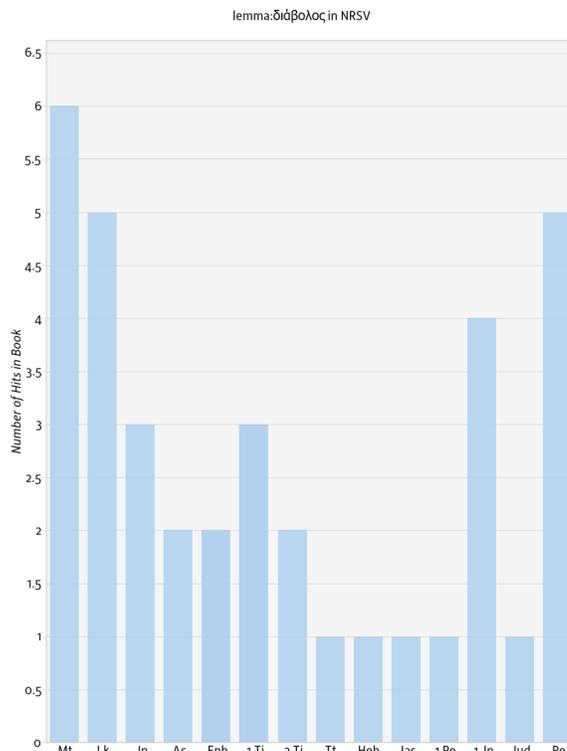
- P<sup>72</sup>  
- εδραιοι P<sup>72</sup>  
- οτι P<sup>72</sup> 614. 630. 1505 p<sup>c</sup>  
- &<sup>g</sup> A P Ψ 0206. 33. 1739 m  
| txt P<sup>72</sup> &\* B p<sup>c</sup>  
- -λεισθε & A B\* K 0206. 33. 614. 630. 1505 al  
| -λειται P<sup>72</sup> p<sup>c</sup>  
| επιμελεισθε 322. 323. 1241

express different ideas from those found in the original wording of the text.

**Internal History.** The paraenetical nature of the passage tends to minimize the time and place references contained in it. But verse nine contains some important markers that need comment as background to the study of the passage. The causal clause, “for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering” (εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῆ ἐν [τῷ] κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι), appear at first glance to imply a widespread persecution of Christians at the time of the writing of this letter. The primary thrust of the phrase is not to claim a universal persecution of Christians, but rather to assure his readers that they were not the only believers suffering persecution. Others, in other provinces elsewhere, were experiencing the same thing as they were.<sup>5</sup> From this they could find encouragement.

One indirect historical issue that is important in this passage is the allusion to the Devil in verse eight. How that concept was understood in Peter’s time is important background to understanding Peter’s perspective here. Peter uses three descriptive labels for his reference: ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν (‘your adversary’), διάβολος (‘the devil’), and ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος (‘like a roaring lion’).

The question that needs asking and answering is *how this depiction compares to others in that day and time?* The chart above reflects the pattern of use of the term διάβολος<sup>6</sup> in the New Testament. The more commonly used term in the New Testament (57x for σατανᾶς; 37



| txt B<sup>2</sup> P Ψ 1739 m lat<sup>t</sup> sy

[Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 607.]

<sup>5</sup>“The important information—perhaps the most important in the entire letter—is that the believers facing slander and persecution in the Asian provinces are not alone. Peter clearly affirms the solidarity of his own congregation (cf. v 13), and of the Christian brotherhood worldwide, with the distant congregations to which he writes.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 301.]

<sup>6</sup>“διάβολος, ον (s. διαβολή)

**1. pert. to engagement in slander, slanderous** (since Aristoph.; Thuc. 6, 15, 2 as adv.; Herm. Wr. 13, 13b; 22b; Philo, Sacr. Abel. 32 p. 215, 6) Pol 5:2. γυναῖκες **1 Ti 3:11**. πρεσβύτερες **Tit 2:3**.—**2 Ti 3:3**.

**2. subst. ὁ δ. one who engages in slander** (since X., Ages. 11, 5; Athen. 11, 508e; Esth 7:4; 8:1; pap first Christian; cp. PLond VI, 1923, 9 [IV A.D.] ‘the devil’; Tat. 22, 1), in our lit. as title of the principal transcendent evil being *the adversary/devil*, already current in the LXX as transl. of ἡψῶν (Job 2:1, but here not ‘as an entity opposed to the divine will’, JGammie, HUCA 56, ’85, 1–19 [s. p. 13]; Zech 3:1f; 1 Ch 21:1; cp. Wsd 2:24; TestNapht 8:4, 6; TestSol, TestJob; JosAs 12:9; GrBar 4:8; ApcSed, ApcMos, AssMos; Just., Mel., P. 67, 477 al.; δ. ὁ ἀρχῶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου Hippol., Ref. 6, 33) **Mt 4:1, 5, 8, 11; 13:39; 25:41; Lk 4:2f, 6, 13; 8:12; J 13:2; Ac 10:38; Eph 4:27; 6:11; Hb 2:14; Js 4:7**. κρίμα ... τοῦ διαβόλου *the judgment that befalls the devil* **1 Ti 3:6**; παγίς τοῦ διαβόλου devil’s trap **3:7; 2 Ti 2:26** (s. IScheftelowitz, Das Schlingen-u. Netzmotiv 1912, 11). ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος *your adversary, the devil* **1 Pt 5:8**; Μιχαὴλ ... τῷ δ. διακρινόμενος **Jd 9**. In **Rv 12:9; 20:2** w. ὄφις and σατανᾶς; s. also 2:10; 12:12; 20:10. τοῦ δ. βοτάνη *weed of the devil* IEph 10:3; ἐνέδραι τοῦ δ. *the devil’s ambushes* ITr 8:1; cp. MPol 3:1. Of tortures inflicted by the devil I Ro 5:3. τῷ δ. λατρεῖν *serve the devil* ISm 9:1; ὄργανα τοῦ δ. *tools of the devil* (of non-Christians) 2 Cl 18:2; πολυπλοκία τοῦ δ. *the devil’s cunning* Hm 4, 3, 4; tempting to sin (cp. πειράζων τὸν σωτήρα δ. Orig., C. Cels. 6, 43, 29) m 4, 3, 6; dwells in anger m 5, 1, 3; ἔργα τοῦ δ. m 7:3; doubt described as the devil’s daughter m 9:9; likew. evil desire m 12, 2, 2. The πνεῦμα or basic character of the devil is mentioned m 11:3; it is a πνεῦμα ἐπίγειον m 11:17 (Just., D. 82, 3 ἀκάθαρτον); ἐντολαὶ τοῦ δ. m 12, 4, 6; παλαίειν μετὰ τοῦ δ. Hs 8, 3, 6.—In imagery, those who oppose divine interests or purpose (s. πατήρ 3b) are υἱοὶ δ. **Ac 13:10**; τέκνα τοῦ δ. **1J 3:10**; they are descended ἐκ τοῦ δ. vs. **8**; the devil is their father **J 8:44**. (Cp. οἱ μὲν τοῦ θεοῦ, οἱ δὲ τοῦ διαβόλου Orig., C. Cels. 8, 25, 16.) On the designation of Judas as δ. **6:70** (sim. Peter as σατανᾶς **Mk 8:33**), cp. **13:2** (cp. εἰσῆλθεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ὁ σατανᾶς **13:27**).—Lit. under δαιμόνιον end, and ἄγγελος end. BNoack, Satanas u. Soteria ’48, 55f.—B. 1487. EDNT. 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), 226-27.]

times for διάβολος) is σατανᾶς,<sup>7</sup> which comes into Greek as a loan-word from ancient Persian sources.<sup>8</sup> The concept of a supernatural spirit being who opposes God and seeks to separate God from humans acquired its basic conceptualization among the Jews during the 400 year inter-testamental era between the Old and New Testaments. Such a concept did not exist in the ancient world outside of the Persian Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity. For Peter's initial readers who did not have Jewish or Persian backgrounds, the concept of

<sup>7</sup>σατανᾶς, ὁ indecl. and σατανᾶς, ἄ, ὁ (the former=Hebr. שָׁטָן 3 Km 11:14; Just., D. 103, 5; the latter Sir 21:27, also TestSol 1:1 D al.; TestJob; Test12Patr; ApcMos 17; Just.=Aram. שָׁטָן; for σατανος Lk 11:18 P<sup>75</sup> read σατανας) literally 'adversary', in our lit. only as title or name: (*the*) *Satan*, in a very special sense, the enemy of God and all of those who belong to God, simply *Satan, the Enemy* (on the concept of Satan s. the lit. s.v. διάβολος 2), almost always w. the art. (B-D-F §254, 1), without it only in Mk 3:23; Lk 22:3; 2 Cor 12:7 and in personal address.—Mt 4:10 (here, as well as in the two passages from Mt and Mk near the end of this entry, without the art. and in the voc.); Mk 1:13; 3:26; Lk 11:18; 22:31. W. διάβολος of the same being Rv 20:2; cp. 2:9f; Pol 7:1 (Just., A I, 28, 1 al.). The Lawless One (Antichrist) appears κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ 2 Th 2:9. He incites people to evil (cp. Homeric usage LfgrE s.v. δαμόνι[ος] col. 198; TestJob 41:5 Ἐλίου ἐμπνευσθεὶς ἐν τῷ Σ. ; 23:11 ὁ Σ. ... ἐπλαγίαζεν αὐτῆς τὴν καρδίαν; cp. 26:6) Mk 4:15; Ac 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; Rv 12:9. Esp. guilty of instigating Judas' evil deed by entering into this disciple Lk 22:3; J 13:27. Causing sickness Lk 13:16 (s. δέω 1b, end). Hence driven out in healings Mt 12:26; Mk 3:23. Hindering the apostle in his work 1 Th 2:18 (cp. Julian., Ep. 40 [68] p. 46, 19 Bidez-Cumont εἰ μὴ τι δαμόνιον γένοιτο κώλυμα). Causing false beliefs to arise 1 Ti 5:15; hence the one who denies the resurrection and judgment is called πρωτότοκος τοῦ σ. Pol 7:1; Polycarp uses the same expr. in speaking of Marcion, Epil Mosq 3. Persecutions of Christians are also inspired by Satan Rv 2:13ab (on the θρόνος τοῦ σ. s. θρόνος 1bε); hence certain Judeans who were hostile to Christians are called συναγωγή τοῦ σ. Rv 2:9; 3:9. God will crush him Ro 16:20. Jesus saw Satan falling (or fallen) fr. heaven Lk 10:18 (Burton, Moods and Tenses §146 [deZwaan §148]; FSpitta, ZNW 9, 1908, 160–63; CWebster, ET 57, '45/46, 52f: πεσ. is timeless and means 'I watched him fall'). Imprisoned, but freed again after a thousand years Rv 20:7. ὁ σ. μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός *Satan disguises himself as an angel of light* 2 Cor 11:14 (TestJob 6:4 μετασχηματισθεὶς εἰς ἐπαίτην a beggar; ApcMos 17 ἐγένετο ἐν εἶδει ἄγγελου; s. μετασχηματίζω; on the subject s. Windisch ad loc.). ἄγγελος σατανᾶ 2 Cor 12:7 (UHeckel, ZNW 84, '93, 69–75); ἄγγελοι τοῦ σ. B 18:1 (ἄγγελος 2c). αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ σ. I Eph 13:1 (δύναμις 5). τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σ. Rv 2:24 (s. βαθύς 2). ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ σ. the power of Satan Ac 26:18; ending of Mk in the Freer ms. ln. 6 (ἐξουσία 2); ibid. ln. 2 ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος ... ὑπὸ τὸν σ. ἐστίν.—παραδοῦναι τινα τῷ σ. 1 Cor 5:5 (s. ὄλεθρος; cp. the Christ. ins New Docs 3, 83); 1 Ti 1:20 (s. on both passages παραδίδωμι 1b).—In Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33 Peter is called Satan by Jesus, because his attempt to turn Jesus aside fr. his divine assignment to accept the consequences of his involvement with humanity has made him a tempter of a diabolical sort, who might thwart the divine plan of salvation. This metaph. usage relates to the striking verdict Rv 2:9; 3:9 above (cp. διάβολος J 6:70; 8:44).—BNoack, Satanás u. Sotería '48. 1369–80 (lit.). DBS XII 1–47. DNP III 269. DELG. M-M. EDNT. TRE III 608f. 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), 916–17.]

<sup>8</sup>"Satan is seldom mentioned in the OT. He is pictured as an angel who acts as the heavenly prosecutor (Jb 1:6–12; 2:1–7; Zec 3:1–2). As such, he is called 'the satan' or 'the accuser,' and there is nothing in the context to indicate that the angel is evil. It is not until the late OT period that Satan appears as a tempter: in 1 Chronicles 21:1, the story of 2 Samuel 24:1 is retold with Satan (used for the first time as a proper name) substituted for God and pictured as an evil figure. The OT, then, has no developed doctrine of Satan but contains the raw material from which the later doctrine came. (Some people see Lucifer of Is 14:12 as a reference to Satan, but the context is clearly referring to the king of Babylon; it is therefore unlikely that any reference to Satan was intended.)

"The Jews further developed the idea of Satan during the intertestamental period, also calling him Belial, Mastema, and Sammael. Three differing conceptions appear. First, the Satan of the OT reappears in the roles of tempting people, of accusing them in heaven before God, and of hindering God's saving plan (Jubilees 11:5; 17:16; Assumption of Moses 17; 1 Enoch 40:7). Second, the Dead Sea Scrolls present Satan (Belial) as the leader of the evil forces and attacker of the righteous. This development was probably influenced by the evil god of Zoroastrian religion. But unlike the Zoroastrian idea, the scrolls never present two gods but rather one God who has created both Belial and the Prince of Light (who is sure to win in the end, for God is with him). Third, in this literature Satan is often identified with OT stories from which his name was originally absent: he lusted after Eve and therefore caused the fall (Wisd of Sol 2:24), he controls the angels who fell in Genesis 6:1–4 (Jubilees 10:5–8; 19:28), or he is a fallen angel himself (2 Enoch 29:4).

"The NT has a developed portrayal of Satan, and he comes with a whole list of names: Satan (Hebrew for 'accuser'), devil (the Greek translation of Satan), Belial, Beelzebul, the Adversary, the Dragon, the Enemy, the Serpent, the Tester, and the Wicked One. Satan is pictured as the ruler of a host of angels (Mt 25:41) and the controller of the world (Lk 4:6; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:4), who especially governs all who are not Christians (Mk 4:15; Jn 8:44; Acts 13:10; Col 1:13). He is opposed to God and seeks to alienate all people from God; therefore, he is an especially dangerous foe of Christians (Lk 8:33; 1 Cor 7:5; 1 Pt 5:8), who must steadfastly resist him and see through his cunning (2 Cor 2:11; Eph 6:11; Jas 4:7). Satan works his evil will by tempting persons (Jn 13:2; Acts 5:3), by hindering God's workers (1 Thes 2:18), by accusing Christians before God (Rv 12:10), and by controlling the evil persons who resist the gospel (2 Thes 2:9; Rv 2:9, 13; 13:2)."

[Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale reference library (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 1168.]

the Devil was a brand new idea. Peter’s perspective of the role of the Devil in their experience of persecution provided new insight into how neighbors and others could turn on them in vicious attack.

**b. Literary**

**Literary Form (Genre).** The broad genre issue remains the same: this passage is a part of the letter body and the teachings are prompted by circumstances that Peter understood to be present among the congregations sufficiently to merit addressing.

The paraenesis nature of the passage, however, contains broad, generalized principles of religious behavior that would urge caution against reading too much detail into the particular circumstances of the congregations (ἐκλεκτοῖς) addressed in the Adscriptio of the letter in 1:1b-2a. No distinctive subtype of paraenetical subgenre is detectable in these verses.

The one distinctive aspect of this passage along with vv. 10-11 is that they are generally understood to be Peter’s exposition of Proverbs 3:34 from the LXX.<sup>9</sup> This perspective then prompts a comparison with James 4:6-10 which is James’ interpretation of the same text from the Old Testament.<sup>10</sup> Similarities of viewpoint between the two NT writers are clearly present in their use of this common text. But differences are also present. James is using the Proverbs passage as a basis for calling his readers to repentance from worldliness. Peter uses it to call his readers to prepare to face persecution. James and Peter both follow the wording of the LXX text closely. Peter gives something of an interpretative paraphrase of the Proverbs text in verse six after quoting it in verse five. And then he draws implications from it that he considers relevant to his readers (vv. 7-11). James also applies the OT text to the needs of his targeted readers, but in a different manner (vv. 7-10).

**Literary Context.** The literary setting of the passage begins in an expanding manner with 5:6-11 as the most immediate context. These verses form a natural unit expression of thought with the LXX passage from Proverbs 3:34 in verse six as the launch pad for Peter’s thoughts in vv. 6-11. Three basic subdivisions emerge: the first two applications in verses 6-7. The third application in verses 8-9, followed by the fourth application in verses 10-11. This final subunit brings not only this passage, vv. 6-11, to a climatic close, but also

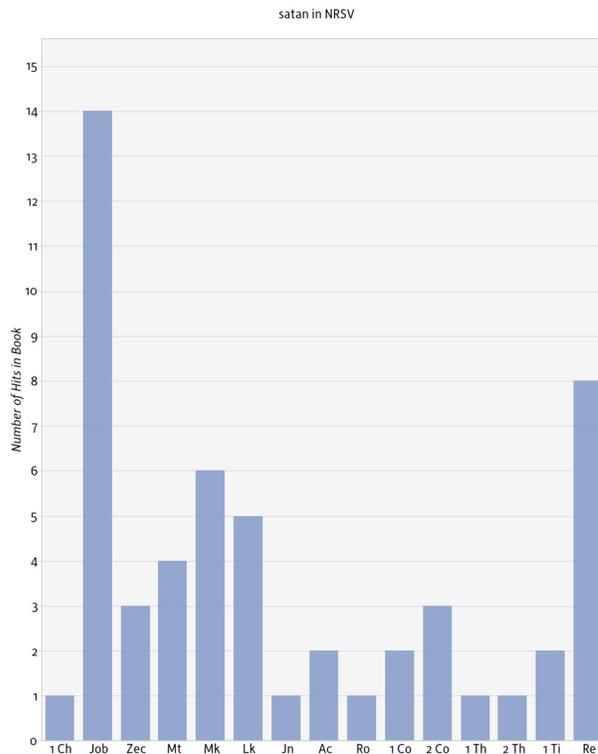
<sup>9</sup>NRSV:  
 Toward the scorners he is scornful,  
 but to the humble he shows favor.  
 κύριος ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται,  
 ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.†  
 [*Septuaginta*: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Pr 3:34.]  
<sup>10</sup>NRSV

6 But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says,  
 “God opposes the proud,  
 but gives grace to the humble.”

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

6 μείζονα δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν; διὸ λέγει·  
 ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται,  
 ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

7 ὑποτάγητε οὖν τῷ θεῷ, ἀντίστητε δὲ τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ φεύξεται ἀφ’ ὑμῶν, 8 ἐγγίσατε τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐγγίει ὑμῖν. καθαρίσατε χεῖρας, ἁμαρτωλοὶ, καὶ ἀγνίστατε καρδίας, δίψυχοι. 9 ταλαιπωρήσατε καὶ πενθήσατε καὶ κλαύσατε. ὁ γέλως ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος μετατραπήτω καὶ ἡ χαρὰ εἰς κατήφειαν. 10 ταπεινώθητε ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ὑψώσει ὑμᾶς.



**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**

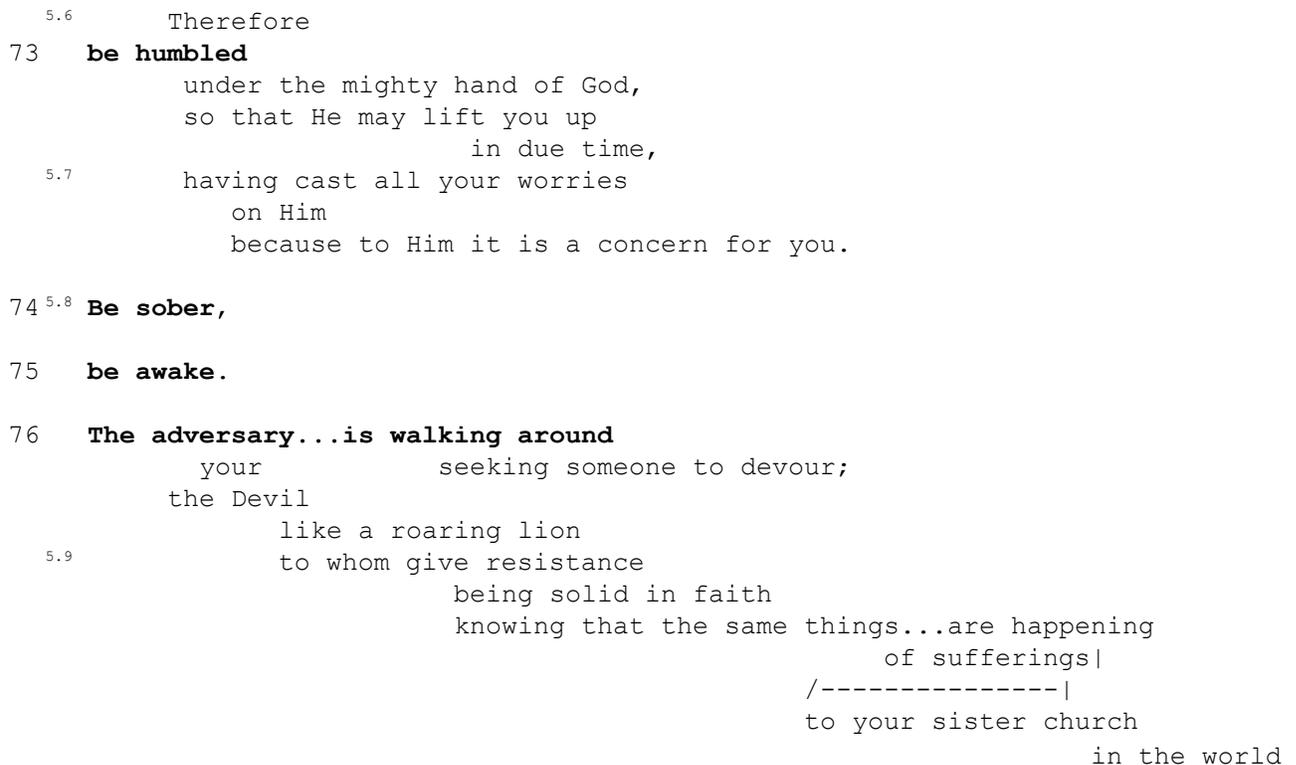
- *Sender Verification, 5:12*
- *Greetings, 5:13-14a*
- *Benedictio, 5:14b*

brings the letter body to its close. The letter structure then moves into a more formal *Conclusio* with a selection of items for the ending of the letter.

The passage, 5:6-9, stands also as a part of a larger unit emphasizing proper conduct in the face of persecution; cf. 5:1-11. This in turn stands as the third and final segment of Peter's discussion of persecution that began in 3:13 and continues down to 5:11.

With each of these subunits in 3:13-5:11, we have observed Peter's marvelous wisdom and insight into believers facing unjust suffering at the hands of individuals opposing their Christian faith. Each segment has contributed new, fresh perspective into this experience for his initially targeted readers, and ultimately to us as modern readers of this text. Such will be the case with 5:6-9 also, for Peter will open our eyes to a larger conflict taking place in the experience of persecution, a cosmic conflict between God and Satan. This makes the urgency of preparing ourselves for such experiences all the more important, as well as heightening our need of God's help in coping with the persecution of evil men against us.

**Literary Structure.** The block diagram below attempts to reflect the structural organization of the thoughts in the original Greek text in a visual manner so they can be more easily understood.



The pattern in this text is rather easy to identify from the above diagram. Two subunits of text material are clearly present. Statement 73 in verses 6 and 7 stand as the first admonition to adopt a stance of humility. Several expansion elements amplify this core admonition in vv. 6b-7. Statements 74-76 constitute the second subunit. Two rapid fire admonitions in synonymous parallelism (#s 74-75) stressing spiritual awareness begin. Although not explicitly stated by a causal conjunction like ὅτι or γάρ, the thought flow suggests that statement 76 is the reason for this awareness: the spiritual danger presented by the Devil.

This passage adds some new dimensions to the ongoing discussion of unjust suffering in 3:13-5:11. The

concept of humility is introduced for the first time. The emphasis on being sober (νήφω) was mentioned in 1:13 and 4:7, and now appears a third time. But the concept of being watchful (γρηγορέω) only surfaces here in the letter. The destructive work of the Devil (διάβολος) shows up for the first time, and he is labeled an adversary (ἀντίδικος) only here in the New Testament. All of this adds another perspective to the experience of unjust suffering for Christians.

## II. Message

The seeming randomness of these admonitions at first glance belies a structure embedded into the passage. The role of Proverbs 3:34, quoted in verse five, is significant here and leads to the clearer understanding that Peter is drawing upon his Jewish heritage to take a text from the Hebrew Bible as the starting point for several ideas he desires to put before his readers. Verse five is then the launch pad for the passage. The first application in verse six builds off it very closely with the common link of reference to God. The second application in verse seven expands the application. Then the focus in verses eight and nine shift to a defensive posture with admonitions to prepare oneself against the attacks of the Devil as he works through the human persecutors against believers. The fourth application in verses ten and eleven (in lesson 21 of the series on First Peter) will return to a focus on God with a marvelous promise from God to see the believer through these trials.

The God / Devil theme in vv. 6-9 will provide the organizing structure for this study.

### a. Be humbled, vv. 6-7

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

6 Ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ, 7 πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ’ αὐτόν, ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν.

#### Notes:

The first two segments begin with Peter’s paraphrase of Proverbs 3:34 from his quote in verse five with an initial application in verse six, and then his second application of it to his readers in verse seven.

The variety of ways in which the Old Testament is used by New Testament writers is instructive and provides insight into patterns of scripture interpretation current among first century Jews. The OT passage is used by both Peter and James. Comparing the ways they quote and interpret the same passage is helpful:

Proverbs 3:34 LXX	1 Peter 5:5	James 4:6
<i>κύριος</i> ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.	[ὁ] θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.	Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

Both New Testament writers follow the OT Septuagintal text closely and substitute κύριος (Lord) with θεὸς (God).<sup>11</sup> This is significant because the exposition of the Proverbs quote in both Peter and James will center primarily on God’s sovereign control over things and the need of believers to fully submit themselves to His authority. But the difference between Peter and James surfaces in the expositions.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>“The citation is from the Septuagint version of Prov 3:34, with *ho theos* (‘God’) substituted for *kyrios* (LXX), since *kyrios* (‘Lord’) in this letter generally designates Jesus Christ (1:3, 25; 2:3; 3:15), except for 2:13 (God) and 3:6 (Abraham). The alteration is consistent with that of 1:25, where the author replaces *theos* with *kyrios* (referring to Christ) in his citation of Isa 40:8. This same proverb is cited also in Jas 4:6 with the same substitution. Prov 3:34 LXX is quoted again more fully in 1 Clem. 30:2 and partially (Prov 3:34a) in Ignatius, Eph. 5:3, so that it appears to have had a firm place in early Christian paraenesis. Here in 1 Peter the proverb supplies a weighty reason for humility toward fellow-believers (v 5b) as well as toward God (v 6a).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 848.]

<sup>12</sup>“The main point of similarity between Peter and James is the close association between humble submission to God and successful resistance to the devil. There is little evidence here of a direct literary relationship between the two epistles, but it is possible to imagine as a common source a couplet (used perhaps in the instruction of new converts) similar in form and content to James 4:10 and 4:7b:

- a. ‘Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.’
- b. ‘Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.’

“With such a couplet (in addition to Prov 3:34) as their starting point, it is possible that James and Peter have constructed their respective sets of admonitions, each adapted to the author’s distinctive purpose. On such a hypothesis, James would have used (a) twice (4:7a, 10) as a frame for the whole, then completed the thought of (b) with a sequel (‘Draw near to God, and he will draw near

In James, this exposition in vv. 7-10 admonishes believers to abandon worldliness that is spiritually deadening and is the source of internal quarreling inside the congregations (cf. 4:1-10). In drawing perceived implications of the Proverbs passage, James puts together very creatively a string of short interlaced admonitions (vv. 6-10): a) submit to God, b) resist the Devil and he will flee, c) clean your hands and purify your hearts, d) cry, weep, and mourn, e) turn laughter into dejection, and f) humble yourselves before God and He will exalt you. This is the solution to worldliness (vv. 4-6) which is the source of church fussing (vv. 1-3).

Peter, on the other hand, sees the Proverbs admonition as foundational to a series of admonitions essential to preparing believers to face persecution from outsiders: a) humble yourselves before God so that He can exalt you, b) cast all your cares on a God who cares for you, c) discipline yourselves to be on guard against the Devil, d) resist the Devil knowing that other Christians are experiencing the same sufferings, e) after some suffering God will help you through the suffering, and f) praise be to this God.

What both writers were doing was to find applications of the OT sacred text to their respective Christian readers. James and Peter both signal this with the use of οὖν (therefore) in Jas. 4:7 and 1 Pet. 5:6. Jewish use of sacred scriptures at the beginning of the Christian era was focused on developing 'links' of the text to contemporary issues being faced by the people of God. A wide variety of methods were employed and fall under the collective label of Midrash. Although at times their approaches became rather imaginative with questionable procedures, the common belief was that the Bible is to be understood in terms of contemporary relevance to every day life. Both James and Peter shared that common perspective and thus employ some of the more solid interpretive procedures from their Jewish heritage to apply the Proverbs passage to the different needs of their readers.

**Peter's first use of Prov. 3:34 (v. 6):** Ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ. Thus in verse six Peter first applies the Proverbs emphasis on pride vs humility emphasis with a humility / exaltation application. The linking of humility and divine exaltation is common in both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>13</sup> When confronted with persecution believers are to turn to God in humble submission to His will and leadership. Out of such commitment then comes the divine 'lifting up' in resurrection, glorification, and eternal life. This stands as the ultimate confirmation of the correctness of submitting humbly to God in the face of persecution. It also becomes one of the implications, in Peter's mind, of the Proverbs promise that God will give grace to the humble.

**Ταπεινώθητε, "be humbled."** The uncommon use of the Aorist passive imperative form of the Greek verb here highlights the responsibility of believers to accept the humbling action of God due to external circumstances.<sup>14</sup> To be humbled is to be brought low in status from the perspective of others. It is the opposite of pride

to you,' 4:8a), and finally supplied his own denunciatory material (4:8b-9) adapted to the broader context of 4:1-6 and 4:13-5:6. Peter would have led off in vv 6-7 with his own adaptation and expansion of (a), then made (b) the centerpiece (v 9a, 'resist') of a significant call to respond to the challenge of persecution (vv 8-9), and finally supplied vv 16-11 as a word of promise and praise.

"It is equally plausible, however, that James 4:7-10 and 1 Pet 5:6-11 are simply independent reflections on Prov 3:34 LXX, with no additional common source (for still another use of this text, cf. 1 Clem 30.1-3, where the word 'arrogance' at the end of 30.1 leads into the quotation in 30.2, and the quotation's statement that 'God ... gives grace' is picked up significantly in 30.3). There is no question that Peter draws on a variety of traditions in these verses, possibly including sayings of Jesus (in vv 6b, 7, and 8a) as well as early metaphorical descriptions of Christian life in the world as spiritual warfare (e.g., Eph 6:16-17, especially vv 10-11, 13; also 1 Thess 5:6-8). Selwyn assigns the material to a traditional 'Persecution-Form' (439-58), but the very different emphases in James and 1 Clement suggest that the accent on persecution is Peter's own contribution." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 294-95.]

<sup>13</sup>“The verb *hypsōō* is used of God's exalting or 'lifting up' of the humble (Ps 149:4; Luke 1:52) and often occurs, as here, in the contrast between humility and exaltation (Matt 23:12/Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14; 2 Cor 11:7; Jas 4:10). It is also used of God's exalting/raising Jesus from the dead (John 3:14; 12:32, 34; Acts 2:33; 5:31; cf. Phil 2:9) and here in 1 Peter refers similarly to God's exalting/raising of the believers. As God raised Jesus Christ (1:3, 21; 3:18, 21-22) and honored him (2:4), so God will exalt and honor those who share in Christ's life (1:3; 2:5, 24; 3:18c, 21; 4:13-14; 5:1, 10). The pattern humility-exaltation replicates the patterns of suffering-glory (1:11; 3:18, 22; 4:13, 14; 5:1, 10) and shame-honor (2:4-10; 4:14, 16). Thus, in the context of this letter, to be exalted is equivalent to being raised, honored, glorified, saved, and receiving a crown of glory. This anticipation of future exaltation expresses the optimism that is voiced explicitly in v 10 and that characterizes this letter as a whole.<sup>734</sup>” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 850-51.]

<sup>14</sup>“The οὖν ('Therefore') with which the verse begins, along with the repetition of the stem ταπεινο- (v. 5: ταπεινοφροσύνη, Bible Study: Page 274

and arrogance. Contextually, Peter sees the opposition of non-believers with their slander etc. of Christians as the external circumstance putting pressure on these believers. Already he has urged rejection of revenge and retaliation by believers against such false accusations. Instead, believers should turn to God for help and guidance. This in spite of perhaps suffering physical persecution from people around them.

**ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ**, “under the mighty hand of God.” Instead of simply saying ‘before God’ as James did in 4:10 (ἐνώπιον κυρίου),<sup>15</sup> Peter uses a common Old Testament image of the hand of God. Probably this was to signal to his Jewish Christian readers the image of the delivering ‘hand of God’ of the Israelite slaves in Egypt.<sup>16</sup> Thus the experience of being humbled was not divine punishment. Rather, it was the opportunity to discover God’s delivering presence in and through a harsh circumstance.

**ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ**, “so that He will lift you up in due time.” The objective of God’s ‘mighty hand’ is to bring ‘victory out of defeat.’ The image of ‘lift you up’ (ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ) plays off an ancient middle eastern tradition of when a subject came in before a reigning monarch he prostrated himself on the floor before the monarch. If the monarch accepted the individual into his presence he gave permission for the person to stand up and look at him by facing the monarch. Thus the heart of the image ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ is divine acceptance to stand in the very presence of Almighty God. Some discussion in commentaries here centers on how dependent Peter was on the teaching of Jesus, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the key anchor point of Peter’s application is the Proverb 3:34 text.<sup>17</sup> That Jesus had already linked humiliation to exaltation probably contributed to Peter’s interpretation of the Proverbs text.

When will God do this? Peter says ἐν καιρῷ, “in due time.” Time defined as καιρός rather than as χρόνος,

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‘humble-mindedness’; v. 6: ταπεινώθητε, ‘be humbled,’ or ‘accept your humble status’), demonstrate the close tie of this verse with the preceding material and indicate a conclusion is here to be drawn from it.<sup>30</sup> The focus has shifted from being humble within the community (v. 5) to accepting the humble status forced upon Christians by the rejection and hostility of the surrounding culture (v. 6), a situation faced by all Christians of whom the author is aware (v. 9). That impression is further reinforced by the unusual use here of the aorist passive imperative (ταπεινώθητε)<sup>31</sup> rather than the more common active verb form with a reflexive pronoun.<sup>32</sup> In addition to Jas 4:10, the passive imperative occurs in the LXX in Gen 16:9 and Jer 13:18, where in the latter it means to accept a situation of humiliation, in the former it means to accept the position of being under another’s will.<sup>33</sup> The point is not that Christians have a choice of whether they humble themselves;<sup>34</sup> that happens to them simply because they are Christians.<sup>35</sup> The point is rather that the Christians are to acknowledge that such status conforms to God’s will and to accept it for that reason, since it is the path God wishes Christians to take,<sup>36</sup> a path that will lead finally to God’s exaltation of them.<sup>37</sup> The author draws here on a commonplace in biblical thought, the contrast between lowliness and exaltation,<sup>38</sup> a contrast that, because it characterized both a number of sayings of Jesus<sup>39</sup> as well as his life,<sup>40</sup> particularly his death and subsequent resurrection,<sup>41</sup> became normative for Christians.<sup>42</sup> This is reflected throughout our epistle, where the humiliation of Christ is cited as a model for Christian behavior (2:21–24; 3:18) as his exaltation (3:22) becomes the ground for hope (1:6, 21; 4:1, 13; 5:10). That contrast is also used in this verse.” [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), 338.]

<sup>15</sup>**James 4:10**, “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you,” ταπεινώθητε ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ὑψώσει ὑμᾶς.

<sup>16</sup>“Instead of simply ‘before God’ (or ‘before the Lord,’ cf. James 4:10), Peter adopts the biblical imagery of God’s ‘mighty hand,’ a phrase used especially in connection with God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt (in the Pentateuch alone, cf. Exod 3:19; 6:1, 13:3, 9, 14, 16; Deut 3:24; 4:34; 5:15; 6:21; 7:8, 19; 9:26, 29; 11:2; 26:8; 29:3; 34:12; on the ‘hand of God,’ see further E. Lohse, TDNT 9:427). The adjective κραταιάν, ‘mighty,’ anticipates κράτος, ‘might,’ in Peter’s doxology in v 11 while echoing the same ascription in 4:11.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 295.]

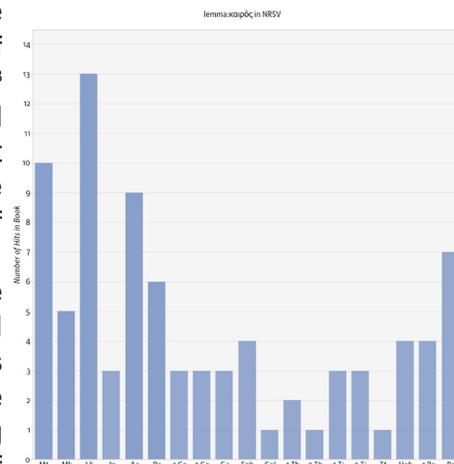
<sup>17</sup>“The theme of humility, or humiliation, and exaltation is conspicuous in the OT (e.g., 1 Sam 2:7–8; Isa 1:25; 2:11; 40:4; Ezek 17:24; Job 5:11; Sir 7:11), in the Gospel tradition (not only Luke 14:11 and 18:14; Matt 18:4 and 23:12; but Luke 1:52), and elsewhere in early Christian literature (2 Cor 11:7; Phil 2:8–9; James 1:9, 4:10; cf. also 1 Clem 59.3).

“The coupling of an explicit or implicit command to humble oneself with an accompanying promise of divine exaltation is limited to this verse in 1 Peter, James 4:10, and the sayings of Jesus (cf. Goppelt, 337). It is quite possible that Peter’s language is formulated with the remembered teaching of Jesus in view (to say nothing of Jesus’ experience: cf. 3:18–22; also Phil 2:8). It is surprising that Gundry ignores this verse in building his case for Peter’s use of the Gospel tradition (Spicq, 44, mentions it only in passing). Whether Peter is aware of a particular saying of Jesus or not, it should be kept in mind that he is first of all interpreting a biblical text, and that the authority to which he here appeals rests in that text, not in the Jesus tradition (cf. Best, 107). The promise that ‘when it is time he will lift you up,’ is therefore Peter’s application of the principle that God “gives grace to the humble” (v 5b).”

[J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 295-96.]

signals the appropriate moment, rather than just projecting a future date of occurrence. God's timing here most likely is the second coming of Christ in light of the earlier use of the phrase ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ in 1:5.<sup>18</sup> In that projected opportune moment, God will set things right, where evil will be punished and the righteous will be vindicated in their commitment to God. Thus the giving of divine grace (v. 5 via Prov. 3:34) to the humble becomes affirmed by the vindication of divine acceptance at the end of time.

Peter, then, urges his readers to turn toward God in coping with the persecution they were facing. His encouragement is based on the sacred scripture principle based in the Hebrew Bible passage from Proverbs 3:34. The first implication of that text -- Peter concludes -- reflects the common command / promise biblical principle of being humbled in turning oneself over to God's care with the divine promise that God will Himself vindicate such a commitment in His own timing and way. There is a lot we can learn from Peter here.



**Peter's second application of Prov. 3:34 (v. 7):** πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ' αὐτόν, ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν. This second application grows out of the first one in verse six, since the verbal expression ἐπιρίψαντες is a Greek modal participle that presupposes this action prior<sup>19</sup> to the being humbled, Ταπεινώθητε. When so understood, the thrust of the admonition to allow oneself to be humbled under God's mighty hand becomes all the more clear. The believer opens himself / herself to the humbling experience with deep confidence in God's care and commitment to take care of the believer.

πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ' αὐτόν, "having cast all your worries upon Him." Although not a quote, the language of Peter here echoes that of Psalm 55:22:

Cast your burden on the LORD,  
and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit  
the righteous to be moved.

ἐπίρριπον ἐπὶ κύριον τὴν μέριμνάν σου,  
καὶ αὐτός σε διαθρέψει·  
οὐ δώσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα  
σάλον τῷ δικαίῳ.

(LXX 54:23)

This first part of Peter's encouragement comes out of the language of the Psalmist who encouraged the Israelites to place their confidence in God. Out of the teaching of Jesus comes a similar emphasis in Mat-

<sup>18c</sup>The phrase ἐν καιρῷ means 'at the appropriate time' (e.g., Matt 24:45 par. Luke 12:42);<sup>48</sup> but in the context of this letter, particularly in light of the similar phrase ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ ('in the last time') in 1:5,<sup>49</sup> the reference here is clearly to the parousia (4:13),<sup>50</sup> the eschatological period when God will restore all things (5:10). For that reason, Christians undergo suffering, namely, in order to be exalted. Our author never argues that suffering is a good thing in itself, that is, because it builds character, or is somehow inevitable in an evil world. Rather, for our author, it occurs by God's will<sup>51</sup> and serves the divine purpose, a purpose most clearly seen in Christ's career. That career remains determinative for our author's understanding of the fate of Christians: subordination is for the purpose of exaltation." [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), 339.]

<sup>19</sup>Greek Aorist participles state completed action having taken place prior to the action of the regular verb they are linked to in their adverbial modifying role. This simple, basic grammar pattern of ancient Greek is frequently overlooked by commentators.

*Antecedent Action.* This is the usual idiom with the circumstantial participle. This is indeed the most common use of the aorist participle. But it must not be forgotten that the aorist part. does not in itself mean antecedent action, either relative or absolute.<sup>1</sup> That is suggested by the context, the natural sequence of events. As examples of the antecedent aorist part. (antecedent from context, not per se) take νηστεύσας—ἐπέινασεν (Mt. 4:2); ιδὼν—μεταμεληθεὶς ἔστρεψεν (27:3); ῥίψας—ἀνεχώρησεν, ἀπελθὼν ἀπήγατο (27:5). These so-called antecedent aorists do not have to precede the principal verb in position in the sentence. Thus ἤγειρεν αὐτὴν κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς (Mk. 1:31), εὐχαριστοῦμεν—ἀκούσαντες (Col. 1:3, 4), μέλλει κρίνειν—παρασχών (Ac. 17:31), ἐκάθισεν—γενόμενος (Heb. 1:3). This idiom is very common in the N. T. as in the older Greek.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, one participle may precede and one may follow the verb as in Lu. 4:35, ῥίψαν—ἐξῆλθεν—βλάψαν. In Heb. 6:10 the aorist is distinguished from the present, ἐνεδείξασθε—διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἀγίοις καὶ διακονοῦντες. In Ro. 5:16, δι' ἑνὸς ἁμαρτησάντος, there is a reference to Adam (verse 14). The principal verb may itself be future as in ἄρας—ποιήσω (1 Cor. 6:15). In Lu. 23:19 ἦν βληθεὶς is punctiliar periphrastic (aorist passive), ἦν being aoristic also. Moulton (Prol., p. 249) cites ἦν ἀκούσασα from Pelagia (inscr. 18). Cf. ἦσαν γενόμενοι in Thuc. 4, 54, 3, and εἶη φανείς in Herod. 3:27. See Gildersleeve, *Syntax*, p. 125.

[A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos, 1919; 2006), 860.]

thew 6:25-34 and in Luke 12:22-32. Peter, however, is ‘exegeting’ the Proverbs 3:34 text by linking it to the language of Psalm 55.<sup>20</sup> He continues in 5:7 an emphasis found earlier in 4:19.<sup>21</sup> The participle ἐπιρίψαντες comes from ἐπι(ρ)ρίπτω, which shows up in the New Testament only twice.<sup>22</sup> What is it that believers are to throw upon the Lord? πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν, “every worry.”<sup>23</sup> The phrase emphasizes absolutely every worry or care that believers have.<sup>24</sup> In the context of facing suffering, the range of apprehensive emotions could be wide and extensive, but Peter urges his reader to put them all on God rather than try to carry them on their own shoulders.

ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν, “because it is a concern for Him about you.” The reason for transferring our worries over to God is clear: He cares about us.<sup>25</sup> The concept of God’s providential care is deeply embedded both in

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<sup>20</sup>This kind of ‘chaining’ one biblical passage to another was a basic interpretive method in first century scribal Judaism. Most likely Peter had seen and heard this done in synagogue ‘homilies’ as a boy in Galilee. Seen as a perfectly legitimate way of interpreting scripture, we should not be surprised to see him doing something similar in his use of the sacred text of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>21</sup>“Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God’s will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.”

ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιῆσιν.

<sup>22</sup>ἐπι(ρ)ρίπτω fut. ἐπιρίψω LXX; 1 aor. ἐπέριψα; pf. ἐπέριψα Josh 23:4; 2 aor. pass. ἐπερίφην (s. ῥίπτω; Hom. et al.; PTeht 5, 183; 185; 249 [118 B.C.]; LXX; En; TestSol 16, 2 P. On the spelling s. W-S. §5, 26b)

“1. to propel someth. from one place to another, *throw* τὶ ἐπὶ τι someth. on someth. (Cleopatra ln. 112; LXX). Lit., of clothes, on an animal used for riding Lk 19:35 (cp. 2 Km 20:12; 3 Km 19:19=Jos., Ant. 8, 353). Pass. of a vine ὅταν ἐπιρίψῃ ἐπὶ τὴν πελέαν when it is attached to the elm Hs 2:3.

“2. to transfer one’s concerns, *cast upon*, fig. ext. of 1: τ. μέριμναν ἐ. ἐπὶ θεόν cast one’s care upon God 1 Pt 5:7 (ἀπορ(ρ)ίπτω P72; Ps 54:23); Hv 3, 11, 3; 4, 2, 4f (in all these pass. Ps 54:23 is in the background). A fig. application of 4 Km 13:21 is made AcPICor 2:32 τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὰ ὀστέα καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα χριστοῦ ἐπιριφέντες ... ἀναστήσεσθε you, who have been thrown upon the body, bones, and spirit of Christ ... shall rise AcPICor 2:32.—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), 378.]

<sup>23</sup>“Many anxieties result from professing faith in Christ in a polytheistic society that is hostile to the exclusive claims of the gospel. The loss of status and respect, loss of family standing, loss of friends, perhaps even loss of one’s livelihood and, in extreme cases, of one’s life — these are real possibilities for the Christians of Asia Minor. Peter instructs his readers to cast these anxieties on God (5:7), another way of saying they must entrust themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good (4:19). Jesus taught that anxiety about life is one of the impediments that can choke out God’s word (Mark 4:19). For God’s word to be fruitful, there must be a self-forgetfulness that is based on trust in God regardless of circumstances. ‘Worry, anxiety for oneself and striving to secure one’s own life, which are marked by fear, is lifted from those who are called to faith,’ lifted by knowledge of God’s personal care and concern for them (Goppelt 1993: 359). God is neither unaware nor unconcerned about what his people are going through in order to remain faithful to Christ.” [Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 313.]

<sup>24</sup>“The picture of throwing one’s anxieties on God is colorful and graphic (the verb occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Luke 19:35, where the disciples toss their cloaks over a donkey as a saddle for Jesus). The language is unique,<sup>7</sup> but the teaching is firmly rooted in the NT. Jesus in Matt. 6:25–34 (cf. Matt. 10:19; Luke 10:41) makes precisely the point that one should not have any anxiety about food or clothing because the God who cares for birds and lilies surely cares far more about disciples. Indeed, to carry anxiety is likely to choke the fruitfulness of God’s work in one’s life (Mark 4:19; Luke 21:34). Paul takes up this idea when he writes in Phil. 4:6, “Do not worry about anything.” In 2 Cor. 8–9 he combines this assurance of God’s care with the carefree giving of the Macedonians to urge a similar attitude. His own confidence in God’s ability in the middle of persecution appeared previously in 2 Cor. 1:8–11. In other words, in 1 Pet. 4:19 our author argued that in persecution the believer should simply commit his or her life to “a faithful Creator.” Here he expands on that attitude. When pressures come on the Christian the proper response is not anxiety, for that comes out of a belief that one must take care of oneself and a lack of trust in God. It is rather a trusting commitment to God (prayer expressing this, as Paul states explicitly in Phil. 4:6) in the assurance that God indeed cares and that his caring does not lack the power or the will to do the very best for his own.” [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), 187-88.]

<sup>25</sup>“This statement does not derive from Ps 54 (‘and he shall sustain you,’ *kai autos se diathrepsei*, v 23b) but offers a similar thought, closer to the expression in Wis 12:13 (*hōi meleī peri pantōn*, ‘he [God] cares for all’). The readers, who are urged to be humble vis-à-vis one another and before God, can comply with this command not only because they will be exalted in the future but also because God takes care of them in the present. The verb *meleī*, a 3d-person sing. pres. act. indic. of the verb *melō*, is used here impersonally with the dative (*autōi*) and the prep. *peri*; literally, ‘there is care to him about you’ (for the construction, see also Matt 22:16/Mark 12:14; John 10:13).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven;

ancient Judaism as well as in apostolic Christianity.<sup>26</sup> This stood in stark contrast to the other religious traditions of Peter's day, from which many of his Gentile readers came out of prior to their Christian conversion. This would be wonderful news to them, and also a reaffirmation of long held belief by his Jewish Christian readers.

By placing this emphasis after the core admonition in verse six, Peter can easily move from the care of God to the destructive intent of their ultimate enemy, the Devil, in the next emphasis.

### **b. Be alert spiritually, vv. 8-9**

8 Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

8 Νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε. ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν [τινα] καταπιεῖν· 9 ὧ ἀντίστητε στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῆ ἐν [τῷ] κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι.

#### **Notes:**

From the focus on turning to God as a part of his application of Prov. 3:34, Peter next moves to defending oneself against the Devil. The historical context remains the situation of facing persecution as the casual statement at the end of verse nine clearly indicates. In the background of Peter's graphic image of the devil is Psalm 22:13, "they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion" (ἤνοιξαν ἐπ' ἐμέ τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν ὡς λέων ὁ ἀρπάζων καὶ ὠρυόμενος). The psalmist's plea for deliverance from suffering in Psalm 22 connected up to Peter's topic here.<sup>27</sup> At this point of exposition, Peter underscores that the struggle with human enemies by believers has deeper dimensions than just facing the persecution of evil people.

**Peter's third application of Prov. 3:34 (v. 8a):** νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε. He begins with a pair of intense admonitions: Νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε.<sup>28</sup> The stress of both verbs is on mental and emotional preparation of oneself to face one's enemy.<sup>29</sup> Although both verbs are used together in 1 Thess. 5:6 (ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν

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London: Yale University Press, 2008), 852.]

<sup>26</sup>“The idea of God's providential care for all was common in Israel (Wis 12:13; Philo, Flacc. 102; Josephus, Ant. 7.45). Philo (Spec. 1.318) employed the kindred terms *epimeleia* and *epimeleō* in making a similar point: '(God) protects and provides for you as would a father. And how much this watchful care (*epimeleia*) will exceed that of humans is measured, believe me, by the surpassing excellence of the one who cares (*epimeloumenos*).' Jesus likewise stressed God's fatherly care for his creatures as the reason for not being anxious (Matt 6:25–34/Luke 12:22–34). A hireling, in contrast to a good shepherd, he also observed, 'cares nothing for the sheep' (John 10:13). 'The conception of God as concerned with the afflictions of man,' Beare (1970, 204) aptly notes, 'is the peculiar treasure of Judaic and Christian faith; Greek philosophy at its highest could formulate a doctrine of His perfect goodness, but could not even imagine in Him an active concern for mankind.'" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 852.]

<sup>27</sup>The psalm is a worship psalm that moves from feeling forsaken by God (vv. 2-6) to being despised by people (vv. 7-11) to a prayer for God's help (v. 12) in light of being surrounded by enemies (vv. 13-19). A prayer for deliverance follows (vv. 20-22b) with a affirmation of being answered (v. 22c) that is followed by a celebration of deliverance (vv. 23-32). The individual psalmist struggles to overcome his enemies (vv. 2-27) and then the congregation joins in the celebration (vv. 28-32). This psalm provided an ideal backdrop for Peter's use of some of its language about the Devil.

This psalm is one of the most frequently alluded to psalms in the entire New Testament, with 21 citations (10x) and/or allusions (11x) by various NT writers, according to the Nestle-Aland 27th rev. ed *Novum Testamentum Graece*, "Loci Citati Vel Allegati," p. 786.

<sup>28</sup>“The two 2d-person pl. aor. imperatives are joined asyndetically and are virtually synonymous in meaning. The verb *nēphō* ('be alert,' 'be sober,' 'stay awake,' 'be self-controlled') occurs more often in 1 Peter (see also 1:13; 4:7; and NOTES) than in any other NT writing (cf. 1 Thess 5:6, 8; 2 Tim 4:5). It involves being self-possessed, clear-headed, and attentive to what is going on. The verb *gregoreō* ('remain watchful,' 'be vigilant') and the call for vigilance appear repeatedly in Jesus' eschatological discourse (Mark 13:34–37; Matt 24:42; 25:13), the Gethsemane episode (Matt 26:36–41/Mark 14:34–38), and other NT eschatological contexts.<sup>738</sup> It is likely that both verbs, combined also in 1 Thess 5:6, belong to early Christian hortatory tradition linked with the teaching of Jesus concerning the dangers of the end time and the vigilance required (Lövestam 1963, 60–64 and passim). Selwyn (1947, 375–82, 452–56) saw this theme of vigilance as a hortatory element of early baptismal catechesis." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 853.]

<sup>29</sup>“The two aorist imperatives are both 'ingressive' and 'programmatic' in setting a new course of action once and for all (like ἐλπίζατε in 1:13; see BDF §337.2, and Comment on 1:13). γρηγορήσατε, 'wake up,' should be distinguished from the more common γρηγορεῖτε, 'stay awake,' of the Synoptic tradition (cf. Matt 24:42; 25:13; 26:38; 41; Mark 13:37; 14:34, 38; cf. Acts 20:31; 1 Cor 16:13; Did. 16.1; also γρηγορῶμεν, 'let us stay awake,' in 1 Thess 5:6), while νήψατε, 'pay attention,' has a different

ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ, ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν), the present tense hortatory subjunctive use by Paul carries the different sense of 'let's stay awake and stay clear headed' in contrast to the many who were already sleeping (καθεύδωμεν). Clearly Paul's use is in an eschatological context of vigilant preparation for 'the day of the Lord' (ἡμέρα κυρίου; v. 2). Most likely, in light of a similar emphasis in 5:4, Peter has a similar background perspective in mind here as well, although Peter stresses initial preparation for facing persecution.

The connection of these emphases to the Prov. 3:34 is indirect and implicit from the stress on divine help being granted to those humbling themselves before God. In receiving the divine grace to provide help in facing one's enemies, the believer must prepare himself mentally and emotionally to face the supernatural enemy that is working through the human enemies. Divine grace is the only effective deterrent to a supernatural force such as the Devil. And that divine help can't be appropriated into our lives while we are ignorant of or indifferent to the nature of our opposition. Thus Peter says in forceful terms, "Get your minds awake and your heads clear about what you are going up against!"

**The cosmic battle behind the persecution (vv. 8b-9):** ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν· ὃ ἀντίστητε στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει, εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῇ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι. Peter first identifies this supernatural enemy and then issues an admonition to resist him.

ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν, "your adversary the devil like a roaring lion is walking around seeking someone to devour." The more common label (57x for σατανᾶς; 37 times for διάβολος) for the Devil in the New Testament is Satan (σατάν, ὁ indecl. and σατανᾶς, ὁ), but all three Greek words are derived from the Hebrew מְשִׁיחַ in Job 2:1.<sup>30</sup> The idea of false accuser lies behind both σατάν and διάβολος with the divine court as described in Job as a part of the background. But in our passage the divine court is not in view; rather this world is the battleground between God and Satan.

Rev. 20:2 adds further images with the designations τὸν δράκοντα, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὃς ἐστὶν Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan." People opposing God and His ways are labeled *children of the Devil* (cf. John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John. 3:8, 10). Jesus labeled Judas as the Devil (John 6:70), and Peter earlier in his life had felt the sting of Jesus calling him the Devil (Mk. 8:33). Here the derivative idea of διάβολος as slanderer and deceiver comes to the forefront. The false accusations, that were being leveled at Peter's readers through other people in their towns and cities (cf. 3:13, 16; 4:4, 14), Peter sees as Satan using people for his own purposes of seeking to destroy God's people.<sup>31</sup> Peter sees him primarily as ὁ ἀντίδικος, enemy.<sup>32</sup> Making false accusations against God's people in

connotation from the νῆφε, 'be steady' (RSV) of 2 Tim 4:5, or the νήφωμεν, 'let us be sober,' of 1 Thess 5:6, 8 (cf. rather ἐκνήψατε δικαίως, 'come to your right mind' [RSV] in 1 Cor 15:34)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 297.]

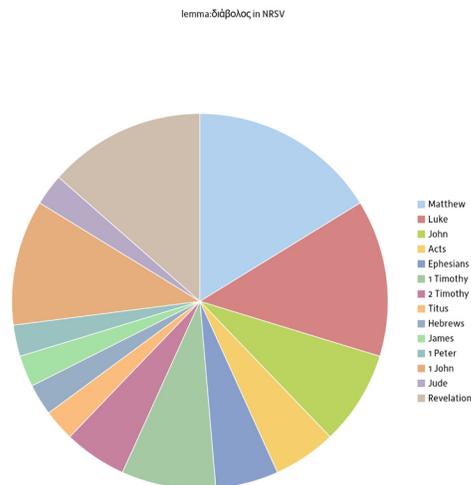
<sup>30</sup>**Job 2:1**, 1 One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and *Satan* also came among them to present himself before the Lord.

Ἐγένετο δὲ ὡς ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ παραστῆναι ἔναντι κυρίου, καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἦλθεν ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν παραστῆναι ἔναντι τοῦ κυρίου.† [*Septuaginta*: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Job 2:1.]

<sup>31</sup>“The range of meaning for διάβολος, ‘the devil,’ and ἀντίδικος, ‘opponent,’ is quite similar. Just as ‘the devil,’ originally (like the Hebrew equivalent, ‘Satan’) the slanderer or accuser in God's court (e.g., Job 2:1; Zech 3:1–2; cf. Rev 12:9–10), became the enemy of God and humanity in the broadest possible sense, so ἀντίδικος, ‘opponent,’ can have both a narrower and a broader meaning. If the devil is an accuser or a courtroom antagonist here, it is not in the court of heaven (as, e.g., in Rev 12:10), but before pagan magistrates — hardly his traditional role (although cf. Rev. 2:10). Actually, the scene Peter sketches in this verse and the next is not a courtroom proceeding at all whether on earth or in heaven — but a universal conflict between the devil and the people of God, with the whole world as its arena (cf. v 9b).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 298.]

<sup>32</sup>“ἀντίδικος, οὐ, ὁ (s. δίκη; Aeschyl. et al.)

**1. one who brings a charge in a lawsuit, accuser, plaintiff** (so X. et al.; SIG 656, 24; 953, 5 and 15; very oft. pap, e.g. POxy 37 I, 8; 237 VII, 24 and 32; VIII, 12; BGU 592, 7; Pr 18:17; Jer 27:34; Philo, Aet. M. 142; Jos., Ant. 8, 30; loanw. in rabb.) **Mt 5:25; Lk 12:58; 18:3**. Of the devil, since he appears in court as an accuser **1 Pt 5:8** (cp. Rv 12:10; Job 1:6ff; Zech 3:1); but here and in **Bible Study: Page 279**



human courts is only a part of his destructive work. In every day life, he fosters gossip, rumors, slander, and all kinds of verbal and physical actions to persecute believers. With evil people at his disposal, he has a vast array of tools to work with in accomplishing his mission.

In order to stress the intensity of his work along with the danger he poses, Peter compares him to a *ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν [τινα] καταπιεῖν*.<sup>33</sup> The lion in the Bible serves as an image with a variety of significances, both positive and negative. That a negative image is in view here can be clearly seen from *ζητῶν [τινα] καταπιεῖν*, “seeking someone to devour.”<sup>34</sup> This lion is out to destroy people wherever he can find them.<sup>35</sup> And he is on the prowl, περιπατεῖ ζητῶν, and thus is very dangerous.<sup>36</sup> The image is of a very hungry

Lk 18:3 it could mean

**2. one who is continuously antagonistic to another, enemy, opponent** in gener. (so Aeschyl., Ag. 41; Philod., Ira p. 65 W.; PGM 3, 6; 1 Km 2:10; Is 41:11; Sir 36:6; Jos., Ant. 13, 413). This would corresp. to the designation of the devil as *ἔχθρος* TestDan 6:3f.—B. 1432. DELG s.v. δίκη. 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), 88.]

<sup>33</sup>*λέων, οντος, ὁ* (Hom.+; also BGU 957, 4 [10 B.C.]; PGrenf II, 84, 7) **lion Hb 11:33**; MPol 12:2; Philo; AcPl Ha 2, 7; 4, 19; 34; 38; 5, 2; 4f; 9; 13; 18. Symbol of rapacity 1 Cl 35:11 (Ps 49:22 v.l. [ARahlf., Psalmi cum Odis ’31]). *λάκκος λέοντων* (s. *λάκκος*) 45:6. Of the devil *ὡς λ. ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ he goes about like a roaring lion 1 Pt 5:8* (Ps 21:14; TestSol 11:1 βρυχώμενος ὡς λέων; cp. JosAs 12:9 ὁ λέων ὁ ἄγριος ὁ παλαιὸς καταδιώκει με). Apocalyptic usage also makes comparisons w. the lion, or parts of his body, or his actions (Il. 6, 181; Strabo 16, 4, 16 fabulous beings: σφίγγες κ. κυνοκέφαλοι κ. κῆβοι [monkeys] λέοντος μὲν πρόσωπον ἔχοντες τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν σῶμα πάνθηρος κτλ.; quite similarly Diod S 3, 35, 6; TestAbr A 17 p. 99, 21 [Stone p. 46]; Ath. 18, 3) **Rv 4:7; 9:8** (cp. Jo 1:6), **17; 10:3; 13:2**. Metaphorically (cp. Il. 21, 483, of Artemis) of a lion-hearted hero (cp. Lycophron 33 [Heracles]; Ael. Aristid. 46 p. 191f D. [Pericles]; Esth 4:17s; Jos., Ant. 18, 228), the Messiah ὁ λ. ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰουδα *the lion fr. the tribe of Judah Rv 5:5* (cp. Gen 49:9).—*ῥυσθῆναι ἐκ στόματος λ. be rescued from the jaws of the lion*, i.e. fr. great danger **2 Ti 4:17** (cp. Ps 21:22). The rapacious lion is found as funerary motif, and both **1 Pt 5:8** (above) and **2 Ti 4:17** may refer to death (the former to physical death, the latter to spiritual death or apostasy: New Docs 3, 50f).—OKeller, *Die Antike Tierwelt*, 2 vols. 1909–13: II 24–61. EGoodenough, *Jewish Symbols VII*, ’58, 29–86. Pauly-W. XIII/1 968–90.—B. 185. DELG. 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), 593.]

<sup>34</sup>The use of *τινα* (someone) is not certain in the history of the copying of this text:

**4 8** {C} *τινα καταπιεῖν* & K L P 81 322 323 (1241 *καταποιεῖν* [sic]) 1243 1292 1505 1611 1739 1852 1881 2138 2464 1590 1592 1895 11159 11298 1 1365 cop<sup>bo</sup> (Origen<sup>gr</sup> 1/6) Eusebius<sup>ms</sup> Cyril-Jerusalem<sup>dub</sup>; Cyprian (Hilary) Jerome<sup>19</sup> // *τινα καταπίη* P<sup>72</sup> A 436 945 1067 1409 2298 Byz Lect it<sup>ar, h, q, t, z</sup> vg arm eth geo slav Origen<sup>gr</sup> 4/6, lat<sup>9/10</sup> Eusebius Asterius Athanasius Cyril-Jerusalem Didymus<sup>6/7</sup> Chrysostom Nilus Marcus-Eremita Isidore Cyril; Lucifer Ambrosiaster Priscillian Ambrose Jerome<sup>8/9</sup> Rufinus Niceta Augustine Quodvultdeus // *τινα καταπίει* 1735 2344 1 591 1 809 1 1153 1 1364 Didymus<sup>17</sup> // *καταπιεῖν* B Ψ 0206<sup>vid</sup> 1175 Origen<sup>gr</sup> 1/6, lat<sup>1/10</sup>

[Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (With Apparatus); The Greek New Testament, 4th Revised Edition (With Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000; 2009).]

<sup>35</sup>The apparent source of Peter’s imagery is a psalm in which Christians took considerable interest in connection with Jesus’ passion: i.e., Ps 21:14 [22:13] LXX, where the psalmist speaks of ‘fat bulls’ who ‘opened their mouth against me, like a ravaging and roaring lion’ (*ὡς λέων ὁ ἀρπάζων καὶ ὠρυόμενος*; cf. Ezek 22:25). The lion, which in some traditions stands for the Jewish Messiah (cf. 4 Ezra 12:31–32) or even Jesus Christ (cf. Rev 5:5), in this psalm represents the enemies of God and of his people. When 2 Tim 4:17 attributes to Paul an allusion to another verse in the same psalm (‘I was delivered from the lion’s mouth’; cf. Ps 21:22 [22:21]), it is possible (although not certain) that deliverance from physical death is in view, and it is natural to ask whether or not the same is true of 1 Peter.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 298.]

<sup>36</sup>Of particular interest (although the enemy is a dragon and not a lion) is Jer 28[51]:34 (‘Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has swallowed me [κατέπιεν], as a dragon he has filled his belly with my vitals’) and its sequel, v 44 (‘and I will take vengeance on Babylon, and I will bring back out of her mouth what she has swallowed’). It is unlikely that Peter has this passage directly in mind, yet it illumines his argument, for two reasons: first, possibly, because of its mention of ‘Babylon’ (cf. v 13, ‘The [congregation] in Babylon’); second, and more important, because of the apparent use of Jeremiah and of 1 Peter simultaneously in the epistle from the churches of Vienne and Lyons (Eusebius, HE 5.1–2). There the devil ‘thought that he had already swallowed’ (*καταπεποκένας*) Biblis the martyr, and wanted ‘to condemn her through blasphemy as well’ (5.1.25), but was thwarted when she ‘came to her senses’ (*ἀνένηψεν*) and ‘awoke’ (*ἀνεγρηγόρησεν*; see Comment above). The martyrs’ victory, the narrative concludes, ‘was this, that the beast [i.e., the devil] should be choked into throwing up alive those he earlier thought he had swallowed’ (*καταπεποκένας*; HE 5.2.6). While the Jeremiah passage may have to do with deliverance from death, it is clear from this martyrological use of similar imagery that being ‘swallowed’ by the devil refers not to physical death but to spiritual death, i.e., to renouncing one’s allegiance to Christ (a similar application to religious faithfulness can be seen in Joseph and Asenath 12.9, where Asenath says, ‘For behold, the ancient and savage lion pursues me closely and his children are the gods of the Egyptians ... and their father the Devil tries to

lion seeking food.

ὡς αντίστητε στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῇ ἐν [τῷ] κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι. At the heart of preparing oneself to face the devil (Nήψατε, γρηγορήσατε) is the responsibility then of ὡς αντίστητε. By attaching the admonition as a relative clause to the main clause admonitions (see the above diagram for illustration of the grammar here), Peter stresses that this responsibility grows out of the core admonitions at the beginning of verse eight. This is almost impossible to express clearly in English Bible translation!

Believers are to oppose the Devil.<sup>37</sup> Both Paul and James have similar admonitions to believers:

**Eph. 6:11-13.** 11 Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able *to stand against the wiles of the devil*. 12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

11 ἐνδύσασθε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς *σῆναι πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου*. 12 ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου, πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἔπουρανίοις. 13 διὰ τοῦτο ἀναλάβετε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δυναθῆτε ἀντιστῆναι ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ πονηρᾷ καὶ ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι σῆναι.

**James 4:7.** Submit yourselves therefore to God. *Resist the devil*, and he will flee from you.

ὑποτάγητε οὖν τῷ θεῷ· *ἀντίστητε* δὲ *τῷ διαβόλῳ*, καὶ φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν

Although the concepts among these three writers is essentially the same, the differences in language and expression argues against them drawing off of some common source of Christian tradition, such as instruction given to new converts at baptism.<sup>38</sup>

These three New Testament writers saw the cosmetic struggle of believers in warfare with the Devil and admonished their Christian leaders to oppose him. Interestingly, James is developing his admonition as an exposition of Prov. 3:34 just as Peter is, although with slightly different trajectories of meaning.

What does it mean to oppose the Devil? Peter is not proposing protest marches against the Devil, nor is he suggesting an *offensive* warfare against the Devil and his forces. Instead, he is talking about a *defensive* stance by believers, as opposed to a capitulation to the forces of evil when they attack. Already he has sent signals of what he implies here: doing good (3:14), giving a defense of one's faith (3:15), keeping one's conscience clear (3:16), following Christ's example (3:17-22); arming oneself with Christ's intention (4:1); living for the will of God (4:2), serious disciplining of oneself for prayer (4:7), maintaining constant love for the community of believers (4:9); serving unselfishly to the community of believers (4:10-11), glorifying God in sufferings

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swallow me up [καταπιεῖν]). There is every reason to believe that the same is true in 1 Peter (cf. Horsley, 51), for Peter's consistent assumption is that physical death holds no fear for those who know they will 'live before God in the Spirit' (4:6: cf. 1:3, 21)." [Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 299.]

<sup>37c</sup> **ἀντίστημι** fut. ἀντιστήσομαι LXX; 2 aor. ἀντέστην; pf. ἀνθέστηκα; 1 aor. pass. ἀντεστάθην Hm 12, 2, 3 (ἀντί, ἴστημι; Hom. et al.) 'set against'; the forms occurring in our lit. have the mid. sense

**1. be in opposition to, set oneself against, oppose**

a. pers. τινί *someone* (PGiss 65, 9) **Mt 5:39; Ac 13:8**; κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην (Dt 7:24; 9:2; 11:25) *I opposed him to his face Gal 2:11*; ἄ. Μωϋσεῖ **2 Ti 3:8**; ἄ. τῷ διαβόλῳ **Js 4:7**; cp. **1 Pt 5:9**; Hm 12, 5, 2 and 4; ἀντιστήτω μοι let him oppose me B 6:1 (Mel., P. 101, 774 [both Is 50:8]).

b. impers. τινί τῇ σοφίᾳ **Lk 21:15; Ac 6:10**. τ. βουλήματι αὐτοῦ **Ro 9:19** (cp. Demosth. 18, 49 τοὺς ἀνθισταμένους τ. ὑμετέροις βουλήμασι). θεοῦ διαταγῇ **13:2**. τῷ κράτει τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ 1 Cl 27:5 (cp. Wsd 11:21). τῇ ἀληθείᾳ **2 Ti 3:8**. τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις **4:15** (cp. Jdth 8:28). ἐπιθυμίαις Hm 12, 2, 3f. ἄ. τῇ ὄξυχολίᾳ resist ill temper m 5, 2, 8.

**2. to be resistant to power, resist**, abs. (BGU 747 II, 10; Esth 9:2; 3 Macc 6:19) ἵνα δυναθῆτε ἀντιστῆναι that you might be able to stand your ground **Eph 6:13** (cp. PPetr II, 37, 2a, 14 [III B.C.] οὐ δύναμαι ἀνθιστάνειν). ἀντιστῶμεν let us take a firm stand B 4:9. οἱ ἀνθεστηκότες those who resist **Ro 13:2b** (sc. τ. διαταγῇ).—DELG s.v. ἴστημι. 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), 80.]

<sup>38c</sup> The only other places a similar command to resist the devil is found in the NT are in Jas 4:7 and, in intent, in Eph 6:11-13, not enough evidence to assume that our author drew it from early catechetical instruction,<sup>84</sup> although it does share with the other two passages the notion that the Christian is engaged in a spiritual warfare with the forces of evil.<sup>85</sup> [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), 342.]

(4:16); entrusting oneself into God's care (4:19) etc. These are the ways believers take a stand against the Devil, in Peter's teaching.<sup>39</sup>

Important to being able to oppose the Devil is being στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει, "firm in faith."<sup>40</sup> Being resolute in one's faith commitment to Christ plays a vital role in being able to take a stand against the Devil. The idea of firmness is literally being 'hard' like a rock -- something that Peter may very well be playing off of out of his own experience and name. His earlier use of Isa. 28:16<sup>41</sup> in 2:6 lies in the background; Isa. 50:7 very well may also lay behind Peter's thought here.<sup>42</sup> Whatever may lie behind Peter's image of hardness here, his point is clear and consistent with the rest of his words: only out of the resources provided by God can we successfully stand up against the forces of supernatural evil. And our commitment to God through Christ is central to accessing those divine resources.

The foundation of this admonition to oppose the Devil is stated as ἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῇ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, "because you know that your fellow brothers and sisters in the world are undergoing the same sufferings." The causal participle ἰδότες signals a reason for the call to oppose the Devil.<sup>43</sup> The content of that reason is specified by the Greek present tense passive voice infinitive ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, "to be being completed."<sup>44</sup> Such a grammar construction is not possible in English, but was quite normal in ancient Greek and is found elsewhere in the pages of the New Testament as well.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup>“To ‘resist’ the devil is not the same as ‘resisting’ human adversaries. Jesus, in fact, explicitly forbids the latter according to Matt 5:39a: ‘But I say to you not to resist the evil one’ (μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ). That ‘the evil one’ means a human being and not the devil is shown by the concrete examples that immediately follow (5:39b–42). There is no evidence that Peter, who knows portions of the Sermon on the Mount (cf., e.g., 2:19–20; 4:14), is reflecting on this passage in particular. Yet the tradition to which he does appeal, a tradition visible also in James 4:7 and Eph 6:11–13, makes it clear that the principle of ‘nonresistance,’ whatever its merits in human encounters, did not extend to the devil or to spiritual warfare. An explicit distinction is drawn in Eph 6:12: ‘For our combat is not against flesh and blood, but against powers, against authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.’ For Peter the distinction, although implicit, is no less real. Even though he perceives ‘disobedient spirits’ (3:19) behind those in Roman society who reject and denounce the Christian message, he consistently urges ‘respect’ and ‘deference’ toward the human critics and oppressors. Not so in relation to the devil himself.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 299–300.]

<sup>40</sup>“The phrase στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει, ‘firm in faith,’ recalls ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει, ‘they were strengthened in faith,’ in Acts 16:5; for τῇ πίστει, ‘in faith,’ as a dative of respect (BDF §197) in similar expressions, cf. Col 1:23; Ign. Eph. 10.2. ‘Faith’ refers here to personal or communal commitment, just as in 1:5, 7, 9, 21, not to a body of doctrine or a formal system of belief (i.e., ‘the faith,’ as, e.g., in Jude 3; cf. Selwyn, 238). The adjective στερεός, ‘hard,’ usually had negative connotations when applied to people (i.e., ‘stubborn’; Selwyn, 238), but Peter may well be writing with the stone imagery of 2:4–8 still in mind, drawing from it the further implication of steadfastness or rocklike resolution (cf. the emphasis on ὁ πιστεύων, ‘the one who believes,’ in 2:6–7). Selwyn (238) cites Isa 50:7: ‘I have set my face as a hard rock [ὡς στερεὰν πέτραν] and I know that I will not be put to shame’ (οὐ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶ; cf. οὐ μὴ κατααἰσχυνθῆ, ‘will not be put to shame’ in Isa 28:16, cited in 1 Peter 2:6). Although Isa 50:7 is not among the texts to which Peter explicitly appeals (in contrast to Barn. 5.14; 6.3), it may well have contributed to early descriptions of ‘God’s firm foundation’ laid in Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:19), or (as here) to calls for Christian ‘steadfastness’ (especially a call attributed to Πέτρος, the ‘rock’; see Introduction).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 300.]

<sup>41</sup>Isa. 28:16, therefore thus says the Lord God, See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: “One who trusts will not panic.”

<sup>42</sup>Isa. 50:7-8, 7 The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8 he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me.

<sup>43</sup> Achtemeier and Epp blow the interpretive challenges of this phrase out of proportion:

The interpretation of the second half of the verse faces several problems: (1) the construal and meaning of εἰδότες (“knowing”), (2) the construal and meaning of τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων (“the same [kinds of] suffering”), (3) the construal and meaning of ἐπιτελεῖσθαι (“be completed, paid,” “complete, pay for oneself”), (4) the construal of τῇ ἀδελφότητι (“the brotherhood”), and (5) the meaning of κόσμῳ (“world”). [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), 342.] In reality the meaning of the participle phrase is much easier to determine.

<sup>44</sup>The erroneous reading of εἰδότες... ἐπιτελεῖσθαι as ‘knowing how to complete the sufferings for themselves’ fails on numerous grounds, grammatical, contextual, theological etc. This older reading has largely been abandoned by more recent commentators.

<sup>45</sup>“εἰδότες, ‘knowing,’ followed by the accusative and an infinitive is equivalent to εἰδότες ὅτι with an indicative (cf. Note f\*; also 1:18), expressing indirect discourse: ‘knowing that the same kinds of suffering are accomplished’ (for the construction, cf. Luke 4:41b; 1 Clem 43.6; 62.3; BDF §397.1). It is a matter of knowing that something is true (BGD, 555.1).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 300.]

What Peter reminds his readers of is that they are not alone in their sufferings. Other believers elsewhere outside the region addressed in the letter (cf. 1:1), τῆ ἐν [τῷ] κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι, are suffering persecution as well as his readers.<sup>46</sup> The term ἀδελφότης, ‘brotherhood,’ underscores the sense of oneness felt by believers toward one another no matter what the geographical location. Peter has already urged his readers to love the brotherhood (τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε) in 2:17. Now he reminds them of what his readers share in common with fellow believers elsewhere.

What they share in common is τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων,<sup>47</sup> “the same things of the sufferings.”<sup>48</sup> Sufferings produce effect or consequence. Different pains, however, can lead to similar consequences. Peter carefully words his expression to include a varieties of differing painful experiences that all point to similar consequences. Things that he has already alluded to in his letter largely in relationship to Christ’s sufferings: 1:11, 4:13, 5:1. In our spiritual union with Christ, we come to share His sufferings as we experience opposition to our faith commitment to Him. Paul intriguingly calls it a ‘fellowship with His sufferings’ in Phil. 3:10, τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, (to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship with His sufferings as I am made conformable to His death). For us pleasure oriented Westerners, such language is a mystery that seems irrational. But for those enduring religious persecution there is a bondedness with Christ in such sufferings that defies explanation, and is unquestionably real and profoundly meaningful.

Wow! Just about when you thought there was nothing else to say about persecution, Peter drops on us the deeper spiritual reality that our physical sufferings from human opponents actually signals a gigantic spiritual confrontation taking place between our God and the Devil himself. In realizing this, we need to turn ourselves over to God completely and in the process realize that by taking a stance opposing the Devil we can discover the necessary spiritual resources to ward off even this supernatural power intent on destroying us.

49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 300.]

<sup>46</sup>Most commentators speak of a ‘universal’ suffering of Christians implied in this phrase. But such is not implied in the Greek construction, as would be the case with either the construction ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ (cf. Matt. 16:26, 26:13 et als.) or παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ (Col. 1:6, Rom. 3:19 et als). The way the construction is set up simply implies that others Christians elsewhere in the Roman Empire are experiencing what these believers in ancient Anatolia were facing. Whether this was isolated or widespread cannot be inferred from Peter’s expression. This statement carries no implication about an official empire wide government persecution of Christians.

<sup>47</sup>πάθημα, ατος, τό (πάσχω; Soph., Hdt. et al.; Philo, Joseph.; Just., A II, 2, 16 [v.l.]; Ath. 28, 4)

**1. that which is suffered or endured, suffering, misfortune**, in our lit. almost always in pl. (Orig., C. Cels. 8, 599, 10. The pl. is also predom. in non-biblical wr.: Plut., Mor. 360d; Appian, Bell. Civ. 2, 64 §269; 4, 1 §2; Jos., Ant. 2, 299) τὰ π. τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ *what we suffer at the present time* **Ro 8:18**.—**2 Cor 1:6f** (on παθ. ... πάσχειν cp. Lamellae Aur. Orphicae ed. AOlivieri 1915 p. 16, 4 [IV/III B.C.]). τὰ παθήματα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν *the sufferings* (that I, Paul, am enduring) *for you* (the Colossians) **Col 1:24** (JSchneider [s. below] 54–61; JSchmid, BZ 21, ’33, 330–44; GKittel, ZST 18, ’41, 186–91; SHanson, The Unity of the Church, ’46, 119f). W. διωγμοί **2 Ti 3:11**. ἄθλησις παθημάτων *a struggle w. suffering* **Hb 10:32**. Of the sufferings of persecuted Christians gener. **1 Pt 5:9**; ISm 5:1.—Of the sufferings of Christ **Hb 2:10**. They are ever before the eyes of Christians 1 Cl 2:1. τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ Christ’s sufferings **2 Cor 1:5**; **1 Pt 4:13**; **5:1** (θεοῦ P<sup>72</sup>). παθήματα αὐτοῦ (=τοῦ Χρ.) Phil 3:10. τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα *the sufferings of Christ* **1 Pt 1:11** (s. εἰς 4cβ; CScott, Exp. 6th ser., 12, 1905, 234–40). Suffering Christians stand in close relation to the suffering Christ. They suffer as Christ did, or for Christ’s sake, or in mystic unity w. Christ. Cp. ASteubing, Der paul. Begriff ‘Christusleiden’, diss. Heidelb. 1905; TSchmidt, Der Leib Christi 1919, 210ff; RPaulus, Das Christusproblem der Gegenwart 1922, 24f; RLiechtenhan, ZTK 32, 1922, 368–99; OSchmitz, Das Lebensgefühl d. Pls, 1922, 50ff, 105ff; J Schneider, D. Passionsmystik des Pls 1929; ASchweitzer, D. Mystik des Ap. Pls 1930, 141–58 (The Mysticism of Paul the Ap., tr. WMontgomery ’31, 141–59); BAhern, CBQ 22, ’60, 1–32, al.—The sing. (Arrian, Anab. 4, 22, 2=suffering, misfortune; 6, 11, 2; 3 of the wounding of Alexander) only **Hb 2:9** of Christ διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου (epexegetic gen.) because of the death he suffered.

**2. an inward experience of an affective nature, feeling, interest** (like πάθος, but less frequent than the latter. Pla., Phd. 79d [of the state of the soul when engaged in purest inquiry] al.; Aristot. [HBonitz, Index Aristot. 1870, 554]; Plut., Pomp. 622 [8, 6]) in a bad sense (Plut., Mor. 1128e) in our lit. only in Paul and only in the pl. interests, desires τὰ π. τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν (the) sinful desires (not limited to sexual interest) **Ro 7:5**. W. ἐπιθυμίας **Gal 5:24**.—B. 1089f. DELG s.v. πάσχω. M-M. EDNT. 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), 747-48.]

<sup>48</sup>“The formulation *ta auta tōn pathēmatōn* itself is unusual, involving a neut. pl. pron. substantive (*ta auta*) with a neut. pl. partitive genitive (*tōn pathēmatōn*), which reads literally, ‘these same of sufferings.’ The formulation is ‘strictly speaking incorrect’ (BDF §164.1), but the sense intended is either that expressed by the proper formulation *ta auta pathēmata* (‘these same sufferings’) or ‘the same sort of sufferings’ (so Robertson 1919, 687). These are the sufferings mentioned most immediately in 4:13, 19; namely, the sufferings that all believers experience as a consequence of their allegiance to the suffering Christ (5:1).<sup>754</sup>” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 861.]



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 21**  
**1 Peter 5:10-11**  
**“God’s Promise”**



*Study By*  
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**Greek NT**

10 ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ, ὀλίγον παθόντας αὐτὸς καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει. 11 αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

10 Ihr müsst jetzt für eine kurze Zeit leiden. Aber Gott hat euch in seiner großen Gnade dazu berufen, in Gemeinschaft mit Jesus Christus für immer in seiner Herrlichkeit zu leben. Er wird euch Kraft geben, sodass euer Glaube stark und fest bleibt und ihr nicht zu Fall kommt. 11 Ihm gehört die Macht in Ewigkeit. Amen.

**NRSV**

10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

**NLT**

10 In his kindness God called you to his eternal glory by means of Jesus Christ. After you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. 11 All power is his forever and ever. Amen.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [God’s promise, v. 10](#)
  - b. [God’s praise, v. 11](#)
  - c. [Unjust Suffering: review of 3:13-5:11](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

With this passage we come to the end of the discussion on persecution and unjust suffering that was begun in 3:13. And also we come to the end of the body proper of the letter itself (1:13-5:11). What a way Peter has for ending his letter: a beautiful promise of divine grace to help those believers suffering under the heavy load of persecution. This final idea of Peter’s letter to the believers in ancient Anatolia left them with hope and encouragement that God was standing with them during their difficult times.

We modern readers can find much encouragement in this divine promise from our God. This should prompt us to follow Peter’s example in verse eleven by bursting forth in a doxology of praise to the Lord.

Once we complete the analysis of these two verses, we will review the theme of unjust suffering and persecution that has occupied studies 15 through 21 that began in 3:13 of the letter. We must not leave this important study without attempting to pull it together in a wholistic summary.

**I. Context and Background<sup>1</sup>**

First we need to take a look at the historical and literary setting of this passage.

**a. Historical**

**External History.** The original wording of these two verses is less certain than with most other passages in First Peter. The United Bible Societies 4th revised edition of *The Greek New Testament* contains five variations of wording in these two short Greek sentences. Also the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece* lists the same variations in its text apparatus.

First in v. 10, with the phrase ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς (*the One who called you*), some manuscripts read ὁ καλέσας ἡμᾶς

<sup>1</sup>Serious 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.

(the One who called us).<sup>2</sup> A large majority of manuscripts support the reading of ὑμᾶς (you), which suggests that it was the original reading.<sup>3</sup>

**Second** in v. 10, the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ [Ἰησοῦ] (in Christ Jesus) has variations of wording.<sup>4</sup> Two alternative readings are found: a) ἐν Χριστῷ or b) the phrase completely omitted.<sup>5</sup> The external support of manuscript evidence favors the longer reading, while internally the shorter reading (# a) is favored. The name Ἰησοῦ (Jesus) is included in brackets [-] because some important early manuscripts omit it, while other include it. Only one late manuscript omits the prepositional phrase completely. This leave us with some uncertainty about whether the original wording was “in Christ Jesus” or just “in Christ.” The meaning is essentially the same which ever direction one goes.

**Third** in v. 10, the series of verbs, καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει (he will restore, support, strengthen, establish...) has variations of wording in many different manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> Despite several variations of wordings, most of these represent efforts at improving the style in writing Greek at a later period of time.<sup>7</sup> The reading of καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει represents the original wording of the text.

**Fourth** in v. 11, some variation of wording, mainly the addition or omission of ἡ δόξα (the glory), surface here among the manuscripts.<sup>8</sup> The influence of the wording in 4:11 (ὃ ἐστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν

<sup>2</sup>“The second person plural pronoun ὑμᾶς is supported by the overwhelming preponderance of evidence. The Textus Receptus, however, following later Greek manuscripts, reads ἡμᾶς (us). In later Greek, the vowels η and υ were pronounced alike, and it is altogether possible that some copyists who wrote ἡμᾶς intended to write ὑμᾶς.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 491.]

<sup>3</sup>{A} ὑμᾶς P<sup>72</sup> κ A B Ψ 33 81 322 323 436 945 1067 1175 1241 1243 1292 1409 1505 1611 1735 1739 1852 2138 2298 2344 2464 Byz [K L P] Lect it<sup>h, q</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup> syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>sa</sup>, bo arm eth geo slav

// ἡμᾶς 0206 1881 / 422 / 592 / 809 / 921 / 938 / 1153 / 1364 / 1441 it<sup>ar, t, z</sup> vg sy<sup>rp</sup> cop<sup>bmss</sup> Didymus<sup>dub</sup>”

<sup>4</sup>“A majority of the Committee was impressed by the support of P<sup>72</sup> and many other Greek, versional, and patristic witnesses reading Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, yet because Ἰησοῦ is absent from several important manuscripts (including κ B 614), it was decided to enclose the word within square brackets, indicating doubt that it belongs in the text.

“[In view of the tendency of scribes to add rather than omit sacred names, the shorter text is to be preferred. B.M.M.]”

[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), 627.]

<sup>5</sup>{C} ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ P72 A Ψ 33 81 322 323 436 1067 1175 1241 1243 1409 1735 1739 1852 1881 2298 2344 2464 Byz [K L P] Lect it<sup>ar, h, q, t, z</sup> vg syr<sup>(p), h with \*</sup> cop<sup>sams, bo</sup> arm (eth) geo slav Didymus<sup>dub</sup>

// ἐν Χριστῷ κ (B ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ) 1292 1505 1611 2138 cop<sup>sams</sup>

// omit 945

<sup>6</sup>{B} καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει κ 33<sup>vid</sup> 436 945 1067 1241 (1243 καταρτιεῖ) 1409 1739\* 1852 1881 2344 2464

// καταρτίσει ὑμᾶς, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει 1739<sup>c</sup> 2298 Lect

// καταρτίσει ὑμᾶς στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει (322 323 omit ὑμᾶς) 1735 Byz [K L P] / 590 ( / 592 ὑμᾶς καὶ) / 593<sup>vid</sup> / 1156 slav

// καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει 1292 1505 1611 2138 ( / 422 / 895 I<sup>AD</sup> καταρτίσει ὑμᾶς) / 1159

// καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, θεμελιώσει P<sup>72</sup> 81 1175 it<sup>q, t</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup> arm (geo)

// καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει A B (Ψ 0206 καταρτιεῖ) / 1298 / 1365 it<sup>ar, h, z</sup> vg

[Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (With Apparatus); The Greek New Testament, 4th Revised Edition (With Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000; 2009).]

<sup>7</sup>“Similarity of ending of each of these four future tense verbs accounts for the accidental omission of the verb σθενώσει (he will strengthen) in some manuscripts and of θεμελιώσει in other manuscripts. The replacement of these future indicative verbs with verbs in the optative mood (καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, etc.) reflects modification by copyists or editors for reasons of style.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 492.]

<sup>8</sup>{B} τὸ κράτος (P<sup>72</sup> omit τό) A B Ψ it<sup>ar</sup> vg<sup>ww, st</sup> geo

// ἡ δόξα 915 it<sup>t</sup>

// ἡ δόξα κράτος K (436 1067 omit ἡ) 1409 Lect ( / 884 / 921 omit ἡ)

// ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος (see 4.11) κ 1735 Byz [L P] / 422 / 592 / 593 / 895 / 1159 I<sup>AD</sup> it<sup>z</sup> vg<sup>cl</sup> cop<sup>sa</sup> slav

// τὸ κράτος καὶ ἡ δόξα 33 81 322 323 945 1175 1241 1243 1292 1505 1611 1739 1852 1881 2138 2298 2344 2464 / 1298 / 1365 syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>bo</sup> arm

// virtus et potestas it<sup>h, q</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup>

αἰώνων, ἀμήν.) has been felt by different copyists over the centuries.<sup>9</sup> Again the most likely original reading is αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν, based on greater mss evidence support.

*Fifth* in v. 11, the adverbial expression εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν (until the ages, amen) is often lengthened to the more common expression εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν (until the ages of the ages, amen).<sup>10</sup> The shorter reading is considered original because of the overwhelming tendencies of copyists to lengthen, rather than shorten, doxologies found in the New Testament.<sup>11</sup> Many modern translations, however, assume the longer reading, e.g., NRSV, NIV, REB, NJB.

What we can conclude from this review is that the wording of the text is pretty stable, and that the essential meaning is unaltered even by the variations. Thus we can interpret these Greek sentences with confidence that they are the exact words dictated to Silas by Peter.

**Internal History.** The primary place / time indications in this passage surface with ὀλίγον παθόντας, “after you have suffered a little while.” The adverb ὀλίγον has a variety of meanings related to smallness or shortness.<sup>12</sup> Here the meaning is a short period of time and alludes to the same period of suffering as earlier

<sup>9</sup>“Some manuscripts add the words ἡ δόξα (the glory) before the word κράτος (the power), and other manuscripts add ἡ δόξα after κράτος. Still other manuscripts do not have the words ἡ δόξα at all. These different readings can be explained best on the assumption that ἡ δόξα is a later addition to the text, added under the influence of 4:11. Variants found in a few other manuscripts were added from traditional doxologies.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 492.]

<sup>10</sup>{A} αἰῶνας P<sup>72</sup> B / 1298 / 1365 cop<sup>bo</sup> arm  
// αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (see 4.11) κ A Ψ 0206<sup>vid</sup> 33 81 322 323 436 945 1067 1175 1241 1243 1292 1409 1505 1611 1735 1739 1852 1881 2138 2298 2344 2464 Byz [K L P] Lect it<sup>ar, h, q, t, z</sup> vg syr<sup>p, h</sup> cop<sup>sa</sup>, bo<sup>ms</sup> eth geo slav

<sup>11</sup>“Considering the almost universal tendency to expansion in doxologies, a majority of the Committee preferred the shorter reading, supported by P<sup>72</sup> B 36 307 / 1365<sup>m</sup> cop<sup>bo</sup> arm.” [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), 628.]

<sup>12</sup>“ὀλίγος, η, ον (Hom.+.—For the NT the spelling ὀλίγος is not infrequently attested [exx. in B-D-F §14; Mlt-H., 98f; cp. Schwyzer I 226; II 201]; like ἐλπής, ἴδιος and a few others of this kind, this form is found in ins and pap as early as pre-Christian times, and is more freq. later [Crönert 148–53; Helbing 25f; Thackeray 126f; Hauser 60]).

**1. pert. to being relatively small in number, few pl.**

a. used w. a noun ἐργάται **Mt 9:37; Lk 10:2.** ἰχθῦδια *a few (small) fish* **Mt 15:34; Mk 8:7.** ἄφροστοι **6:5.** ἄφρονες *a few foolish persons* ITr 8:2. ὀνόματα **Rv 3:4.** πρόσωπα *persons* 1 Cl 1:1. W. κεράμια to be understood fr. the immediate context Hm 12, 5, 3. ἡμέραι ὀλίγαι (PFay 123, 10 [c. 100 A.D.]; Gen 29:20; cp. Ps 108:8; Philo, Somn. 1, 46; Jos., Ant. 1, 91): ἐν ἡμ. ὀλίγαις (Diod S 36, 4, 4) **Ac 15:30** D. πρὸς ὀλ. ἡμέρας *for a few days* **Hb 12:10;** μετὰ ἡμέρας ὀλ. *after a few days* Hs 7:1; 8, 4, 1. μετ’ ὀλ. ἡμέρας (Teles p. 19, 5; Diod S 13, 8, 1) 8, 11, 5; 9, 5, 5f. μετὰ ὀλ. ἡμέρας 5, 2, 9; 8, 2, 9. ὀλ. ῥήματα *a few words* m 4, 2, 1; 12, 5, 1. δι’ ὀλ. γραμμῶτων *in a few lines* (s. γράμμα 1) IRo 8:2; IPol 7:3.

b. abs. ὀλίγοι (a) **few** (opp. πολλοί as Menand., Mon. 670 Jäkel [443 Meineke]; Polyb. 18, 53, 1; Diod S 15, 37, 1; Plut., Mor. 188e; Porphyg., Vi. Pyth. 22; Tat. 3, 2) **Mt 7:14** (Cebes 15, 2f there are ὀλίγοι who travel the στενή ὁδός ... , ἡ ἄγουσα to the goal; TestAbr A 11 p. 90, 11 [Stone p. 28] ὀλίγοι ... οἱ σφρζόμενοι); **20:16** v.l.; **22:14=4:14; Lk 13:23.**—*a few* 1 Pt 3:20; MPol 5:1 (cp. Just., A I, 44, 13). Used w. the partitive gen. (Arrian, Anab. 5, 15, 4 ὀλίγοι τῶν ἐλεφάντων) and a neg. **not a few, a number** (of) (Jos., Bell. 7, 438) γυναικῶν **Ac 17:4.** γυναικῶν ... καὶ ἀνδρῶν vs. **12.**—ὀλ. ἐξ αὐτῶν Hs 9, 8, 6.—ὀλίγα (a) **few things** **Lk 10:42** v.l. (opp. πολλά as Menand., Mon. 311 Jäkel [226 Meineke]; Ath. 12, 3; s. ABaker, CBQ 27, ’65, 127–37); **Rv 2:14;** ὑποδείξω ὀλ. **I shall point out a few things** **1:8.** ὀλ. ἐπερωτῶν τινα *ask someone a few questions* Hm 4, 1, 4. ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἧς πιστός **you were trustworthy in managing a few things** **Mt 25:21, 23.** δαρήσεται ὀλίγας **he will receive few lashes** **Lk 12:48** (s. δέρω). δι’ ὀλίγων γράφειν **1 Pt 5:12** (βραχέων P72, cp. Hb 13:22; s. διά A 3b).

**2. pert. to being relatively small on a scale of extent, little, small, short, sing.**

a. of amount (3 Km 17:10 ὀλ. ὕδωρ) οἶνος ὀλ. **a little wine** (Artem. 1, 66 p. 59, 25) **1 Ti 5:23;** πῦρ ὀλ. **a little fire** **Js 3:5** v.l. οὐκ ὀλ. ἐργασία **no small profit** **Ac 19:24;** **of fruit little** Hs 2:4; **of a country small** 1 Cl 10:2.—Subst. τὸ ὀλίγον **a small amount** ὁ τὸ ὀλ. **one who gathered a small amount** (opp. ὁ τὸ πολύ) **2 Cor 8:15** (cp. Num 11:32; Ex 16:18). ὁ ὀλίγον ἀφίεται **the one to whom little is forgiven** **Lk 7:47a** (cp. the use in vs. 47b and s. 3 below).

b. of duration

a. (Musaeus vs. 291 ὀλίγον ἐπὶ χρόνον= **for a short time**; TestAbr B 2 p. 106, 5 [Stone p. 60] ὀλίγην ὄραν) ὀλ. καιρός **a short time** **Rv 12:12.** χρόνος οὐκ ὀλ. **a long time** (Jos., Bell. 2, 62) **Ac 14:28.** ὀλίγον χρόνον **for a short while** (Menand., Fgm. 567 Kö.) 2 Cl 19:3; Hs 7:6; ἐν καιρῷ ὀλ. **in a short time** 1 Cl 23:4.

β. The neut. ὀλίγον used adverbially (Hom. et al.; Pr 6:10; Sir 51:16, 27) w. preps. **in a short time, quickly** (Pind.; Pla., Apol. 22b; Jos., Ant. 18, 145; Lucian, Toxaris 24) **Ac 26:28** (s. πείθω 1b; 3a and reff. there). καὶ ἐν ὀλ. καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ whether in a short

mentioned in 1:6, ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, **ὀλίγον** ἄρτι εἰ δέον λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, (In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials). The duration of this suffering is left undefined precisely, in part because Peter’s use of ὀλίγον in 5:10 stands in contrast to τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν (His eternal glory) in the sentence. Thus what ever suffering we endure in this world, no matter its duration, pales into insignificance compared to the eternal Presence of God that is ours in Heaven.

## b. Literary

**Literary Form (Genre).** The literary forms here move from the broad genre to the small sub-genre with some distinction. At the broad level, this is the final pericope of the letter body, and as such it closes out the main part of Peter’s message to these congregations identified at the beginning of the letter. At this point, it is important to remember the occasional nature of ancient letters. That is, letters were prompted by a cluster of spiritual needs on the part of those addressed in the Adscriptio. As a substitute visit by the letter sender, the letter sought to address those perceived needs with spiritual insight and wisdom possessed by the sender. This setting provides the tone and shape of the advice offered by the letter sender. He is not sitting down to write some theological treatise largely abstract and detached from real needs and situations. Universal, timeless principles may very well be used in addressing specific problems in the lives of those receiving the letter. But the main focus is bringing spiritual truth to bare on specific issues being faced by those initial readers.



At the small genre level, our text contains a basic encouragement (v. 10) and is followed by a doxology (v. 11). It is the latter that has a distinctive literary form that needs some consideration.<sup>13</sup> Three elements

or a long time vs. 29 (s. B-D-F §195; GWhitaker, *The Words of Agrippa to St. Paul*: JTS 15, 1914, 82f; AFridrichsen, *SymbOsl* 14, '35, 50; Field, *Notes* 141–43; s. Rob. 653).—μετ’ ὀλίγον *after a short while* (Diod S 14, 9, 6; 15, 6, 5; Appian, *Liby.* 98 §465; SIG 1170, 25f; PRyl 77, 41; Jdth 13:9; Wsd 15:8; TestAbr A 7 p. 84, 8 [Stone p. 16]; GrBar 9:3; Jos., *Vi.* 344; Just., *D.* 56, 18) MPol 11:2.—πρὸς ὀλίγον *for a short time* (Lucian, *Dial. Deor.* 18, 1; Aelian, *VH* 12, 63; POxy 67, 14; Jos., *Bell.* 4, 642, *Ant.* 4, 128; Just., *A I*, 12, 2) **Js 4:14**.—Without a prep. (Ps 36:10; TestJob 40:4; ParJer 5:2) **Mk 6:31; 1 Pt 1:6; 5:10; Rv 17:10**.

c. of distance, the neut. ὀλίγον used adverbially a little of distance, etc. (Pla., *Prot.* 26, 339d ὀλίγον προελθών; ApcMos 19 περιπατήσας ὀλίγον) **Mk 1:19; Lk 5:3**.

**3. relatively low on a scale of extent or existing only to a small degree, little, slight** οὐκ ὀλ. *great, severe*: τάραχο **Ac 12:18; 19:23**. στάσις κ. ζήτησις **15:2**. χειμών **27:20**.—Only a little (Ael. *Aristid.* 33, 6 K.=51 p. 573 D.) ὀλίγον ἀγαπᾷ *he loves only (to) a little (extent)* **Lk 7:47b**.—W. prep. ἐν ὀλίῳ (cp. TestGad 4:6=‘slightly’) in brief (*Aristot., Rhet.* 3, 11 p. 1412b, 23; *Dionys. Byz.* §3) **Eph 3:3**. πρὸς ὀλίγον ὠφέλιμος *profitable for (a) little* (=has some value) **1 Ti 4:8**. GJs19, 2 (s. deStrycker 279).—B. 925f. DELG. M-M. EDNT. 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), 702-03.]

<sup>13</sup>“DOXOLOGY [Gk doxología, from dóxa—‘praise, honor, glory’ and lógos—‘utterance’]. A brief expression of praise, primarily to God or to other members of the trinity.

“The basic form is the blessing formula ‘Blessed be the Lord’ or ‘Blessed be the God and Father ...’ (Heb *bārūk*; Gk *eulogētós*; Gen. 24:27; Ex. 18:10; 1 Ch. 16:36; Lk. 1:68; 2 Cor. 1:3f; Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3; etc.), followed by a statement of the attributes motivating the utterance, primarily God’s activities in the lives of His people. Variants are ‘Worthy is the Lamb’ (Gk *áxios*, Rev. 4:11; 5:9, 12) and ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty’ (Gk *hágios*, Rev. 4:8). See BLESS.

“Doxologies may begin with an imperative verb, exhorting the hearers to ‘ascribe to the Lord glory and strength’ or ‘the glory of his name’ (Heb *yāhab*; Ps. 29:1f par 96:7–9; 1 Ch. 16:28f; cf. Bar. 2:18) or ‘ascribe power’ (Ps. 68:34 [MT 35]), ‘praise the Lord’ (Heb *hālal*, (Ps. 150; cf. Gk *ainéō*, Rev. 19:5), ‘worship the Lord’ (hithpael of *šāhā*; Ps. 29:2), or ‘glory in his holy name’ (hithpalel of *hālal*; 1 Ch. 16:10). Among the qualities thus attributed to God (frequently using only the phrase ‘to him be’) are glory (Rom. 16:27; Gal. 1:5), honor, dominion (1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Pet. 4:11), salvation, power (Rev. 19:1), majesty, and authority (Jude 25; cf. 1Clem 61). Such blessings are ‘for ever’ (Rom. 11:36) or ‘for ever and ever’ (2 Tim. 4:18; **1 Pet. 5:11**; cf. 4 Macc. 18:24). In the NT doxologies may begin with exclamations of ‘Hallelujah’ (Rev. 19:1), ‘Glory to God in the highest’ (Lk. 2:14), or ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’ (Mt. 21:9, 15; Mk. 11:9f; Jn. 12:13; see HOSANNA).

“Although God is the primary focus of NT doxologies, other objects of praise include Christ (Mt. 21:9; Rev. 5:12) and the

ordinary make up an expression of praise in these forms: a) the subject of the praise; b) ascription of praise; c) duration of the praise. To be sure variations of each of these three elements is found among the various doxologies in both the Old and the New Testaments.<sup>14</sup> Such ascriptions of praise to God can be found in

kingdom of God (Mk. 11:10). A frequent Christological doxology exclaims ‘Blessed is he [or the King] who comes in the name of the Lord’ (Mt. 21:9; 23:39; Mk. 11:9; Lk. 19:38; cf. Ps. 118:26). To Him are ascribed salvation and power (Rev. 19:1), blessing and might (Rev. 5:18), glory (He. 13:21), and dominion (Rev. 1:6) ‘both now and to the day of eternity’ (2 Pet. 3:18). Blessings are frequently offered to God ‘through Jesus Christ’ (Rom. 16:27; He. 13:21; Jude 25; cf. 1Clem 6:13) or “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3; 3:21).

“Only rarely are the doxologies expressed in the second person, as ‘Blessed art thou’ and ‘thine’ is the greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty (1 Ch. 29:11f). Following this prayer of David, some NT MSS and the Didache add to the Lord’s Prayer the doxology ‘For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen’ (Mt. 6:13 mg; Did 8:2; 9–10. See LORD’S PRAYER). Cf. Pr. Man. 15, ‘sings thy praise’; 1Clem 61:3, ‘O Thou ..., glory and majesty to thee.’

“Originally doxologies were voiced by the congregation at the conclusion of hymns and prayers (1 Ch. 16:36; Rom. 11:33–36), in connection with the response ‘Amen’ (Mt. 6:13 mg; Rev. 1:6; cf. Rom. 9:5; 16:27; 1 Pet. 4:11; **5:11**; etc.). However, blessings do occur in the opening lines of prayers (1 Ch. 29:10–13; Dnl. 2:20–23; Lk. 1:67–79). As in Jewish ritual, they may have been uttered in response to each mention of God’s name (cf. Rom. 1:25; 2 Cor. 11:31). It is generally held that doxologies were added editorially to mark the conclusion of the five sections of the Psalter (Pss. 41:13 [MT 14]; 72:18f; 89:52 [MT 53]; 106:48; 150).

“The doxology was commonly employed in the various parts of the NT epistle, including the salutation (Gal. 1:5), opening thanksgiving (2 Cor. 1:3f; Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3), final exhortations (1 Tim. 6:15f; **1 Pet. 5:11**; 2 Pet. 3:18), and closing (He. 13:20f; Jude 24f).

“Doxologies of the early Christian Church reflect the various interpretations of the trinity. To the forms ascribing praise ‘through Christ’ were added the phrases ‘through Christ and the Holy Spirit’ (Clement of Alexandria *Quis dives salvetur?* 42.2), ‘through Christ in the Holy Spirit’ (Origen *De oratione*, passim), and ‘to the Father and Son with the Holy Spirit in your holy church’ (Hippolytus *Traditio apostolica* 6.4). The Gloria Patri or ‘Lesser Doxology,’ used as a response to the Psalms since the 4th cent, equates the three members of the trinity (cf. Basil the Great *De Spiritu sancto* 29), a reaction against the Arian heresy. Other Christian doxologies include the Gloria in Excelsis, the ‘Greater Doxology’ or ‘Angelic Hymn,’ an expansion of Lk. 2:14 that begins ‘Glory be to God on high.’ Often emphasizing a particular aspect of Christ or of the ecclesiastical calendar, doxologies were added to various hymns; perhaps most familiar is the stanza beginning ‘Praise God from whom all blessings flow,’ written by the Anglican Bishop Thomas Ken (1637–1711).

“Bibliography.—L. G. Champion, *Benedictions and Doxologies in the Epistles of Paul* (1934); *Dictionnaire d’Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, IV, 1525–1536 (G. F. Moore); LTK, III, 534–36 (J. M. Neilen, J. A. Jungmann); RAC, IV, 210–226 (A. Stuiber).”

[A.C. Myers, “Doxology,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromile, Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988; 2002), 1: 989-90.]

<sup>14</sup>“Doxologies are short, spontaneous ascriptions of praise to God which frequently appear as concluding formulae to prayers, hymnic expressions (see Hymns) and sections of Paul’s letters. Their basic structure is threefold. First, the person to whom praise is ascribed is mentioned (‘to our God and Father,’ Phil 4:20). Then follows the word of praise, usually *doxa* (‘glory,’ or an equivalent), and finally, the doxology concludes with a temporal description, normally an eternity formula (‘for ever and ever’). In most cases the doxology is followed by ‘amen.’

“The first element in these NT ascriptions of praise is the most variable: the one to whom glory is given may be expressed by a relative pronoun (‘whom,’ Gal 1:5; ‘him,’ Rom 11:36), a Greek participial expression (‘God who is able to strengthen you,’ Rom 16:25) or a simple noun (‘the King of the ages,’ 1 Tim 1:17). The ascription in Philippians 4:20 is particularly appropriate: Paul ascribes glory ‘to our God and Father.’ At Philippians 4:19 he used the intensely personal expression ‘my God’ to assure the Philippians that his God would act on his behalf to fulfill all their needs. Now he changes to the plural ‘our’ as he unites himself with his converts in this ascription of praise.

“The second element of the doxology is the ascription of ‘glory’ (honor, greatness or power) which properly belongs to God and is, therefore, rightly ascribed to him. In the OT *doxa* was primarily the brightness or radiance of God’s presence. To give God glory is not to add something to him; rather, it is an active acknowledgment or extolling of what he is or has already done (Ps 29:2; 96:8). Although many doxologies contain no verb, the indicative ‘is’ or ‘belongs’ is presupposed: the doxology is an affirmation rather than a wish. So in Galatians 1:5 glory belongs to God for it was in accordance with his will that the ‘Lord Jesus Christ ... gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age.’

“The third feature of Paul’s doxologies is the temporal expression ‘for ever and ever’ (literally, ‘to the ages of the ages’). This eternity formula, which is unique to the NT (cf. Gal 1:5; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18), is a more emphatic variation of the common LXX expression which means ‘for all eternity’ in an unlimited sense (cf. Ps 84:5). Paul’s ascription of glory to God is not restricted to ‘this age’ but belongs to ‘the age to come’ as well. The spontaneous endorsement of the doxology in Philippians 4:20 is uttered in the ‘amen’ which follows, a response uttered on solemn occasions in the OT to confirm a curse or adjuration, to accept a blessing or to associate oneself with a doxology. Each of the doxologies which conclude the first four books of the OT psalter (Ps 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48) ends with an ‘amen,’ while prayers and doxologies in the NT are strengthened and endorsed by it (Rom 1:25; Gal

many of the letters in the New Testament, and in different places ranging from the initial elements of the *Prae-scriptio* and *Proem*, to the letter body, and then in the letter *Conclusio* at the end. With the Jewish heritage of doxological praise in worship of God with formal worship, the New Testament writers sometimes feel such emotion with an expression of spiritual reality that their response is simply to burst forth in an expression of doxological praise to God.<sup>15</sup>

1:5). The ‘amen’ makes it clear that Paul’s ascription of praise is not simply a matter of the lips, but is the spontaneous response of his whole being. Elsewhere he strikingly connects believers’ response of ‘amen’ to the faithfulness of God who has said yes to all his promises in Christ (2 Cor 1:20).”

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 69. S.V., “Benediction, Blessing, Doxology, Thanksgiving,” by P.T. O’Brien]

<sup>15</sup>Below is a listing of all the doxologies found in the New Testament. This listing provides helpful illustration of the variety of patterns that one encounters in the pages of the New Testament.

### Doxologies in the New Testament

#### Romans:

11:36

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα· αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

16:25-27

25 Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26 but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

[25 Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑμᾶς στηρίζαι κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν μυστηρίου χρόνοις αἰωνίοις σεσιγημένου, 26 φανερωθέντος δὲ νῦν διὰ τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν κατ’ ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ αἰωνίου θεοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη γνωρισθέντος, 27 μόνῳ σοφῷ θεῷ, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.]

#### Galatians:

1:5

to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

#### Ephesians:

3:20-21

20 Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

20 Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν, 21 αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

#### Philippians:

4:20

To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

#### First Timothy:

1:17

To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων, ἀφθάρτῳ ἀοράτῳ μόνῳ θεῷ, τιμὴ καὶ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

#### Second Timothy:

4:18

To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

#### Hebrews:

13:21b

to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων], ἀμήν.

#### First Peter:

4:11

To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

ᾧ ἐστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

In First Peter, this happens twice:

4.11b. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

ὧ̄ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων, ἀμήν.

5.11. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

In the first doxology of 4:11b, the antecedent of the relative pronoun ὧ̄ (to whom) is either ὁ θεὸς (God) or Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Jesus Christ), with the evidence favoring God somewhat more. In 5:11, the antecedent of the personal pronoun αὐτῷ (to him) can refer back to either ὁ θεὸς (God) in 5:10 or to Χριστῷ [Ἰησοῦ] (Christ Jesus) also in 5:10. Greek grammar would normally suggest the closest possible antecedent should be taken as the intended reference, which in both examples would be Christ. But traditionally God is the subject reference who receives the praise in the majority of doxologies. The ambiguity of subject reference in both 4:11 and 5:11 has affinity with Gal. 1:5 and 2 Tim. 4:18.<sup>16</sup>

Beyond the spiritual meaning of the doxology, another issue that surfaces with 5:11 is the literary role the verse is playing. Does the doxology belong in the letter *Conclusio* or in the letter body? Opinions will differ here among scholars who address the question. Although a doxology can unquestionably come in the letter *Conclusio*, they are found in the letter body and often toward the end of the body proper of the letter as a signal of a transitional from the body to the *Conclusio* of the letter. Most likely this is the literary function of this doxology in contrast to the one in 4:11. The use of epistolary doxologies in such a literary role is not surprising since they often came at the close of liturgical worship in ancient Israel.<sup>17</sup>

### 5:11

To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

### Second Peter:

#### 3:18

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος. [ἀμήν.]

### Jude:

#### 25:

To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

μόνῳ θεῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν δόξα μεγαλωσύνη κράτος καὶ ἐξουσία πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντα τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

### Revelation:

#### 1:5b-6

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰῶνων]· ἀμήν.

#### 4:11

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

ἄξιος εἶ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἐκτίσας τὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημα σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

#### 5:13

“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

#### 7:12

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

ἀμήν, ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἰσχὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων· ἀμήν.

<sup>16</sup>Michaels (*WBC*) proposes Christ as the reference point in 4:11 but God in 5:11:

“αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν, ‘To him belongs the might forever. Amen.’ This is a shortened form of the doxology in 4:11, this time, directed to the ‘God of all grace’ (v 10) rather than to Jesus Christ (see Comment on 4:11).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 303-04.]

<sup>17</sup>“Biblical doxologies are found in many contexts, but one of their chief functions seems to have been as a conclusion to songs

**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*

The short rather distinctive wording of this doxology lies behind most of the variations in wording that have surfaced over the centuries of copying this text, as was discussed above under *External History*. Most copyists felt the expression was too short and needed expansion to “fit” the pattern of 4:11 and the longer expressions typically found elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. footnote 15).

**Literary Context.** The literary setting for 5:10-11 is reflected in the chart. It stands as the final statements of the unit on “Proper Conduct” in 5:1-11. As such it brings this emphasis on facing persecution with the right behavior to a climax. Additionally it signals the end of the discussion on persecution begun in 3:13, and, as well, functions to bring the letter body to a close (1:13-5:11). Thus Peter’s overarching message to his readers is a word of praise to God for taking care of His people during the times of their suffering under persecution. Such is indeed a fitting climax to this lengthy discussion.

Additionally, then the doxology in 5:11 in particular signals a transition into the letter *Conclusio* in 5:12-14. With this word of praise to God we sense, as did those first listeners to the reading of this letter, that the letter is almost concluded.

**Literary Structure.** The block diagram of the Greek text below in English highlights the unusual grammar constructions in the two sentences that complete the unit of 5:1-11.

```

5.10      And
          the God...
            of all grace
              who called you
                into His eternal glory
                  in Christ,
                    after you have suffered for a while
77      --- Himself will restore
78      --- ----- will support
79      --- ----- will strengthen
80      --- ----- will establish you.

81 5.11 To Him (be) power
          for ever and ever;
          Amen.

```

Clearly the text falls into two divisions with the two sentences in the Greek text. The first sentence in verse 10 contains a series of future tense verb expressions (#s 77-80) with God as the subject of all of them. The focus re-emphasizes the affirmations of vv. 6-7.<sup>18</sup> The language here establishes a close link with the beginning exposition of Prov. 3:34 in vv. 6-7, as well as picks up key terminology in the proverb with the promise to

(Exod. 15:18), psalms (Ps. 146:10), and prayers (Matt. 6:13), where they possibly served as group responses to solo singing or recitation. Doxologies conclude four of the five divisions of the psalter (Ps. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48), with Ps. 150 serving as a sort of doxology to the entire collection. Doxologies also occur at or near the end of several NT books (Rom. 16:27; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; **1 Pet. 5:11**; 2 Pet. 3:18; Jude 25) and figure prominently in the Revelation (1:6; 4:8; 5:13; 7:12).” [Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 441. S.V., “Doxology,” by David W. Music.]

<sup>18</sup>NRSV. “6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.”

6 Ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ, 7 πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ’ αὐτόν, ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν.

ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν (*but He gives grace to the humble*) in 5:5b.

The second division stands in v. 11 as a doxology of praise offered up to God in light of the marvelous promise of His help to those facing persecution.

## II. Message

The natural twofold division of the text provides the first two points of exegesis. The third point will attempt to pull together a wholistic picture of persecution and suffering as discussed in 3:13-5:11.

### a. God's promise, v. 10

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

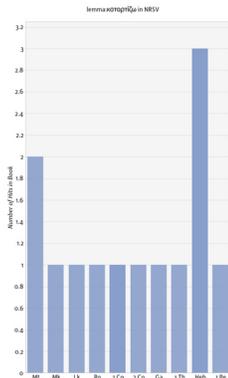
Ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ [Ἰησοῦ], ὀλίγον παθόντας αὐτὸς καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει.

#### Notes:

This sentence in Greek is the most unusual one that we have come across in the entire letter. It is made up of four core verbs in the future tense expressed as divine promises and all linked to the common subject of God with extensive expansions and also contains a major temporal expansion of the verbs expressed by a Greek participle phrase. The Greek sentence is beautifully laid out, but is very difficult to translate into English.

**The promises:** αὐτὸς καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει, *will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.* The intensive pronoun αὐτὸς (*himself*) adds emphasis to God's personal involvement in these verbal actions. **Promise One:**

καταρτίσει.<sup>19</sup> This Greek verb from καταρτίζω shows up some 13 times in the New Testament, mostly with the meanings of 'restore' or 'prepare.' In 5:10, the sense is to fully train or complete individuals.<sup>20</sup> The sense here is close to



<sup>19c</sup> **καταρτίζω** fut. καταρτίσω; 1 aor. κατήρτισα, mid. κατηρτισάμην, 2 sg. κατηρτίσω. Pass.: aor. κατηρτίσθην LXX; pf. pass. κατήρτισμαι (ἀρτίζω, 'get ready, prepare', s. next entry; Hdt. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; TestSol 5:12 H).

#### 1. to cause to be in a condition to function well, put in order, restore.

a. *restore to a former condition, put to rights* (since Hdt. 5, 28; 106; Dionys. Hal. 3, 10) *τι someth.* nets (by cleaning, mending, folding together) **Mt 4:21**; **Mk 1:19** (cp. GWynne, Exp. 7th ser., 8, 1909, 282–85). Fig. κ. τινά *restore someone ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος in a spirit of gentleness*, i.e. in a gentle manner **Gal 6:1**. Pass. καταρτίξεσθε *mend your ways* **2 Cor 13:11**.

b. *put into proper condition* (cp. Epict. 3, 20, 10 of a trainer who adjusts parts of the body), *adjust, complete, make complete* *τι someth.* καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τ. πίστεως ὑμῶν *to fix up any deficiencies in your faith* or *to complete what is lacking in your faith* **1 Th 3:10**. τινά *someone*: ὑμᾶς ἐν παντί ἀγαθῷ *make you complete in every good thing* **Hb 13:21**. κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοί και ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ *adjusted / made complete in the same mind and the same conviction* **1 Cor 1:10**. ἐν μιᾷ ὑποταγῇ **IEph 2:2**. ἐν ἀκινήτῳ πίστει **ISm 1:1**. Abs. **1 Pt 5:10**. κατηρτισμένος (fully) trained, practiced (Polyb. 5, 2, 11 τ. εἰρεσίαις κατηρτισμένοι) κ. πᾶς (μαθητῆς) ἔσται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ *when fully trained, the pupil will be like the teacher* **Lk 6:40**. S. Betz, Gal. 297 n. 43.

#### 2. to prepare for a purpose, prepare, make, create, outfit.

a. act. and pass., of God (w. ποιεῖν) **B 16:6**. (W. κτίζειν) τὰ πάντα **Hm 1:1**. Pass. ὁ κόσμος κατηρτίσθη **Hv 2, 4, 1**; also οἱ αἰῶνες (s. αἰών 3) ῥήματι θεοῦ **Hb 11:3**. κατηρτισμένος εἰς τι **made, created for someth.**: σκευὴ ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν *vessels of wrath, designed for destruction* **Ro 9:22**. ἄνθρωπος εἰς ἔνωσιν κατηρτισμένος *a man set on* (lit. made for) *unity* **IPhld 8:1**.

b. mid. (PGM 4, 1147) καταρτίξεσθαι τί τινι *prepare someth. for someone* σῶμα **Hb 10:5** (Ps 39:7 codd.: BSA). W. reflexive mng.: *for oneself* καταρτίσω αἶνον *you prepared praise for yourself* **Mt 21:16** (Ps 8:3).—DELG s.v. ἀραρίσκω. 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), 526.]

<sup>20c</sup> *Perfect* is literally 'restore,' denoting the idea of putting something in order, making something complete (compare JB 'will see that all is well again'; Phps 'will make you whole'); it is a very fitting promise for Christians whose bodies are broken down because of persecution and whose wills are ever put to the test. A literal rendering of will himself perfect you may be misunderstood as a reference to complete sanctification in the sense of 'make you perfect.' The focus here is upon restoration, not upon sanctification. An equivalent in some instances may be 'will do for you all that is necessary' or 'will fix everything up for you

its meaning in the Heb. 13:20-21 *Benedictio*.<sup>21</sup> God's promise is to make believers complete and whole so that nothing is spiritually lacking in their lives. If their suffering has caused them to stumble, God will restore them to wholeness.

**Promise Two:** στηρίζει. This second promise from στηρίζω<sup>22</sup> stresses the personal actions of God to firm up believers after their sufferings. **Promise Three:** σθενώσει.<sup>23</sup> This verb from σθενώ is found only here in the entire New Testament and means simply to make strong.<sup>24</sup> It is this unusual feature of the verb with a similar

again.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 171.]

<sup>21</sup>**NRSV:** 20 Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 **make you complete** in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

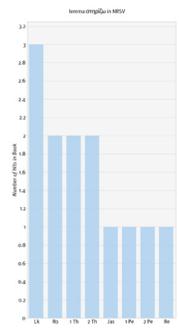
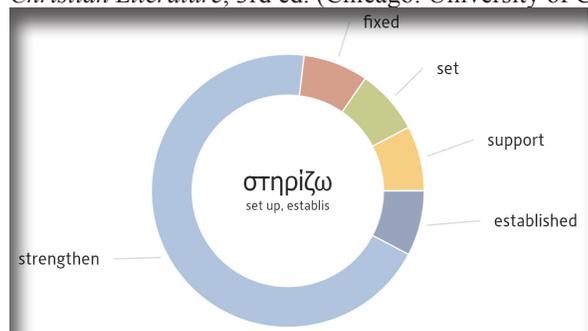
20 Ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης, ὁ ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου, τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν, 21 **καταρτίσαι ὑμᾶς** ἐν παντὶ ἀγαθῷ εἰς τὸ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων], ἀμήν.

22 **στηρίζω** (Hom.+; also OGI 612, 8; 769, 11; InsGolanHeights no. 11\* line 11; PSI 452, 3) fut. στηρίζω (beside στηρίσω—B-D-F §71; W-S. §13, 4; Mlt-H. 259; Rob. 1219—and στηριῶ [s. Ezk 14:8; Sir 6:37]); 1 aor. ἐστήριξα (t.r.) and ἐστήρισα (B-D-F §71; W-S. § 13, 4; Mlt-H.; and Rob. as above). Pass.: fut. 3 sg. στηριχθήσεται Sir 15:4 and στηρισθήσεται Sir 15:4 v.l.; 1 aor. ἐστηρίχθην; perf. ἐστήριγμα, inf. ἐστηρίχθαι (LXX, Just.) and ἐστηρίσθαι 1 Km 26:19.

**1. to fix firmly in a place, set up, establish, support**, lit. τὶ *someh*. τοὺς οὐρανοὺς 1 Cl 33:3 (στ. of the creation of the world: Arat., Phaen. 10; Orphica, Fgm. 170, 3; Mel.; s. Hippol, Ref. 6, 32, 2 [w. μορφῶ]). Pass., *of a city be well established* Ox 1, 17–18 (GTh 32). Of a chasm ἐστήρικται *has been fixed* Lk 16:26 (cp. Gen 28:12 κλίμαξ ἐστηριγμένη; En 24:2; ParJer 9:17 τὸ δένδρον τὸ στηριχθέν).

**2. to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, confirm, establish, strengthen** fig. ext. of 1 (Apollon. Rhod. 4, 816 hatred; Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 98 τὴν ἀρχήν; Ps 50:14; Sir 3:9; 1 Macc 14:14) w. acc. οὐ τὰ ἐστῶτα στηρίζειν ἀλλὰ τὰ πίπτοντα 2 Cl 2:6 (s. Sir 13:21).—Lk 22:32; Ac 18:23; Ro 16:25; 1 Th 3:2; 2 Th 3:3; 1 Pt 5:10; Rv 3:2. Pass. (Iren. 1, 2, 4 [Harv. I 19, 1]) Ro 1:11. τὴν καρδίαν τινός (Judg 19:5, 8; Sir 6:37; 22:16) Js 5:8; w. a second acc. στ. ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους 1 Th 3:13 (s. Rtzst., Erlösungsmyst. 147, 3). τινὰ ἐν τινι *someone in someth*. 2 Th 2:17; IPHld ins. Pass. 2 Pt 1:12. τινά τινι *strengthen someone w. someth*. 1 Cl 18:12 (Ps 50:14). τινὶ στ. ἐαυτὸν εἰς τι *strengthen oneself w. someth. in order to do someth*. 13:3; στ. τινὶ *establish (someth.) by someth*. 8:5. ἐὰν ἐστηριγμένη ἦ ἡ διάνοια ἡμῶν πιστῶς πρὸς τὸν θεόν *if our mind is firmly fixed on God in faith* 35:5. ἐγὼ ὑπὸ κίνδυνον, ὑμεῖς ἐστηριγμένοι I am in danger, you are secure IEph 12:1.—In a related sense, but with more evident retention of the imagery of someth. that is fixed, to be determined to accomplish an objective, resolve: Hebraistically στηρίζειν τὸ πρόσωπον *set one's face* (Ezk 6:2; 13:17; 14:8; 15:7) *to denote firmness of purpose* (s. Jer 21:10; cp. our 'set one's jaw') foll. by gen. of inf. w. art. (B-D-F §400, 7; Rob. 1068) Lk 9:51 (s. πρόσωπον 1b and on 9:51–19:27 HConzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, tr. GBuswell, '60, esp. 60–73).—DELG. 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), 945.]



<sup>23</sup>**σθενώ** (σθένος 'strength') fut. σθενώσω (Herodian Gramm. 449, 21; Rhet. Gr. VII 260, 20; Hesych.) *strengthen, make strong* 1 Pt 5:10.—DELG s.v. σθένος. 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), 922.]

<sup>24</sup>Third, God will 'strengthen' them. This is quite an unusual word meaning 'to make strong,' found only here in biblical Greek (a related term appears in 3 Macc. 3:8, but that only once) and rarely in secular Greek.<sup>307</sup> [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), 196.]

A related verb σθένω is fairly common in Greek literature and has the meaning of "to be strong." Verbs with the spelling ἴζω usually carry the sense of becoming what the stem specifies, as do omicron contract verbs e.g., ὄω. This probably accounts for the use of this rare verb as a part of a somewhat poetic expression of repetition for emphasis sake. Thus σθενόω continues the stress on

meaning to στηρίζει that causes it to be left out of several manuscript copies of this passage.<sup>25</sup> **Promise Four:** θεμελιώσει.<sup>26</sup> This verb from θεμελιώω shows up some five times in the New Testament and literally means to build a foundation underneath a building. The figurative meaning then alludes to God building a strong basis for one’s life based on a spiritual foundation. Again it is somewhat similar in meaning to the previous two verbs but with a slightly different perspective.<sup>27</sup>

What Peter stresses here is the fourfold promise of God to get any believer through the time of suffering and to address any “wounds” that occurred during the trial. The repetition of the promise in four ways underscores the certainty and the intensity of God’s promise to help.

**The subject:** ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ, **the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ.** Who is this God who makes such an emphatic promise? Peter qualifies the designation ὁ θεὸς with two qualifiers: a genitive case noun and a participle phrase.

**God of all grace:** ὁ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος. Divine grace has been a frequent emphasis of Peter in this letter: 1:2, 10, 13, 2:19-20, 3:7, 4:10, 5:12. God’s favor comes to believers in this life and will come to them in final judgment. The two references most prominently in mind with the phrase here are in 4:10, “**the manifold grace of God**” (ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ), and in 5:5 He “**gives grace to the humble**” (ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν). The adjective πάσης underscores every situation needing God’s favor. Thus the first trait of the God who makes the promises of support is His grace that is all encompassing.<sup>28</sup>

God’s promise to strengthen believers having undergone suffering.

<sup>25</sup>p<sup>72</sup> 81 r t vg<sup>mss</sup>

<sup>26</sup>**Θεμελιώω** (s. θεμέλιος) fut. θεμελιώσω; 1 aor. ἐθεμελίωσα. Pass.: 1 aor. 3 sg. ἐθεμελιώθη LXX; pf. τεθεμελίωμαι; plpf. 3 sg. τεθεμελίωτο (on the missing augment s. B-D-F §66, 1; W-S. §12, 4; Mlt-H. 190) (X., Cyr. 7, 5, 11; SIG 1104, 15; synagogue ins fr. Jerus.: SEG VIII, 170, 9 [before 70 A.D.]; LXX; En; TestSol; JosAs 12:3 [cod. A ch. 19 p. 69, 18 Bat.]; Philo, Op. M. 102)

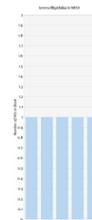
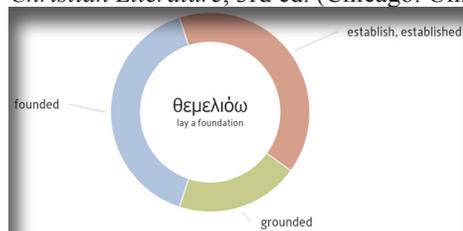
**1. to provide a base for some material object or structure, lay a foundation, found,** lit. τι *some*th. τὴν γῆν (Job 38:4; Pr 3:19; En 18:12; 21:2; JosAs 12:3) **Hb 1:10**; Hm 12, 4, 1 v.l. (Ps 101:26). θεμελιώσας τ. γῆν ἐπὶ ὑδάτων (who) *founded the earth upon the waters* Hv 1, 3, 4 (cp. Ps 23:2). In the same sense ἐπὶ w. acc. τεθεμελίωτο ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν **Mt 7:25**; **Lk 6:48** v.l.

**2. to provide a secure basis for the inner life and its resources, establish, strengthen,** fig. ext. of mng. 1 (Diod S 11, 68, 7 βασιλεία καλῶς θεμελιωθεῖσα; 15, 1, 3).

a. *of believers, whom God establishes* **1 Pt 5:10**, or to whom he gives a secure place Hv 1, 3, 2. Pass. **Eph 3:17**; **Col 1:23**; Hv 3, 13, 4; 4, 1, 4.

b. *of revelations that H. receives:* πάντα τεθεμελιωμένα ἐστὶν they are all well-founded Hv 3, 4, 3.—Of the church viewed as a tower: τεθεμελιώται τῷ ῥήματι τοῦ παντοκράτορος καὶ ἐνδόξου ὀνόματος it has been established by the word of the almighty and glorious name (of God) Hv 3, 3, 5.—DELG s.v. θεμός. 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), 449.]



<sup>27</sup>“Peter is multiplying synonyms, perhaps to reinforce the key phrase, στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει, ‘firm in faith,’ in v 9 and to keep before his readers to the end of his epistle the implications of the three ‘stone’ quotations in 2:6–8. θεμελιώσει, ‘establish,’ recalls the saying of Jesus in Matt 7:25 (cf. Luke 6:48), where the phrase τεθεμελίωτο ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν, ‘was established on the rock,’ corresponds to the initial reference to a wise man who ‘built’ (ᾠκοδόμησεν, 7:24) his house ‘on the rock.’ In a similar, although far less direct, way Peter’s concluding promise θεμελιώσει, ‘he will establish,’ corresponds to the οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς, ‘you are being built as a spiritual house,’ in 2:5 (cf. also, of course, Matt 16:18–19. The verb θεμελιῶν (often perfect passive, as in Matt 7:25) finds its way into Christian moral instruction in Col 1:23; Eph 3:17; Herm Vis. 3.3.5; 3.13.4; 4.1.4; for the future indicative with God as subject, as here, cf. Herm Vis. 1.3.2).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 303.]

<sup>28</sup>“God is designated, accordingly, as ‘the God of all grace’ (cf. ‘God of all consolation’ in 2 Cor 1:3). ‘All grace’ corresponds in scope to the ‘diversified grace’ of 4:10, encompassing not only the grace to come at the ‘revelation of Jesus Christ’ (1:13; cf. 3:7), but the grace of ‘suffering for doing good’ (2:19, 20) and the grace of mutual ministries in the worshipping congregations (4:10).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 302.]

**God who called you:** ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ. The language of divine calling into salvation here echoes what was stated in 1:15 (κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον) and 2:9 (τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς). Believers have been invited by God to experience His presence and His life. Earlier the emphasis was on this world, but here in 5:10 the focus is the eschatological. His glory (αὐτοῦ δόξαν) is His divine Presence that continues for all eternity.<sup>29</sup> This divine calling is defined as having coming “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ). The absence of the article before Χριστῷ stresses connection of this prepositional phrase with the participle καλέσας rather than with the noun δόξαν.<sup>30</sup> The calling of God came in Christ and His work of redemption on the cross. Thus as Peter moves toward finishing up his letter he reaches back to the emphasis on divine grace and calling to encourage his readers to steadfastness in facing their trials.

**The time qualifier:** ὀλίγον παθόντας, after you have suffered for a little while. When do these promises of God take effect? The Aorist participle παθόντας together with the temporal adverb ὀλίγον signal that after a short period of suffering we can count on God’s renewal and strengthening presence. Peter has already asserted God’s help during the time of suffering: 1:6; 2:12, 19, 20; 3:9, 14, 16, 17; 4:1, 6, 12–16, 19; 5:9. Does God step away from believers after helping them through suffering? This climatic affirmation in 5:10 asserts that God stands with believers not just during their trials but afterwards as well, when He begins the recovery and healing process from the ‘wounds’ brought about by the suffering.

Peter gives to his readers a wonderful promise from God at the end of his letter: *God commits Himself to take care of you when you face persecution.* When you are ‘wounded’ by such suffering, He will restore you and put you back together again emotionally and spiritually. It’s not that He only helps you while you are suffering, He will also stand with you after you move through the trial to make sure that you are okay.

#### b. God’s praise, v. 11

To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

**Notes:** In light of such a marvelous promise from the Heavenly Father, Peter understandably moves to offer up praise to God. The doxology is brief but pointed. Already he has concluded an eloquent encouragement to prepare for facing trials with a similar word of praise; cf. 4:11, αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν (To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.).<sup>31</sup> Two distinctives surface with this second doxology in 5:11. First, the term τὸ κράτος, power, is used rather than the most common terms ἡ δόξα, or ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος. The latter is the pattern in 4:11. Second, the adverbial expression for “forever” is different: εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας rather than εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.<sup>32</sup> The essential meaning remains the

<sup>29</sup>“The eschatological goal of the divinely-called reborn believers is once more expressed: sharing in the glory of God (1:7; 4:11, 13, 14, 16; 5:4), as does Jesus Christ (1:11; 5:1). 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 expresses a similar sentiment: “God chose you ... he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. also Rom 8:30; 9:23; 1 Thess 2:12).” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 865.]

<sup>30</sup>“Since, however, the expression is used also in 3:16 and 5:14 to designate those who are in union with Christ (5:14) or the conduct of those united with Christ (3:16), a trace of this sense may be present here as well. Christ has been glorified (1:11, 21; 4:13; 5:1) and shares in the glory of God (4:11d, 14, 16; 5:10b; cf. 2:12), so that all who are ‘in Christ’—that is, united with Christ—are called to share in both God’s glory and Christ’s (1:7; 4:13, 14; 5:1, 4). The glory of God manifest in Christ belongs to those in union with Christ. On the phrase ‘in Christ,’ see also the NOTES on 3:16 and 5:14.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 865.]

<sup>31</sup>“Having assured his beleaguered readers of God’s certain care and support, the author concludes these consolatory words and the letter as a whole with a celebratory doxology. Similar in form to the doxology of 4:11, where to *kratos* (‘the power’) also appears, this praise of God affirms in particular the power that is God’s to accomplish the actions enumerated in v 10. The pronoun *autōi* [‘him’], like the foregoing *autos* in v 10, has God (v 10a) as its antecedent. The implied verb of the ellipsis is *estin* (‘is’), as in 4:11, rather than *estō* (‘to Him be’). Similar doxological formulations appear in Pss. Sol. 17:3 (*to kratos tou theou hēmōn eis ton aiōna met’ eleous*, ‘the power of our God is forever with mercy’) and 1 Tim 6:16 (*hōi timē kai kratos aiōnion, amēn*, ‘His is honor and eternal power, amen’; cf. Shimada 1966, 396–421). The noun ‘the power’ (*to kratos*) recalls the ‘powerful (*krataian*) hand of God’ in v 6; the two related terms belong to the inclusion framing vv 5b/6–11.<sup>767</sup> By contrast, *kratos* never appears in Pauline doxologies but is found in the doxologies of the Deutero-Pauline 1 Timothy (6:16) as well as Jude 25 and Rev 1:6 and 5:13.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 867–68.]

<sup>32</sup>One should note this very Jewish way of referring to eternity, which literally means “ages of ages.” All the New Testament Bible Study: Page 295

same, but these variations from 4:11, and a common pattern generally in the New Testament (cf. footnote 15 on page 6 for listing), prompted considerable variation in the wording of the manuscript copies over the first eight centuries (cf. *External History* for details).

The word τὸ **κράτος** (**might**) echoes τὴν **κραταιὰν** χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ (**the mighty hand of God**) in 5:6, which probably accounts for its use by itself here.<sup>33</sup> The doxological praise setting signals that such a word of praise from the believer means that the believer is acknowledging in worship God's superior power. The praise affirms God's power for all eternity. Now that's something to sing about!

The ἀμήν at the end of the doxology signals a response to the listeners that they should affirm this praise by saying, "Amen."<sup>34</sup> What a way to bring his message of hope to his suffering readers!

### c. Unjust Suffering: Review of 3:13-5:11

For quite some time we have been looking at the theme of unjust suffering in First Peter. The primary text is 3:13-5:11, but this theme has surfaced some prior to 3:13 as well.<sup>35</sup> Before leaving the letter body section of First Peter (1:13-5:11), we need to reflect on what Peter has said. This document of the New Testament goes into greater detail about persecution faced by Christians than any other single document in the NT. Therefore, some clear understanding of this theme from First Peter is important.

Consideration of this discussion can perhaps be summarized most helpfully by asking some questions from a modern western cultural perspective on unjust suffering.

**1. What was the persecution being experienced?** In the history of interpretation of First Peter, esepewriters, except for Luke, studiously avoid the more common Greek designations for eternal or forever, e.g., ἀεὶ. The reason for this is the dramatically different conceptions of eternity. In Greek philosophy, eternity is a timeless, static vacuum where everything stops. In the Jewish apocalyptic thinking that is adopted by early Christianity, eternity is an endless progression of time that moves forward without ever stopping. The expression τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων is the most common way to express this idea, both in Jewish and early Christian writings.

<sup>33</sup>κράτος, οὐς, τό (Hom.+)

#### 1. ability to exhibit or express resident strength, **might**

**a. of God's power** (Theognis 376 al.; Ael. Aristid. 37, 8 K.=2 p. 15D.; 2 Macc 3:34; 7:17; 11:4; s. also 3 below) 1 Cl 33:3; 61:1; 64; AcPl Ha 5, 26. *Of the power of Jesus* 2 Cl 17:5.—τὸ κ. τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ *his glorious (divine) might* **Col 1:11**. κατὰ κράτος αὐξάνειν *grow mightily, wonderfully* **Ac 19:20** (κατὰ κράτος like Menand., Per. 407; Dio Chrys. 26 [43], 11; IG XII/5, 444, 103 [264/263 B.C.]; PTeht 27, 83 [113 B.C.]; AArgyle, ET 75, '64, 151 connects κατὰ κ. with τ. κυρίου, by the might of the Lord).

**b. of intensity in might** (cp. Appian, Bell. Civ. 2, 35 §141 κατὰ κράτος=with all his might; Ps.-Callisth. 1, 8, 2 ἡλίου κ.; Ps 89:11) τὸ κ. τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ *the working of his strength = mighty strength* **Eph 1:19; 6:10**; 1 Cl 27:5 (cp. Is 40:26; Da 4:30 Theod.; s. IQS 11, 19f; 1QH 4, 32).

**2. a specific product of resident strength, mighty deed** ποιεῖν κ. (cp. עָשָׂה פִּלְאֵי Ps 118:15) *do mighty deeds* **Lk 1:51**.

**a. exercise of ruling ability, power, rule, sovereignty** (Arrian, Anab. 4, 20, 3 the ruling might of the great king; POxy 41 I, 2 εἰς αἰῶνα τὸ κράτος τῶν Ῥωμαίων; Mel., HE 4, 26, 7 τὸ Ῥωμαίων ... κράτος. Of deities: Apollon. Rhod. 4, 804 Zeus; UPZ 81 II, 17 [II B.C.] Isis: ἔλθέ μοι θεὰ θεῶν, κράτος ἔχουσα μέγιστον; PSI 29, 21 τὸ κ. τοῦ Ἀδωναῖ; POxy 1380, 238 ἀστραπῶν τὸ κ. ἔχεις; Philo, Spec. Leg. 1, 307 τ. ὄλων τὸ κ.; Jos., Ant. 10, 263 τὸ πάντων κ. ἔχων) τὸν τὸ κ. ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου the one who has power over death Hb 2:14 (τὸ κ. ἔχειν τινός since Hdt. 3, 69).—In a doxology (Mel., P. 105, 823): **1 Ti 6:16; 1 Pt 4:11; 5:11; Jd 25; Rv 1:6; 5:13**; 1 Cl 65:2; MPol 20:2.—DELG. 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), 565.]

<sup>34</sup>The conclusion of the doxology with the word ἀμήν<sup>119</sup> follows a practice attested in the OT and other Jewish literature, where the word can be used to affirm what has been said,<sup>120</sup> but is more commonly employed as a response, public or private, to a curse,<sup>121</sup> to a prayer,<sup>122</sup> to a blessing or praise of God, whether public<sup>123</sup> or private,<sup>124</sup> or to a doxology.<sup>125</sup> These uses are then carried over into the NT: affirmation,<sup>126</sup> praise,<sup>127</sup> prayer,<sup>128</sup> but the chief use of the word as response is, as in this verse, at the conclusion of doxologies.<sup>129</sup> The presence of the doxology here does not provide conclusive evidence that a document incorporated into our epistle ended at this point.<sup>130</sup> While in three instances a doxology does conclude a document in the NT,<sup>131</sup> it is far more commonly found within the document itself.<sup>132</sup> It is therefore best to understand it as concluding a section of the letter here, but not as an indication of the conclusion of a formerly independent source incorporated into 1 Peter by the author.<sup>133</sup> [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), 300.]

<sup>35</sup>These prior allusions to suffering come at two points before 3:13. In the letter *Proem* at 1:6-7 Peter signals the theme of suffering and rejoicing as something he is going to discuss further later on in the letter. Then at 2:13-25 the theme surfaces in connection with Christian slaves experiencing unjust suffering at the hands of non-christian owners who are abusive of their slaves.

cially during the past two centuries, efforts to understand this have played a major role in the dating of the letter, the authorship of the letter etc.<sup>36</sup> Thus a clear perspective of what Peter says on this subject is crucial to solid understanding of the document as a whole.

The section on persecution in 3:13-5:11 begins in 3:13 with a contrast between ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς (the one harming you) and believers being τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ (zealots for good). Then the possibility of πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην (you might suffer because of righteousness) is raised. In 3:15, believers are to be prepared to give an answer to τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος (to the one demanding an accounting about the hope you have). In 3:16, Peter speaks of ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε (while you are being slandered) regarding his readers. Also he refers to οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφὴν (those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ). In 3:17, again he mentions ἀγαθοποιοῦντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν (suffering for doing good, if it may be God's will) as being far better than suffering for κακοποιοῦντας (for doing evil).

In 4:4, Peter mentions the surprise of Gentile friends over believers no longer being willing to join them in immoral living: ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν. Consequently these pagans are βλασφημοῦντες (slandering) the believers' God.

In 4:12, he cautions believers μὴ ξενίσεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος (don't be shocked at the fiery ordeal happening to you as a trial, as though something strange were happening to you). In 4:14, he mentions them being reviled because of the name of Christ: ὄνειδίζεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ. They may suffer as a Christian (4:16): πασχέτω... ὡς Χριστιανός, which he then labels in 4:19 as οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ (those suffering according to the will of God). In 5:10, he alludes to them as ὀλίγον παθόντας (having suffered a little while); also see ὀλίγον ἄρτι, a little while now, in 1:6. Peter did not see the suffering of his readers continuing on without interruption and/or termination.

From this survey, what do we notice? For the believers, the language of suffering (πάσχω) dominates.<sup>37</sup> This Greek verb is used 42 times in the New Testament, with the negative meaning of suffering in all but two instances.<sup>38</sup> Several qualifying words add understanding to what Peter is alluding to with this word. The initial

<sup>36</sup>“The most prominent and repeatedly emphasized feature of the addressees' situation as portrayed in 1 Peter is the undeserved suffering that they were undergoing as a result of the disparagement and abuse to which they were subjected by hostile nonbelievers. While commentators agree on this point, only in more recent time has a consensus emerged regarding the nature, agents, and motives of this hostility. Positions on this issue are also related to positions taken on the author of the letter, its genre, integrity, and date.” [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 97-98.]

<sup>37</sup>Of the various meanings of the English verb ‘suffer’ the idea of πάσχω intersects the English verb at the intransitive verbs meanings of “1: to endure death, pain, or distress; 2: to sustain loss or damage.” [Merriam-Webster online Dictionary: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/suffer>]

<sup>38</sup>“πάσχω fut. 3 sg. παθεῖται (2 Cl 7:5; v.l. πείσεται; cp. Reinhold p. 74; B-D-F §74, 3), 3 pl. παθοῦνται Hs 8, 10, 4; 2 aor. ἔπαθον; pf. πέπονθα, ptc. πεπονθώς; plpf. 3 pl. ἐπεπόνθεισαν Wsd 18:1 (Hom.+ ‘to experience someth., be treated’ (π. expresses the passive idea corresponding to the active idea in ποιέω) of everything that befalls a person, whether good or ill. Yet its usage developed in such a way that π. came to be used less and less frequently in a good sense, and never thus without some clear indication, at least fr. the context, that the good sense is meant. In our lit. it is found...

3. In all other places, as always in LXX, in an unfavorable sense *suffer, endure*.

#### a. suffer

a. abs. (also in the sense suffer death, be killed, [have to] die: Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 70 §321; 3, 87 §359; Arrian, Anab. 6, 10, 3; Paroem. Gr.: Zenob. 4, 60 the crow ἔπαθε from the scorpion's poison; Herodian 1, 17, 7; Just., D. 52, 3; Mel., P. 8, 65; sim. Callinus [VII B.C.], Fgm. 1, 17 G-B.[=D.3] ἦν τι πάθη=‘if he fell’; Demosth. 4, 11f; Straton of Lamps., Fgm. 10 [in Diog. L. 5, 61] εἰάν τι πάσχω=‘if anything happens to me’; Diod S 13, 98, 2; Lucian, Dial. Meretr. 8, 3; Iambl., Vi. Pyth. 33, 238; Jos., Ant. 15, 65; 18, 352; CB I/2, 391 no. 254; Iren. 1, 3, 3 [Harv. I, 27, 1]) πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν before I suffer Lk 22:15. Cp. 24:46; Ac 1:3; 3:18; 17:3; 1 Cor 12:26; Hb 2:18 (on ἐν ᾧ s. ἐν 7); 9:26; 1 Pt 2:20, 23; 3:17; B 7:2a; Hs 8, 10, 4. The expr. γῆ πάσχουσα B 6:9 seems to transfer the philosoph. concept of suffering matter to the γῆ (Hefele, Hilgenfeld, Veil): earth capable of suffering (Goodspr.), earth capable of being molded into a human being (Kleist, note ad loc.).

β. w. additions: ὑπό τινας at the hands of someone denotes the one who caused the suffering (Antiphon Orat., Fgm. 34; Ael. Aristid. 45 p. 134 D.; PAmh 78, 4; Jos., Bell. 5, 19, Ant. 10, 92; Mel., P. 75, 546ff; B-D-F §315) Mt 17:12 (s. also b below). Also ὑπό χειρὸς τινοῦ B 5:5b (cp. Mel., Fgm. 7 ὑπό δεξιᾶ Ἰσραηλίδου). ὑπὲρ τινοῦ for someone or someth. (Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 15 §63 π. ὑπὲρ τινοῦ=suffer for someone; Just., D. 121, 2 ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ἀρνεῖσθαι αὐτόν as military metaphor; EKrentz, in Origins and Method, JHurd Festschr. '93, 126) Phil 1:29; 2 Th 1:5; 1 Pt 2:21 (περὶ τινοῦ v.l.), ὑπὲρ τ. ὀνόματος τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ Hs 9, 28, 2a. ὑπὲρ τοῦ νόμου 8, 3, 6. ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας, ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτωλῶν MPol 17:2. ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ISM 7:1. Also περὶ τινοῦ (Nicol. Dam.: 90 Fgm. 130, 29 p. 415, 29 Jac. περὶ τῶν διαδόχων αὐτοῦ ἅπαν ... παθεῖν) περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν 1 Pt 3:18 (v.l. ἀπέθανεν).

readers were suffering διὰ δικαιοσύνην (3:14; **because of righteousness**), for ἀγαθοποιοῦντας (**doing good**), κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ (**according to God's will**). Their suffering was to last ὀλίγον (**a little while**).

Prior to 3:13, Peter has also mentioned the suffering of his readers with this same verb πάσχω, although mainly in connection to his admonitions to Christian slaves with non-Christian masters (2:18-25). In 2:20, the Christian slaves were ἀγαθοποιοῦντες καὶ πάσχοντες (**doing good and suffering**). In 2:19, they were πάσχων ἀδίκως (**suffering unjustly**), which meant enduring pain (ὑποφέρει τις λύπας). The tone of these references is consistent with the more inclusive discussion in 3:13-5:11.

In the letter *Proem* (cf. 1:6-7), Peter signaled his awareness of their sufferings: ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιάσθε, ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον **λυπηθέντες**<sup>39</sup> ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς. ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ περι τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν B 5:5a. διὰ w. acc. *for the sake of*: διὰ δικαιοσύνην **1 Pt 3:14**. διὰ τὸ ὄνομα (αὐτοῦ) Pol 8:2; Hv 3, 2, 1; Hs 9, 28, 3. δι' ἡμᾶς B 7:2b. διὰ τὸν θεόν Hs 9, 28, 6a. εἵνεκα or ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματος v 3, 1, 9; 3, 5, 2; Hs 9, 28, 5; 6b. κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ **1 Pt 4:19**. ἔξω τῆς πύλης Hb 13:12. ἐπὶ ξύλου on the tree B 5:13b.—Used w. an instrumental (?) dat.: αἰκίαις καὶ βασάνοις π. 1 Cl 6:1 v.l. πολλαῖς πράξεσι Hs 6, 3, 4. W. dat. to denote manner (B-D-F §198) π. σαρκί *suffer in the body* **1 Pt 4:1ab** (in b v.l. ἐν σαρκί).—Used w. an adverb: ἀδίκως **1 Pt 2:19**. ἀληθῶς I Sm 2b. δικαίως (TestSim 4:3; Just., D. 110, 6) Hs 6, 3, 6a. ἡδέως 8, 10, 4. προθύμως 9, 28, 2b and 4. οὕτω GPt 4:13; B 5:13a. ὀλίγον (s. ὀλίγος 2bβ) **1 Pt 5:10**. τὸ δοκεῖν (δοκέω 2αα) in semblance, seemingly ITr 10; I Sm 2c.—ὡς φονεύς undergo punishment (cp. SIG 1016, 7 π. ὡς ἱερόσυλος) *as a murderer* **1 Pt 4:15**.

**b. endure, undergo** τί someth. (Orig., C. Cels. 7, 13, 7; π. καταστροφῆν; Did., Gen. 232, 11; Theoph. Ant. 2, 23 [p. 156, 6]) παθήματα π. *endure sufferings* **2 Cor 1:6** (ὧν by attraction of the rel. fr. ἄ; sim. Iren. 1, 8, 2 [Harv. I 70, 4]). αἰκίσματα 1 Cl 6:2. πολλὰ π. (Jos., Ant. 13, 268; 403) **Mt 27:19; Mk 8:31; 9:12; Lk 9:22** (s. further below); **17:25**; B 7:11; AcPl Ha 8, 19. τὰ ὁμοία τι *the same things as someone* Ox 840, 3. οὐδὲν κακὸν *suffer no harm* **Ac 28:5**. οὐδὲν τῶν πονηρῶν Hs 6, 3, 6b. ὡς οὐδὲν πεπονηθῶς *as if nothing had happened to him* MPol 8:3 (cp. TestJob 47:7 ὡς οὐδὲν ὅλως πεπονηθῶς). ταῦτα **Lk 13:2; 24:26; 2 Ti 1:12**; 1 Cl 45:5. τί παθεῖται; *what will he have to endure?* 2 Cl 7:5 (πάσχειν τι=endure punishment, as Pla., Leg. 10, 1, 885ab). μὴ φοβοῦ ἃ μελλεῖς πάσχειν *do not be afraid of what you are about to undergo* **Rv 2:10**. W. attraction ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν= ἔμαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν ἀπὸ τούτων ἃ ἔπαθεν *he learned obedience from what he endured* (i.e. despite his being God's son, Jesus experienced suffering as the medium for exhibiting the ultimate extent of his obedience) **Hb 5:8** (for the consonance or wordplay s. the reff. cited s.v. μανθάνω 3). π. τι ὑπὸ τινος *endure someth. at someone's hands* (X., Hiero 7, 8, Symp. 1, 9; Jos., Ant. 7, 209; 12, 401; s. 3αβ above) **Mk 5:26; 1 Th 2:14**; B 7:5. Also π. τι ἀπὸ τινος (Dio Chrys. 67 [17], 11; Lucian, D. Deor. 6, 4; Orig., C. Cels. 8, 27, 5) **Mt 16:21**; perh. **Lk 9:22**. π. τι ἕνεκά τινος *endure someth. for someone's sake* 2 Cl 1:2. Also π. τι διὰ τινα I Sm 2a (Just., D. 117, 3; Mel., P. 59, 435). ὅσα δεῖ αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου παθεῖν **Ac 9:16** (π. τι ὑπὲρ τινος as Jos., Ant. 13, 199).—WWichmann, D. Leidenstheologie, e. Form der Leidensdeutung im Spätjudentum 1930; HVondran, D. Leidensgedanke im Spiegel d. Selbstbewusstseins Jesu: NKZ 43, '32, 257–75; RLiechtenhan, D. Überwindung d. Leidens b. Pls. u. in d. zeitgen. Stoa: ZTK n.s. 3, 1922, 368–99; WMichaelis, Herkunft u. Bed. des Ausdrucks 'Leiden u. Sterben J. Chr.' '45; HRiesenfeld, Jésus Transfiguré, '47, 314–17 (Le Messie Souffrant ...); ELohse, Märtyrer u. Gottesknecht (Sühntod Jesu Christi), '55; EGüttgemanns, D. leidende Apostel, '66.—K Schelkle, Die Passion Jesu etc., '49; JGreen, The Death of Jesus '88; RBrown, The Death of the Messiah, 2 vols. '94; ACollins, From Noble Death to Crucified Messiah, NTS 40, '94, 481–503; on alleged anti-Judaism in Luke's passion narrative, s. HMerkel, NTS 40, '94, 394–95 (lit.).—Schmidt, Syn. I 424–441. DELG. M-M. EDNT. DLNT. 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), 785–86.]

<sup>39c</sup> **λυπέω** 1 aor. ἐλύπησα; pf. λελύπηκα. Pass.: 1 fut. λυπηθήσομαι; 1 aor. ἐλυπήθην; pf. λελύπημαι (fr. λύπη 'pain, grief'; Hes.+ ) gener. 'grieve, pain'.

**1. to cause severe mental or emotional distress, vex, irritate, offend, insult**, act. τινά someone (Test Abr A 8 p. 86, 9 [Stone p. 20]; Dio Chrys. 28 [45], 3; BGU 531 II, 18 [I A.D.], freq. in the sense *vex, irritate, offend* TestSol 2:3 D; Herodas 5, 7, 3; Ar. 15:7) **2 Cor 2:2a; 7:8ab**. The object of λυπεῖν can also be a deity (Diod S 1, 65, 7; 8 τὸν θεόν; schol. on Apollon. Rhod. 2, 313 λ. τὸν Δία; cp. τοῦ ἀγγέλου μου ArcSed 14:10) μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ **Eph 4:30**; Hm 10, 2, 2; 10, 3, 2ab; cp. 10, 2, 4. χάριν Dg 11:7. In εἰ τις λελύπηκεν **2 Cor 2:5** λ. used abs. is certainly more than cause pain or vexation. In Polyaeus 8, 47 it is used of the severe humiliation or outrage experienced by a king who has been deposed by his subjects.

**2. to experience sadness or distress, pass.**

a. aor. λυπηθῆναι **become sad, sorrowful, distressed** (BGU 1079, 9 [41 A.D.]; Esth 2:21; Ps 54:3; 2 Esdr 15:6; TestJob, Test12Patr, GrBar; Jos., Ant. 8, 356) **Mt 14:9**; AcPl Ha 7, 17; **J 16:20; 2 Cor 2:4; 7:9a; 1 Pt 1:6**; Dg 1. W. σφόδρα (Da 6:15 LXX; 1 Macc 10:68; JosAs 8:8 al.) **Mt 17:23; 18:31**; GJs 1:3; 2:4; AcPl Ha 7, 15; w. λίαν 1 Cl 4:3 (Gen 4:5 Cain took offense). W. ὅτι foll. become distressed because (cp. En 102:5) **J 21:17**. λυπηθῆναι εἰς μετάνοιαν become sorry enough to repent **2 Cor 7:9b**. λ. κατὰ θεόν as God would have it vss. **9c, 11**.

b. pres. λυπεῖσθαι **be sad, be distressed, grieve** (La 1:22) **1 Th 4:13**. λυπῆ; *are you grieved or hurt?* Hv 3, 1, 9b. λυπούμενος (*being*) *sad, sorrowful* **Mt 19:22; 26:22; Mk 10:22**; Hv 1, 2, 2; 3, 13, 2 (TestAbr A 7 p. 84, 9 [Stone p. 16]; Jos., Vi. 208). (Opp. χαίρων as Dio Chrys. 50 [67], 5; Philo, Virt. 103) **2 Cor 6:10**. λυπούμενου (μου) ὅτι because Hv 3, 1, 9a. ἡμην λυπούμενος 1, 2, 1. ὁ λυπούμενος the mournful man (Ael. Aristid. 46 p. 404 D.) m 10, 3, 3. ὁ λ. ἐξ ἐμοῦ **2 Cor 2:2b** gives the source of the pain or sadness. ἤρξατο λυπεῖσθαι *he began to be sorrowful* **Mt 26:37**; cp. **Mk 14:19**. λ. διὰ τι because of someth. (schol. on Apollon. Rhod.

τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου εὐρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>40</sup> Here he labeled them ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, *different kinds of trials*, and indicated that believers were λυπηθέντες, *being caused grief*, by them.

Clearly from both sections (2:18-25 & 3:13-5:11) as well as in the *Proem* (1:6-7), Peter stresses the very real experience of believers facing opposition and persecution based upon their religious commitment to Christ. The verb πάσχω implies experiencing pain and discomfort both physically and emotionally. What the believers experienced that caused such pain is not spelled out in specific detail.

*From what were they suffering?* In 3:13, the possibility of κακώσων (*harming, injuring*) the believers is raised. The verb κακῶω, although it can refer to making a person angry (cf. Acts 14:2), overwhelmingly means in the New Testament the doing of physical harm to another person.<sup>41</sup> In Acts 7:6 this referred to the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt from Gen. 15:13. In Acts 18:10, God promises Paul that “no one will lay a hand on you to harm you” (οὐδεὶς ἐπιθήσεται σοι τοῦ κακῶσαι σε) in Corinth. Clearly the verb can refer to violent action of some kind taken against another person. In 3:16, Peter alludes to believers being slandered, καταλαλεῖσθε,<sup>42</sup> and abused, ἐπηρεάζοντες.<sup>43</sup> The first verb καταλαλέω implies verbal abuse largely by deliberation misrepresentation of the truth about another person. The second verb ἐπηρεάζω moves the same direction of verbal abuse but with threatening tones of anger expressed in the lies about another person. In 4:4, Gentile friends of believers are said to be βλασφημοῦντες<sup>44</sup> (*slandering*) the believers. While implying verbal abuse, βλασφημέω 4, 1090; JosAs 24:19 δι’ Ἀσενέθ; ParJer 4:11 διὰ σέ): εἰ διὰ βρῶμα ὁ ἀδελφὸς λυπεῖται *if a member’s feelings are hurt because of food* **Ro 14:15** (but λ. can also mean injure, damage: X., Mem. 1, 6, 6, Cyr. 6, 3, 13). μὴ λυπεῖσθω ὁ εὐσεβὴς *ἐάν the godly man is not to grieve if* 2 Cl 19:4. λ. ἐπὶ τινι at someth. (X., Mem. 3, 9, 8; Lucian, Dial. Mort. 13, 5, Tox. 24; Artem. 2, 60; PGrenf II, 36, 9 [95 B.C.]; Jon 4:9; ApcMos 39 p. 21, 1 Tdf.; Philo, Abr. 22; Just., D. 107, 3) Hm 10, 2, 3; cp. Hs 6, 3, 1. ἐλυπεῖτο περὶ τῆς γυναίκος οὐ μικρῶς (Hieronymus) *was quite upset with his wife, who had displayed interest in Paul’s message* AcPl Ha 4, 16f (w. περὶ as Da 6:18 LXX; ApcMos 18 p. 9, 13 Tdf.).—Impf. ἐλυπούμην I was sad GPt 7:26; cp. 14:59 (TestSol 2:2 D; TestSim 4:3; ParJer 7:30); w. σφόδρα (JosAs 24:1) GJs 1:4 (aor. v.l.).—DELG s.v. λύπη. 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), 604.]

<sup>40</sup>NRSV: *In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

<sup>41</sup>κακῶω fut. κακῶσω; 1 aor. ἐκάκωσα; pf. 2 sg. κεκάκωκας 3 Km 17:20. Pass.: 1 aor. ἐκακώθη LXX; pf. inf. κεκακῶσθαι. **1. to cause harm to, harm, mistreat** w. acc. (Hom.+; PTebt 407, 9 [II A.D.]; LXX; TestSol 8:11; Test12Patr; Philo, Spec. Leg. 2, 135; Jos., Vi. 121; Just., D. 109, 3 [s. Mi 4:6]) **Ac 7:6** (Gen 15:13), **19; 12:1; 18:10; 1 Pt 3:13**. Pass. 1 Cl 16:7 (Is 53:7).

**2. to cause someone to think badly about another, make angry, embitter** τὰς ψυχὰς τινῶν κατὰ τινος *poison the minds of some persons against another* **Ac 14:2** (cp. Jos., Ant. 16, 10; pass., 16, 205; 262; Ps 105:32).—DELG s.v. κακό. 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), 502.]

<sup>42</sup>καταλαλέω fut. 3 pl. καταλαλήσουσιν Mi 3:7; 1 aor. κατελάλησα LXX (s. two next entries and λαλέω; Aristoph.+; Polyb.; Stoic. III 237, 6 al.; SIG 593, 6 [II B.C.]; PHib 151 [c. 250 B.C.]; LXX, En; TestAbr B 12 p. 116, 20 [Stone p. 80]; Test12Patr; Philo [only in connection w. the OT: Leg. All. 2, 66f=Num 12:8 and Leg. All. 2, 78=Num 21:7]) **speak ill of, speak degradingly of, speak evil of, defame, slander** τινός *someone* (Ps 77:19 τοῦ θεοῦ; 100:5 τοῦ πλησίων αὐτοῦ; TestIss 3:4, Gad 5:4; cp. Diod S 11, 44, 6; τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δόξης Theoph. Ant. 3, 30 [p. 268, 28]) **Js 4:11ab**; 2 Cl 4:3; Hm 2:2a. ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν **1 Pt 2:12** (cp. SIG loc. cit. ἵνα μὴδ’ ἐν τούτοις ἔχωσιν ἡμᾶς καταλαλεῖν οἱ ... ). Also κατὰ τινος (so mostly LXX, En) 1 Cl 35:8 (Ps 49:20). Pass. **1 Pt 3:16**.—Fig. (Ps.-Lucian, As. 12 τοῦ λύχνου) νόμου *speak against the law* **Js 4:11c**.—Abs. ὁ καταλαλῶν one who speaks evil Hm 2:2 (three times).—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), 519.]

<sup>43</sup>ἐπηρεάζω (s. next entry; Hdt.+; ins, pap; Philo, Mos. 2, 199, De Jos. 71; Just. A I, 1, 1) **to treat someone in a despicable manner, threaten, mistreat, abuse** usu. w. dat. (as Ael. Aristid. 23, 28 K.=42 p. 777 D.; PFlor 99, 10 [I/II A.D.]; Jos., Bell. 1, 13); τινά (OGI 484, 26 [II A.D.]): περὶ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς *for those who mistreat you* (in something they do, as PFay 123, 7; PLond II, 157, 4f p. 255 [II A.D.]) **Lk 6:28**, cp. **Mt 5:44** v.l. (Just., A I, 15, 9). τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἀναστροφὴν *disparage/malign (your) good conduct* **1 Pt 3:16**.—Schmidt, Syn. IV 275–78. DELG s.v. ἐπήρεια. 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), 362.]

<sup>44</sup>βλασφημέω impf. ἐβλασφήμουν; 1 aor. ἐβλασφήμησα. Pass.: 1 fut. βλασφημηθήσομαι; 1 aor. ἐβλασφημήθην (s. next two entries; Pla. et al.; PSI 298, 14; LXX; Alex., Ep. XVI 2f; TestJob 16:7; AssMos Fgm. j p. 67 Denis; Philo, Joseph., Just.) prim. ‘to demean through speech’, an esp. sensitive matter in an honor-shame oriented society. **to speak in a disrespectful way that demeans, denigrates, maligns**

carries a religious tone and suggests that the misrepresentation about the believers was in connection to Christ and God. In 4:14-16, Peter assumes his readers are being reviled because of Christ (ὀνειδίζεσθε<sup>45</sup> ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ), and are suffering ὡς Χριστιανός (as Christians). Intense verbal abuse was directed at believers because they were identified with Christ.

a. in relation to humans *slander, revile, defame* (Isocr. 10, 45 w. λοιδορεῖν) τινά someone (Socrat., Ep. 22, 2; Chion, Ep. 7, 1 ἡμᾶς) μηδένα (Philo, Spec. Leg. 4, 197; Jos., Vi. 232; Hippol., Ref. 7, 32, 6) *speak evil of* **Tit 3:2**. Pass. **Ro 3:8**; **1 Cor 4:13** v.l.; **10:30** (ὕπερ οὗ = ὑπ. τούτου ὑπ. οὗ); Dg 5:14. Abs. **Ac 13:45**; **18:6**.

b. in relation to transcendent or associated entities *slander, revile, defame, speak irreverently/impiously/disrespectfully of or about*

α. a Gr-Rom. deity (for Gr-Rom. attitudes respecting deities Ps.-Pla., Alc. II 149c; Diod S 2, 21, 7; Philo, Spec. Leg. 1, 53; Jos., Ant. 4, 207, C. Apion 2, 237 [s. βλασφημία by]; Orig., C. Cels. 8, 43, 27; s. be below and at the very end of the entry) τὴν θεὸν ἡμῶν **Ac 19:37**.

β. God in Israelite/Christian tradition (4 Km 19:4) τὸν θεόν (cp. Philo, Fuga 84b; Jos., Ant. 4, 202; 6, 183; Hippol., Ref. 7, 11) **Rv 16:11, 21**. Abs. (2 Macc 10:34; 12:14; Orig., C. Cels. 8, 43, 31; Hippol., Ref. 1, Pr. 2) Mt 9:3; 26:65 (JKennard, Jr., ZNW 53, '62, 25–51); **Mk 2:7**; **J 10:36**; **Ac 26:11**; **1 Ti 1:20**; **1 Pt 4:4** (the last 3 passages may be interpr. as not referring exclusively to God). βλασφημῖαι, ὅσα ἐὰν βλασφημήσωσιν *whatever impious slanders they utter* **Mk 3:28** (cp. Pla., Leg. 7, 800c βλ. βλασφημίαν; Tob 1:18 S).

γ. God's name **Ro 2:24** (contrast the approval expressed OGI 339, 30); 2 Cl 13:2a; ITr 8:2b (all three Is 52:5); **1 Ti 6:1**; **Rv 13:6**; **16:9**; 2 Cl 13:1, 2b (quot. of unknown orig.), 4; Hs 6, 2, 3 v.l.

δ. God's Spirit εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον **Mk 3:29**; **Lk 12:10**. On impious slander of the Holy Spirit s. WWeber, ZWT 52, 1910, 320–41; HWindisch, in Porter-Bacon Festschr. 1928, 218–21; EBuonaiuti, Ricerche Religiose 6, 1930, 481–91; OEvans, ET 68, '57, 240–44; GFitzer, TZ 13, '57, 161–82; JWilliams, NTS 12, '65, 75–77; CColpe, JJeremias Festschr., '70, 63–79.

ε. Christ **Mt 27:39**; **Mk 15:29**; **Lk 23:39**; ἕτερα πολλὰ β. **22:65** (cp. Vett. Val. 67, 20 πολλὰ βλασφημήσει θεοῦς). τὸν κύριον Hs 8, 6, 4; 8, 8, 2; 9, 19, 3; ISm 5:2; εἰς τ. κύριον Hv 2, 2, 2; Hs 6, 2, 4; τὸν βασιλέα μου MPol 9:3.—The name of Christ **Js 2:7**.

ζ. angels δόξας β. **2 Pt 2:10**; **Jd 8**. Angels are also meant in ὅσα οὐκ οἶδασιν β. **Jd 10** and ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν β. defaming where they have no knowledge **2 Pt 2:12** (B-D-F §152, 1; Rob. 473). S. δόξα 4.

η. things that constitute the significant possessions of Christians τὴν ὁδὸν τ. δικαιοσύνης ApcPt 7:22; cp. **2 Pt 2:2**. Here and elsewh. pass. ὁ λόγος τ. θεοῦ **Tit 2:5**; ὑμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν **Ro 14:16**; τὸ ἐν θεῷ πλήθος ITr 8:2a; τὸ ὄνομα ὑμῶν μεγάλως β. 1 Cl 1:1; τὸν νόμον τοῦ κυρίου Hs 8, 6, 2.—In our lit. β. is used w. the acc. of the pers. or thing (Plut.; Appian [Nägeli 44]; Vett. Val. [s. be above]; Philo [s. ba and bβ above]; Joseph. [s. ba and bβ above]; 4 Km 19:22) or w. εἰς and acc. (Demosth. 51, 3; Philo, Mos. 2, 206; Jos., Bell. 2, 406. Specif. εἰς θεοῦς and the like, Pla., Rep. 2 p. 381e; Vett. Val. 44, 4; 58, 12; Philo, Fuga 84a; Jos., Ant. 8, 392; Da 3:96; Bel 8 Theod.).—S. βλασφημία end. DELG. M-M. s.v.-ος. 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), 178.]

<sup>45c</sup> **ὀνειδίζω** impf. ὀνειδίζων; fut. 3 sg. ὀνειδίει Sir 18:8; Ps 73, 10 and ὀνειδίσει Sir 20:15; 1 aor. ὀνειδίσα. Pass: fut. 3 pl. ὀνειδισθήσονται Sir 41:7; 1 aor. ὀνειδίσθην LXX (ὀνειδο; Hom.; Pla. [on contrast w. λοιδορεῖν s. Pla., Ap. 38c] +; BGU 1024 VII, 21; PGiss 40 II, 5; LXX; PsSol 2:19; Test12Patr; GrBar 1:2; Philo, Joseph., Just.).

**1. to find fault in a way that demeans the other, reproach, revile, mock, heap insults upon as a way of shaming**; w. acc. of the pers. affected (Trag.; Pla., Apol. 30e; Lucian, Tox. 61; Ps 41:11; 54:13 al. LXX; Jos., Ant. 14, 430; 18, 360) *of the reviling/mocking of Jesus* **Mk 15:32**; cp. **Ro 15:3** (Ps 68:10) *and of Jesus' disciples* **Mt 5:11**; **Lk 6:22**. W. double acc. (Soph., Oed. Col. 1002 ὄν. τινά τοιαῦτα; Ael. Aristid. 28, 155 K.=49 p. 542 D.; Heliod. 7, 27, 5) τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ οἱ ληστὰι ὀνειδίζον αὐτὸν *the robbers also reviled/mockd him in the same way* **Mt 27:44**.—Pass. εἰ ὀνειδίζεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ *if you are (being) reviled for the name of Christ* **1 Pt 4:14**.—Only as v.l. in the two foll. pass.: εἰς τοῦτο κοπιῶμεν καὶ ὀνειδίζομεθα *it is for this (i.e., what precedes) that we toil and suffer reproach* **1 Ti 4:10** v.l. (for ἀγωνιζόμεθα). εἰς τί ὀνειδίσάς με; *why have you reproached me? or what have you reproached me for?* (ὄν. τινά εἰς τι as Appian, Bell. Civ. 2, 104 §430 ὀνειδίσειεν ἐς δειλίαν=he reproached him for cowardice; 5, 54 §224; 5, 96 §400; Jos., Bell. 1, 237) Mk 15:34 D and Macarius Magnes 1, 12 (the text has ἐγκατέλιπες. S. Harnack, SBBerlAk 1901, 262ff=Studien I '31, 98ff; JSundwall, D. Zusammensetzung des Mk '34, 83).—A special kind of reproach is the suggestion of reluctance that too often accompanies the giving of a gift (Sextus 339 ὁ διδοὺς μετ' ὀνειδίους ὑβρίζει; diff. Plut., Mor. 64a; s. also Sir 20:15; 41:25.—ὄν. can also mean charge or reproach someone with someth., a kind of verbal extortion, with the purpose of obtaining someth. from a pers., e.g., Maximus Tyr. 5, 7h τῷ θεῷ τὸ building of a temple); *God does not do this* **Js 1:5**.

**2. to find justifiable fault with someone, reproach, reprimand**, w. acc. of pers. (Pr 25:8; Philo, Fuga 30; Jos., Ant. 4, 189; Just., D. 37, 2 ὀνειδίξει ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον al.) and ὄντι foll. *to give the reason for the reproach* **Mt 11:20**. W. acc. of pers. and λέγων foll. w. dir. discourse (cp. BGU 1141, 23 [14 B.C.] ὀνειδίξει με λέγων) GPt 4:13. W. acc. of the thing censured (Isocr., Or. 15, 318, 345a; Herodian 3, 8, 6; Wsd 2:12; Jos., Ant. 10, 139) τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν **Mk 16:14**.—Schmidt, Syn. I 136–49. DELG s.v. ὀνειδο. 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), 710.]

Most likely this connection to Christ implied little if any understanding of who Christ actually was. In the opponents' minds, Christ represented a new religious movement that they were suspicious of and thus were hostile to. The continual squabbling internally by the Jews about their religion created negative feelings about anything religious connected to Jewish people.<sup>46</sup> Christianity was perceived as a Jewish religious movement by Gentiles in that world, even though many non-Jews were coming into Christianity. Added to that was the insistence on the existence of only one God in a world of polytheism affirming the existence of many gods.

In 5:9, Peter alludes to believers elsewhere in that world experiencing τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων (*the same sufferings*) as those of his readers. In this same passage, vv. 6-11, these sufferings are the product of the activity of the διάβολος, *Devil*, working through humans who oppose believers and their God. Their experience of suffering is compared to τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν (*the fiery ordeal among you for testing*) in 4:12. See also 1:7 where the testing of faith in suffering is compared to the refining of gold by fire. For the believers, what they were experiencing was like walking through a hot furnace with fire blasting them.

The picture that emerges here dominantly is that the opposition being leveled at Peter's initial readers was primarily verbal in nature. This does imply the possibility of formal legal charges being made against them through the Roman court systems in place throughout these provinces, but nothing explicitly states this. More likely, the picture that Peter is painting here implies verbal abuse made by people living around them in the towns and villages where believers were found. This could easily have taken place in the market places and perhaps in the Jewish synagogues, as well as on the streets. Much of it was spoken face to face with believers, but a lot of it was spoken behind their backs as gossip and rumor. First Peter 3:9 strongly implies this: μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας, τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες, "*Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing.*"

The picture painted by Peter is that the communities, where the believers were, did not accept the new religious devotion of their neighbors. The dramatically different and changed lifestyle of the believers created suspicion and distrust. When believers refused to continue participating in the immoral living of their neighbors, suspicion turned into slander and misrepresentation of the new religion of these folks: βλασφημοῦντες (*slandering*). At some point that could have spilled over into formal charges made against them, but the tone of Peter's description does not suggest that such had happened at the time of the writing of his letter to them. Not even mob violence against Christians is hinted at by Peter.

**2. Did Peter link physical persecution and suffering?** It is not clear whether physical acts of violence took place or not. A couple of the verbs used, κακῶν and πάσχω, are certainly broad enough in their scope

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<sup>46</sup>Historically the fussing between the Hebraists and the Hellenists had sometimes led to physical combat between these two groups. See γογγυσμὸς τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους in Acts 6:1 where this tension spilled over into the early church in Jerusalem. These conflicts existed where ever Jews lived throughout the Roman empire. Certainly in the province of Asia in western Anatolia with its very large Jewish populations the surrounding communities would have been familiar with these debates and squabbles. And probably it was known well in the other provinces mentioned in 1:2.

Extensive literature on this issue exists:

Oscar Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," JBL 74 (1955) 213–26, reprinted in *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (ed. Krister Stendahl; New York: Harper, 1957) 18–32. He argues that converted members of the Qumran community were among the Hellenists.

Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes: Eine Untersuchung zum Kirchenbewusstsein des Urchristentums* (Skrifter utgitt av det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, 2 hist.-filos. Klasse 1941:2; Oslo; Dybwad, 1941; reprinted Darmstadt; Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963) 193–98.

Werner Georg Kümmel, "Das Urchristentum," ThR n.s. 14 (1942) 91.

Werner Georg Kümmel, "Das Urchristentum: III: Die Geschichte der Urkirche," ThR n.s. 17 (1948–49) 23–26.

Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Richmond: John Knox, 1959) 218–28. He has a completely different conception.

C. F. D. Moule, "Once More, Who Were the Hellenists?" ExpTim 70 (1958–59) 100–102.

Albrecht Oepke, *Das Neue Gottesvolk in Schrifttum, Schauspiel, bildender Kunst und Weltgestaltung* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1950) 188–90. Simon, St Stephen

Ceslas Spicq, "L'Épître aux Hébreux, Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumran," RevQ 1 (1958–59) 365–90.

Hans Windisch, "Ἑλλην," TDNT 2 (1964) 511–12.

[from Hans Conzelmann, Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).]

of meaning to include such. Much less likely is that actions against the believers in this letter were motivated and driven by governmental authorities. While within the range of possibility, Peter's depiction of the suffering of his initial readers clearly does not point this direction.

One must be cautious about the way Peter links up the suffering of his readers to the example of Christ both in 2:21-25 and in 3:18-22. Both for Christian slaves with abusive masters (2:21-25) and for believers in general (3:18-22), Peter finds in Christ an ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ, *an example that you should follow in His steps* (2:21). Jesus as a role model is not meant to suggest that believers were dying for their faith; rather it strongly urges that they *be willing* to die, if called upon,<sup>47</sup> as was Jesus. Christ becomes the inspiring example for believers to follow in large measure because Peter sees good emerging from the suffering of believers just as it did from Christ.

All this leads to one clear conclusion. The older interpretive view that the suffering described in First Peter was the massacring of believers by the Roman government authorities -- either under Nero in the mid 60s or much later under Domitian or one of the later second century Roman emperors -- is completely unfounded by the text of First Peter. To draw such conclusions of systematic government persecution from the text that we have surveyed above represents a hidden agenda by the interpreter who superficially attaches false meaning to the language of Peter in order to make his preconceived conclusions sound plausible. Historically in the last two centuries this 'hidden' agenda revolved around contending that this document was a second century product that Peter had nothing to do with, or, in rebuttal the agenda was to defend Petrine authorship of First Peter at all costs based on an unwise acceptance of the systematic persecution scenario. This is *eisegesis* of scripture texts in a deplorable manner!

**3. What spiritual insights about facing persecution does Peter offer?** Two basic perspectives need consideration in answer to this question. What was God's view of their suffering? And, what did Peter encourage them to do so they would be prepared to face suffering?

**What was God's view of their suffering?** At the beginning of the letter in 1:6, Peter portrays suffering as possible within the framework of God's will: εἰ δέον [ἐστὶν] λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, *if it is necessary for you to suffer in different kinds of trials*.<sup>48</sup> This lays the foundation for some statements later on in the letter.

<sup>47</sup>This idea is presented clearly as an unexpected possibility in 1:6, ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον [ἐστὶν] λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς. The fourth class conditional clause εἰ δέον presents the experience only as a remote possibility and one that would come from God. Similarity in 2:19 εἰ διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσχω ἀδίκως, *if because of conscience one experiences grief by suffering unjustly*, presents this as likely possibility but not inevitably. The same stance is adopted with εἰ ἀγαθοποιούντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, *if while doing good and suffering you endure...*, in 2:20. The concessive clause εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, *even if you might suffer because of righteousness*, in 3:14 sets up a remote possibility of suffering. The ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε, *while you are being slandered*, in 3:17 does assume this is taking place. The εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, *if God's will might desire*, in 3:17 also sees this as remote possibility rather than inevitability.

This language of 'possibility of suffering' clearly excludes any conclusion of a massive universal persecution of a systematic nature being in place at the time of the writing of First Peter.

<sup>48</sup>δεῖ inf. (τὸ) δεῖν Lk 18:1, Ac 25:24; AcPICor 1:9, subj. δέη, impf. ἔδει (B-D-F §358, 1; Rob. 885f), fut. δεήσει Josh 18:4; impers. verb from δέω; for Attic ins forms s. Thraette II 634f (Hom.+). Strict classification of usage is not possible because of the multifunctional adaptability of this verb, esp. in colloquial discourse.

**1. to be under necessity of happening, it is necessary, one must, one has to**, denoting compulsion of any kind.

*a. of that which takes place because of circumstances or inner necessity, with the context determining the cause* (Hdt. [8, 53 ἔδεε κατὰ τὸ θεοπρόπιον]; Appian, Liby. 122 §578 ἀλῶναι ἔδει Καρχηδόνα=it was necessary that Carthage be captured, i.e. it could not escape being captured [Appian's theological perspective surfaces, s. e.g. 7, 53; 8, 51; 57; 61; 62; 92]; Da 2:28f, 45 Theod; Wsd 16:4; Just., D. 6, 2; 32, 4) Mt 17:10; 24:6 (δεῖ γενέσθαι as Jos., Ant. 10, 142); 26:54; Mk 9:11; 13:7, 10; Lk 4:43; 21:9; 24:46 v.l.; J 3:14, 30; 9:4; 10:16; 20:9; Ac 1:16; 3:21; 4:12; Ro 1:27; 1 Cor 15:53; 2 Cor 5:10; Rv 1:1; 4:1; 22:6; 2 Cl 2:5.

*b. of the compulsion of law or custom* ἧ ἔδει θύεσθαι τὸ πάσχα when the paschal lamb had to be sacrificed Lk 22:7.—Mt 23:23; Lk 11:42; 13:14; J 4:20, 24; Ac 15:5; 18:21 v.l. Of the compulsion of Roman law 25:10.

*c. of an inner necessity growing out of a given situation*, Mt 26:35 (Jos., Ant. 6, 108 κὰν ἀποθανεῖν δέη; PFay 109, 5 ἐάν σε δῆ [=δέη] τὸ εἰμάτιόν σου θεῖναι ἐνέχυρον; Ath. 24, 1 τί δὲ δεῖ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ... μνημονεῖν;), Mk 14:31; J 4:4; Ac 14:22; 21:22 v.l.; 27:21; 2 Cor 11:30.—ὥστε ... [τὴν Ἀρτεμύλλαν] μικροῦ δεῖν ἀπόπληκτον γενέσθαι so that Artemilla was on the point of fainting AcPI Ha 3, 33–35 (Demosth. 27, 29; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 119 al.).

*d. of compulsion caused by the necessity of attaining a certain result* Lk 12:12; 19:5; Ac 9:6; 1 Cor 11:19; 2 Cl 1:1; B 4:1; IEph 7:1.—τὰ δέοντα (PPetr II, 11 [1], 6; BGU 251, 5 al.; pap; Pr 30:8; 2 Macc 13:20) the needs Hs 2, 5 and 8.

**2. to be someth. that should happen because of being fitting**,

The pronouncing of a beatitude of blessing on sufferers in 3:14 εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, *μακάριοι*, even if you might suffer because of righteousness, you are blessed, affirms a divine acceptance of such suffering. Additionally, the second beatitude in 4:14 makes the same basic point with greater detail: εἰ ὀνειδίξεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, *μακάριοι*, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται, 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. Suffering for doing good can be God’s will: εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, in 3:17. Similarly in 4:19, suffering within God’s will prompts one to entrust himself to a faithful Creator: καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ.

What Peter understood about suffering is that, when it occurs because of religious opposition, God looks upon it favorably. Central to this divine approval is the experience and example of Christ’s suffering. This occupies a substantial role in Peter’s discussion, first in regard to Christian slaves (2:21-25) and then generally in 3:18-22. Christ’s suffering had the distinctive objective of redemption for sinful humanity (3:18; 2:21-25). But in the exemplary aspect, this suffering becomes a divinely approved role model for believers because, just as God produced good from the evil inflicted upon Christ, He can do something similar when believers suffer unjustly: τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῶ. εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, *this is praiseworthy before God, for unto this you were called* (2:20c-21a). In the language of 3:22, ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ [τοῦ] θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων, Jesus’ exaltation in Heaven affirms the potential good that God can work out of the suffering of His people.

It would be contrary to Peter’s view to claim that God causes unjust suffering on His people. This clearly comes from the Devil (5:8-9) and from evil people (3:14-15). But God will stand with His people during their time of suffering (3:12; 4:14, 19; 5:7) and will openly reward suffering believers in final judgement (1:7, 9; 3:9; 5:6, 10). Even after the experience of suffering God is committed to restoring us from any harm that suffering may have inflicted on us (5:10). For the initial readers who were considered as inferior people by their pagan neighbors afflicting suffering on them, these affirmations underscore their value to God as His own special people (2:1-10) despite the rejection of friends and neighbors.

**How were the believers to prepare themselves for suffering?** Preparation to face suffering has several aspects in Peter’s teachings. These focus inwardly; spiritually on God, outwardly toward both fellow believers and to non-Christian neighbors. It takes all of these angles being strengthened before the believer is fully ready to endure opposition because of his/her religious commitment.

**Inwardly**, believers are to do several things: σωφρονήσατε καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς, *be sober and awake for prayers* (4:7); μὴ ξενίζεσθε, *not be shocked by suffering* (4:12); χαίρετε, *rejoice* (4:13; 1:6-7); μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε, *don’t be afraid or intimidated* (3:14); μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, *don’t be embarrassed* (4:16). These admonitions call for an inner strengthening of oneself mentally, volitionally, and emotionally in order to face the pressure

a. gener. (Epict. 2, 22, 20 φίλος ἔσομαι οἷος δεῖ; 3, 23, 21 ὡς δεῖ, as Just., D. 114, 1; 2 Macc 6:20; 4 Macc 7:8) **2 Ti 2:6, 24**. καθὸ δεῖ *as is proper* **Ro 8:26**.—δέον ἐστὶν *it is necessary, one must* (Polyb.; POxy 727, 19f; 1061, 13; BGU 981 II, 6; Sir. Prol. In. 3; 1 Macc 12:11; EpArist) **Ac 19:36**; 1 Cl 34:2; without ἐστὶν (POxy 899, 40; EpArist 227; 242; Philo, Aet. M. 107; Jos., Bell. 2, 296; Just., A I, 4, 6; A II, 2, 7; D. 11, 2) ITr 2:3; Pol 5:3. εἰ δέον ἐστὶν *if it must be* **1 Pt 1:6** (s. εἰμί 11d); οὐ δέον v.l. for οὐδέν Papias (4).—On the constr. of δεῖ, note that as a rule the acc. and inf. follow it (Jos., C. Ap. 2, 254; Lucian, Charon 13, Pisc. 17; Just., D. 11, 2 al.; B-D-F §408), occasionally the inf. alone **Mt 23:23** (Jos., C. Ap. 1, 53a; Just., A I, 4, 6 al.—B-D-F §407); **26:54; Ac 5:29**.—To convey the idea that someth. should not happen, δεῖ is used w. the negative οὐ **Lk 13:16; 2 Tim 2:24; 2 Cl 1:1; AcPCor 1:10** or μή. **Tit 1:11** (ἃ μὴ δεῖ what is not proper [also Ael. Aristid. 54 p. 687 D.] is prob. a mixture of τὰ μὴ δέοντα **1 Ti 5:13** and ἃ οὐ δεῖ [Job 19:4]; s. B-D-F §428, 4; Rob. 1169); **Ac 15:24**. εἰ δὲ δεῖ ἡμᾶς ... μὴ ποιῆσθαι τὴν παραβολὴν AcPCor 2:28.

b. of that which one should do (Wsd 12:19; 16:28; EpJer 5; Tob 12:1): **one ought or should** οὐκ ἔδει σε ἐλεῆσαι; *should you not have had mercy?* **Mt 18:33**.—**Lk 2:49; 15:32; 18:1; Ac 5:29; 1 Th 4:1; Tit 1:11; 1 Cl 62:2**.—In τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν; *what shall I do?* **Ac 16:30**, δ. stands for the deliberative subj. (B-D-F §366, 4).

c. to indicate that something that happened should by all means have happened, expressed w. the impf. ἔδει (Jos., Bell. 4, 232; Just., D. 88, 6; 141, 1 al.) *had to* **Lk 15:32; 22:7; 24:26; J 4:4; Ac 1:16; 17:3**.

d. to indicate that someth. that did not take place really should have happened, also expressed w. the impf. ἔδει *should have, ought to have* **Mt 18:33; 23:23; Ac 24:19** (Ath. 21, 1; ὄν ἔδει w. inf. TestJos 14:3; οὐς ἔδει w. inf.: Isocr. 3, 40, 35a; Lysias 14, 29; Lucian, Philops. 21); **27:21; 2 Cor 2:3**. Cp. B-D-F. §358.—EFascher, Theol. Beobachtungen zu δεῖ im AT: ZNW 45, ’54, 244–52, Theol. Beobachtungen zu δεῖ: RBultmann Festschr., ’54, 228–54; CCosgrove, NovT 26, ’84, 168–90 (Luke-Acts).—JKube, TEXNH und APETH ’69, 46. Cp. γρή. B. 640f. Schmidt, Syn. III 702–5. DELG s.v. δέω 2. EDNT. 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), 213-14.]

of suffering unjustly.

**Spiritually**, believers are first to focus on commitment to God and Christ. This is expressed in a variety of ways: κύριον τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, *sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts* (3:15); καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, *you also arm yourselves with the same mind-set of Christ* (4:1); θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον, *live out the remainder of your lives by God's will* (4:2); δοξαζέτω τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ, *praise God because of this name* (4:16); πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ, *entrust your lives to a faithful Creator while doing good* (4:19); ταπεινώθητε ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ, *become humble under the mighty hand of God* (5:6); πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ' αὐτόν, *cast all your anxieties on Him* (5:7); στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει, *be steadfast in your faith commitment* (5:9). Unless our spiritual commitment to Christ becomes the stack pole around which our entire life revolves, we will not be ready to face unjust suffering.

Closely linked to this is resisting the devil: ὃ ἀντίστητε, *resist him* (5:9). This comes out of understanding who he is as ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν, *your adversary*, διάβολος, *Devil*, λέων ὠρυόμενος, *roaring lion* (5:8). His supernatural power cannot be resisted except by God's superior power.

**Outwardly to the world**, believers are to ἔτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος, *be ready always to give an answer to everyone demanding a reason from you for the hope that you have* (3:15); εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις, *not live out your lives by human passions as the pagans do* (4:2-3); μὴ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος, *don't suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or as a criminal, nor especially as a mischief maker* (4:15).

Earlier Peter had set forth a generalized principle: τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσιν τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς, *Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge* (2:12). This becomes something of a general foundational concept providing a basis for the other admonitions listed above in relationships with non-Christians.

**Outwardly to the believing community**, believers have particular responsibilities to their own spiritual family as a part of preparing to face suffering. They must πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, *above all show love eagerly to one another* (4:8). Out of this comes φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀνευ γογγυσμοῦ, *being hospitable to one another without complaining* (4:9) and εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ, *serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God* (4:10-11). Leaders in the community must minister as good examples (5:1-4), and young men must respect the leaders (5:5a). Everyone must be humble in your dealings with others in the community: πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε (5:5b).

The heart of outward relationships with others, both inside and outside the community of faith, is captured in the oft repeated phrase of doing good: πάντες ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε (2:12); ἀγαθοποιοῦντες (2:20); διὰ δικαιοσύνην (3:14); τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφὴν (3:16); ἀγαθοποιοῦντας (3:17); ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ (4:19). What Peter defines here is not 'doing good' apart from a relationship with Christ. Rather it is through a noble lifestyle in Christ (τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφὴν, 3:16) that we do good things for other people.

Wow! He has communicated a lot to his readers about facing suffering in 3:13-5:11. And we have a lot yet to learn about this profound insight. What a different person we are encountering in Peter toward the end of his life in this letter. The young Peter walking the countryside of Galilee with Jesus had not yet learned these lessons. But nearly three decades of service to Christ and a deepening spiritual union with the Lord open a level of understanding to Peter that continues to profit and inspire believers two thousand years later.

My prayer for you and for myself is that our walk with the Lord can open up to us these kinds of deeper spiritual understandings about life and especially about facing hostility to our Christian faith.



The First Letter of Peter  
**Bible Study Session 22**  
**1 Peter 5:12-14**  
**“Saying Goodbye”**



*Study By*  
*Lorin L Cranford*

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**Greek NT**

12 Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε. 13 ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ καὶ Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου. 14 ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης. εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

**Gute Nachricht Bibel**

12 Ich habe euch diesen kurzen Brief mit Hilfe von Silvanus geschrieben, den ich als treuen Bruder schätze. Ich wollte euch ermutigen und euch bezeugen, dass ihr gerade in eurem Leiden die wahre Gnade Gottes erlebt. Bleibt fest in dieser Gnade!

13 Eure Schwestergemeinde hier in Babylon, die so wie ihr von Gott erwählt wurde, grüßt euch; ebenso mein Sohn Markus. 14 Grüßt einander mit dem heiligen Kuss, dem Zeichen eurer Verbundenheit als Brüder und Schwestern!

Frieden sei mit euch allen, die ihr mit Christus verbunden seid!

**NRSV**

12 Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. 13 Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

**NLT**

2 I have written this short letter to you with the help of Silas, whom I consider a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that the grace of God is with you no matter what happens. 13 Your sister church here in Rome sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet each other in Christian love. Peace be to all of you who are in Christ.

**Quick Links to the Study**

- I. [Context](#)
  - a. [Historical](#)
  - b. [Literary](#)
- II. [Message](#)
  - a. [Sender Verification, v. 12](#)
  - b. [Greetings, vv. 13-14a](#)
  - c. [Benedictio, v. 14b](#)
  - d. [Review of the Contents of the Letter](#)

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**Introduction to Study.**

How do you say, “Goodbye”? Au revoir? Auf Wiedersehen? Adíós? Αντίο? להתראות In the ancient world saying goodbye in letters was more involved. The epistolary *Conclusio* in ancient letters could be a few words or a few paragraphs! It all depended on the sender of the letter. In comparison of this section to the letters in the New Testament, Peter says his farewells fairly quickly.<sup>1</sup> But what he says gives us important insight not only into the writing of ancient letters but other information as well.

At the end of the exegesis section, we will do a brief survey of the letter contents so that we can carry away from our study of First Peter a more complete picture of the materials found in this writing of the New Testament.

**I. Context and Background<sup>2</sup>**

Historical and literary setting issues here play a particularly important role in the understanding not just of this

<sup>1</sup>Compare Gal. 6:11-18; 1 Thess. 5:23-28; 2 Thess. 3:16-18; 1 Cor. 16:19-24; 2 Cor. 13:11-13; Rom. 16:1-27; Philm. 23-25; Col. 4:10-18; Eph. 6:23-24; Phil. 4:21-23; 1 Tim. 6:21b; 2 Tim. 4:19-22; Tit. 3:15 .

<sup>2</sup>Serious 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.

passage, but of the entire letter. Thus we should take a close look at them as a part of our study.

### a. Historical

**External History.** Over the centuries of copying this text, some variations in wording surface. The UBS 4th revised edition of the *Greek New Testament* lists three places with variations significant enough to impact Bible translation. But the Nestle-Aland 27th revised edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece* list seven places with differences in wording.

First, let's look at the UBS variation in readings. In verse 13, the reference to Babylon varies from ἐν Βαβυλῶνι to Βαβυλῶνι ἐκκλησία or to Ῥώμη.<sup>3</sup> Most of the manuscripts simply read ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτῆ, *the in Babylon sister church*. Some manuscripts (κ it<sup>ar,z</sup> vg<sup>cl,ww</sup> syr<sup>p</sup> arm eth<sup>pp</sup>) change this to ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἐκκλησία, *the in Babylon church*. One copyist (2138) adopted the common interpretation of Babylon to refer actually to Rome and so replaced Βαβυλῶνι with Ῥώμη. But the overwhelming weight of evidence favors the text reading of ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτῆ, *the in Babylon sister church*.<sup>4</sup>

In verse 14, the ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης, *with a kiss of love*, is changed to read ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ, *with a holy kiss*, or to read ἐν φιλήματι καὶ ἀγάπης, *with a holy kiss and of love*.<sup>5</sup> Again the clear weight of evidence favors the text reading of ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης, *with a kiss of love*.<sup>6</sup>

In verse 14, τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, *those in Christ*, is modified (1) to read τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ. ἀμήν, *those in Christ. Amen*, or (2) τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, *those in Christ Jesus*, or (3) Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀμήν, *those in Christ Jesus. Amen*.<sup>7</sup> The uncertainty revolved around whether to not to add Ἰησοῦ and ἀμήν. The shorter reading of τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ is preferred primarily because of scribal tendencies to lengthen the sacred name rather than shorten it.<sup>8</sup>

The additional variations that are listed in the N-A 27th edition Greek text are mainly stylistic variations that do not change the meaning of the text and are supported mostly by late manuscripts.<sup>9</sup> Again, we observe what has consistency been true in every instance of variation in the wording of the text of First Peter that the essential meaning remains the same. The changes in the wording almost always are attempts by copyists to

<sup>3</sup>13 {A} Βαβυλῶνι P<sup>72</sup> A B Ψ 81 322 323 436 945 1067 1175 1241 1243 1292 1409 1505 1611 1735 1739 1852 1881 2298 2344 2464 Byz [K L P] Lect it<sup>h,q</sup> vg<sup>st</sup> syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>sa,bo</sup> geo slav Origen<sup>acc. to Eusebius</sup> Eusebius // Βαβυλῶνι ἐκκλησία κ it<sup>ar,z</sup> vg<sup>cl,ww</sup> syr<sup>p</sup> arm eth<sup>pp</sup> // Ῥώμη 2138.

<sup>4</sup>“Instead of Βαβυλῶνι, a few minuscule manuscripts read Ῥώμη (Rome). The variant reading is probably correct in understanding the name Βαβυλῶνι to be a code name for ‘Rome’; and this information may be stated in a note which explains that, as in Rev 17:5, this name probably refers to Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. TEV, for example, has a footnote which states, ‘As in the book of Revelation, this probably refers to Rome.’ GECL similarly has a note, which reads, ‘Probably a code-word for Rome (see Rev 17).’” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 492.]

<sup>5</sup>{A} ἀγάπης P<sup>72</sup> κ A B Ψ 81 322 323 945 1175 1241 1243 1292 1505 1611 1739 1852 1881 2138 2298 2344 Byz [K L P] Lect it<sup>h,q</sup> syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>sa,bo</sup> eth slav geo Cyril-Jerusalem<sup>dub</sup>; Cassiodorus // ἀγίῳ 436 1067 1409 1735 2464 1 593 1 1298 1 1365 it<sup>ar,z</sup> vg syr<sup>p</sup> (arm) // ἀγίῳ καὶ ἀγάπης l 422 (cop<sup>bomss</sup>).

<sup>6</sup>“Instead of ἀγάπης, the copyists of several minuscule manuscripts wrote ἀγίῳ (holy), thus imitating the familiar Pauline expression φιλημα ἅγιον (holy kiss; [Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26]). Lectionary 422 combines both expressions, φιλήματι ἀγίῳ καὶ ἀγάπης. In order. In order to make clear that this kiss is not an erotic kiss, TEV says, ‘Greet one another with the kiss of Christian love.’” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 493.]

<sup>7</sup>{A} Χριστῷ. A B Ψ 2344 it<sup>ar,z</sup> vg<sup>st</sup> cop<sup>sams, bomss</sup> // Χριστῷ. ἀμήν. 2464 1 895 1 1365 1 1441 vg<sup>ww</sup> syr<sup>p</sup> eth // Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 81 322 323 945 1175 1241 1243 1739\* 1881 2298 cop<sup>sams, bomss</sup> geo // Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀμήν κ 436 1067 1292 1409 1505 1611 1735 1739<sup>c</sup> 1852 2138 Byz [K L P] Lect it<sup>h</sup> vg<sup>cl</sup> syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>bomss</sup> arm slav.

<sup>8</sup>“5:14 Χριστῷ (in Christ) {A}

“The Textus Receptus, along with several Greek and versional witnesses, adds Ἰησοῦ (Jesus), and manuscript 629 substitutes κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ (Lord Jesus). In view of the tendency of copyists to expand the sacred name, the shorter reading, supported by representatives of several text-types, is most likely original.

“5:14 omit ἀμήν. (amen.) {A}

“Although most witnesses, as might be expected, conclude the epistle with ἀμήν (amen), the copyists of some manuscripts resisted what must have been a strong liturgical temptation to add the word.”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament : An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 493.]

<sup>9</sup>Note the following listing in the N-A, 27th rev. text apparatus:

make the text read clearer to his readership by updating the language, and / or by making the text conform to dominant patterns of similar expressions found either elsewhere in First Peter or in the New Testament.

**Internal History.** The time and place markers in this passage are minimal, and they relate to exegetical issues as much or more than they do to historical background matters. Thus, these will be treated below in the exegesis section of the study.

**b. Literary**

**Literary Form (Genre).** The broad genre issue here is that of the letter *Conclusio* that covers all three verses in the letter.<sup>10</sup> Inside the New Testament reference is made to different letters,<sup>11</sup> and short excerpts of

<p><b>1. Petrus 5,12</b>          * δια βραχεων P<sup>72</sup>          * P72 Ψ 0206<sup>vid</sup> 33. 81. 323. 945.          1241. 1739 <i>al</i>          * εστηκατε P M h r vg<sup>cl</sup>            εστε 1505 pc sy<sup>h</sup>            αιτειτε Ψ            txt P<sup>72</sup> &amp; A B 33. 81. 323. 945. 1241.          1739 <i>al</i> vg<sup>st,ww</sup></p>	<p><b>1. Petrus 5,13</b>          * Ρωμη 2138 pc          * εκκλησια &amp; ρ<sup>c</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup> sy<sup>p</sup></p>	<p><b>1. Petrus 5,14</b>          * αγιω 623. 2464 <i>al</i> vg sy<sup>p</sup>          * P72          * Ιησου &amp; P 1739 m h vg<sup>cl</sup> sy<sup>h</sup> sa<sup>mss</sup> bo            txt A B Ψ 33<sup>vid</sup> pc vg<sup>st,ww</sup> sy<sup>p</sup> sa<sup>ms</sup>          bo<sup>mss</sup>          * αμην &amp; P 1739<sup>c</sup> m h vg<sup>cl,ww</sup> sy bo<sup>mss</sup>            txt A B Ψ 81. 323. 945. 1241. 1739*          pc vg<sup>st</sup> co</p>
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[Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 608.]

<sup>10c</sup>The normal Greek letter simply ended with a short closing word, perhaps preceded by such items as (1) an oath, (2) a health wish, (3) a purpose statement, and (4) a mention of who was carrying the letter,<sup>1</sup> but the NT writers (especially Paul, although that may only appear to be the case because we have so many of his letters and relatively few of those of other writers) have expanded this into a relatively lengthy conclusion. It was normal for these church letters to include (1) greetings (rare in Greek letters, but more common in oriental ones and valued in the church as a means of strengthening interchurch unity: 2 Cor. 13:12; Phil. 4:22; 2 John 13), (2) some comment about the messenger (Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 8:17; Eph. 6:21; Phil. 2:25; Col. 4:7–8; Philem. 11–12), (3) a statement as to the purpose of the letter (Gal. 6:11–17; 1 Tim. 6:20–21; Philem. 21–22; Heb. 13:22; Jas. 5:19–20; 1 John 5:21), and (4) a blessing or prayer as the concluding line (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; Col. 4:18; Heb. 13:25). It was also normal for the author to take the pen from the scribe at this point and write the conclusion (although not necessarily the greetings if they were extended) in his own hand, as likely happens here (Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17). However, despite structural parallels our letter shows no literary dependence on Pauline formulas (as the differences will show), but rather a general similarity to Paul’s letters as well as to other NT letters.” [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), 197.]

<sup>11c</sup>**ἐπιστολή, ἡς, ἡ** (s. ἐπιστέλλω) **letter, epistle** (so Eur., Thu.+; loanw. in rabb.) **2 Cor 7:8; 2 Th 3:17; 1 Cl 47:1; 63:2; IEph 12:2; ISm 11:3; Pol 13:2b.** δι’ ἐπιστολῆς (Diod S 19, 48, 1; Polyaeus 7, 39; 53rd letter of Apollonius of Tyana [Philostrat. I 358, 9]; Ps.-Demetr., Form. Ep. p. 5, 10; BGU 884, 6; 1046 II, 5) **by a letter 2 Th 2:2** (Vi. Aesopi W 104 P. ἐ. ὡς ἐκ τοῦ Αἰσώπου; Polyaeus 8, 50 of two dead persons ὡς ἐτι ζώντων ἐπιστολή), vs. 15, cp. 3:14. γράφειν ἐπιστολήν (Diod S 17, 39, 2; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 207) Ac 15:23 D; 23:25 (on the specific type of administrative communication s. Taubenschlag, OpMin II 722, w. ref. to PTeht 45, 27); Ro 16:22; ἐν τῇ ἐ. **1 Cor 5:9** (ἐν τῇ ἐ.=‘in the letter known to you’ [s. ὁ 2a] as ChronLind B 14 ἐν τῷ ἐπιστολῷ; Hyperid. 3, 25 ἐν τ. ἐπιστολαῖς; Pla., Ep. 7, 345c ἡ ἐ.=the letter [known to you]). ταύτην δευτέραν ὑμῖν γράφω ἐ. **2 Pt 3:1** (cp. BGU 827, 20 ἰδοῦ τρίτην ἐπιστολήν σοι γράφω. PMich 209, 5 δευτέραν ἐπιστολήν ἔπεμψά σοι). ἀπό τῆς Ἰωάννου προτέρας ἐ. Papias (2:17); αἱ δύο ἐπιστολαὶ αἱ μικραὶ Papias (11:1); ἀναδιδόναι τὴν ἐπιστολήν τινι *deliver the letter to someone* **Ac 23:33**. Also ἐπιδιδόναι **15:30**. διαπέμπεσθαι send MPol 20:1. διακονεῖν *care for* **2 Cor 3:3**. ἀναγινώσκειν (X., An. 1, 6, 4; 1 Macc 10:7; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 37) **3:2; Col 4:16; 1 Th 5:27**. In all probability the plur. in our lit.—even **Ac 9:2; Pol 3:2**—always means more than one letter, not a single one (as Eur., Iph. A. 111; 314; Thu. 1, 132, 5; 4, 50, 2, also M. Iulius Brutus, Ep. 1, 1 [fr. Mithridates]; 1 Macc 10:3, 7; Jos., Ant. 10, 15; 16): δι’ ἐπιστολῶν **with letters 1 Cor 16:3**. τῷ λόγῳ δι’ ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες (do someth.) *through word by means of letters, when we are absent* **2 Cor 10:11** (cp. UPZ 69, 3 [152 B.C.] ἀπόντος μου ... διὰ τοῦ ἐπιστολίου); vs. **9**; ἐ. βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραὶ *the letters are weighty and powerful* vs. **10**. ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ἐ. **2 Pt 3:16**. ἐ. συστατικαὶ letters of recommendation **2 Cor 3:1** (s. on συστατικός). ἐπιστολὰς πέμπειν (Ps.-Demosth. 11, 17; Diod S 17, 23, 6 ἔπεμψεν ἐπιστολὰς=letters; OGI 42, 6; 2 Macc 11:34) IPol 8:1; cp. Pol 13:2a. ἐπιστολή πρὸς τινα *a letter to someone* (2 Esdr 12:7; 2 Macc 11:27; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 111) Ac 9:2; 22:5 (letters empowering someone to arrest people and deliver them to the authorities in the capital city, as PTeht 315, 29ff [II A.D.]); **2 Cor 3:1** (πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐξ ὑμῶν).—Later epistolary subscriptions to the NT letters, as well as B, 1 Cl, 2 Cl.—GBahr, Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century, CBQ 28, ’66, 465–77; JWhite, Light fr. Ancient Letters ’86, 3–20, 221–24 lit. Lit. on χαιρῶ 2b. B. 1286; RAC II 564–85.—DELG s.v. στέλλω. M-M. EDNT. 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), 381.]

**ἐπιστέλλω** (s. ἐπιστολή, στέλλω) 1 aor. ἐπέστειλα; pf. 2 sg. ἐπέστακλας 3 Km 5:22 cod. A *to send someth. to, inform/instruct*  
**Bible Study: Page 307**

a few letters are embedded in some of the other writings, namely, Acts.<sup>12</sup>

The *Conclusio* of most ancient Greek and Latin letters served an important role in helping seal a bond of friendship between the letter sender and those who received the letter as named recipients. Several items could surface in this section: sender verification, greetings, doxologies, benedictia. The patterns vary from writer to writer and from letter to letter reflecting the fact that no rigidly set pattern was in place. Not all of the letters in the New Testament contain a *conclusio*, although all thirteen of Paul's letters do. Among the non-Pauline letters, Hebrews 13:18-25 contains the lengthiest *conclusio*. Romans 16:1-25 is the longest of all of the *conclusia* found in the New Testament.

The *Conclusio* in First Peter is more developed than in Second Peter which contains only a doxology in 3:18b that compares to the one in Jude 24-25. This unit of the letter does provide insight into letter writing along with reference to some other Christian leaders at that time.

At the small genre level, this text contains three of the many possible elements typically found in letter *conclusia* in the ancient world: a) sender verification (v. 12); greetings (vv. 13-14a); and *benedictio* (v. 14b).

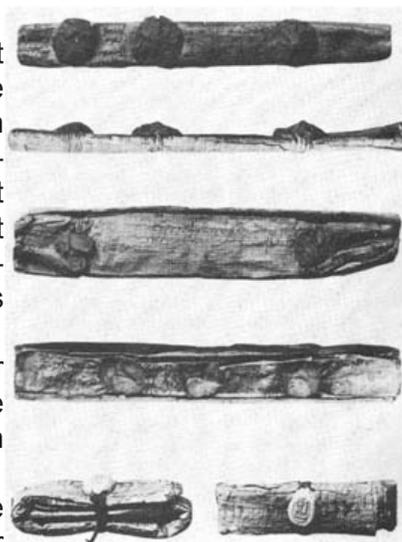
*The Sender Verification.* Because most formal letters, such as those in the New Testament, were not written directly by the designated sender but rather by a scribe who took dictation from the sender, the customary pattern was for the sender to take pen in hand at the *Conclusio* and write out most, if not all of it, in his own handwriting. This hand writing would normally be recognized by the designated readers of the letter and would thus serve as the sender's validation to them that the contents of the letter, even though not in the sender's hand writing, did reflect his ideas and thus should be taken as such by the readers.

In the New Testament we have a reflection of the common tendency in the outside world of that day regarding the composition of formal letters.<sup>13</sup> What we have for certain in 1 Peter 5:12, as reflected in the first

*by letter also simply write* (so Hdt. et al.; SIG 837, 14; pap, LXX) w. dat. of pers. (PFay 133, 12; Jos., Ant. 4, 13; 14, 52) διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν *I have written to you briefly* **Hb 13:22** (cp. Herm. Wr. 14, 1 σοι δι' ὀλίγων ἐ.). ἰκανῶς ἐ. τινὶ περὶ τινος sufficiently to someone about someth. 1 Cl 62:1 (cp. Ps.-Aeschin., Ep. 12, 14; Jos., Ant. 12, 50). περὶ τινος (cp. UPZ 110, 185 [164 B.C.]; Jos., Ant. 18, 300) concerning someone **Ac 21:25**. τινὶ περὶ τινος (BGU 1081, 5) 1 Cl 47:3. W. subst. inf. foll. τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι to abstain **Ac 15:20**. Abs. 1 Cl 7:1.—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), 381.]

<sup>12c</sup>There are four different sources for our knowledge of ancient letters: letters preserved through literary transmission, letters discovered in modern times, letters preserved in inscriptions, and letters embedded in other kinds of literature. Many Greek and Latin letters were preserved and copied because they were valued as literature by certain communities. The Greek letters of Plato, Isocrates, Demosthenes, and Libanius and the Latin letters of Cicero, Pliny, Seneca, and Fronto fit into this category, as do the Christian letters in the NT, of the Apostolic fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Augustine, and Jerome. Letters preserved in this way tend to be more consciously literary than letters from the other categories and are often highly shaped by Greek or Latin rhetoric. Some letters in this category were written and collected with an eye toward publication. They also reflect a higher social level than other sorts of letters." [David Noel Freedman, vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 290-91.]

<sup>13c</sup>The Greek term *grammateus* occurs only once in the NT in its normal sense of 'clerk' or 'secretary' (Acts 19:35), yet here the term designates not a 'secretary,' in the simple sense, but a high civic official whose duties included the drafting of decrees of the citizenry, administering civic funds, and transacting affairs of the city. (The frequent translation 'town clerk' is not quite apposite.) Still, the activity of secretaries is elsewhere intimated in the NT, especially in the letters of Paul. It was apparently Paul's custom to dictate his letters to a secretary. The 'oral style' of the letters is only one indication of this. In Rom 16:22, one Tertius expressly designates himself as the transcriber of the letter. Paul's practice in other letters of adding greetings (1 Cor 16:21, 2 Thess 3:17, Col 4:18), an asseveration (Phlm 19), and a summary statement (Gal 6:11-18) in his own handwriting implies that the letters themselves were written at the hands of amanuenses who transcribed at Paul's dictation. Indeed, 2 Thess 3:17 claims that Paul's appended greeting, written in his own hand, was a 'sign' or 'mark' employed in each of his letters. This practice suggests that these letters were normally in the handwriting of a secretary. A similar use of an amanuensis is also indicated by 1 Pet 5:12. In dictating his letters to a secretary, Paul was following a well-established practice in antiquity. Many papyrus letters preserved from the period were written in the hand of a secretary, with the final greeting or other closing matter written in the hand of the sender. In addition, classical literature often attests the use of a secretary. Cicero, a prolific letter writer, often dictated letters to his secretary, Tiro, and frequently alluded to this practice. Plutarch mentions it for Caesar (Vit. Caes. 17.3), Pliny the Younger mentions it for his uncle (Ep.



Papyri that have been rolled, bound, sealed, and addressed for dispatch (Staatliche Museen, Berlin)

person singular verb ἔγραψα, in verse 12 and probably also in vv. 12-14 is Peter himself writing the final words of the letter, rather than Silas who had written everything to that point.

**Greetings.** The greetings found in the letter *conclusio* differ from the *salutatio* greeting in the opening *praescriptio* of the letter, although their literary function is similar: to strengthen bonds of friendship between the letter sender(s) and the letter recipients. In the *conclusio*, greetings flow two directions: a) from the sender to the letter recipients, either inclusively or to named individuals among the designated recipients; b) from friends of the letter sender present with him at the time of the writing of the letter to the letter recipients, either inclusively or to named individuals among the designated recipients. Usually, these friends are known by the targeted recipients, or else by individuals among the targeted recipients.

The manner of greeting was both orally spoken greetings<sup>14</sup> and the kiss (φίλημα) on the cheek.<sup>15</sup> Shaking hands in the ancient world had another meaning, that of formalizing an agreement; see Gal. 2:9 for a NT example.<sup>16</sup>

The importance of sending and receiving greetings is underscored by the exceedingly long list of greetings in Romans 16:3-16, 21-23. This custom arose out of the important role of friendship in the ancient world,<sup>17</sup> despite the single NT use of ἡ φιλία for 'friendship' in James 4:4.<sup>18</sup> The concept of friendship did not

3.5, 9.36), and Quintilian objects to its widespread use (Inst. 10,3,19) (Bahr, 1966, concisely surveys the evidence).” [David Noel Freedman, vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 172.]

<sup>14</sup>Cf. 2 John 10-11 for an example of an oral greeting:

10 Do not receive into the house or **welcome anyone** who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; 11 for **to welcome** is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person.

10 εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδασχὴν οὐ φέρει, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ **χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε**: 11 **ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ χαίρειν** κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.

<sup>15</sup>**φίλημα, ατος, τό** (Aeschyl.+; Pr 27:6; SSol 1:2; Philo, Div. Rer. Her. 40; Jos., Bell. 7, 391; Just., A I, 65, 2; Ath. 32, 3) *a kiss* (φιλέω 2) **Lk 22:48** (a basic betrayal of canons of friendship, cp. Aristot. EN 8; JDöller, Der Judaskuss: Korrespondenzblatt f. d. kath. Klerus Österreichs 1918; 127–29). φίλημά τι διδόναι *give someone a kiss* (Nicophon Com. [V/IV B.C.] 8) *Lk 7:45*. The kiss w. which Christians give expression to their intimate fellowship (Ath. 32, 3 τὸ φ., μάλλον δὲ τὸ προσκύνημα ‘the kiss, or rather the formal greeting’; here the qualification τὸ π. aims at thwarting charges of indecency) *is called* φίλημα ἅγιον: ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ *greet one another w. a kiss of esteem* **Ro 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; cp. 1 Th 5:26**. Also ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης *greet one another w. an affectionate kiss* **1 Pt 5:14** (Just., A I, 65, 2 [without ἐν]).—H AChelis, Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten I 1912, 292f; Windisch on 2 Cor 13:12; RSeeberg, Aus Rel. u. Gesch. I 1906, 118–22; AWünsche, Der Kuss in Bibel, Talmud u. Midrasch 1911; K-MHofmann, Philema Hagion ’38; WLowrie, The Kiss of Peace, Theology Today 12, ’55, 236–42; KThraede, JAC 11f, ’68/69, 124–80; JEllington, Kissing in the Bible, Form and Meaning: BT 41, ’90, 409–16; WKlassen, NTS 39, ’93, 122–35.—B. 1114. DELG s.v. φίλος. 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), 1057.]

<sup>16</sup>NRSV: **and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship**, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, **δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας**, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν·

<sup>17</sup>Friendship was a regular ancient topic of discourse (e.g., Epictetus Disc. 2.22), the leading subject of numerous essays, for instance, by Aristotle (Eth. Eud. 7.1234b-1246a; Eth. Nic. 8–9); Plutarch (Many Friends, Mor. 93A-97B); Dio Chrysostom (Third Discourse on Kingship 99–100); Cicero (De Amic.); Seneca (Ep. Lucil. 3, “On True and False Friendships”; 9, “On Philosophy and Friendship”; see further Sevenster, 172–77); and Theophrastus (according to Aulus Gellius Noc. Att. 1.3.10–11). Scholars have produced detailed studies of friendship in Philo, who develops some Stoic ideals (see Sterling); on Aristotle (Schroeder, 35–45) and his followers, the Peripatetics (Schroeder, 45–56; for other sources, see especially Fitzgerald 1997b, 7–10). Even before Aristotle, many ideals of friendship circulated that later became pervasive in the Roman world (see Fitzgerald 1997a). There were a variety of perspectives on and kinds of friendship, not only in the philosophers but also throughout Greco-Roman and Jewish society. Friendship could signify a relationship of dependence or of equality, of impersonal alliances or of personal bonds of affection.” [Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>18</sup>“In one of its most common uses in ancient literature, ‘friendship’ could apply to alliances, cooperation or nonaggression treaties among peoples. Epics could use such language for alliances (Homer Il. 3.93, 256; 4.17; 16.282; Virgil Aen. 11.321), as might orators (Demosthenes On the Navy Boards 5; On the Embassy 62; Letters 3.27; cf. Rhet. Ad Herenn. 3.3.4). It also appears in geographers (Strabo Geog. 8.5.5) and apologists (Josephus Ag. Ap. 1.109; 2.83b). Naturally, this language predominates in biographers and historians. We can attest it abundantly in biographers such as Arrian (Alex. 1.28.1; 4.15.2, 5; 4.21.8; 7.15.4);

imply a leveling of social roles to equality; rather, it tended to be viewed a mutual need between individuals or groups.<sup>19</sup> Although the terminology of friendship is not extensively used in the New Testament, the concept clearly was important among the writers of the New Testament.<sup>20</sup> But with both the teaching and example of

Plutarch (Comp. Lyc. Num. 4.6; Pel. 5.1; 29.4; also Epameinondas 17 in Reg. Imp. Apophth., Mor. 193DE); Cornelius Nepos (Vir. Illus. 7.4.7; 7.5.3; 7.7.5; 14.8.5; 23.10.2), and others (Josephus Life 30, 124). It is if anything more abundant in the historians, such as Polybius (e.g., Hist. 14.1); Dionysius of Halicarnassus (e.g., Ant. Rom. 3.28.7; 3.51.1; 5.26.4; 5.50.3); Diodorus Siculus (e.g., Bib. Hist.. 14.30.4; 14.56.2; 17.39.1); Livy (e.g., Hist. 6.2.3; 27.4.6; 43.6.9); and 1 Maccabees (1 Macc 12:1, 3, 8; 14:40).

“Ancient writers frequently apply the designation friendship to personal or familial relationships undertaken for political expediency (e.g., Achilles Tatius Leuc. 4.6.1–3); Plutarch provides abundant examples (e.g., Plutarch Ages. 23.6; Pomp. 70.4; Statecraft 13, Mor. 806F-809B; Philosophers and Men in Power 1, Mor. 776AB; Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs 6, Mor. 787B).” [Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>19c</sup>“Although Roman patronal friendship made at best a vague pretense to equality, this traditional Greek image of friendship, even when related to benefaction, demanded at least the idea of equality. Aristotle cited the earlier proverb, ‘Friendship is equality’ (Aristotle Eth. Eud. 7.9.1, 1241b), and is said to have ‘defined friendship as an equality of reciprocal goodwill’ (Diogenes Laertius Vit. 5.31, as translated in LCL 1:478–79). Of course, what Aristotle meant by ‘equality’ differs considerably from our usage of that concept. Any kind of friendship could exist either between equals or with one as a superior (Aristotle Eth. Eud. 7.3.2, 1238b; 7.10.10, 1242b; Eth. Nic. 8.7.1, 1158b; 8.13.1, 1162ab); Aristotle further defined ‘equality’ more proportionately than quantitatively (Aristotle Eth. Nic. 8.7.2–3, 1158b). In the same way, his teacher Plato stressed both the friendship held by loving equals and that which stemmed from the poor’s need for the rich (Plato Leg. 8, 837AB).” [Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background : A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>20c</sup>“Much of the conventional language of friendship, although not our specific term, recurs in Paul’s letters, possibly presupposed in Paul’s conflict with the Corinthians (see Marshall, especially 132–33; Mitchell, 230–31), in his pathos section in Galatians 4:12–20 (Mitchell, 227–30) and probably important in his letter to the Philippians (Mitchell, 233–36 and the numerous authors he cites).

“Luke-Acts employs a great deal of friendship imagery (see Mitchell, 236–57). The matter of reciprocal obligation may inform some of these texts, for example, in the case of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5–8). The centurion’s friends act as his messengers (Lk 7:6), perhaps performing a favor in return for his benefactions (Lk 7:5) or acting as his clients (cf. Acts 10:7–8). The friends in view in Luke 15:6, 9, 29; 21:16 are one’s equals; in Luke 14:12 they could be social peers but possibly clients (cf. Lk 14:10), as also in Acts 10:24, where relatives are likely dependents, given the social status of a Roman officer in the provinces (see Family and Household). In Luke 16:9 the friends in the context might be clients in some sense, but the emphasis is on networking with allies bound to one by reciprocal obligation (cf. Lk 16:5–7). Luke 23:12 clearly designates the friendship of political alliance. The accusation in Q that Jesus is friends with sinners (Mt 11:19 par. Lk 7:34) probably stems from Palestinian Jewish ideas about table fellowship (cf. Ps 1:1), but Greco-Roman readers of Luke might recognize how this practice (Lk 5:29; 15:1–2) could be shockingly misinterpreted in terms of a patron endorsing clients or a client sage teaching at banquets of the well-to-do. The Asiarchs may be Paul’s patrons in some sense in Acts 19:31.

“In Acts 2:44–47, the ancient context of friendship as sharing possessions, as equality and as patronage all provide part of the context. Although Acts 2:44–47 does not employ the term friendship, its emphasis on shared possessions would evoke for many Greek readers the ideal of friendship held by various other communities, at the same time challenging the usual expectation of reciprocity in ancient friendship. In contrast to the patronal model of friendship, higher-status members of Luke’s audience are to use their possessions to provide benefaction without expecting reciprocation, even in honor (Lk 6:34–35; 14:12–14; Acts 20:35; Mitchell, 237–49; cf. perhaps Acts 27:3). Luke thus pushes the notion of equality in friendship further than traditions of patronage; Paul probably does the same (2 Cor 8:13–14). As in Roman party politics, those who share common allies also share common enemies (Jas 4:4).

“The ‘friend of the bridegroom’ in John 3:29 may represent a custom different from what we have discussed; many commentators relate this to the *shoshbin*, the best man of traditional Jewish weddings (e.g., Abrahams, 2:213; Dodd, 386). At least according to our later sources, the *shoshbins* of bride and groom functioned as witnesses in the wedding (Deut. Rab. 3:16), normally contributed financially to the wedding (Safrai, 757) and would be intimately concerned with the success of the wedding; thus, for example, the bride’s *shoshbin* might have the evidence of her virginity (Num. Rab. 18:12). Some have linked the *shoshbin* with the marriage negotiator (Batey, 16–17). This may have been sometimes the case; agents (*šāli.ahīm*) often negotiated betrothals (e.g., t. Yebam. 4:4; b. Qidd. 43a; Romans also negotiated betrothals through intermediaries [Friedländer, 1:234]), and sometimes these agents were probably significant persons who might also fill a role in the wedding, which might fit the image of John the Baptist in this context (Jn 3:27–29) as one sent by God. (Three of the four tannaitic parables regarding a marriage broker present Moses as the intermediary between God and Israel; Johnston, 589.) But such agents were sometimes servants (e.g., b. Giṭ 23a), not likely to become *shoshbins*. When possible, a *shoshbin* of status even higher than that of the groom was preferred (b. Yebam. 63a).

“We commented on the ideal of friends dying for one another in John 15:13–15 (§3 above), one of the most explicit friendship

Jesus, friendship between individual believers had a leveling impact, as Paul expresses in Gal. 6:2-5.<sup>21</sup>

The letter as a 'substitute presence' of the sender with the recipients then contained very naturally expressions of greetings, both at the beginning and at the closing in order to affirm the bonds of friendship between the sender and the recipients. In the letter *conclusio*, the noun ἀσπασμός<sup>22</sup> and the verb ἀσπάζομαι<sup>23</sup> are used

passages in the NT, and addressed this text in terms of both Greco-Roman and Jewish writers' comments on friendship with God (§4 above). Although the passage may depend partly on the idea of patronal friendship, the ancient ideals of loyalty, intimacy and sharing are more dominant. Jesus intimately shares the secrets of his heart with his disciples, treating them as friends as God treated Abraham and Moses by revealing himself to them. The parallels with John 16:13–15 indicate that the Spirit of truth would continue passing down the revelations from the Father and Jesus to the disciples, just as in Jesus' own ministry (Jn 5:20; 8:26). They are his friends and therefore objects of his self-sacrifice (Jn 15:13), if they do what he commands them (Jn 15:14). The paradoxical image of friends, not slaves, who obey Jesus' commandments is meant to jar the hearer to attention; friendship means not freedom to disobey but an intimate relationship that continues to recognize distinctions in authority. (Authority distinctions remained in patron-client relationships; at the same time Jesus' complete sharing with his disciples resembles the Greek notion of equality in friendships.) Disciples as Jesus' friends might stem from Jesus tradition (Lk 12:4, though stylistically a Lukan preference). It may have become a title for believers (3 Jn 15) as in some philosophical groups.<sup>24</sup>

[Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>21</sup>NRSV: 2 Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4 All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. 5 For all must carry their own loads.

2 ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάετε, καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 3 εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναι τι μὴδὲν ὄν, φρεναπατᾷ ἑαυτὸν· 4 τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον, 5 ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει.

<sup>22</sup>ἀσπασμός, οὐ, ὁ (s. ἀσπάζομαι; Theognis et al.; Epict. 4, 4, 3; 37; POxy 471, 67; TestSol 18:21 H; EpArist 246; 304; Jos., Ant. 15, 210) *greeting*.

a. of personal salutations **Lk 1:29, 41, 44**; φιλεῖν etc. **Mt 23:7; Mk 12:38; Lk 11:43; 20:46**. ὦρα τοῦ ἁ. GJs 24:1 (s. ἀσπάζομαι 1b end).

b. of written greetings ὁ ἁ. τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου **1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Th 3:17**.—DELG s.v. ἀσπάζομαι. M-M. TW.

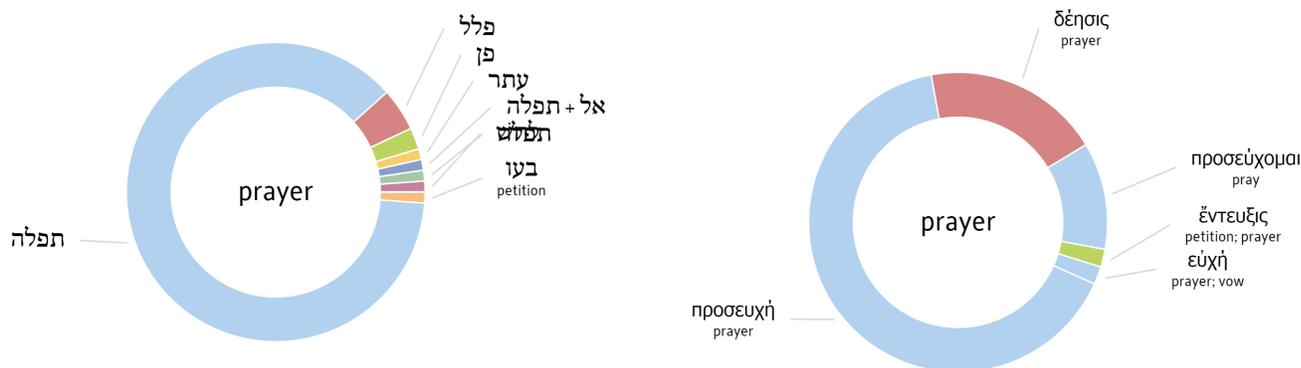
[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 144.]

<sup>23</sup>ἀσπάζομαι fut. ptc. ἀσπασομένου 3 Macc. 1:8; 1 aor. ἠσπασάμην (s. next entry; Hom.+) 'greet'.

**1. to engage in hospitable recognition of another** (w. varying degrees of intimacy), *greet, welcome* τινά *someone* Just., A I, 65, 2

a. through word or gesture or both: of those entering a house **Mt 10:12; Lk 1:40; Ac 21:19**; Hv 5:1. Of those meeting others (Jos., Ant. 8, 321) **Lk 10:4**; *welcome, greet someone* (Philostrat., Vi. Apoll. 1, 12) **Mk 9:15**; Hv 1, 1, 4; 1, 2, 2; 4, 2, 2; AcPl Ha 7:38; 8:3. Of those departing take leave of (X., An. 7, 1, 8; Nicol. Dam.: 90 Fgm. 68, 7 Jac.; Plut., Aemil. P. 270 [29, 1] ἀσπασάμενος ἀνέξεν) **Ac 20:1, 12 D; 21:6** v.l.; AcPl Ha 5, 13.—**Mt 5:47** ἁ. here denotes more than a perfunctory salutation and requires some such rendering as spend time in warm exchange (cp. X., Cyr. 1, 4, 1; Ael. Aristid. 31, 6 K.=11 p. 128 D.; Aelian, VH 9, 4; Appian, Bell. Civ. 3, 79 §322 τ. ἐναντίους; w. ἀγαπάω (vs. 46), of which it is almost a synonym (as Plut., Mor. 143b; s. HAlmqvist, Plut. u. das NT, '46, 34; Ptolem., Apotel. 1, 3, 17.—W. φιλέω: Hierocles 19, 460; opp. μισέω: Simplicius in Epict. p. 31, 6). See FPorporato, Verb. Domini 11, '31, 15–22.—Freq. in written greetings (cp. the exx. in Ltzm., Griech. Papyri [Kleine Texte 14] 2 1910, nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13.—FZiemann, De Epistularum Graec. Formulæ Soll., diss. Halle 1911, 325ff; FXJExler, The Form of the Ancient Gk. Letter 1923; ORoller, D. Formular d. paul. Briefe '33, 67ff; HKoskenniemi, Studien z. Idee u. Phraseologie d. griech. Briefes '56, 148ff); the impv. may be transl. *greetings to (someone) or remember me to (someone)*; other moods than impv. may be rendered wish to be remembered, *greet, send greetings* **Ro 16:3, 5ff; 1 Cor 16:19f; 2 Cor 13:12; Phil 4:21f; Col 4:10, 12, 14f; 2 Ti 4:19, 21; Tit 3:15; Phlm 23; Hb 13:24; 1 Pt 5:13f; 2 J 13; 3 J 15**; IMg ins; 15; ITr ins; 12:1; 13:1; IRo ins; 9:3; IPhd ins; 11:2; ISm 11:1; 12:1f; 13:1f; IPol 8:2f. Another person than the writer of the letter sometimes adds greetings of his own **Ro 16:22** (sim. POxy 1067, 25 καγὼ Ἀλέξανδρος ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς πολλά). ἁ. πολλά (besides the pap just mentioned also PParis 18, 3 [Dssm., B 215]; POxy 930, 22; 935, 22; PGrenf II, 73, 4 [=Ltzm. Pap. nos. 13, 14, 15]) *greet warmly* **1 Cor 16:19**; ἁ. κατ' ὄνομα (PParis 18, 15 [Dssm., B 216]; POxy 930, 26 [=Ltzm. Pap. no. 13]) *greet by name* **3 J 15**; ISm 13:2 (πάντας κατ' ὄνομα as PMich 206, 20ff [II A.D.]); ἄσπασαι τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει (PFay 119, 25ff ἀσπάζου τοὺς φιλοῦντες [sic] ἡμᾶς πρὸς ἀλήθειαν. Sim. BGU 814, 38) Tit 3:15. Among friends the greeting is accompanied by a kiss (Ps.-Lucian, De Asin. 17 φιλήμασιν ἠσπάζοντο ἀλλήλους; Heliod. 10, 6; φιλήματι Just., A I, 65, 2; cp. the apocryphal preface Ath. 32, 3 [Resch, Agrapha 137]), hence: ἁ. ἐν φιλήματι **Ro 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Th 5:26; 1 Pt 5:14**. Of homage to a king hail, acclaim (Dionys. Hal. 4, 39; Plut., Pomp. 624 [12, 4]; 13, 7; cp. Jos., Ant. 10, 211) **Mk 15:18** (cp. Philo, In Flacc. 38).

b. of short friendly visits, 'look in on' **Ac 18:22; 21:7**; IRo 1:1. Of official visits pay one's respects to (Sb 8247, 13; 15 [II A.D.]; BGU 248, 12; 347 I, 3 and II, 2; 376 I, 3; Jos., Ant. 1, 290; 6, 207) Ac 25:13 (OGI 219, 43 [III B.C.]) s. Schwyzer II 301, also



to express these written greetings. Consequently, most of the letters in the New Testament contain greetings from the sender to the recipients.<sup>24</sup>

**Benedictio.** The final element in the *conclusio* of First Peter is the benedictory prayer.<sup>25</sup> This element is very common in the letters of the New Testament, especially those of Paul.<sup>26</sup> The ancient world was a very religious world that believed profoundly that deities played a deep role in human affairs. Thus appeals to the gods and goddesses permeated daily life and are natural elements in their letters. Again, these prayers form boundary determining elements of ancient letters with the *proem* as an opening prayer of thanksgiving and the *benedictio* as the final element in the *conclusio*. For the New Testament letter writers, and Paul in particular, the use of an opening and closing prayer in his letters mirrored the pattern of early Christian worship, which in turn had taken its clue from the pattern of Jewish synagogue worship with opening and closing prayers.

Prayer in ancient Israel was a major aspect of worship both in the temple and in the synagogue. Both Hebrew and Greek have a wide variety of words with the meaning of prayer, as the above charts illustrate. This carried over into early Christian experience.<sup>27</sup> Prayer was both formal and spontaneous, as illustrated

297. Of the greeting given to a priest in a liturgical service τοῦ ἀσπάσασθαι αὐτὸν ἐν εὐχῇ to greet him with prayer GJs 24:1.

**2. to express happiness about the arrival of someth., welcome, greet,** fig. ext. of 1 in ref. to someth. intangible (Eur., Ion 587; Chariton 6, 7, 12; Alciphron 1, 3, 3; Diog. L. σοφίαν ἀσπαζόμενος; POxy 41, 17 τὴν παρ’ ὁμῶν τιμὴν; CPR 30 II, 39; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 21; Jos., Ant. 6, 82; 7, 187; TestGad 3:3; Just.) τὰς ἐπαγγελίας the promises **Hb 11:13**.—DELG. 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), 144.]

<sup>24</sup>See the listing “The Greetings in the Letters of the New Testament,” at cranfordville.com.

<sup>25</sup>**1.1. Benedictions.** The inclusion of benedictions in a letter to express the writer’s wish-prayers for the readers may have been derived from Jewish worship, in which benediction was a common practice. In the Pauline corpus each letter commenced and ended with a benediction. In the group of writings we are considering, however, there are some distinctive features: not every letter includes a benediction (e.g., Jas and 1 Jn) and, except for 1 Peter, each letter includes only one benediction, either at the beginning (1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet 1:2; 2 Jn 3; Jude 2; Rev 1:4) or at the end (Heb 13:20–21, 25; 1 Pet 5:14; 3 Jn 15; Rev 22:21). Even though benediction is frequently included in a letter, it is not a necessary element. The Johannine epistles provide strong evidence: there is no benediction in 1 John, one introductory benediction in 2 John and only a brief closing benediction in 3 John (see John, Letters of). Here the same writer does not follow a stereotyped format in his letters.

“Benedictions are essentially wishes of grace and/or peace: ‘Grace be with you [all]’ (Heb 13:25; Rev 22:21) or ‘Peace be with [or to] you’ (1 Pet 5:14; 3 Jn 15). In some letters benedictions are elaborated with additional features such as mercy (2 Jn 3) or love (Jude 2) or with a closing ‘Amen’ (Heb 13:25; Rev 22:21). In Hebrews 13:20–21 and Revelation 1:4, both letters include lengthy introductions about God, the source of the benefaction, with epithets that coincide with the major motifs of the letters (Lane, 560). The Pauline formula ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you’ and the so-called Dominus Vobiscum (‘The Lord be with you’; see Lk 1:28; van Unnik 1959), are not shared by these writings. Thus we see the contents of benedictions are also subject to modification by each writer according to personal choice or the needs of the recipients (Delling, 76).” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>26</sup>Only one of Paul’s thirteen letters doesn’t contain a closing prayer, but only two of the general letters do. See the listing “The Benedictio in the Letters of the New Testament,” at cranfordville.com.

<sup>27</sup>“Prayer played a central role in the activities of the early church. From the records in Acts of the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 1:14, 24; 2; 42; 3:1; 4:31) to the records of the apostolic fathers in the Mediterranean world at the beginning of the second century (e.g., Ign. Eph. 1.2; Ign. Magn. 7.1; Ign. Smyrn. 7.1), prayer was a central activity and unifying feature of the Christian community.” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

## Outline of Contents in First Peter:

Paul's Letter to the Philippians	
Praescriptio	
Superscriptio	Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ
Adscriptio	πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνους,
Salutatio	χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
Proem	Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνεῖα ὑμῶν. . .
Body	Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσιν, . . .
Conclusio	Ἀσπάσασθε πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί. . .

Ancient Letter on papyrus

### 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**

by the model prayer of Jesus in the sermon on the mount (cf. Mt. 6: 7-13). That is, it was given both to be prayed in formal worship and as a guide for composing individual prayers. Thus both Judaism<sup>28</sup> and Jesus<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup>**2.1.1. Influence from Judaism.** The early church was thoroughly Jewish, which meant that its prayer life was governed by the common practices of Jewish prayer, informal and formal, private and public, individual and corporate. While continuing the ancient practice of personal, spontaneous prayers (note that Cornelius as a God-fearer both kept traditional times of prayer as well as prayed ‘continuously,’ Acts 10:2-4), Jews of the late Second Temple period gathered for increasingly fixed, communal prayer (Charlesworth, 265-66). In Diaspora Judaism Jews were characterized by their commitment to times of communal prayer (see Acts 16:13, 16). The synagogue and temple were places Jews gathered to pray. We find that the early church was a distinct entity gathered for prayer (Acts 1:13-14; 2:42), while at the same time they carried out the traditional times of prayer individually (Acts 10:9) and at least at the beginning attended the temple at the prescribed hour of prayer (Acts 3:1; cf. Acts 2:42, 46, “the prayers”). The apostle Paul regularly went to the synagogue upon arriving at a new location on his missionary journeys (Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1-2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19: 19:8).” [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>29</sup>**2.1.2. Influence from Jesus.** The prayer life of the early church was also influenced by its relationship to Jesus. In the first place Jesus’ personal practice of prayer set an example for the early church. Jesus derided public, ostentatious prayers and called his followers to personal prayer with the Father (Mt 6:5-8), thereby enhancing private prayer and leading to silent prayer as a discipline (cf. van der Horst, 16-18). Jesus prayed at special times of crisis and need, but prayer was also the ‘daily inspiration of His life’ (Martin 1974, 28-29).

“Second, Jesus’ practice of prayer reflected his relationship to Judaism. All four Evangelists concur that Jesus frequently attended synagogue services on the sabbath, and his cleansing of the temple was based upon his desire that it should be a ‘house of prayer’ (Mk 11:17). These activities established continuity with Judaism but also set the stage for the breach between the church and Judaism (see Christianity and Judaism). ‘The originality of Christian worship is not that it rejects Jewish worship but that it reforms and develops that worship, in accordance with Jesus’ teaching and in recognition of his saving work’ (Beckwith, 65).

“Third, therefore, ‘the prayers the church offers are now Christocentric’ (Turner, 73-74). What Israel had identified as divine prerogatives the church now attributes to Jesus: he is the one Lord on whose name (in Joel’s terms) people are now to call for salvation (Joel 2:17-39); he speaks to Saul in conviction (Acts 9:4-6) and Peter in direction (Acts 10:13-16); prayer is offered to him by Stephen (Acts 7:59) and Ananias (Acts 9:10-16). Soon after the ascension of Jesus, the nascent church gathered to pray (Acts 1:14). They prayed for the Lord to show them which of the two who qualified—Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias—should take Judas’s place (Acts 1:15-26). This scene marks a central aspect of the new form of discipleship: although their Lord is no longer with them personally, they can still ask him and the Father for help in times of need through prayer.

“Fourth, the age of fulfillment that was announced by John the Baptist and Jesus (Mt 3:2; 4:17) was now experienced in the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:14-41). The earliest gathering of the Christian community involved devotion to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42). The primitive church, already both within and outside Israel,

shaped the prayer life of apostolic Christianity. The writing of the apostles in their letters also reflect this central role of prayer with both the *proem* and the *benedictio* prayers. Peter was not an exception to this pattern; he stressed prayer greatly in both letters.<sup>30</sup>

A comparison of the various benedictions in the letters found in the New Testament will suggest these prayers were short and to the point by invoking the grace of God upon the readers. Divine grace (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...) is the focus of every one of the benedictions in the Pauline letters, and also in Heb. 13:25. But Peter's distinctive is to zero in on divine peace (εἰρήνη). Uniformly in all of them the channel through which God's grace and peace flows into the lives of believers is Christ; all of the prayers are Christocentric!

**Literary Context.** As illustrated in the chart on the above right, and also by the genre label *conclusio*, the literary setting for this passage is at the very end of the letter. In ancient letter writing styles, the sender of the letter would almost always provide some kind of formal closing to the letter. All of Paul's letters follow this standard, and among the general letters only James contains no closing. But this is largely due to the homily nature of this document that only contains a *praescriptio* in 1:1 and no other letter aspect. Thus James is not a real letter, but a sermon with a formal introduction in 1:1 using the letter *praescriptio*.

Beyond a literary role for the *conclusio*, this unit additionally served to cement bonds of friendship between the letter sender and the recipients. Thus it served an important role.<sup>31</sup>

**Literary Structure.** The diagram below represents the idea structure of the underlying Greek text of the passage.

```

5.12          Through Silvanus
                my faithful brother,
                        as I consider
                briefly
82  to you...I am writing,
                to encourage
                        and
                to give witness
                        that this is the true grace of God
                                /-----|
                                in which you are to stand.

83  5.13 You sister church in Babylon sends you greetings,
                and
                Mark, my son.

84  5.14 Greet one another
                with a kiss of love.

85  Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

```

This text as a whole composes the letter *Conclusio* and as such contains three elements commonly found in letter *conclusio* throughout the ancient world: a) sender verification(#82); b) greetings (#s 83-84; and

now offered prayers in 'Easter joy' (Alsup, 34) and in the power of the Holy Spirit."

[Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>30</sup>"The importance of prayer in 1 Peter and 2 Peter is indicated by the wide range of prayer material. It includes opening and closing wish-prayers (1 Pet 1:2; 5:14; 2 Pet 1:2), brief doxologies (1 Pet 4:11; 5:11; 2 Pet 3:18), the longer praise form related to the Jewish berakah style of liturgical prayer in which praise (1 Pet 1:3-4) merges into exhortation (1 Pet 1:5-12), and specific exhortations to prayer, including invocation of (1 Pet 1:17), entrusting themselves to (1 Pet 4:19) and casting their anxieties upon (1 Pet 5:7) God, who cares for them while they encounter various difficulties (1 Pet 4:17)." [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>31</sup>"The letter closing or postscript maintains contact between sender and recipient and enhances their friendship. This is accomplished by using greetings (*aspazomai*), a health wish and/or words of farewell. In Christian letters a doxology or benediction (see Liturgical Elements) can replace the last two." [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

c) *benedictio* (#85).

## II. Message

Given the well defined contents of this passage, the exegesis of the various units will follow the literary forms that are contained in the letter *Conclusio*. Then, we will do a brief synopsis of the contents of the letter following the outline as our final look at this letter in this series of studies.

### a. Sender Verification, v. 12

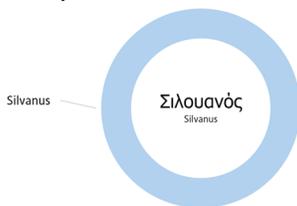
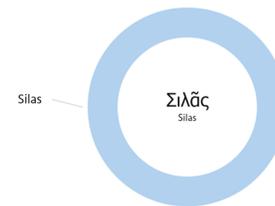
Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα, παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε.

#### Notes:

Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ...ἔγραψα. Peter indicates that he has written (ἔγραψα) this letter through Silvanus (Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ) to his readers (ὑμῖν). Each of these segments is important.

**Who was Silvanus?**<sup>32</sup> This spelling of his name, along with an alternative Σιλβανός (2 Cor. 1:19 only), is either a Latin form written out using Greek letters, or an original Greek name. In either case, Σιλᾶς or Σίλας<sup>33</sup> (Silas) -- both spellings are found in only in Acts in the New Testament -- represents a shortened Greek adaptation



silas | 12 of 12

- Ac 15:22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers.
- Ac 15:27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth.
- Ac 15:32 Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers.
- Ac 15:40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord.
- Ac 16:19 But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.
- Ac 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.
- Ac 16:29 The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.
- Ac 17:4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.
- Ac 17:10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue.
- Ac 17:14 Then the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained behind.
- Ac 17:15 Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him.
- Ac 18:5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.

silvanus | 4 of 4

- 2 Co 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes."
- 1 Th 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.
- 2 Th 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 1 Pe 5:12 Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

<sup>32</sup>“Σιλουανός, οὗ, ὁ (Diod S 11, 27, 1, a Σ. as contemporary with the battle of Salamis [480 B.C.]; OGI 533, 50 [time of Augustus] and later ins and pap; Jos., Ant. 20:14; in rabbinic lit. נִיְלָוִס CIJ I, 596) *Silvanus*; surely the same man who appears in Ac as Σίλας (q.v.). Either he had two names (like Paul), one Semit. and one Lat. (Zahn), or Σιλουανός is the Lat. form of the same name that is Grecized in Σίλας (B-D-F §125, 2; Mlt-H. 109f; 146). **2 Cor 1:19** (v.l. Σιλβανός, which is also found Diod S 11, 41, 1); **1 Th 1:1**; **2 Th 1:1** (s. also the subscr. of 2 Th); **1 Pt 5:12** (this pass. has given rise to the conclusion that Silvanus was somehow or other [as translator? in Sb 8246, 38 Germanus speaks before the court δι’ Ἀνουβίωνος ἐρμηνεύοντος] connected w. the writing of 1 Pt; e.g., Zahn [Einleitung II 3 10f], GWohlenberg [NKZ 24, 1913, 742–62], WBornemann [Der erste Petrusbrief—eine Taufrede des Silvanus?: ZNW 19, 1920, 143ff], Harnack [Mission I 4 1923, 85], LRadermacher [Der 1 Pt u. Silvanus: ZNW 25, 1926, 287ff]; ESelwyn, 1 Pt 46, 9–17 but s. WKümmel [Introd. NT, tr. HKee, ’75, 416–25]).—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), 923.]

<sup>33</sup>“Σιλᾶς, α or Σίλας, ᾶ (still other spellings are attested for the NT; s. B-D-F §53, 2; 125, 2), ὁ (several times in Joseph. as a Semitic name; OGI 604, 4; IGR III 817, 1. Evidently=שִׁלְיָאשׁ, the Aram. form [in Palmyrene inscriptions] of שָׁלְיָא Saul) *Silas*. This name, which occurs only in Ac, is borne by a respected member of the church at Jerusalem who was prophetically gifted **15:22, 27**; he was sent to Antioch and stayed there vss. **32, 33 [34]** v.l.; later he accompanied Paul on his so-called second missionary journey **15:40–18:5** (mentioned nine times). Despite CWeizsäcker, Das apost. Zeitalter 2 1892, 247 et al., incl. LRadermacher, ZNW 25, 1926, 295, it is hardly to be doubted that this Silas is the same pers. as the Σιλουανός who is mentioned in Paul and 1 Pt. See the next entry and s. AStegmann, Silvanus als Missionär u. ‘Hagiograph’ 1917. S. also s.v. Ἰωάν(ν)ης 6.—TRE III 609. 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), 923.]

of his Latin name, or else a 'nickname' from the longer Σιλουανός.<sup>34</sup> Silvanus / Silas<sup>35</sup> was familiar to many if not all of the readers of this letter, since he was a respected member of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22) who was also very active in the church at Antioch (Acts 15:27-40). Silas became Paul's co-missionary beginning on the second missionary journey (Acts 14:40) and traveled with him from that point on (Acts 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4, 10; 14, 15; 18:5; 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1). At some point in the late 50s to the early 60s, Silas began working with Peter, and also with Mark, to help their ministries, especially in and around Rome. The interesting irony is that Paul's and Silas' close relationship was prompted in large part because of a parting of the ways between Paul and Barnabas over the issue of taking Mark with them on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:27-40). Silas became Paul's traveling companion rather than Barnabas because of Mark! Now they are working together to help Peter. To learn how this developed would be quite a story of the power of God's grace in the lives of these early Christian leaders.

**What was Silas doing for Peter?** The expression here literally says that Peter wrote this letter "through Silvanus." Considerable debate among current scholars centers over whether Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ should be taken to mean either that a) Silas did the writing of the letter as the *amanuensis*, or that b) Silas was the one who delivered the letter to its recipients. To me, the arguments seem rather contrived and artificially framed to answer an either/or framing of the question. Because of many commentators extending implications of either view beyond what the text statement intends, the debate continues with the dominant trend favoring the second view in rejection of the first view.

When one carefully considers a somewhat similar statement in Acts 15:23 about Silas, a clear conclusion is that Silas played a role in drafting not only First Peter but also the letter of James and the leaders of the Jerusalem council to the church at Antioch:

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23

<sup>34</sup>Abbreviated names in -ᾶς (frequently without definitely identifiable full names): Ἀρτεμᾶς for Ἀρτεμίδωρος (Varro, de Lingua Latina 8.21), Ἐρμᾶς perhaps for Ἐρμύδωρος, Ζηνᾶς for Ζηνόδωρος (Bekker, Anec. Gr. II 857.2), Νυμφᾶς for Νυμφόδωρος (M.-H. 71 sees in Νύμφᾶν a fem. which he bases on αὐτῆς C 4:15 B), Ὀλυμπᾶς perhaps for Ὀλυμπιόδωρος; Δημᾶς for Δημήτριος? Στεφανᾶς for Στεφανηφόρος or a development from Att. Στέφανος? (Bechtel-Fick, op. cit. 253f. holds Στέφανος itself to be an abbreviation of Φιλοστέφανος or Στεφανοκλής). Παρμενᾶς for Παρμένων, cf. Πάρμενις, -νίδης, -νίσκος, -νίων (ibid. 205).—Abbreviated names in -ῆς appear less frequently: Ἀπελλῆς s. infra, Ἐρμῆς R 16:14 (hardly to be simply identified with the name of the god, although in the later period this type of designation also appears [ibid. 304ff.]); in -ῶς only Ἀπολλῶς (s. infra). Ἀνδρέας is an old Greek name.—**Double names for the same person:** Σιλᾶς and Σιλουανός s. infra (2); Ἀπολλώνιος A 18:24 D and Ἀπολλῶς Paul (Ἀπελλῆς s. §29(4)); Ἀμπλιᾶτος R 16:8 and v.l. Ἀμπλιᾶς; Ἀντιπᾶς and Ἀντίπατρος Jos., Ant. 14.10; accordingly, Ἐπαφρόδιτος Ph 2:25, 4:18 and Ἐπαφρῶς C 1:7, 4:12, Phm 23 could be one person, were it not improbable on other grounds." [Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 68.]

<sup>35</sup>*Silvanus*. Except for the brief commendation that follows, nothing further is said of this person, thus suggesting that he was known to the addressees. Paul's letters also mention a person named Silvanus, who accompanied Paul on his mission to certain regions of Asia Minor and Greece, and who is identified, along with Paul and Timothy, as co-author of the letters of 1 and 2 Thessalonians (2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). Since these are the only occurrences of the name Silvanus in the NT, it is likely that they refer to one and the same person. In Acts, as most scholars agree, this person is identified as "Silas," a Grecized form of the Aramaic *Šē'ilā'*, the name by which Silvanus was earlier known in the Jerusalem community (Acts 15:22, 25-27). In regions of the Diaspora to which the letters of Paul and 1 Peter were addressed, this companion of Paul referred to as Silas in Acts (16:19, 25, 29; 17:4-15; 18:5) was also known as Siluanos, a like-sounding Grecized form of the Latin name Silvanus.<sup>70</sup> Bigg (1902, 84) conjectures that 'Silvanus or one of his ancestors [was once a slave who] had been manumitted by one or other of the Roman [family] Silvani,' but he provides no support for this supposition.

"In Acts, Silas/Silvanus and his colleague Judas Barsabbas are identified as 'leading men among the brothers' of the Jerusalem church (15:22) and 'prophets' (15:32). As men of high prestige in Jerusalem, they were commissioned to deliver to the church of Antioch the letter conveying the decision of the Jerusalem church validating Paul's mission to the Gentiles (15:22-34). Thereafter, Silas/Silvanus was chosen by Paul as his associate on his journey to Asia Minor and Greece (15:40-18:21; 18:23-23:35), and in 2 Cor 1:19 he is mentioned as a cofounder of the Corinthian church. Acts indicates that Silas/Silvanus also possessed Roman citizenship (16:37) but records nothing of his further activity following his work with Paul. His earlier association with Peter and Mark in Jerusalem (Acts 15; cf. also 12:12-17) could have provided the stimulus for a later resumption of this association in Rome, a situation against which nothing in the historical record would argue. What is explicit in the NT evidence is his high standing in the early Jerusalem community, his later service with Paul as a missionary to areas of the Diaspora, including Asia Minor, and finally, his collaboration with Peter and Mark in Rome."<sup>71</sup> [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 871.]

And *they wrote letters by them* after this manner (KJV)

22 Τότε ἔδοξε τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐκλεξαμένους ἄνδρας ἐξ αὐτῶν πέμψαι εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν σὺν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρναβᾷ, Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν καὶ Σιλᾶν, ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, 23 *γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν*.<sup>36</sup>

It seems to me that such rejection of the fundamental meaning of γράφω<sup>37</sup> as “I write” represents scholarly bias in very unjustifiable ways. The very questionable evidence cited as a basis for this rejection (IRo 10:1; IPhld 11:2; ISm 12:1; Pol 14) comes in the second century, much later than First Peter and Acts and itself is clearly capable of implying involvement in the composition of a letter.<sup>38</sup> Peter’s other use of γράφω in 1:16 clearly means to write, not to carry. Unquestionably, it means to write in the two uses in Second Peter (3:1 & 3:15). The bias against Silas having involvement in the composition of the letter stems from the authorship debates over First Peter almost a century ago when influential scholars rejected denial of Petrine authorship and then attributed supposed non-Petrine qualities of this letter to Silas.<sup>39</sup> But the view of Peter Davids, an expert in ancient

<sup>36</sup>I find it interesting and puzzling why most English translations automatically assume that γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν with the literal meaning ‘having written by their hand’ means that Judas Barsabbas and Silas only carried the letter from Jerusalem to Antioch and had nothing to do with its composition.

<sup>37</sup>γράφω impf. ἔγραφον; fut. γράψω; 1 aor. ἔγραψα; pf. γέγραφα; 1 pl. γεγραφήκαμεν 2 Macc 1:7 v.l. Pass.: 2 aor. ἐγράφη; pf. γέγραμμαι; 3 sg. plpf. ἐγέγραπτο LXX (Hom.+) ‘write’...

**2. to express thought in writing...**

**c. of correspondence** write (to) someone τινί (Plut., Pomp. 634 [29, 3]; pap; 1 Macc 12:22; 2 Macc 2:16; Da 6:26; ParJer; Jos., Ant. 12, 16; Mel., HE 4, 26, 10) **Ro 15:15; 2 Cor 2:4, 9** v.l.; **7:12; Phlm 21; 2 Pt 3:15; 1J 2:12ff.** δι’ ὀλίγων *briefly, a few lines* **1 Pt 5:12.** διὰ μέλανος καὶ καλάμου *w. pen and ink* **3J 13** (cp. ParJer 6:19). The content of the writing is quoted: **Rv 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; write someth. to someone** τινί τι (Plut., Cic. 879 [37, 1]; pap; 1 Macc: 10:24; 11:29; 13:35) **1 Cor 14:37; 2 Cor 1:13; Gal 1:20; 3J 9.** τινί τι περί τινος (1 Macc 11:31) **Ac 25:26; 1J 2:26.** τινί περί τινος (1 Macc 12:22; Jos., Vi. 62; Mel., HE 4, 26, 10) **2 Cor 9:1; 1 Th 4:9; 5:1; Jd 3.** περί δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε (μοι v.l.) *as to the matters about which you wrote (me)* **1 Cor 7:1** (Pla., Ep. 13 p. 361a περί δὲ ὧν ἐπέστελλές μοι; Socrat., Ep. 7, 1 ὑπὲρ ὧν γράφεις); γ. τινί *give someone directions in writing* w. inf. foll. **Ac 18:27;** also w. ὅπως *ibid.* D.—γ. διά τινος signifies either that the person referred to in the διά-phrase participated in writing the document (Dionys. of Cor. in Eus., HE 4, 23, 11; cp. IG XIV, 956B, 10f ὑπογράφαντες διὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἡμῶν) **1 Pt 5:12**, as some comm. hold, or that this person is its bearer IRo 10:1; IPhld 11:2; ISm 12:1; Pol 14. The latter mng. obtains in διὰ χειρὸς τινος **Ac 15:23.**”

[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), 207.]

<sup>38</sup>Careful examination of the references to these letters of Ignatius (*To the Romans*, 10:1 [Γράφω δὲ ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἀπὸ Σμύρνης δι’ Ἐφεσίων τῶν ἀξιομακαρίστων]; *To the Philadelphians*, 11:2 [γράφω ὑμῖν διὰ Βούρρου]; *To the Smyrnaeans*, 12:1 [γράφω ὑμῖν διὰ Βούρρου]) clearly indicates that both participation in the composition and also the delivery of a letter, but especially the former, is the most natural meaning even of these texts. The letter of Polycarp *To the Philippians* 14 is only available in Latin rather than Greek but follows the same pattern: Haec vobis scripsi per Crescentem.

Ignatius was a spiritual leader in Antioch at the beginning of the second century and suffered martyrdom prior to 117 AD. He wrote seven letters that exist today including the ones referenced above. He was according to church tradition a disciple of the apostle John. Polycarp (69-155 AD) was a spiritual leader at Smyrna until his martyrdom in 155 AD.

<sup>39</sup>Cf. Kelly, 215; Selwyn, 11; cf. Moffatt, 169. As one example, J.N.D. Kelly is often included among these scholars. But an examination of what he actually said on 1 Peter 5:12 seems reasonable. The rejection of his view outright by Achtemeier (Hermeneia) and Elliott (AYBC) is unwarranted and without adequate grounds. Many of these commentators seem not to have ever seriously explored the work of scribes (grammateus, amanuensis) in doing the actual writing of ancient letters. Thus sloppy scholarship results.

The expression by (dia with the genitive) Silvanus may hold the key to the secret of the letter. It has been held to mean (a) that Silvanus, as was regular practice in antiquity, was to act as its bearer (cf. Acts 15:23, where ‘having written by their hand ...’ indicates that the persons mentioned were given the letter to deliver, not that they had penned it); or (b) that Silvanus was the amanuensis who up to this point has taken the letter down from the author’s (Peter’s?) dictation; or (c) that Silvanus had been responsible for drafting the letter on the author’s (Peter’s?) behalf and on his instructions. As regards (a), such passages as Ignatius, Rom. x. 1; Philad. xi. 2; Smyrn. xii. 1; Polycarp, Phil. xiv. 1 confirm that the formula ‘write by X.’ could in Greek signify ‘despatch a letter with X. as its carrier’, although the more normal idiom was ‘send by X.’ or something of the sort; but this exegesis seems ruled out in the present case by short (a more literal rendering would be ‘I have written briefly’), which requires us to take ‘write’ in the strict sense of actually writing or drafting rather than the enlarged sense of transmitting. We should equally exclude (b) on the ground that we can hardly envisage Silvanus, Paul’s collaborator in writing to Thessalonica, serving as a dictation clerk, which was a role too modest for so important a figure. Everything in fact points to (c) as the correct explanation, and it is strikingly supported by a letter of the late-2nd cent. bishop Dionysius of Corinth (in Eusebius, Hist. eccl. iv. 23. 11) to the Roman church referring to 1 Clement (sent from Rome to Corinth c. 95) as ‘your earlier letter to us written by (dia) Clement’. Clearly Dionysius implies by this phrase that in writing the epistle Clement was expressing in his own words the views of the Roman church.

[J. N. D. Kelly, *Black’s New Testament Commentary: The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: Continuum, 1969), 214-

epistolography, seems more plausible.<sup>40</sup> My personal inclination is closer to view number two that asserts that Silas did play an important role in the composition of the letter, although whether this process was done by strict dictation or by sketching out an outline followed by detailed composition of the letter is impossible to determine.<sup>41</sup> Consequently the determination of detailed stylistic patterns to either the letter sender or to the writing secretary cannot be made with certainty; it all depends upon how much freedom Silas was given in the writing of the letter. The language of 5:12 does signal that Silas was involved in the composition, and very likely also in the deliverer of the letter to its designation as stated in 1:1-2, and perhaps John Mark.

That Silas was highly regarded in early Christianity is without question. He was labeled by Luke ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς (*leaders among the brothers*) along with Judas Barsabbas in Acts 15:22 and αὐτοὶ προφῆται ὄντες (*prophets*) in 15:32. Paul valued his ministry enough to make him a co-missionary in joint ministry for much of his service to Christ on the second and third missionary journeys. He and Timothy were included in the sending and delivery of both the First and Second Thessalonian letters along with Paul. Very much in line with these evaluations, Peter goes out of his way to commend Silas as τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, a *faithful brother*.<sup>42</sup> Peter's first contact with Silas had been in Jerusalem almost three decades earlier. Now toward the close of Peter's earthly life their paths crossed again in Rome. And Silas was there to help the apostle with an important project: the composition<sup>43</sup> and delivery of a letter.<sup>44</sup>

Interestingly Peter indicates that this is a short letter: δι' ὀλίγων. The sense of length of a letter clearly was a very relative matter largely in the mind of the letter sender, for the writer of Hebrews says the same thing about his letter in Heb. 13:22.<sup>45</sup> In comparison with not just the letters inside the New Testament, but more formal letters in that era, First Peter is not a short letter! Peter evidently follows a frequent convention for letter writing in that time when a letter may have gone on too long the sender 'apologizes' by asserting

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<sup>40</sup>“The reference to Silvanus or Silas (the shorter form of his name) means one of three things: (1) he is the carrier of the letter (Acts 15:23, where there is no sense that both Judas and Silas wrote the short letter, but that they were delivering it; cf. Ignatius, Rom. 10:1; Phld. 11:2; Smyrn. 12:1; Polycarp, Phil. 14:1), (2) he is the secretary or amanuensis who wrote the letter by dictation (Rom. 16:22), or (3) he is responsible for writing the letter on behalf of someone else (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. 4.23.11, quotes Dionysius of Corinth who uses the same grammatical structure used here to refer to Clement's writing on behalf of the Roman church in A.D. 96). The reference to writing 'briefly' would seem to make the first option less likely as the intention of 'by means of Silvanus' (although it is still possible that Silvanus carried the letter without that fact being mentioned), for it appears to make the sentence refer to the process of writing itself. <sup>2</sup> The second option is possible, but given his need to go on to name Silvanus 'a faithful brother' and Silvanus's coworker (perhaps coapostle) status with Paul noted above, it would seem unlikely that he was a mere scribe. Thus this option merges into the third. Silvanus is being cited as the real author of the letter per se, although the thoughts behind it are those of Simon Peter (see Introduction).” [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), 198.]

<sup>41</sup>E. Randolph Richards, a former student, did his PhD dissertation at SWBTS on this topic that was published in the German University of Tübingen dissertation series several years ago. Out of this work has come two other important publications: *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing Secretaries: Composition and Collection*, by InterVarsity Press in 2004, and *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, volume 42 of series 2 in Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament by Mohr publications in 1991. The two approaches to the composition of ancient letters is well documented, although determining which approach was used in individual instances is very difficult without clear signaling in the contents of the letter.

<sup>42</sup>“The expression, “faithful brother,” makes it clear that Silvanus was not only a Christian believer (for πιστός in that sense, cf. 1:21), but a valued co-worker as well (in the Pauline correspondence, cf. especially Eph 6:21–22//Col 4:7–9; also, for “brother,” 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1; Philem 1). Silvanus was associated with Paul in his mission to the Greek cities of Philippi (Acts 16:19, 25, 29), Thessalonica (17:4), Berea (17:10, 14), and Corinth (18:5; cf. 2 Cor 1:19), but was known to the churches to which 1 Peter is written only by reputation, if at all (cf. Acts 16:6–8, where the Spirit directs Paul and Silas away from Asia and Bithynia).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 307.]

<sup>43</sup>The use of ἔγραψα as an epistolary Aorist function of the verb reflects a common usage in ancient letters signaling the viewpoint of the readers rather than that of the writers. See ATR: “I have written (ἔγραψα [*egrapsa*]). Epistolary aorist applying to this Epistle as in I Cor. 5:11 (not 5:9); I Cor. 9:15; Gal. 6:11; Rom. 15:15; Philemon 19, 21.” [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 1 Pe 5:12.”

<sup>44</sup>The speculation that it was Silas who reported to Peter the details of the situations in the various Roman provinces in Anatolia, which prompted the writing of the letter cannot be validated. See

<sup>45</sup>“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you *briefly*.” Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἀνεχέσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, καὶ γὰρ *διὰ βραχείων* ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν.

shortness.<sup>46</sup>

The expressed objectives<sup>47</sup> of the letter are παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε, *to encourage you and to verify that this grace of God is genuine, in which you are to stand.*<sup>48</sup> The twofold expression stresses a positive objective for his writing of the letter.<sup>49</sup> *First*, Peter's intention was to encourage his readers. Twice already he had expressed a similar desire (2:11; 5:1). The verb defines making a strong appeal to someone.<sup>50</sup> Here Peter does not define the content of the appeal, since the content of the letter is in view. He simply says that he objective in the letter generally was to help them spiritually.

*Second*, his objective was to ἐπιμαρτυρῶν. This is the only place in the New Testament where this verb ἐπιμαρτυρέω is used, and it has the meaning of validating something.<sup>51</sup> What is being validated is ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἣν στήτε. Although various translations of this phrase are possible, the meaning is relatively clear. The ταύτην, *this*, goes back to πάσης χάριτος in verse ten, *the God of all grace.*<sup>52</sup> What Peter has sought to do in the letter is to affirm to his readers that God's grace not only will sustain them in final judgment but also is essential for coping with their suffering on a day to day basis. This favor from God is

<sup>46</sup>“The phrase δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα<sup>48</sup> (‘I have written you briefly’) conforms again to ancient epistolary convention: long letters were regarded as inappropriate if not indeed impolite,<sup>49</sup> and so authors conventionally referred to their ‘brief letter.’<sup>50</sup> The phrase is thus not related to the actual length of the epistle,<sup>51</sup> nor to its brevity in relation to the sublimity of its content,<sup>52</sup> nor to the modesty of its author.<sup>53</sup> [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), 352.]

<sup>47</sup>The grammatical function of the two Greek participles παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν is adverbial telic (purpose).

<sup>48</sup>An alternative translation which is possible is: “*this is the true grace of God.*”

<sup>49</sup>“The two participles, both dependent on ἔγραψα, ‘I have written,’ are not quite parallel in function, for the first refers to ethical exhortation and the second to testimony or proclamation. The indirect discourse that follows (i.e., ‘that this is true grace from God’) is, accordingly, linked only to ἐπιμαρτυρῶν, ‘bring testimony,’ not to παρακαλῶν, ‘make an appeal.’ [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 308.]

<sup>50</sup>“**παρακαλέω** impf. παρεκάλουν; fut. παρακαλέσω LXX; 1 aor. παρεκάλεσα. Pass.: 1 fut. παρακληθήσομαι; 1 aor. παρεκλήθην; pf. παρακέκλημαι (Aeschyl., Hdt.+). . . .

**2. to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage** (X. et al.; LXX) w. acc. of pers. **Ac 16:40; 2 Cor 10:1; 1 Th 2:12** (but s. 5 below); **5:11; Hb 3:13**; ITr 12:2; IRo 7:2. The acc. is found in the immediate context **Ac 20:1; 1 Ti 5:1** (but s. 5 below). Pass. **1 Cor 14:31**. τινὰ λόγῳ πολλῶ *someone with many words* **Ac 20:2**; also τινὰ διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ **15:32**. τινὰ δι’ ὀλίγων γραμμάτων IPol 7:3. W. acc. of pers. and direct discourse **1 Cor 4:16; 1 Th 5:14; Hb 13:22; 1 Pt 5:1**; direct discourse introduced by λέγων (B-D-F §420) **Ac 2:40**. W. acc. of pers. and inf. foll. (SIG 695, 43 [129 B.C.]) 11:23; 27:33f; **Ro 12:1** (EKäsemann, Gottesdienst im Alltag, ’60 [Beih. ZNW], 165–71); **15:30; 16:17; 2 Cor 2:8; 6:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:2; Tit 2:6; 1 Pt 2:11** (cp. Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36 II, 4 Jac. p. 1172, 19; ELohe, ZNW 45, ’54, 68–89); **Jd 3** (the acc. is found in the immediate context, as Philo, Poster Cai. 138); ITr 6:1; IPhd 8:2; IPol 1:2a; Pol 9:1 al. W. inf. (acc. in the context), continued by καὶ ὅτι (s. B-D-F §397, 6; Rob. 1047) **Ac 14:22**. W. acc. of pers. and ἵνα foll. (PRyl 229, 17 [38 A.D.]; EpArist 318; Jos., Ant. 14, 168.—B-D-F §392, 1c; Rob. 1046) **1 Cor 1:10; 16:15f; 2 Cor 8:6; 1 Th 4:1** (π. w. ἐρωτάω as BGU 1141, 10; POxy 294, 29) **2 Th 3:12**; Hm 12, 3, 2; AcPl Ha 7, 32. The ἵνα-clause expresses not the content of the appeal, as in the pass. referred to above, but its aim: πάντας παρακαλεῖν, ἵνα σώζονται IPol 1:2b.—Without acc. of pers.: w. direct discourse foll. ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα since God as it were makes his appeal through us: ‘We beg’ **2 Cor 5:20**. Paul serves as God’s agent (like a ‘legate of Caesar’ Dssm. LO 320 [LAE 374]) and functions as mediator (like Alexander the Great, Plut., Mor. 329c διαλλακτής; cp. also the mediatorial role of a judge IPriene 53, esp. 10f; s. also CBreytenbach, Versöhnung ’89, 64–66). W. inf. foll. **1 Ti 2:1**. Abs. **Ro 12:8** (mng. 4 is also poss.); **2 Ti 4:2; Tit 1:9; Hb 10:25; 1 Pt 5:12** (w. ἐπιμαρτυρεῖν); B 19:10.—W. acc. of thing impress upon someone, urge, exhort πολλά ἔτερα **Lk 3:18**. ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει **1 Ti 6:2**. ταῦτα λάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγχε **Tit 2:15**. In the case of several of the passages dealt with in this section, it is poss. that they could as well be classed under 3. (below).” [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), 765.]

<sup>51</sup>“**ἐπιμαρτυρέω** to affirm that someth. is true, bear witness, attest (s. μαρτυρέω; Pla., Crat. 397a; Lucian, Alex. 42; Plut., Lys. 445 [22, 9] al.; PLond 1692a, 19 [VI A.D.]; Cat. Cod. Astrol. IX/1 p. 182, 27f; Jos., Ant. 7, 349; Tat. 3:3 ‘endorse’; Ath., R. 77, 21) foll. by acc. and inf. **1 Pt 5:12**.—New Docs 2, 85f. 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), 375.]

<sup>52</sup>Two other understandings of the antecedent of ταύτην are suggested by commentators: a) ταύτην refers to some experience of suffering that doesn’t readily appear to be an expression of divine grace, but here Peter so affirms it to be [2:20 is often appealed to in support]; or b) ταύτην refers to the contents of the letter generally as an expression of authentic grace from God [an assumed ἐπιστολή (letter) is supposed to lie behind the feminine spelling ταύτην]. Significant difficulties grammatically etc. are present in these alternatives, making them less attractive options.

what is real and genuine, not the accusations of their enemies nor those of the Devil who both seek to plant doubts and uncertainty in their thinking about their Christian commitment. Thus the sustaining power of this authentic grace of God is what they must stand in (εἰς ἣν στήτε) both during this life and on the final day of judgment. Every other source of supposed strength is faulty and will fail them in moments of crisis both now and in eternity. This, Peter says, is what he has sought to not only communicate to them in the letter, but, more importantly, to validate to them as genuine.

Clearly Peter has had some lofty goals for this letter. But as we have worked our way through its content, I believe we can say that these goals have been achieved well. His close working with Silas in the composition of the letter has been successful.

### **b. Greetings, vv. 13-14a**

13 Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

13 ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ καὶ Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου. 14 ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης.

#### **Notes:**

In a manner found commonly in the greetings of the letters of the New Testament, Peter sends greetings to the readers from the community of believers where he was at the writing of the letter. The identity of this group is unusual: ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ, *the in Babylon fellow elect...* The spelling of the Greek suggests that the full expression is ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ ἐκκλησία, *the in Babylon chosen congregation*.<sup>53</sup> But Peter has not used the term ἐκκλησία in the letter previously. Still he has not previously alluded to the Christian community where he was at the writing of the letter, until now. Most likely this assumption about ἐκκλησία is correct, and follows the pattern found also in 2 John 1 and 13: ἐκλεκτῆ κυρία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς (*to the elect lady and her children*) and τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς ἐκλεκτῆς (*the children of your chosen sister*).

The somewhat mysterious aspect is what did Peter mean by ἐν Βαβυλῶνι? Literally, this would place him in the ancient of Babylon at the writing of the letter. Little possibility of this exists from what we know about Peter's travels. Far more likely, is that Babylon is simply a 'code word' for Rome.<sup>54</sup> The negative image of

<sup>53</sup>Another option grammatically is to take the feminine ἡ ... συνεκλεκτῆ, 'chosen with,' as a reference to a woman, possibly Peter's wife (the immediate mention of 'Mark, my son,' would complete the authorial family). On this interpretation, συνεκλεκτῆ would mean 'chosen with me,' rather than 'chosen with you.' The difficulty with this is the correspondence between συνεκλεκτῆ here and ἐκλεκτοῖς, 'chosen,' in 1:1 (cf. 2:9). Brox (247) notes Peter's fondness for compounds ('inheritance' in 1:4 and 3:9, with 'co-heir' in 3:7; 'elder' and 'fellow elder' in 5:1). Peter is affirming common ground between the συνεκλεκτῆ and his readers, not himself." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 310.]

<sup>54</sup>"Babylon" is undoubtedly Rome, as in Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21 (cf. especially 17:18: 'the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth'; in Jewish sources, cf. Sib. Or. 5.143, 159, and in general, the perspective of the two apocalypses, 4 Ezra and 2 Apoc. Bar., based on the analogy between Jerusalem's destruction by Babylon in 586 B.C. and by Rome in A.D. 70). This interpretation goes back at least to Papias in the second century, who, according to Eusebius, claimed that Peter 'composed it [συντάξα] in Rome itself, which ... he himself indicates, referring to the city metaphorically [τροπικώτερον] as Babylon' (Eusebius, HE 2.15.2; how much of this is Papias's actual language is difficult to say, but συντάξα, 'compose,' is at any rate characteristic of the few quotations of Papias that we possess).

"At the same time, it is doubtful that all the sinister associations of 'Babylon the Great, Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth' (Rev 17:5) are present already in 1 Peter. Peter's earlier admonitions to defer to the Roman emperor and his appointed representatives (2:13–17) preclude any deep-seated critique of the empire or imperial authority. The only thing wrong with 'Babylon' is that it is not home. 'Babylon' at the end of the epistle is simply the counterpart to 'diaspora' at the beginning. It is the place of exile for a community whose natural home is Jerusalem. The author and his readers, wherever they may be, find themselves in the same predicament. 'Babylon' establishes for him credibility and common ground with them; he can give them advice on how to respond to opposition because he and his congregation face the same threats they do (cf. v 9). The designation becomes a metaphor both for an actual city (Rome) and for an experience of alienation not necessarily linked to a particular place. There were literal Babylons in the ancient world, of course, not only the original Babylon on the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, where Judaism flourished, but a Roman military settlement in Egypt where Cairo now stands (Selwyn, 243, points to 'the Roman legionnaires' custom of naming places after military stations where they had previously been on duty' to show how easily names were transferred). Neither of these identifications is very likely, yet a fourth century papyrus from the Egyptian Babylon illustrates how easily a name with such rich connotations could acquire a double meaning (Horsley, 141–48). A traveler, probably Jewish, is taken ill after falling from his horse and writes home from Babylon to Oxyrhynchos requesting help. 'You too, therefore, please send

Babylon as 'being away from home' underscored that Peter being in Rome with the Christian community there was an exile and foreigner along with his readers. Additionally, it served to help safeguard the geographical location of Christians in Rome who might also be subject to isolated persecution.

More interesting is the implicit story behind the reference to Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου, *Mark, my son*.<sup>55</sup> Very unlikely is ὁ υἱός μου to be taken literally referring to Mark either as a birth son or an adoptive son. The expression is figurative and designates Mark as a spiritual 'son' of Peter in the sharing of common commitment to Christ.<sup>56</sup> The connection of John Mark to Peter reaches back to the beginning of the Christian movement in Jerusalem, as Acts 12:12-17 asserts. Mark evidentially traveled to Rome and became attached to Peter while they both were there. A very early church tradition reaching back to the end of the first century contends that Mark served as Peter's interpreter in Rome, and that Peter dictated to Mark the contents of the gospel that became the second gospel bearing Mark's name.<sup>57</sup> The encouraging story behind the reference here is that this young man who made a huge mistake in ministry when he abandoned Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey.<sup>58</sup> This happened in the mid 40s and now a little over a decade later Mark is in Rome

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help to me since I am at a strange (town) [τῷ ὄντι ἐπὶ ξένης] and in sickness. I searched for a ship to embark on, and found no-one to search for me; for I am in Babylon' (ἐν τῇ γὰρ Βαβυλῶναι εἰμει; 141-42). There is no doubt that the writer is giving his actual location, yet he appears at the same time to be playing on the association—traditional and natural to any Jew—between being 'in Babylon' and being alone in a strange (ἐπὶ ξένης) place. Horsley (147) rightly rejects the notion 'that Babylon is a secret name, used for its figurative significance,' but a simple play on the connotation of a name is much more plausible. It is not quite the same in 1 Peter, where it is a matter of two metaphorical associations of the name Babylon, one specific (Rome) and one general (alienation or displacement), yet the papyrus text aptly illustrates how easily this particular name could do double duty." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 311.]

<sup>55</sup>"The reference is probably to 'John who was called Mark,' first mentioned in Acts 12:12, whose mother Mary opened her house for prayer to the disciples in Jerusalem. The double name occurs again in Acts 12:25, where he becomes a companion of Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus, and in 15:37. In Acts 13:5, 13 he is called simply 'John,' and in 15:39 'Mark.' He is 'Mark' consistently in letters ascribed to Paul (cf. Philem 24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11). The information that he is cousin to Barnabas (Col 4:10) links him to the Acts accounts and helps explain Barnabas's attachment to him according to Acts 15:37-39. At the same time Paul's warm commendations of Mark (Col 4:10-11; 2 Tim 4:11) suggest that the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over him, as described in Acts 15:37-39, was only temporary. Even if the references in Colossians and 2 Timothy are questioned by those who doubt Pauline authorship, Philem 24 remains, with its clear mention of Mark among Paul's co-workers, specifically in Rome." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 312.]

<sup>56</sup>"Col 4:11 identifies Mark as a Jewish Christian, one of only three among Paul's 'fellow workers for the kingdom of God,' while the book of Acts points to an association between Mark and Peter going back to the early years of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12-17). With a little imagination, one could picture Peter marrying Mark's widowed mother, so that Mark actually became his adopted son. As we have seen, the phrase, 'she who in Babylon,' does not lend itself to such an interpretation. 'Son,' therefore, should be understood as 'convert' or 'disciple' (BGD, 833.1c) in the same way that Timothy is referred to as Paul's 'child' (τέκνον) in 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2 (cf. Titus in Titus 1:4; also Onesimus in Philem 10; of Paul's converts more generally, cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19). υἱός, 'son,' in this sense is attested only in the plural or in relation to a group (e.g., the Pharisees: Matt 12:27// Luke 11:19; Acts 23:6), but Peter seems to have adopted it here to give to his concluding words the ring of a family greeting (cf. his emphasis on the Christian community as a 'brotherhood' in 2:17; 5:9)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 312.]

<sup>57</sup>"Eusebius attributes a knowledge of this passage to Papias in the mid-second century (see Comment above on "Babylon"), in connection with a reference to Mark as a 'follower' (ἀκόλουθον) of Peter (HE 2.15.1). The tradition of a 'presbyter' even earlier than Papias refers to Mark as Peter's 'interpreter' (ἐρμηνευτής) in the sense that he 'wrote accurately all that he remembered ... of the things said or done by the Lord' (HE 3.39.15; note that Eusebius mentions again in 3.39.17 Papias's knowledge of this epistle). Despite Papias's acquaintance with this passage, it is not likely that he (or the mysterious presbyter who preceded him) created the tradition of Mark's responsibility for Peter's memoirs out of the simple phrase, 'Mark, my son.' Rather, Papias provides independent evidence of Mark's association with Peter in Rome. If the style of Mark's Gospel were not so obviously different from that of 1 Peter, he would be a more natural candidate than Silvanus for the role of Peter's amanuensis or literary secretary. Probably he is mentioned simply because he and Peter were working closely together at this time in the Roman church, and because his name would be familiar to at least a few of the congregations where the epistle would circulate (e.g., Colosse, Col 4:10; Philem 24; Ephesus, 2 Tim 4:11)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary : 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 312.]

<sup>58</sup>Acts 13:13-14: 13 Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. *John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem;* 14 but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia.

13 Αναχθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Πάφου οἱ περὶ Παῦλον ἦλθον εἰς Πέργην τῆς Παμφυλίας: *Ἰωάννης δὲ ἀποχωρήσας ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα.* 14 αὐτοὶ δὲ διελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Πέργης παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν τὴν Πισιδίαν,

active in ministry, and even according to Col 4:10, Philem 24, and 2 Tim 4:11 has been reconciled to Paul. Perhaps Peter saw himself in this young man and was drawn to him in order to help him utilize his ministry gifts. That the two worked closely together in the closing years of Peter's earthly life is an almost universal assumption in early Christianity. By including Mark in these greetings, Peter may well be implying that Mark as well as Silas played a role in the composition and delivery of the letter. Whatever the situation may have been, one thing is clear: a mistake in ministry early on did not destroy ministry for John Mark. God's grace reclaimed him for the cause of the gospel.

Peter's admonition in the greetings section is both typical and unusual: ἀσπάσσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης.<sup>59</sup> Cultural tradition dictates appropriate actions for greeting others beyond a verbal expression, which most commonly was χαίρειν (cf. 2 John 10-11). For those who have traveled and lived in different parts of our modern world, this reality is very clear. In the ancient world, the kiss on the cheek was the greeting beyond saying hello. Paul refers to the kiss as a holy kiss (ἀσπάσσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίω; cf. Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26). Neither of these expressions (holy kiss; kiss of love) specify a different way of kissing. Instead, they define the intent behind the greeting as being Christian in nature.

The encouragement to greet one another with a kiss that expressed sincere Christian love most likely also signals the assumption that this letter would be read in assembled worship settings among the various churches it was sent to.<sup>60</sup> Paul makes this explicit in 1 Thess. 5:27.<sup>61</sup> These letters from the highly respected leaders of Peter and Paul would be welcomed expressions of instruction and encouragement. These churches in ancient Anatolia, and those especially in the western province of Asia, enjoyed not only this letter of Peter, but Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon from Paul. Such a beginning collection of writings addressed directly to them would have been quickly copied before being passed on to the next congregation, and then greatly treasured by the different congregations. It would not be many years before these documents took on a level of authority as sacred writings, along side that of the Hebrew Bible in the Greek Septuagint form.

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This failure was considered significant enough that Paul absolutely refused to take Mark on the second missionary journey. The division over John Mark between Paul and Barnabas was so severe that they parted ways and went separate directions in ministry. Compare Acts 15:36-41:

36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. 39 The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

36 Μετὰ δὲ τινὰς ἡμέρας εἶπεν πρὸς Βαρναβᾶν Παῦλος· Ἐπιστρέψαντες δὴ ἐπισκεψώμεθα τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς κατὰ πόλιν πᾶσαν ἐν αἷς κατηγγείλαμεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἔχουσιν. 37 Βαρναβᾶς δὲ ἐβούλετο συμπαραλαβεῖν καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν καλούμενον Μάρκον· 38 Παῦλος δὲ ἠξίου, τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Παμφυλίας καὶ μὴ συνελθόντα αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἔργον, μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν τοῦτον. 39 ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμὸς ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τὸν τε Βαρναβᾶν παραλαβόντα τὸν Μάρκον ἐκπεῦσαι εἰς Κύπρον, 40 Παῦλος δὲ ἐπιλεξάμενος Σιλᾶν ἐξῆλθεν παραδοθεὶς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, 41 διήρχετο δὲ τὴν Συρίαν καὶ τὴν Κιλικίαν ἐπιστηρίζων τὰς ἐκκλησίας.

<sup>59</sup>"In Greco-Roman culture, the kiss (*philēma*) was an expression of affection (*philia*) among family members and close friends (*philoī*; see Adinolfi 1988, 183–86). The etiquette of the kiss varied in expression (lips to lips; lips to hand; lips to feet; cheek to cheek; kiss as embrace or hug) and according to social situation. It could serve as a gesture of greeting; of farewell; of respect, honor, and deference; of familial or fraternal affection; of sexual ardor; of reconciliation; or of friendship and solidarity.<sup>818</sup> As the letters of Paul also show, the Christian community adopted the kiss as a regular physical manifestation of their affection for one another, not as a perfunctory ritual but as a genuine expression of love within the brotherhood. Paul, however, preferred the expression 'holy kiss' (*philēma hagion*, Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26).<sup>819</sup> For both authors, however, this kiss was an expression of the familial affection typical of the Christian community, whose members regarded one another as sisters and brothers in the faith." [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 890.]

<sup>60</sup>"The author's encouragement of this greeting may suggest the presumption that the letter would be read during a worship assembly. Reference to the kiss in combination with the reading of letters, probably during the worship assembly, is found already in 1 Cor 16:19–20 and 1 Thess 5:26–27; cf. also Acts 20:37. Later evidence clearly attests the sharing of the kiss in the setting of the Eucharistic liturgy.<sup>821</sup>" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 891.]

<sup>61</sup>I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them.

Ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν κύριον ἀναγνωσθῆναι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

### c. **Benedictio, v. 14b**

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

#### Notes:

The final word of Peter to his readers is a prayer asking for God's peace to be upon them and upon all who are in spiritual union with Christ. The prayer wish for God's peace reflects a very traditional Jewish expression that was widely used in early Christian circles as well.<sup>62</sup> The Christian distinctive to this prayer wish is τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, *to those in Christ*. This reflects the Christian perspective that true peace can be found with God only through Jesus Christ. It was often a farewell also, and so the letter closes with Peter's farewell to them as a prayer for God's peace to permeate their lives and the congregations completely.

### d. **Review of the Contents of the Letter.**

#### Notes:

Before the leave this study of First Peter, a brief synopsis of what we have learned from the letter is appropriate. The outline of the letter that we have been following will help organize our review. Perhaps helpful also will be to frame those thoughts around a series of questions. Out of these can come some timeless truths that help us live the Christian life more as God desires.

**1. How did Peter put his ideas together to present to his readers?** He used the format of a letter that followed the general patterns of letting writing in his time. Such means of communication played a large role in that world for presenting one's ideas to a group of individuals.<sup>63</sup> The letter served as a "substitute visit" by the sender who was unable to personally visit his readers due to some circumstance. This meant that letters were 'occasional,' which implies that their writing was prompted by the sender learning of problems and situations among his targeted readers that needed his response.

This reality carries important implications about how to interpret the contents of a letter. The process of interpretation must give serious consideration to the historical identification of the problems and issues being address addressed in the letter. The application of the sender's advice, given to his first readers, to our modern situation is in direct relationship to how similar their problems are to the ones we are facing. The greater the similarity the closer and more direct the application. The greater the difference between then and now the more difficult and less certain it is to make direct applications.

#### 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**

<sup>62</sup>The letter ends in conventional epistolary fashion with a wish for peace (cf. Eph 6:23; Heb 13:20; 3 John 15; and Koskenniemi 1956, 148). Just as the author wished his readers 'peace' at the beginning of his letter (1:2), so he concludes on the same note. 'Peace' (*eirēnē*) thus forms, along with other terms (personal names [Peter, Silvanus, Mark, 5:12-13; 1:1]; grace [5:12; 1:2]; co-elect/elect [5:13; 1:1]; Babylon/Diaspora [5:14; 1:1]; Christ [5:14/1:1]) part of the grand literary inclusion framing the letter as a whole. The greeting contains no verb, but in such formulations its omission is conventional.

<sup>63</sup>"Peace" (*eirēnē*; Heb. *šālôm*) is the concluding term of the ancient Aaronic benediction ('... and give you peace,' Num 6:24-26). The wishing of peace reflects a conventional Israelite and Christian greeting (cf. 'go in peace,' Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50; 8:48; Acts 16:36; Jas 2:16). 'Peace' was also the salutation of the risen Lord (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 21, 26). Paul, by contrast, normally used 'grace' as the concluding term in his postscripts, with 2 Cor 13:11 forming a singular exception.<sup>824</sup> Peace, the sound state of a person and the prosperity of one's affairs as well as the state of mutual concord, naturally was precious to Israelites and Christians alike. The great sage Hillel taught: 'Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow-creatures, and drawing them near to the Torah' (m. 'Abot 1:12).<sup>825</sup>" [John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 891-92.]

<sup>63</sup>The letter is one of the most common and socially significant kinds of written text from antiquity. Extant letters represent every level of Greco-Roman society from Egyptian peasants to Roman emperors. The letter served the most basic needs of day-to-day communication and the most highly developed art and ideology. The letter is also arguably the most important, and certainly the most prevalent type of literature in early Christianity." [David Noel Freedman, vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 290.]

What we have discovered about First Peter is that this letter was composed by Peter while in Rome during the late 50s to middle 60s of the first century, some time prior to his martyrdom by Nero in the mid 60s. He utilized the help of Silas as his writing secretary, and most likely called on the services of John Mark also to assist in the process of composing the letter. This team of writers put together a beautiful expression of encouragement to faithfulness that provides deep insight into the sustaining power of God's grace.

The letter sought to encourage a wide range of Christian groups meeting in house churches in towns and cities scattered through the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Included in the readership are folks in very rural settings and also in highly urbanized settings. They came out of a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds that included Jews, Greeks, Romans, along with localized ethnic heritages. There were very wealthy folks and also very poor folks, as well as a considerable number of slaves in this mixture. They all had grown up in other religious traditions and were first generation believers in this new religion called Christianity.



The churches seem to be stable and relatively free from the influence of heretical teaching at the time of the writing of this letter. But comparison with First and Second Timothy sent to Ephesus in Asia, along with Colossians and Philemon sent to Colossae during the same general time frame paints a different picture for Ephesus and Colossae in Asia. Considerable problems with false teachers and the promotion of heresy existed in these two locations. About a decade or so earlier the churches in the province of Galatia had struggled greatly under the false teaching of the Judaizing influence. Either Peter opted to not address such problems that may have lingered there, or by the writing of First Peter these problems had diminished to such a point that he felt no need to address them. Or, he may have felt that these problems were more isolated and localized to just a few of the provinces and that the writings of Paul had already adequately addressed them. Certainly from Silas and also by this point from John Mark he had learned how Paul had sought to solve these issues of false teachers.

The problems that he did address in the church largely focused on a common issue being experienced in various ways by most all the congregations. That issue revolved around the negative image this new religious movement experienced from non-Christians in the communities. This negative view of Christianity sometimes erupted into persecution ranging from verbal abuse to some physical violence against those identified as Christians. Peter doesn't feel from his sources of information about their situation that many believers were denying their faith in the face of such hostility. But he was aware that they were having to pay a real price for their Christian commitment. Thus the letter is largely centered on helping these believers understand who they actually are in the eyes of God, and what their commitment to Christ has gained for them spiritually both in this life and for all eternity. Out of a strong spiritual self identity they can hopefully utilize to the fullest God's presence with them for coping with the opposition they are facing.

Thus one of the fundamental contributions that First Peter has made over the centuries is to provide a source of inspiration and insight to Christians who are going through really hard times. Especially is this true when they are suffering hostility to their Christian faith from people around them. Peter gives deep insight into both how God looks at His people in Christ, and the extent of His commitment to help them cope with their trials.

## 2. What did he say about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit?

The portrait of God that Peter paints in his letter is diverse and rich. The initial strokes in this portrait are painted at the beginning of the letter *in the Adscriptio*: *chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood*, κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς, ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος, εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥάντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:2). The implicit trinitarian affirma-

tion in the letter *Adscriptio* summarizes Peter's conception of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father chooses; the Spirit makes holy; the Son's blood cleanses.

The initial strokes continue **in the letter Proem** (1:3-12): God who is Father of Christ acts out of His abundant mercy to give spiritual birth (1:3): ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς. . . . The expression of that mercy is the resurrection of Christ (1:3): δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν. The God's power protects believers for the day of salvation (1:5): τοὺς ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ φρουρουμένους. That final day is defined as a revealing of Christ (1:7): ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ made God's salvation plan known to the Old Testament prophets (1:11): ἐδήλου τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ. This focused on Christ's sufferings and subsequent glory (1:11): τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας. The evangelists who brought the gospel message to the initial readers were being used by the Holy Spirit to do this work (1:12): διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ.

Thus with these introductory brushes on the portrait of God in these two beginning segments of the letter, that often serve to set the tone for the rest of the letter, we discover a rich understanding of God in relation to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The central activity of God presented here is His work of salvation for sinful humanity. In the letter body then we can anticipate finding this initial picture 'fleshed out' with more details.

**The first section on holy living** in 1:13-2:10 begins the amplification of the picture. The beginning detailed stroke in the letter body is the assertion that Jesus Christ's coming again will bring to believers God's grace (1:13): τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The God who calls us into salvation is holy and thus expects us as His children to be holy (1:14-16): κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε. This same God impartially judges all humanity as Father on the basis of our actions (1:17): τὸν ἀπροσωπολήμπτως κρίνοντα κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον. Our redemption from sin was accomplished by the precious blood of Christ shed like a sacrificial lamb (1:19): τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἁσπίλου Χριστοῦ. The Father planned this out before He created the world and then carried it out through Christ at the end of the world (1:20-21): προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, φανερωθέντος δὲ ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων δι' ὑμᾶς. . . . Once again God's having raised Jesus from the dead and then having glorified Him is affirmed (1:21): θεὸν τὸν ἐγείραντα αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα. As such then God becomes the object of our faith and hope (1:21): ὥστε τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι εἰς θεόν.

Next, what God says lasts forever (1:23, 25): λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος... τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. What God has said that lasts forever is the orally preached gospel of salvation (1:25): τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς.

God is in the process of building Himself a new temple on earth: the collection of believers who have 'tasted' His goodness (2:1-8): ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος... αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς. In this new temple, believers function both as building stones and as priests offering up spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ (2:5): εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In that construction process, the believing community now becomes God's new chosen people (2:9-10): Ὑμεῖς γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλεῖον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν,....

**In the second section on relationships with others** in 2:11-3:12, God's will becomes the basis for relating properly to both outsiders and insiders in the world around us (2:11-17): οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀγαθοποιούντας φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν. Through doing what God desires we nullify the criticism of the outside world against us and our God. For Christian slaves (2:18-25), suffering abuse for doing God's will bring His approval (2:20): εἰ ἀγαθοποιούντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῷ.

The incredible example of Christ's suffering unjustly in his crucifixion (2:21-25) should inspire slaves to follow in His footsteps (21): καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ. In this unjust suffering, Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross in order to enable us to live righteously (2:24): ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὗ τῷ μῶλωτι ἰάθητε. Thus we have returned to Christ, as the Shepherd and Guardian of our very lives (2:25): ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

Living by God's will also includes Christian wives with non-Christian husbands (3:1-6). God values in them a quiet dignity flowing outward from within (3:4): ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν

ένωπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής. In putting her hope in God, the Christian wife identifies with Sarah and other wives in the Old Testament (3:5-6). Christian husbands must treat their wives like queens if they expect God to listen to their prayers (3:7). The entire community of believers must live by God's will (3:8-12) since God's stance is positive toward the righteous and negative toward those doing evil (3:12): ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὤτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακά.

In **the third section, the lengthy discussion on unjust suffering** in 3:13-5:11, certain aspects about God surface as well. One important coping mechanism for facing suffering is to sanctify Christ as Lord (3:15): κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν. Our good lifestyle is a reflection of spiritual union with Christ (3:16): ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφήν. Suffering unjustly may on occasion reflect God's will (3:17): εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν.

For a second time the example of Christ suffering unjustly comes to the surface as an inspiration to believers generally (3:18-25). Christ's death, resurrection, and exaltation stand as the means of bringing salvation to repentant sinners (3:18b-25). His once for all death and resurrection is central (3:18): καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπασι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. The inspiration of this by Christ inspires believers to suffer unjustly knowing that God can bring good out of their bad experience, just as He did for Christ.

In light of this, we are to arm ourselves with the same way of thinking that Christ possessed (4:1, 2-6): Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε. We are beneficiaries and stewards of the manifold grace of God (4:7-11), which obligates us to service (4:10): ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα, εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ. In properly expressed service, God receives the glory since it is He working through us, and not we ourselves (4:11): ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζηται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν. He supplies the strength and the words for us to use (4:11).

The experience of unjust suffering is indeed a sharing in the sufferings of Christ (4:13; κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν), a sign of divine blessing with the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life (4:14; τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται), an occasion for glorying God (4:16; δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ), and an opportunity to entrust our life into God's hands as the faithful Creator (4:19; οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ).

Peter reminds his readers that he was a witness to Christ's sufferings (5:1): ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων. The spiritual leaders are commissioned to take care of believers as God's flock, not theirs (5:2): ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

God's posture of opposing the proud but giving grace to the humble from Prov. 3:34 not only applies to spiritual leaders (5:1-5) but becomes the basis for his final admonitions in 5:6-11. The letter closes with a powerful affirmation of God's all encompassing grace (5:10, ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος) that will restore, support, strengthen, and establish believers in their experience of suffering.

**In the conclusio**, we are reminded this all encompassing grace is the true grace of God (5:12): ἀληθὴ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ. And believers once again are in spiritual union with Christ (5:14): τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

Wow! What a beautiful portrait of God that Peter paints in this letter. It is a picture of a God who loves, is kind and caring, but who is holy and expects His people to be so. He has graciously reached out through Christ to provide eternal salvation to all who will come to Him through Christ. And His Spirit comes to sustain and enable believers to live according to His will. But, also, God is the Judge of all mankind with exacting demands upon every person, including His own people. At the coming of Christ, all humanity will face Him in this judgment. Only those who have experienced and followed His sustaining grace will come through this judgment successfully.

These beautiful truths regarding our God never change and thus apply to us, just as they did to the first readers of this letter. From this magnificent picture of our God, we can burst forth in the doxologies of praise prompted by Peter in 4:11 and 5:11.

To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. (4:11)  
ᾧ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. (5:11)  
αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

### 3. What did he say about the communities of believers that the letter was sent to originally?

#### **The historical picture of the first readers is rather limited.**

In the letter *Adscriptio* (1:1), they are defined as exiles of the diaspora located in the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: παρεπιδήμοις διασποράς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας. The vast territory covered in these provinces contained a great diversity of ethnic groups of people from



not just Jewish heritage, but Greeks and Romans from the west and Persian and other ethnic groups from the east. Mixed into this melting pot of cultures were a huge variety of local cultures and ethnic groups. They are defined by Peter as *exiles*, παρεπιδήμοις, which carried a highly negative meaning socially in that world as foreign immigrants. Peter turns this negative term into a positive one by using it to highlight that this world is as a foreign land to believers.

But the negative connotation of the term παρεπιδήμοις signals a theme to be developed throughout the letter underscoring how much difficulty these believing communities faced in gaining acceptance from friends and neighbors in the towns and cities where they lived. They are suffering various kinds of trials (λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, 1:6). Peter will expand the label παρεπιδήμοις to *foreigners and exiles* in 2:11: παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους. They were living among Gentiles (2:12, ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν), who sometimes were slandering them with labels such as *criminals* (2:12, ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν).

Some of his readers were Christian slaves with abusive owners (2:18-20): Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπόταις, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς. Some of his readers were Christian wives with non-Christian husbands (3:1-6): Ὅμοίως γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα καὶ εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἀνευ λόγου κερδηθήσονται.

On occasion some of them faced people demanding answers about their religion (3:15): ἔτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος. Sometimes many of them faced intense efforts to intimidate them into abandoning their Christian faith (3:14): τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε.

Many of them came out of paganism and an immoral life style into Christianity (4:3): ἀρκετὸς ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι, πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κῶμοις, πότοις, καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας. After conversion, their pagan friends were surprised by their refusal to continue joining the friends in immoral living and thus turned on them in defaming the God the believers now worshipped (4:4): ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν, βλασφημοῦντες.

This experience of suffering unjustly was first described in the letter *Proem* as a trial by fire (1:7): διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζόμενου. In the letter body at 4:12, it is amplified as a *fiery ordeal*: τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρῶσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη. For the Gentile believers having to face religious based hostility for the first time, this came as a shock (4:12): μὴ ξενίζεσθε. . . ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος. Probably the Jewish Christians in the churches were already accustomed to experiencing hostility from pagan neighbors.

The spiritual leaders among these communities of faith are labeled as *elders* and told to pastor God's flock under their care as care givers (5:1-4): Πρεσβυτέρους. . . ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες.

These communities of believers have some awareness not only of Peter but also of Silas (5:12) and of John Mark (5:13). Whether the two men had previously visited this region in its entirety or not we do not know. Clearly Silas, from having accompanied the apostle Paul on the second and third missionary journeys had been active in the western provinces mentioned at the beginning of the letter: Galatia and Asia.

Thus we know something about these people historically, although probably not nearly as much as we would like to know.

**But the spiritual portrait of these believers is rich and profound.** A major objective of Peter in this

letter was to affirmed these 'no bodies' as a very special people in the eyes of God. Thus, he spends quite a bit of space asserting their spiritual identity as believers in Christ.

The letter *Adscriptio* begins this affirmation in 1:1-2 with several declarations of the spiritual situation of his first readers. Peter juxtaposes two opposite terms in addressing them as ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις, **chosen exiles**. The choosing of them comes from God and is developed as κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός (**according to God the Father's foreknowledge**), ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος (**in sanctification by the Spirit**), and εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (**for obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**). Thus at the outset Peter addressed their self esteem by affirming the spiritual status granted to them by God in contrast to the negative view of them from the world around them. The label of διασποράς, **diaspora**, carries the subtle tone of being God's people, given its Jewish background of usage.

The letter *Proem* (1:3-12) continues this positive affirmation with an eloquent picture of the mercy of God providing them with **new birth** (ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς), **a living hope** (ἐλπίδα ζωῶσαν), **an imperishable inheritance** (κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμόραντον) already reserved for them in Heaven, and **a divine protection of them for final salvation in eternity** (σωτηρίαν ἐτοίμην ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ). Out of this comes great joy and rejoicing.

Thus with these signals of spiritual status and blessing given in the two opening segments of the letter, we can anticipate amplification of these core ideas coming in the letter body.

In **the first section of the letter body on holy living** (1:13-2:10), the theme of salvation, σωτηρία, so richly expressed in the letter *Proem* is the primary point of expansion in the letter body. In 1:13, it is centered in the expectation of divine grace coming to believers at the return of Christ: ἐλπίσατε ἐπὶ τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. This σωτηρία initially received in conversion is also a divine call to holy living in this life (1:15): κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε. Without question, the definition of holy living is defined solely by God (1:16).

This σωτηρία is also a spiritual ransoming from immoral living that was accomplished by the blood of Christ (1:18-19): ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ. The obligation growing out of this is to live in reverence of God all the days of our life (1:17): ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε. Thus our faith and hope are focused on God through Christ (1:21): τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι εἰς θεόν.

This σωτηρία is additionally an obedience to the Truth that brings purification of our life (1:22): Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας. Crucial to this obedience is a profound sacrificial love for our spiritual brothers and sisters in the community of believers (1:22): εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐκ καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς. The foundation of this commitment is set forth again as new birth from God rather than from human effort (1:23-25): ἀναγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σποράς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου, διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος.

The obligations of this σωτηρία are presented again in 2:1-3 in terms of shedding immoral living in favor of a passionate hunger for the spiritual nourishment that God alone can provide. Closely connected to that is the willingness to allow God to incorporate us as living stones into His new temple where we then serve Him as spiritual priests (2:4-8). As such we enjoy the status, as Jewish and Gentile believers, of being God's new people (2:9-10).

In **the second section of the letter body on obligations** (2:11-3:12), the theme of σωτηρία focuses on developing proper relationships as believers with both non-Christians and with other believers. It is summarized in 2:11-17, in terms of living honorably among the Gentiles (τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν) and of expressing sacrificial love to fellow believers (τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε).

*To outsiders* believers are obligated to show respect for political leaders (1:13b-14, εἴτε βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, 14 εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ πεμπόμενοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν), and to all people generally (1:17a, πάντας τιμήσατε). Three groups of believers are singled out for specific instruction: Christian slaves with non-Christian owners (2:18-25), Christian wives with non-Christian husbands (3:1-6), and Christian husbands with Christian wives (3:7). All of the instructions given to these three sets of individuals are developed off the foundational obligation in 2:13: Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον (**show proper respect to every human leader because of the Lord**). These sets of obligations began with the collective responsibility of the Christian community to government leaders (2:13-17) and in 3:8-12 Peter returns to the collective obligations of the community of believers *to one another internally*, again based on

the fundamental obligation in 2:13.

In **the third segment of the letter body on persecution** (3:13-5:11), this σωτηρία from God is essential for successfully coping with hostility to one's religious faith. Throughout the three subunits of material in 3:13-4:11, 4:12-19, and 5:1-11, Peter's focus is upon utilizing God's resources made available through Christ to believers to face opposition to one's faith. Strengthening our commitment to Christ (3:15, κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν) is the right option rather than becoming afraid and intimidated by threats (3:14). Being prepared to explain this salvation as hope to opponents is important (3:15), but to do it with proper respect of even the opponent is important (3:16-22).

Central to successful coping is to arm ourselves with Christ's thinking toward unjust suffering (4:1). This will enable us to avoid giving in to purely human impulses that typify pagan ways of living (4:2-6). Another dimension is what lies ahead at final judgment of both believers and non-believers (4:4-6), where God will hold everyone strictly accountable for their actions. Additionally, the nearness of the end of all things should prompt believers into serious disciplined ministry to others, especially inside the community of believers (4:7-11).

Our faith commitment to Christ in σωτηρία has identified us with Christ's sufferings on the cross that can and will extend to our personal suffering of persecution (4:12-19). But our suffering because of Christ only binds us closer to the sufferings of Christ and thus becomes a source of joy and rejoicing, rather than shame and embarrassment. The ultimate victory over such suffering is assured because Christ gained victory over them and we share in that victory now, and will share in it for eternity at final judgment. Therefore with confidence we must entrust our lives now and for eternity into the hands of our God (4:19).

The quality of spiritual leadership given in the communities of faith must be high and based on the servant model of leadership (5:1-5), if God's people are to be ready to face persecution. That kind of leadership must be embraced by all in the community of believers. The fundamental source of the spiritual principle for this comes from Prov. 3:34, that Peter quotes in 5:5 as the basis of his appeal to leaders in 5:1-4) and then expands in 5:6-11 with traditional Jewish scripture exposition. Thus Peter closes with believers being called upon to embrace God fully into their lives, to firmly resist the Devil in his efforts to undermine this commitment, and to accept the divine promise of renewal and support growing out of their suffering.

In **the letter Conclusio** (5:12-14), believers are called upon to take their stand in the grace of God (ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰς ἣν στήτε), which Peter described as all encompassing (θεὸς πάσης χάριτος) in 5:10.

What Peter affirms to these suffering believers in the first century continues to have application to us as committed believers in the modern world. And especially is this true when we are called upon to face opposition because of our faith commitment to Christ. Every believer in the modern world needs to remember his or her value to God, no matter what other people may think or say about us. We must never forget that our σωτηρία in Christ has brought us into God's family as His chosen people who share relationship with Him now and will continue to do so throughout eternity. In that final judgment, believers will be separated out from the hostility of non-believers for all eternity and will no longer face criticism for their commitment to serve God through Christ. By God's grace being poured out on believers in final judgment, they will be vindicated for having resisted the pressure to cave into the threats of non-believers in this life. The bonds of community as the family of God in this world enable us to draw strength from one another in order to stand faithful to our Christ.

This is the heart of Peter's message to the suffering believers in ancient Anatolia. And also his enduring message to us today as committed servants of Christ. Hopefully your response and mine is that of Peter's:

**“To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.”**

# ΠΕΤΡΟΥ Α Diagram<sup>1</sup>

## Outline of Contents in First Peter:

### Praescriptio:

#### Superscriptio.

1.1 Πέτρος  
ἀπόστολος  
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

#### Adscriptio.

ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις  
διασπορᾶς  
Πόντου,  
Γαλατίας,  
Καππαδοκίας,  
Ἀσίας,  
καὶ  
Βιθυνίας,

1.2 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς,  
ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος,  
εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·

#### Salutatio.

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη.

### Proem:

1 1.3

Εὐλογητὸς (εστὼ) ὁ θεὸς

καὶ

πατὴρ

↑ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,  
κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος  
ὁ...ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς  
εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωῆς  
δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ  
ἐκ νεκρῶν,  
1.4 εἰς κληρονομίαν  
ἄφθαρτον  
καὶ  
ἀμίαντον  
καὶ  
ἀμάραντον,  
τετηρημένην  
ἐν οὐρανοῖς  
εἰς ὑμᾶς

1.5

ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ  
τοῦς...φρουρουμένους  
διὰ πίστεως  
εἰς σωτηρίαν  
/-----|  
ἐτοίμην ἀποκαλυφθῆναι  
ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ.

1.6

ἐν ᾧ ἠγαλλιᾶσθε,  
(εστίν) ὀλίγον ἄρτι  
εἰ δέον  
λυπηθέντες

↑ ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς,

### 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

1.7 ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως... εὐρεθῆ  
πολυτιμότερον  
χρυσίου τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου  
δὲ  
διὰ πυρὸς  
δοκιμαζομένου  
εἰς ἔπαινον  
καὶ  
δόξαν  
καὶ  
τιμὴν  
ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

1.8 οὐκ ἰδόντες  
ὄν...ἀγαπᾶτε,  
ἄρτι  
μὴ ὀρῶντες  
δὲ  
πιστεύοντες  
εἰς ὄν...ἀγαλλιᾶσθε  
χαρᾶ  
ἀνεκκλαλήτῳ  
καὶ  
δεδοξασμένη,

1.9 κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν  
σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν,

1.10 /-----|  
περὶ ἧς σωτηρίας ἐξεζήτησαν  
καὶ  
ἐξηραύνησαν προφῆται

1.11 ἐραυνῶντες  
/-----|  
εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν ἐδήλου τὸ...πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ  
/-----|  
προμαρτυρόμενον τὰ...παθήματα  
καὶ  
μετὰ ταῦτα  
τὰς...δόξας·

1.12 /-----|  
οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη |  
/-----|  
ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτά,  
-----|  
ἀ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν  
διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς  
πνεύματι ἁγίῳ  
ἀποσταλέντι  
ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ,  
εἰς ᾧ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψα

1.13 Διὸ  
ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν,  
νήφοντες τελείως,

2 **ἐλπίζατε**  
ἐπὶ τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν  
ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

1.14 ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς,  
μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι  
ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν  
ταῖς πρότερον...ἐπιθυμίαις,

1.15 ἀλλὰ  
κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον  
καὶ  
ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ

3 **αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι...γενήθητε,**  
1.16 <sup>1</sup>διότι γέγραπται  
ὅτι Ἄγιοι ἔσεσθε,  
ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος.

1.17 Καὶ  
ἀπροσωπολήμπως  
εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν...κρίνοντα  
κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον,  
ἐν φόβῳ  
τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν

4 **τὸν...χρόνον ἀναστράφητε**  
1.18 εἰδότες  
ὅτι οὐ. . . ἐλυτρώθητε  
φθαρτοῖς,  
ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ,  
ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς  
/-----|  
πατροπαραδότου,

1.19 ἀλλὰ  
(ἐλυτρώθητε)  
τιμίῳ αἵματι  
ὡς ἄμνου  
ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου  
Χριστοῦ,  
μὲν  
προεγνωσμένου  
/---|  
πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου,  
δὲ  
φανερωθέντος  
/----|  
ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων  
δι' ὑμᾶς  
/-----|

1.20 τοὺς δι' αὐτοῦ πιστοὺς

1.21

<sup>1</sup>\*G-D, p. 199: διότι in place of causal ὅτι: 1 Pt 1:16a, 24; 2:6

εἰς θεὸν

τὸν ἐγείραντα αὐτὸν

ἐκ νεκρῶν

καὶ

δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα,

/-----|

ὥστε τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐλπίδα εἶναι

εἰς θεόν.

1.22

Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες

ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας

εἰς φιλαδελφίαν

ἀνυπόκριτον

ἐκ καρδίας

5 **ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε**

ἐκτενῶς,

1.23

ἀναγεγεννημένοι

οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς

ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου,

διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος·

1.24

διότι\* πᾶσα σὰρξ -----

ὡς χόρτος,

καὶ

πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῆς -----

ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου·

ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος,

καὶ

τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν·

1.25

δὲ

τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει

εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

δέ

6 **τοῦτο ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα**

τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν

εἰς ὑμᾶς.

2.1

οὔν

Ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν κακίαν

καὶ

πάντα δόλον

καὶ

ὑποκρίσεις

καὶ

φθόνους

καὶ

πάσας καταλαλιὰς,

2.2

ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη

7 **τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε,**

ἐν αὐτῷ

ἵνα...ἀύξηθῆτε

\*G-D, p. 199: διότι in place of causal ὅτι: 1 Pt 1:16a, 24; 2:6

2.3 εἰς σωτηρίαν,  
εἰ ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος.

2.4 Πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι,  
λίθον ζῶντα,  
ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον  
παρὰ δὲ θεῶ ἐκλεκτὸν  
ἐντιμον

2.5 καὶ  
ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες  
8 **αὐτοὶ...οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς**  
εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον,  
ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας

εὐπροσδέκτους θεῶ  
διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·

2.6 διότι περιέχει  
ἐν γραφῇ·

Ἴδοῦ  
τίθημι...λίθον  
ἐν Σιών

ἀκρογωνιαῖον  
ἐκλεκτὸν  
ἐντιμον,

καὶ  
ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυθῆ.

2.7 οὖν  
9 **ὑμῖν ἡ τιμὴ -----**  
τοῖς πιστεύουσιν·  
δὲ

10 **ἀπιστοῦσιν...οὗτος ἐγενήθη**

2.8 εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας  
καὶ  
λίθος προσκόμματος  
καὶ  
πέτρα σκανδάλου·

οἱ προσκόπτουσιν  
τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες·

11 **εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν.**

2.9 δὲ

12 **Ὑμεῖς (εἰσιν) γένος ἐκλεκτόν,  
βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα,  
ἔθνος ἅγιον,  
λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν,**  
ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε

ἐκ σκότους  
τοῦ... ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος  
εἰς τὸ θαυμαστόν αὐτοῦ φῶς·  
οἱ ποτε οὐ λαὸς  
δὲ  
-- νῦν λαὸς θεοῦ,  
οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι  
δὲ  
-- νῦν ἐλεηθέντες.

2.10

2.11 Ἀγαπητοί,

13 **παρακαλῶ**

ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους  
**ἀπέχεσθαι**

τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν,  
αἵτινες στρατεύονται  
κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς·  
ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

2.12

τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν... ἔχοντες καλήν,  
ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν  
ὡς κακοποιῶν,  
ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων  
ἐποπτεύοντες  
ἵνα... δοξάσωσι τὸν θεὸν  
ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς.

14 2.13 **Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει**

οὐὰ τὸν κύριον·

2.14

εἴτε βασιλεῖ  
ὡς ὑπερέχοντι,  
εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν  
ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις  
εἰς ἐκδίκησιν  
κακοποιῶν  
δὲ  
ἔπαινον  
ἀγαθοποιῶν

2.15

(ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ,  
ἀγαθοποιοῦντας

2.16

φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν)·  
ὡς ἐλεύθεροι,  
καὶ  
μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα  
ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν,

ἀλλ'  
ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι.

15 <sup>2.17</sup> πάντας τιμήσατε,  
16 τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε,  
17 τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε,  
18 τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε.

19 <sup>2.18</sup> Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι... τοῖς δεσπόταις,  
ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ

οὐ μόνον  
τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς  
καὶ  
ἐπιεικέσιν  
ἀλλὰ  
καὶ  
τοῖς σκολιοῖς.

<sup>2.19</sup> γὰρ  
20 **τοῦτο (-----) χάρις**  
διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ  
εἰ... ὑποφέρει τις λύπας  
πάσχων ἀδίκως·

<sup>2.20</sup> γὰρ  
21 **ποῖον (-----) κλέος**  
ἁμαρτάνοντες  
καὶ  
κολαφιζόμενοι  
εἰ... ὑπομενεῖτε;  
ἀλλ'  
ἀγαθοποιοῦντες  
καὶ  
πάσχοντες  
εἰ... ὑπομενεῖτε,  
22 **τοῦτο (-----) χάρις**  
παρὰ θεῶ.

<sup>2.21</sup> γὰρ  
εἰς τοῦτο  
23 **ἐκλήθητε,**  
καὶ  
ὅτι... Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν  
| ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν,  
| ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν  
| ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε  
| τοῖς ἰχνεσιν αὐτοῦ·  
<sup>2.22</sup> ὃς ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν  
| οὐδὲ  
-- εὐρέθη δόλος  
| ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ·  
<sup>2.23</sup> ὃς λοιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδορεῖ,  
-- πάσχων οὐκ ἠπείλει,

2.24 | δὲ  
 -- παρεδίδου τῷ κρίνοντι  
 | δικαίως·  
 ὅς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν  
 | ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ  
 | ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον,  
 | |-----|  
 | ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι  
 | τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ  
 | ἵνα...ζήσωμεν·  
 οὗ τῷ μῶλωπι ἰάθητε.

2.25 γὰρ  
 24 **ἦτε...πλανώμενοι,**  
 ὡς πρόβατα  
 ἀλλὰ  
 25 **ἐπεστράφητε**  
 νῦν  
 ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα  
 καὶ  
 ἐπίσκοπον  
 τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

3.1 Ὅμοίως  
 26 **γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν,**  
 καὶ εἰ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ  
 διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς  
 ἀνευ λόγου  
 ἵνα...κερδηθήσονται

3.2 ἐν φόβῳ  
 ἐποπιτεύσαντες τὴν...ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν.

27 3.3 **ὧν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἕξωθεν**  
 ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν  
 καὶ  
 περιθέσεως χρυσίων  
 ἢ  
 ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος,

3.4 ἀλλ'  
 28 -- ---- **ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος**  
 ἐν τῷ ἀφάρτῳ

πραέως  
 καὶ  
 ἡσυχίου  
 τοῦ...πνεύματος,  
 ὁ ἐστίν...πολυτελής.  
 ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ

3.5 γάρ

οὕτως  
ποτε  
καὶ

29 **αἱ ἅγαι γυναῖκες...ἐκόσμουν ἑαυτάς,**

αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι εἰς θεὸν

ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν,

3.6

ὡς Σάρρα ὑπήκουσεν τῷ Ἀβραάμ,

κύριον αὐτὸν καλοῦσα·

ἧς ἐγενήθητε τέκνα

ἀγαθοποιοῦσαι

καὶ

μὴ φοβούμεναι μηδεμίαν πτόησιν.

ὁμοίως

30 <sup>3.7</sup> **Οἱ ἄνδρες...συνοικοῦντες**

κατὰ γυνῶσιν,

ὡς ἀσθενεστέρω σκεύει

τῷ γυναικείῳ ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν,

ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς,

εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

3.8

δὲ

Τὸ τέλος

31 **πάντες (ὄντες) ὁμόφρονες,**

**συμπαθεῖς,**

**φιλάδελφοι,**

**εὐσπλαγχνοὶ,**

**ταπεινόφρονες,**

32 <sup>3.9</sup> ----- **μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ**

ἢ

33 ----- -- ----- **λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας**

δὲ

τούναντίον

34 ----- **εὐλογοῦντες,**

ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε

ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε.

3.10

γάρ

**ὁ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν**

καὶ

**ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς**

35 **παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν**

ἀπὸ κακοῦ

καὶ

36 ----- **χείλη**

τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον,

3.11

δὲ

37 ----- **ἐκκλινάτω**

ἀπὸ κακοῦ

38 καὶ ----- ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν,  
 39 ----- ζητησάτω εἰρήνην  
 40 καὶ ----- διωξάτω αὐτήν·  
 3.12 ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου (εἰσὶν)  
 ἐπὶ δικαίους  
 καὶ  
 ὧτα αὐτοῦ (εἰσὶν)  
 εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν,  
 δὲ  
 πρόσωπον κυρίου (ἐστὶν)  
 ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακά.

3.13 Καὶ  
 41 **τίς (ἐστὶν) ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς**  
 ἐὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε;

3.14 ἀλλ’  
 εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε  
 διὰ δικαιοσύνην,  
 42 **(ἐστε)μακάριοι.**

43 δὲ  
**τὸν φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε**  
 μηδὲ  
 44 **ταραχθῆτε,**

45 3.15 **κύριον τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε**  
 ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν,  
 ἔτοιμοι αἰεὶ  
 πρὸς ἀπολογία  
 παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον  
 περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος,  
 3.16 ἀλλὰ  
 μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου,  
 συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν,  
 ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε  
 ἵνα...καταισχυθῶσιν  
 | ἀγαθὴν  
 /-----| ἐν Χριστῷ  
 οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν...ἀναστροφήν.

3.17 γὰρ  
 ἀγαθοποιοῦντας,  
 εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 46 **κρεῖττον (ἐστὶν) ...πάσχειν**  
 ἢ  
 47 -----  
 κακοποιοῦντας.

3.18

ὅτι

καὶ  
ἄπαξ  
περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν

48 **Χριστὸς...ἔπαθεν,**

49 **δίκαιος -----**

ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων,  
ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγη τῷ θεῷ,  
θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ  
δὲ  
ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι·

|<sup>2</sup>-----|<sup>1</sup>-----|

3.19

3.20

|  
ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν...ἐκήρυξεν,  
ἀπειθήσασίν

ποτε

ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία  
ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε  
κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ  
/-----|  
εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι...διεσώθησαν  
δι' ὕδατος.

τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτῶ ψυχαί,

/-----|

3.21

ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σῶζει βάπτισμα,  
οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ρύπου |  
ἀλλὰ |  
συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα|

εἰς θεόν,

/-----|

δι' ἀναστάσεως

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

/-----|

3.22

ὅς ἐστιν

ἐν δεξιᾷ θεοῦ  
πορευθεὶς  
εἰς οὐρανὸν

ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων.

4.1

οὓν

Χριστοῦ παθόντος σαρκὶ  
καὶ

50 **ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε,**

4.2

ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας,  
εἰς τὸ μηκέτι (βιῶσαι)  
ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις

ἀλλὰ

<sup>2</sup>The ἐν ᾧ can be understood as adverbial temporal (“in the time which”) or as adjectival (“in which”) going back to πνεύματι as the antecedent.

θελήματι θεοῦ  
τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.

- 4.3 γὰρ  
51 **ἀρκετὸς (ἐστὶν) ὁ παρεληλυθὸς χρόνος**  
τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι,  
πεπορευμένους  
ἐν ἀσελγείαις,  
ἐπιθυμίαις,  
οἴνοφλυγίαις,  
κώμοις,  
πότοις,  
καὶ  
ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις,  
4.4 ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται  
μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν  
εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν,  
βλασφημοῦντες·  
/-----|  
4.5 οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμῳ ἔχοντι κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς·  
4.6 γὰρ  
εἰς τοῦτο  
καὶ  
52 **νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη**  
ἵνα κριθῶσι  
μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ  
δὲ  
ζῶσι  
κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.  
4.7 δὲ  
Πάντων  
53 **τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν.**  
οὔν  
54 **σωφρονήσατε**  
καὶ  
55 **νήψατε**  
εἰς προσευχάς·  
4.8 πρὸ πάντων  
τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες,  
ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος  
ἀμαρτιῶν·  
4.9 φιλόξενοι  
εἰς ἀλλήλους  
ἀνευ γογγυσμοῦ·  
4.10 ἕκαστος  
καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα,  
εἰς ἑαυτοὺς  
αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες  
ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι  
ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ·

4.11 εἰ τις λαλεῖ,  
 56 **(λαλεῖτω)**  
 ὡς λόγια θεοῦ·  
 εἰ τις διακονεῖ,  
 57 **(διακονεῖτω)**  
 ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος  
 ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός·  
 ἐν πᾶσιν  
 ἵνα...δοξάζεται ὁ θεὸς  
 διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,  
 ᾧ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος  
 εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων·  
 ἀμήν.

4.12 Ἀγαπητοί,  
 ἐν ὑμῖν  
 58 **μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ...πυρώσει**  
 πρὸς πειρασμὸν  
 ὑμῖν γινομένην  
 ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος,  
 4.13 ἀλλὰ  
 καθὸ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν  
 59 **χαίρετε,**  
 καὶ  
 ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ  
 ἵνα...χαρῆτε  
 ἀγαλλιώμενοι.

4.14 εἰ ὄνειδίζεσθε  
 ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ,  
 60 **(ἐστε) μακάριοι,**  
 ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται.

4.15 γάρ  
 61 **μὴ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω**  
 ὡς φονεὺς  
 ἢ  
 κλέπτης  
 ἢ  
 κακοποιὸς  
 ἢ  
 ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος·

4.16 δὲ  
 εἰ ὡς Χριστιανός,  
 62 **μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω,**  
 δὲ  
 63 **δοξαζέτω τὸν θεὸν**  
 ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ.

4.17 ὅτι  
 64 **ὁ καιρὸς (ἐστίν)**  
 τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα  
 ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ·  
 δὲ  
 εἰ πρῶτον ἀφ' ἡμῶν,  
 65 **τί (ἐστε) τὸ τέλος**  
 τῶν ἀπειθούντων τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ;

4.18 καὶ  
 εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σφάζεται,  
 66 **ὁ ἀσεβὴς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται;**

4.19 ὥστε  
 καὶ  
 67 **οἱ πάσχοντες...πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν**  
 κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ  
 ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ.

5.1 οὖν  
 ἐν ὑμῖν  
 68 **Πρεσβυτέρους...παρακαλῶ**  
 ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς  
 τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων,  
 ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός,  
 69 5.2 **ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ,**  
 ἐπισκοποῦντες  
 μὴ ἀναγκαστικῶς  
 ἀλλὰ ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν,  
 μὴδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς  
 ἀλλὰ προθύμως,  
 5.3 μὴδ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων  
 ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου·  
 5.4 καὶ  
 φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος  
 70 **κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.**

5.5 ὁμοίως,  
 νεώτεροι,  
 71 **ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις.**

δὲ  
 72 **πάντες ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε,**  
 /----|  
 ὅτι Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται  
 δὲ  
 - ---- ταπεινοῖς δίδωσιν χάριν.

- 5.6 οὖν
- 73 **Ταπεινώθητε**  
 ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ,
- 5.7 πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες  
 ἐπ' αὐτόν,  
 ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν.
- 74 5.8 **νήψατε,**
- 75 **γρηγορήσατε.**
- 76 **ὁ ἀντίδικος... περιπατεῖ**  
 ὑμῶν ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν·  
 διάβολος  
 ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος
- 5.9 ᾧ ἀντίστητε  
 στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει,  
 εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῆ... ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι.  
 ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ  
 ὑμῶν
- 5.10 δὲ
- ὁ θεὸς...**  
 πάσης χάριτος,  
 ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς  
 εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν  
 ἐν Χριστῷ,  
 ὀλίγον παθόντας  
 αὐτὸς
- 77 - ----...καταρτίσει,
- 78 - ----...στηρίξει,
- 79 - ----...σθενώσει,
- 80 - ----...θεμελιώσει.
- 81 5.11 **αὐτῷ (εστὼ) τὸ κράτος**  
 εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων·  
 ἀμήν.
- 5.12 Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ  
 ὑμῖν  
 τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ,  
 ὡς λογίζομαι,  
 δι' ὀλίγων
- 82 **ἔγραψα,**  
 παρακαλῶν  
 καὶ  
 ἐπιμαρτυρῶν  
 ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ·  
 εἰς ἣν στηῆτε.

83 <sup>5.13</sup> ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτῇ  
καὶ  
Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου.

84 <sup>5.14</sup> ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους  
ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης.

85 εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

# First Peter - English Text Diagram

## 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*

1.1 **Peter**  
an apostle of Jesus Christ

**To the chosen immigrants of the diaspora**

in Pontus  
Galatia  
Cappadocia  
Asia  
and  
Bithynia

1.2 according to the foreknowledge of God  
the Father

in sanctification by the Spirit  
for obedience  
and  
the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,

**Grace and peace be multiplied to you.**

1 1.3 **Blessed be the God**

and

**Father**

of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
according to His abundant mercy  
who gave you new birth  
for a living hope  
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ  
from the dead,

1.4 unto an inheritance,  
incorruptable  
and  
undefiled  
and  
unfading,  
reserved

1.5 in Heaven  
for you,  
by God's power  
who...are being guarded  
through faith  
for salvation,

ready to be revealed  
at the last time.

1.6 in whom you are rejoicing

for a short time  
if need be  
suffering  
in various kinds of testings,

1.7 more precious  
 than gold  
 /-----|  
 which is perishing  
 and  
 through fire  
 is being tested  
 in order that the testing...may be found  
 your  
 of...faith  
 /-----|  
 unto praise  
 and  
 glory  
 and  
 honor  
 at the revelation  
 of Jesus Christ.

1.8 /-----|  
 not seeing  
 whom...you love  
 not seeing  
 in whom now...you are rejoicing  
 but  
 believing  
 with joy  
 indescribable  
 and  
 glorious  
 1.9 receiving for yourselves the outcome of your faith  
 salvation  
 of your souls.

1.10 /-----|  
 concerning which salvation  
 the prophets made careful search  
 and  
 ----- inquired  
 about the grace to you  
 who prophesied  
 1.11 checking  
 into which person or kind of time the Spirit..was indicating  
 of Christ  
 in them  
 /-----|  
 pre-testifying to the sufferings of Christ  
 and  
 the glory afterwards;

1.12 to whom it was revealed |  
 /-----|  
 that not for themselves... were they serving these things  
 but  
 for you -----|,

which things now announced to you  
through the preaching of the gospel to you  
by the Holy Spirit  
sent from Heaven  
at which things angels long to look.

1.13 Wherefore  
having girded up the loins of your thinking,  
being sober  
completely

2 **set (your) hope**  
upon the grace being brought to you  
at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1.14 As children of obedience  
not conforming yourselves  
in your ignorance  
to the former...passions

1.15 but  
according as the one having called you is holy  
also  
in all your living

3 **become yourselves holy,**  
1.16 because it stands written,  
"You shall be holy,"  
because I am holy.

1.17 And  
since you call upon the Father  
who judges  
/-----|  
without partiality  
according to each one's work,  
in fear

4 **the time of your sojourning live out,**  
not with corruptible things,  
|-----| silver or gold,  
|-----|  
1.18 knowing that...you were not ransomed  
/-----|  
from your worthless behavior  
of your ancestors

1.19 but  
(you were ransomed)  
with precious blood  
|-----|  
as a lamb  
| blameless and spotless  
of Christ,

1.20 |-----|  
indeed  
who was foreknown  
before the foundation of the world,  
but

--- was manifested  
in the last of times  
for your sakes,

1.21

through Him  
you who are believers  
in God,

|-----|

who raised Him  
| from the dead  
| and

--- gave Him glory,  
so that your faith and hope might be  
in God.

1.22 Having purified your lives  
in obedience to the Truth  
in unhyprocritical brotherly love  
from your hearts

5 **love one another**

eagerly

1.23 having been born again  
not out of corruptible seeds  
but out of incorruptible  
through the living and abiding word of God;

1.24 wherefore **all flesh is**

*as grass*

*and*

**all its glory is**

*as the flower of grass;*

**the grass withers**

*and*

**its flower falls off;**

1.25

*but*

**the Word of God remains**

*forever.*

And

6 **this is the word**

which was preached to you.

2.1

Therefore  
having shed off all evil  
and  
all guile  
and  
hypocrisies  
and  
envies  
and  
all slanders



out of darkness  
of the One who called you  
|-----|  
who once were not a people  
but  
--- are now God's people,  
who were not objects of mercy,  
but  
--- now have been shown mercy.

2.10

2.11 Beloved,  
13 **I exhort (you)**

as foreigners and aliens  
**to abstain**

from fleshly desires

which do battle

against the soul,

2.12

among the Gentiles

while possessing your noble manner of living

during which time they slander you

as evil doers

from your noble deeds

observing

so that they will glorify God

on the Day of Visitation.

14 <sup>2.13</sup> **Be submissive to every human institution**

because of the Lord,

whether to a king

as having highest authority,

2.14

whether to governors,

as by Him being sent

for punishment

of evil-doers

but

for praise

of doing good

2.15

because thusly is the will of God

by doing good

to silence the ignorance of foolish men

as free men

and

not as an excuse for evil

having freedom

instead as servants of God

15 <sup>2.17</sup> **Honor everyone,**

16 **Love the fellowship of brothers,**

17 **Fear God,**

18 **Honor the king.**

19 <sup>2.18</sup> **Slaves should be submissive to their masters,**

with full respect

not only  
to the good  
and  
kind ones,  
but  
also  
to the harsh ones.

2.19 For  
20 **this (is) grace**  
through consciousness of God  
if...one endures some grief  
while suffering unjustly;

2.20 for  
21 **what credit (is there)**  
while sinning  
and  
being beaten  
if you endure  
instead  
while doing good  
and  
suffering  
if you endure  
22 **this (is) grace**  
before God.

2.21 For  
23 **you have been called**  
also  
because...Christ suffered  
| in your place  
| leaving an example for you  
| so that you might follow  
| in His footsteps;  
2.22 who committed no sin  
| neither  
was guile found  
| in His mouth;  
2.23 who being abused did not abuse,  
--- suffering did not threaten,  
| but  
--- entrusted Himself to the One who judges  
| justly;  
2.24 who Himself carried our sins  
| in His body  
| upon the tree  
| being set free  
| from our sins  
| in righteousness  
| so that we might live;  
by whose strips you are healed.

2.25 For  
24 **you...were being led astray**  
like sheep  
but  
25 **you have returned**  
now  
to the Shepherd  
and  
Overseer  
of your lives.

3.1 Likewise  
26 **the wives should be submissive to their own husbands,**  
even if some are not obeying the Word  
through the lifestyle of their wives  
without a word  
so that they...may be won over  
in reverence  
3.2 observing your...pure lifestyle.

27 3.3 **Whose let it not be the outward**  
braiding of hair  
and  
putting on of gold ornaments  
or  
wearing of fine clothes,

3.4 instead  
28 **(whose let it be) the secret person of the heart**  
in the incorruptible  
gentle  
and  
quiet  
of a...spirit  
which is...very valuable  
before God

3.5 For  
likewise  
formerly  
also  
29 **the holy women...were adorning themselves,**  
who put their hope in God  
by being submissive to their own husbands,  
as Sarah was obedient to Abraham  
calling him lord,  
whose children you have become  
/--|  
by doing good  
and  
not fearing any terror.

likewise  
30 <sup>3.7</sup> **husbands should live together (with their wives)**  
according to knowledge,  
as a weaker vessel  
showing their wife honor  
as also joint heirs of the grace of life,  
so that your prayers won't be hindered.

<sup>3.8</sup> And  
finally  
31 **let all be harmonious,**  
**sympathetic,**  
**having brotherly love,**  
**compassionate,**  
**humble,**  
32 <sup>3.9</sup> **let all not pay back evil for evil,**  
or  
33 **let all not pay back abuse for abuse,**  
but  
on the contrary  
34 **let all speak blessings**  
because to this you were called,  
that you might inherit a blessing.

<sup>3.10</sup> For  
the one desiring to love life  
| and  
| to see good days  
35 **let him cease his tongue**  
| from evil  
and  
36 **let him cease his lips**  
| from speaking slander,  
<sup>3.11</sup> and  
37 **let him cease**  
| from evil,  
and  
38 **let him do good,**  
|  
39 **let him seek peace,**  
and  
|  
40 **let him pursue it,**  
<sup>3.12</sup> because the eyes of the Lord are  
| upon the righteous  
| and  
His ears are  
| for their petitions,  
| but  
the face of the Lord is  
against those doing evil.

2.13 And  
41 **who is the one doing you harm,**  
if you become zealous for the good?

3.14 But  
even if you may suffer  
because of righteousness,  
42 **you are blessed.**

And  
43 **you must not fear their fear,**  
neither  
44 **should you be caused to tremble,**  
rather  
45 3.15 **santify the Lord Christ**  
in your hearts,  
always ready  
for a defense  
to every one asking you for a word  
about the hope that is in you,  
3.16 but  
with meekness and fear  
possessing a clear conscience  
when they slander (you)  
so that...they may be embarrassed  
| good  
| in Christ  
who observe your...manner of living.

3.17 For  
while doing good  
if the will of God wishes  
46 **it is better...to suffer**  
than  
47 **it is to suffer**  
while doing evil.

3.18 Because  
also  
once for all  
for sins  
48 **Christ...suffered,**  
49 **just suffered**  
for the unjust,  
in order that he might lead you to God,  
having died on the one hand in the flesh  
but  
having been made alive by the Spirit;  
3.19 having gone  
while he also preached to the spirits in prison,  
3.20 | disobeying  
| formerly

|-----|  
while the patience of God was waiting  
in the days of Noah  
|-----|  
in the building of the ark

in which a few were saved  
| through water  
that is eight lives  
/-----|  
3.21 which also now baptism as a type saves you  
not the putting away of filthy flesh |  
but |  
the answer of a clear conscience to|God  
/-----|  
through the resurrection  
of Jesus Christ,

/-----|  
3:22 who is at the right hand of God  
after having gone  
into Heaven  
with angels and authorities and powers being subject to Him.

4:1 Therefore  
because Christ suffered in the flesh  
also

50 **you equip yourselves with the same insight**

4.2 because the one having suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,  
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.

4.7 And  
of all things  
53 **the end is near.**

Therefore  
54 **be serious**  
and  
55 **be sober**  
for prayers,  
4.8 most importantly  
having fervent love for one another  
because love covers a multitude of sins;  
4.9 being hospitable  
to one another  
without complaining;  
4.10 each one  
just as he has received a gift,  
to one another  
serving it  
as good stewards  
of the many faceted grace of God;  
4.11 if one speaks,  
56 **(let him speak)**  
as the oracles of God;  
if one serves  
57 **(let him serve)**  
as from the strength  
which God supplies;  
in everything  
so that...God may be praised  
through Jesus Christ,  
to whom is glory and power  
forever and ever;  
amen.

4.12 Beloved,  
among you  
58 **don't be shocked at the fiery ordeal**  
for testing  
coming at you  
as though a strange thing were happening to you  
4.13 but  
just as you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ,  
59 **rejoice,**

also  
at the revelation of His glory  
in order that...you may have occasion to rejoice  
while being overjoyed.

4.14 If you are being reviled  
because of the name of Christ,  
60 **(you are) blessed,**  
because the Spirit of His Glory and of God rests upon you.

4.15 For  
61 **let no one of you suffer**  
as a murderer,  
or  
a thief  
or  
a criminal  
nor  
as a mischief maker;

4.16 but  
if as a Christian,  
62 **let him not be ashamed,**  
but  
63 **let him praise God,**  
because of this name.

4.17 Because  
64 **the time (is)**  
for judgment to begin  
starting with the house of God;  
and  
if first with us,  
65 **what is the outcome**  
of those disobeying the Gospel of God?

4.18 And  
if the righteous is hardly saved,  
66 **how will the impious and sinner show up?**

4.19 Consequently  
also  
67 **let those suffering...entrust their lives to a faithful Creator**  
according to the will of God  
in doing good.

5.1 Therefore,  
among you  
68 **I exhort the elders,**  
a fellow elder and witness  
to the sufferings of Christ,  
also a partaker in the going to be revealed glory,

69 <sup>5.2</sup> **Shepherd God's flock among you,**  
     looking after (them)  
         not under compulsion,  
         but willingly from God,  
         nor for profit,  
         but eagerly

5.3  
     nor as one lording it over your portion,  
     but by becoming a good example to the flock;

5.4  
     and  
         when the chief Shepherd appears,  
 70 **you will be rewarded with the never ending crown, the Glory.**

5.5  
     Likewise,  
         young men,  
 71 **be submissive to the elders.**

    And  
 72 **all of you put on humility toward one another,**  
         because God resists the proud  
             but  
             --- gives grace to the humble.

5.6  
     Therefore  
 73 **be humbled**  
         under the mighty hand of God,  
         so that He may lift you up  
             in due time,  
 5.7  
     having cast all your worries  
         on Him  
         because to Him it is a concern for you.

74 <sup>5.8</sup> **Be sober,**

75 **be awake.**

76 **The adversary...is walking around**  
     your                      seeking someone to devour;  
     the Devil  
         like a roaring lion  
 5.9  
         to whom give resistance  
             being solid in faith  
             knowing that the same things...are happening  
                             of sufferings|  
                             /-----|  
                             to your sister church  
   in the world

5.10

And  
**the God...**

of all grace  
who called you  
into His eternal glory  
in Christ,  
after you have suffered for a while

77 --- **Himself will restore**  
78 --- ----- **will support**  
79 --- ----- **will strengthen**  
80 --- ----- **will establish you.**

81 5.11 **To Him (be) power**

for ever and ever;  
Amen.

5.12

Through Silvanus  
my faithful brother,  
as I consider

82 **to you...I am writing,**  
briefly  
to encourage  
and  
to give witness

that this is the true grace of God  
/-----|  
in which you are to stand.

83 5.13 **You sister church in Babylon sends you greetings,**  
and  
**Mark, my son.**

84 5.14 **Greet one another**  
with a kiss of love.

85 **Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**



# The First Letter of Peter Bibliography



Study By  
Lorin L Cranford

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## Quick Links to the Study

### I. Introductions & Background

- a. Introductions
- b. Background Studies
- c. Text Studies

### II. Commentaries

- a. Single Volume Commentaries
- b. Commentary Studia Evangelicaria
- c. Individual volume Commentaries

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## Introduction to Bibliography

Of the writing of books and articles there is no end! Certainly in the modern period this is a true saying. The bibliography of the publications regarding some aspect of the Interpretation of First Peter is massive -- and First Peter is not one of the more popular books in the New Testament Studies to write about. A collation of publications just from a few of the major commentaries on First Peter could easily generate a listing of over two hundred pages!<sup>1</sup> And this just scratches the surface of what exists in the print world on this scripture document.

The real dilemma is selection of a limited number of publications to include. The listings included below thus are rather limited and should not be understood as exhaustive.<sup>2</sup>

### I. Introductions and Background

In the study of any document of the New Testament, many secondary tools beyond commentaries on the scripture text itself are necessary for the Interpretative process.

#### a. Introductions

This first section includes general introductions to the New Testament and to First Peter from both interpretive and theological perspectives. These can be individual books or articles in dictionaries, journals, and other sources. The focus is on an overarching survey of the letter of First Peter.

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<sup>1</sup>My initial checking of just three commentaries generated over 85 pages of publications.

<sup>2</sup>For most of the listings, I am heavily indebted to Davids, Peter H. *The First Epistle of Peter*: The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990. But extensive modification and rearrangement of the listing was done in order to make the references more useful.

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### c. Text Studies

An important Antonianum source of secondary information for exegeting passages of scripture are not just the commentaries but journal articles and others that treat specific passages in the document and particular topics present in the document. Often these are the most current and up to date sources of scholarly insight that are available. Included in the listing below is a wide range of secondary treatments of passages in First Peter.

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## II. Commentaries

Commentaries come in all kinds of strips and colors, some good and some terrible. For a detailed discussion of different types of commentaries go to my online discussion, "Explanation of Commentaries" (<http://cranfordville.com/NT-BiblioComExp.html>) in the "Annotated Bibliography" section of cranfordville.com. One should always remember that commentaries are secondary sources of information about the text, never primary. Consequently a combination of multiple commentaries should be consulted rather than depending on one or two Interpretations of the scripture text.

Commentaries in the modern era will represent a variety of perspectives. The theological assumptions about the nature of the scripture text will reflect the full range of views from one end to the other of theological understanding of the Bible. More importantly, however, is the trend over the past century of commentary writing. Most commentary publishers in today's highly competitive market look for a distinctive contribution niche for their publications before they are willing to invest the millions of dollars necessary to produce a set of commentaries. For good or evil, the sales market exerts tremendous influence globally over the publishing of commentaries in the contemporary world. One of the more common angles of commentary production recently has been the adoption of a distinctive set of interpretative guidelines for exegeting the scripture text. With the explosion of alternative methods of Interpretation over the past century entire sets of commentaries now will tend to reflect the dominance of an interpretive method, e.g., a socio-literary reading of biblical texts.

The value of these different approaches in today's market is that each volume or each commentary set will provide distinctive understanding of the scripture text that can be gleaned from reading the text a certain way. Typically the publisher will contract with scholars who have established skills in using the adopted methodology by the series. Each approach will be limited in that no single method of interpreting biblical texts can glean all the insights present in sacred scripture.

Also important is what the commentary seeks to accomplish. Commentaries have very different objectives that range all the way from **devotional** goals to very **technical studies** of the biblical text. Between these goals will fall **expositional commentaries** that are more detailed but only mildly technical. More complex will be the **exegetical commentary**. The visible difference between these two can usually be seen in whether or not the Hebrew and Greek texts are printed in the original languages or not.

Specialty commentaries will fall into this range at different points, depending on their complexity. These kinds of commentaries include homiletical commentaries, theological commentaries, biblical background commentaries, and a host of others. Such commentaries are targeting a specific readership such a preachers needing sources of sermon ideas with the homiletical commentary.

Also contained in the above range of commentary types will be a shift in interpretive focus. The devotional commentary will usually center on contemporary application of scripture texts to the life of the modern reader. The technical commentaries will tend to focus dominantly, if not exclusively, on the historical meaning of the scripture passage with minimal attempt to apply that meaning to today's world.

Listed below is a wide range of different types of commentaries on First Peter.

### a. Single Volume Commentaries

Many commentaries are very summary in nature and will contain only a single volume that covers either the entire Christian Bible or one or the other testaments. Because of very limited space for each document in the Bible, the comments will be very brief and usually of a summary nature that just touches on the major emphasis of a document or of passages inside each biblical document. Although such secondary sources will seldom answer questions arising from detailed text study, they will provide wholistic summations of the contents of individual scripture documents. Often in the Interpreting process, such a wholistic picture is important to gain in order to have a context for detailed understanding of specific passages inside the document.

Such commentaries will tend to follow one of two major directions. First, they will seek to summarize the major themes of a biblical document, as they reflect the writer's assessment of these themes. Or, second, they will seek to summarize the history of the Interpretation of the biblical document, so that the reader will better grasp the interpretative alternatives of the scripture text as they have emerged over the centuries of Interpretation. Both types of commentaries have merit for the student of the Bible.

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Willmering, H. "The First Epistle of St. Peter." In *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*. Eds. B. Orchard et al. London, 1953.

#### **b. Commentary Series**

This grouping of commentaries will reflect a much greater detailed treatment of individual biblical texts. The label 'Commentary Series' simply designates multi-volume commentary sets that cover either the entire Bible or the Old or New Testaments. The sets can range from four or five volumes covering the entire Bible to upwards of a hundred volumes covering just the Old or New Testaments. Some of the technical commentary series will contain multiple volumes with each volume having upwards of a thousand pages or more. Occasionally, three to five volumes will touch on a single book of the Bible.

These types of commentaries are the best sources of interpretive perspective that will tend to answer the reader's questions arising from careful examination of the scripture text.

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Blenkin, G. W. *The First Epistle General of Peter*. Cambridge Greek Testament. Ed. R. St.-J. Parry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914.

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