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STANDING FIRM IN THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD: BIBLICAL  
THEOLOGY AND PREACHING IN 1 PETER

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Jeffrey Aaron Mixon  
December 2022

**APPROVAL SHEET**

STANDING FIRM IN THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD: BIBLICAL  
THEOLOGY AND PREACHING IN 1 PETER

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I dedicate this project to my wife, Courtney Mixon, who has sojourned with me as we await the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994-2000
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>NDBT</i>	Alexander, T. Desmond, Brian S. Rosner, D. A. Carson, and Graeme Goldsworthy, eds. <i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i> . Electronic ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
T. Levi	Testament of Levi

## PREFACE

Reflecting on the journey to completing this project recalls those who have walked along the way with me and helped in this endeavor. Everyone is influenced in some way by the context into which they were born. In his providential kindness, God allowed me to be born into a family that loved Christ. Their love for him and its effect upon me set me on a trajectory that, at present, has produced this project. Their prayers, encouragement, and support have been wonderful. Roger Tilford and Floyd Junius Mixon have left a distinct imprint in my mind of studying the word of God. I am grateful for their example of mining the riches of Scripture.

One of the most exhilarating experiences of being a follower of Christ has been being part of His church. To be numbered among those redeemed by Christ and to have fellowship with them is nothing less than glorious. I am especially thankful for the local church of which I am a part, and for which I have the privilege to pastor, New Life Christian Church. They have shown me sincere brotherly love in their graciousness, patience, encouragement during the work of this project. I am blessed to be part of the New Life family. I want express gratitude especially to the elders of New Life: David Brandts, Michael Higgins, Joe Peeler, and David Wolper. They have been supportive of this project from the very beginning and have faithfully helped shoulder the work of shepherding, as some of my time was spent away writing.

The gratitude of my heart extends to my teachers at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Their seminars have been invigorating. I am especially thankful for the opportunity to sit under Peter Gentry and Jim Hamilton. Both men have helped me to better read the Scripture.

Several friends in ministry took the time to discuss texts and theology during my doctoral studies. I am grateful for pastors Daniel McCarty, Tony Trussoni, and Michael Roe for their comments, insights, and feedback, which has played a part in this work. I am thankful for Rev. Dr. David Smith who provided valuable feedback, comments, and editing.

I'm grateful to my precious six children who have patiently and graciously endured their father spending time on this project and whose "snuggles" and quiet playing in my study provided refreshment and blessing. Words cannot convey the gratitude and appreciation I have for my beloved wife. This project would not have happened without her encouragement, exhortation, prayers, editing, and most importantly, love. She has done much to afford me the opportunity to study and write.

The greatest thanks of all is to my Lord. He has shown me unceasing mercy and kindness. He has graciously called me out of darkness into his marvelous light and allowed me to proclaim his excellencies. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

Jeffrey A. Mixon

Cincinnati, Ohio

December 2022

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Amber was devastated. She did not see it coming and it had hit her like a baseball bat in the stomach. She felt betrayed. Worse than that, however, she felt the hopelessness of her life if she would continue down the path she had been going. Amber was 34. She professed to be a follower of Jesus Christ. She had been since college. Those had been exciting times. She enjoyed reading Scripture, praying, and fellowshiping with other Christians. She had hoped that she would find a godly man to marry. The years went on and no man was found. She began to worry that she would be alone her whole life and never experience true love or true happiness. She had a conviction that she only dated followers of Jesus, but that did not seem to be working for her. Before she knew it, she found herself dating others who did not share her convictions. Soon she was dating Greg. It was wonderful, except Greg was not a Christian. But she felt that he was the best she could do. No Christian guys really wanted her. She found herself compromising on a variety of levels in her relationship with Greg. Amber rationalized that it was okay because she was with someone she cared about and who cared about her. That was until Greg broke up with her. She was crushed. She had sacrificed so much of who she was because of him and now she was left empty and full of pain.

Amber is not unlike many people who are shaped by a hope that goes unfulfilled and makes them question who they are, which in turn will impact the way they live. Ideas inevitably have consequences and the idea that one has of him or herself, of their world, and most importantly of God will influence the way they live. This is the reason biblical theology in preaching is so important. It helps to properly shape our reality so that we think rightly and in turn act faithfully. It is the task of the preacher to

proclaim God's Word to God's people. That after all is the mandate (2 Tim 4:2). God has revealed himself by his word and thus desires to be known. The preacher must communicate God's Word accurately and faithfully if this is to take place. Biblical theology, therefore, is essential to the task of preaching. It is essential because of what it seeks to do. As will be seen below, it seeks to take seriously what the Bible is, as well as what it communicates. Thus, the preacher understands that the Bible is God's revelation being unveiled progressively over the course of redemptive history. The preacher must first always explain the text within its immediate context of the book from which that text resides. Yet he must also consider where this text is situated within the storyline of redemption, especially its connection to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Not only this, but in seeking to do justice to what the Bible is, the preacher must consider that God has revealed himself within a canon of sixty-six books. He must preach his text in connection with where it fits in the cannon and preach it with the rest of the canonical witness in view. He must pay attention to how a text relates to texts that have come before it, as well as how latter texts are influenced by that text. When this is accomplished, the preacher has handled faithfully what God has communicated and discharged his responsibility in the preaching event.

### **Defining Biblical Theology**

In his book on logic, Isaac Watts stated that the first rule of rationale discourse is for one to define one's terms.<sup>1</sup> Watts understood that there were times when persons engaged in dialogue were employing the same vocabulary but, un-recognized by them, with different meanings. It is much the same with biblical theology. Different people mean different things when using the term "biblical theology." Below we will survey at a broad level the spectrum of meaning that has been applied to the term.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac Watts, *Logic; or The Right Use of Reason, in the Inquiry after Truth* (London: Milner & Sowerby, 1866), chap. 1, Kindle.

## The Historical Description Approach

The Historical Description approach seeks to affirm the historical and exegetical nature of biblical theology. It was first made popular by Kristen Stendahl who captured this approach by making a distinction between two questions. “What did it mean?” and “What does it mean?”<sup>2</sup> The first question accurately captures the focus of the historical descriptive approach. It concentrates on content that has to do with the past, but the content does not speak to the present day. This perspective, then, sees biblical theology as a purely exegetical task that is done by scholars as opposed to the church. As it relates to theology, it is the historical context that determines the theology. Theology may be gained from the text but the discovery of theology, in terms of what was the theology, is not limited to the scope of the text. In this approach to biblical theology, having the text itself will not suffice to carry out the task.

James Barr felt it helpful to define biblical theology by way of contrast to other disciplines. He saw systematic theology as that discipline which endeavored to “state, clarify, and illuminate the church today.”<sup>3</sup> Biblical theology was to be concerned with the theology of the Bible itself. One can see the distinction that was made with reference to who does theology. Barr believed that biblical theology was the task of scholars who were engaged in a purely descriptive endeavor. He viewed this in contrast to systematic or dogmatic theology of which the focus of the task was prescriptive.<sup>4</sup>

Barr felt that another way to bring clarity to the discipline of biblical theology was to contrast it with non-theological elements of the study of the Bible. Such elements that would be regarded this way would include textual-criticism, the study of Greek or

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<sup>2</sup> Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 10.

<sup>3</sup> James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology* (London: SCM, 1999), chap. 1, Kindle.

<sup>4</sup> Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, chap. 1.

Hebrew, these began to be viewed as not having in interest in “theology.”<sup>5</sup> Biblical theology was contrasted with this notion by Barr in order to (1) emphasize the focus on the central message of the biblical text, (2) the linking of texts together by the interrelating of ideas, and (3) “the convictions that inspired the texts and untied them as a composite and yet unitary ‘witness’ to ultimate theological truth.”<sup>6</sup> While they shared some elements in common with historical criticism, Barr saw biblical theology as contrasting the history of religion approach. The history of religion is comparative while biblical theology seeks to subordinate the other religions in the Bible to a central theological structure, not seeking to compare or contrast them.<sup>7</sup> Barr further clarified his view of biblical theology by contrasting it with philosophy. In his view, biblical theology saw itself entering an ancient mode of thinking that differed with traditional philosophy, which came down from the Greek tradition.<sup>8</sup> Biblical theology stands in contrast to the interpretation of the parts in that its objective was the whole Bible.

### **The Redemptive Historical Approach**

The Redemptive Historical approach understands that God progressively reveals himself over a sequential and historical timeline.<sup>9</sup> It focuses on redemptive history as it unfolds within the Scripture, which is its scope, to understand God’s typical purposes. This approach holds to the coherence of Scripture and seeks to discern that coherence as it unfolds over history. It does inductive analysis, considering historical or

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<sup>5</sup> Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, chap. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, chap. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, chap. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, chap. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 59.

literary factors, of themes which are depicted across discrete parts or the whole of Scripture.<sup>10</sup> The goal in doing this is to comprehend God's activity of redemption.<sup>11</sup>

Rosner helps sharpen the understanding by defining biblical theology as theological interpretation of the Scriptures.<sup>12</sup> It sees the Bible as having an overarching message that has relevance for life. It is not merely a descriptive task but a task that results in reflection and concern about what the Bible declares and predicates.<sup>13</sup> The context of where it is done and the purpose for whom it is done is the church. It makes analysis of the Bible's teaching about God and his relation to the world and then seeks to synthesize this teaching. Rosner points out that the analysis and the synthesis seek to be faithful to the categories that the Scripture itself has established. In other words, Rosner, points out that this work seeks to understand that teaching of the Bible on its own terms. It presupposes an overarching narrative that has a Christocentric purpose. Biblical theology always wants these two elements in view as it seeks to gain understanding of what the Bible's teaching is about the ways of God in the world.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Worldview Story Approach**

In this approach the Bible has an over-arching narrative that connects the Testaments together. It is this over-arching story that reflects continuity between the testaments. The individual units are read through the lens of the larger story.<sup>15</sup> It pays particular attention to how earlier episodes were understood, interpreted, and then

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<sup>10</sup> D. A. Carson, "Series Preface," in *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, by James M. Hamilton Jr., New Studies in Biblical Theology 32 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, chap. 3.

<sup>12</sup> B. S. Rosner, "Biblical Theology," in *NDBT*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Rosner, "Biblical Theology," 5.

<sup>14</sup> Rosner, "Biblical Theology," 10.

<sup>15</sup> Peter J. Gentry, "The Significance of Covenants in Biblical Theology," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 20, no. 1 (2016): 11.

developed later within the narrative. There is a strong focus on inter-textuality. The key point about this approach is that the over-arching narrative is essential for the interpretive task. Important to Wright is the elements of story and worldview. Wright defines worldview as a grid through which human beings perceive reality. It is through this grid that human beings emerge into explicit awareness of human beliefs and aims. These aims and beliefs are principal expressions of worldview.<sup>16</sup> Thus, as Wright puts it, stories play a role because it is the story that invests the events with meaning.<sup>17</sup> They are the tool that communicates significance. In this approach there is an over-arching story that is sought to be understood, namely the story of Israel, informed by the Old Testament as well as Second Temple Judaism. When the story is understood, a coherent worldview emerges.

### **The Canonical Approach**

This method was started by Brevard Childs. He argued that biblical theology is an exegetical task that must be done within the canon. One of the arguments supporting this is that when one considers the process of the formation of the canon, they can see that its formation was being moved toward a theological end. The multiplicity of the oral, literary, editing stages of the process are proof of this. This being the case, it implies that theological formulation was to be done within the scope of the canon. When Childs spoke of “canon” he is referring to the process of how the collection of books called the Scripture came about and led to its final form, what he calls the “literary and textual stabilization.” In light of this, Childs emphasized that the process was not late or alien to the canon. The intent of the process, along with the fact that throughout the development of the canon there were hermeneutical, literary, and redactional stages evidences a “canon consciousness” that resided in the formation of the canon. Childs was seeking to

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<sup>16</sup> N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, vol. 1 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 38.

<sup>17</sup> Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*, 79.

communicate that it was not general folklore or socio-political factors that were at play in the formation of the canon but rather theological ones. In his mind, this demonstrated intentionality. Thus, if there was an intentionality in the formation of the canon, then it was put together to be read a certain way, with certain categories, with a desired result in mind when read. Thus, this approach could not be merely descriptive.<sup>18</sup> This is what set him apart from Barr and biblical theology as historical description. This allows theological formulation to be based within the context of the canon. This approach worked to express the relationship between biblical studies and theology.<sup>19</sup> It endeavors to bring together the historical meaning of the text with the contemporary meaning of Scripture.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it is seeking both the question of “What did it mean?” and “What does it mean?” A canonical approach puts clear parameters on the source from which biblical theology can be done is seeks to answer these questions. A canonical approach focuses on the biblical canon’s interpretive control and function in biblical theology.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Approach of This Project**

The approach taken in this project understands biblical theology is the “hermeneutical discipline of reading the Bible as God’s Word on the Bible’s own terms.”<sup>22</sup> First, by noting that it is a discipline I am saying that it stands distinct from other theological disciplines. It is not systematic theology, nor historical theology, nor is

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<sup>18</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 70-71.

<sup>19</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, chap. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, chap. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, chap. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 95.

it apologetics, etc.<sup>23</sup> This is not to say that biblical theology has no connection with other theological disciplines, rather the function is a state of mutual reliance.<sup>24</sup>

Second, biblical theology reads the Bible as God's Word. It is a task that reads in accord what it is. Scripture presents itself as God's "breathed out" word, its origin being divine (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). Scripture is "God's authoritative self-revelation through human authors progressively given in time."<sup>25</sup> Thus, biblical theology views the Bible as divine revelation, God's own self-disclosure to human beings, and therefore a divine act by which God is seeking to communicate. This divine activity of revelation is the interpretation of what God has done and thus communicates the significance of the acts of God.<sup>26</sup> In Scripture we receive the record of God's divine acts but also his statement of their meaning.<sup>27</sup>

To read the Bible as God's Word is to recognize not only that it is divine revelation which interprets God's redemptive acts, but that it is also a progressive revelation. The self-disclosure of God has taken place in stages so that we understand that revelation has not come all at once but, rather, has unfolded over time. God's acts unfold over time and so the interpretation of those acts must necessarily also unfold over

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<sup>23</sup> Vos noted four divisions theology: exegetical, historical, systematic, and practical. He understood biblical theology to be a branch of exegetical theology and thus distinct from the other divisions. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000), 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> Rosner states, "While we distinguish it from other theological disciplines, such as systematics, historical theology, apologetics and practical theology, its relationship to these disciplines is one of interdependence." Rosner, "Biblical Theology," 3.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen J. Wellum, "Editorial: Preaching and Teaching the Whole Counsel of God," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 3.

<sup>26</sup> Vos understood that special revelation was connected to God's redemptive activity. These redemptive acts are not left to interpret themselves. Rather God's self-revelation articulates the meaning of the acts. God interprets the significance of the flood and preservation of Noah. He interprets to Moses the significance to exodus, both before and after the event. In the New Testament the apostles interpret the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3-4). Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), chap. 3, Kindle. Wellum argues that God's redemptive acts reveal himself, but those acts do not speak for themselves but are given their meaning by his word.

history.<sup>28</sup> Thus to read Scripture is to read the “progressive unfolding of God’s purpose in salvation for humanity.”<sup>29</sup> Over time more of God’s purposes are unveiled with each advancement in redemption history. How God will achieve his purposes in salvation becomes clearer as revelation unfolds through different redemptive epochs. This revelation has an end-goal, a *telos*, it finds its culmination in the coming of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:9-10; Heb 1:1-4).

The Bible, then, being God’s self-disclosure that has come to us over time as it has progressively been unveiled, means that there is a collection of documents that compose this revelation. It is the Bible to the exclusion of all else that is God’s divine written revelation and thus it alone is the place in which biblical theology can be done.<sup>30</sup> The canon of the Christian Scriptures is where one can encounter God’s written revelation.

Third, biblical theology reads the Bible on its own terms. It seeks to let Scripture present its own categories and structures.<sup>31</sup> In other words, it works inductively in the text to discover what categories emerge from the text rather than imposing categories from outside. The Scripture presents itself in a certain order, a structure, or movement that must be discerned.<sup>32</sup> There is a storyline that the Bible presents in its own way. Biblical theology seeks to grasp both the storyline itself and how that storyline

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<sup>28</sup> Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> P. E. Satterthwaite, “Biblical History,” in *NDBT*, 43.

<sup>30</sup> Roger Beckwith notes this point when he writes, “The canon provides both boundaries and a basis. We are not engaged in producing a general survey of ancient Jewish and Christian religious ideas; if we were, all the surviving literature from the period would have an equal claim to our attention. Rather, we are engaged in interpreting the revelation of God, and for this the books which are believed to embody that revelation, and their text, are alone directly relevant.” R. T. Beckwith, “The Canon of Scripture,” in *NDBT*, 28.

<sup>31</sup> Goldsworthy sees the structures in which revelation unfolds as one of the occupations of biblical theology: “In the Wider sense, biblical theology is concerned with the structure of revelation and with the ways in which the unity of the biblical canon can be described.” Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 40.

<sup>32</sup> Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” 10.

unfolds across the canon. It traces the movement of the story: Creation, Fall, Redemption, New Creation. This movement unfolds within the redemptive epochs of the covenants which function as the structure in which the Bible presents its story.<sup>33</sup> In seeking to read the Bible in terms of its own categories we are seeking to grasp the interpretive perspective of the biblical writers.<sup>34</sup> As this perspective is grasped, the biblical theologian can trace the movement of Scripture's plot to its goal that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.<sup>35</sup>

Three horizons must be considered when doing biblical theology.<sup>36</sup> First, Scripture must be interpreted along its textual horizon. Here attention is given to the immediate context of a text. This involves grammatical-historical exegesis. Thus, attention must be given to the grammar and syntax, and historical background. the literary forms/structure and features of the specific genre of the passage, along with the meaning of specific words, figures of speech, and historical background. It also pays attention to the imagery and symbols present in the text as well.<sup>37</sup>

Second, interpretation will be done along what is called the Epochal horizon. The revelation of God and redemptive history have both unfolded progressively. Thus,

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<sup>33</sup> For the argument that the biblical storyline unfolds across the biblical covenants, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*. Wellum helpfully summarizes, "This progressive revelation of God's plan and purposes takes shape through redemptive covenants between God and his people across separate but related epochs in redemptive history, culminating in the person and new covenant work of Christ (Heb 1:1-2; Col 1:15-20)." Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 95.

<sup>34</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr. defines it as follows: "It is the framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identifications, truths and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world and the events that take place." Hamilton states that biblical theology has to do with the interpretive perspective that is reflected in the way the biblical authors have presented their understanding of earlier biblical texts, redemptive history, and events in their own day. James M. Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 15-16. The interpretive perspective of the biblical writers reveals the categories in which they operate and convey their material.

<sup>35</sup> Rosner, "Biblical Theology," 10.

<sup>36</sup> Richard Lints argues for three horizons of interpretation which should be read considering one another: textual, epochal, and canonical. For a fuller discussion on these horizons, see Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomena to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 293-310.

<sup>37</sup> Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 296-300; Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 61-75.

the progress unfolds over different epochs. God and his purposes come into sharper view as the revelation unfolds over these epochs.<sup>38</sup> Thus where the passage lies in the unfolding of redemptive history must not be dismissed.<sup>39</sup> This also means that what has been revealed in prior epochs and what will come after must also be considered. This matters because the biblical writers draw out practical implications based on where they stood in redemptive history.<sup>40</sup>

The last horizon that must be considered is the Canonical horizon. This means that a text must be read considering the whole canon of Scripture.<sup>41</sup> The Old Testament closes having made promises that had yet to be fulfilled.<sup>42</sup> The New Testament is presented as the announcement of those promises being fulfilled, specifically in the coming, person and work of Jesus Christ. This promise-fulfillment is what binds these two testaments together because the God who has made promises in the past and fulfilled them will certainly fulfill his promises that have yet to be consummated.<sup>43</sup> This structure

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<sup>38</sup> Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 301.

<sup>39</sup> Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 96.

<sup>40</sup> Lints recognizes the significance of the epochs for drawing conclusions on matters even as he observes differences among how the biblical authors outline those epochs: “The Old Testament is vast and complex, and the epochal divisions that Paul, Peter, Stephen, and the Old Testament authors themselves marked out manifest different but complementary perspectives in looking at redemptive history in the Old Testament. Each had distinct theological purposes in view and drew divisions in redemptive history that were relevant to their concerns. All the authors sought to draw out the implications of God’s covenantal working throughout all of history by investigating the significant differences as well as significant continuities between previous epochs and their own.” Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 302.

<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Goldsworthy defines biblical theology as “the study of how every text in the Bible relates to every other text in the Bible. It is the study of the matrix of divine revelation in the Bible as a whole.” Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 40.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Schreiner points out that the Old Testament ends as a story that is not complete: “The OT clearly leaves us with an unfinished story. The serpent was not yet crushed. That Israel could dwell in the land was contradicted by the exile, and even when Israel possessed the land, they were either under the thumb of foreign powers or barely hanging on to independence. The promise of the new covenant, the new exodus, the new creation obviously was not realized. Yahweh ruled as the sovereign king over the entire earth, but his saving promises for Israel and the world remained unfulfilled.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 428.

<sup>43</sup> Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 303.

means that Scriptures parts must be read considering the whole of Scripture. It also means that Scripture must be read as a united whole.<sup>44</sup>

Reading the Bible this way means that we do canonical contextual exegesis which takes into account references or connections made to other Scripture.<sup>45</sup> These literary connections are made by the biblical writers by way of allusions or citations of earlier texts.<sup>46</sup> As it pertains to the use of the OT in the NT, the biblical authors quote or allude to OT are not taken out of context but rather they are referred to in a way that is “warranted by the meanings in their original contexts, but also develops and clarifies the original meaning in light of the progressive biblical-theological development across the canon of Scripture and eschatological fulfillment in Christ.”<sup>47</sup> This means that the images and symbols observed at the textual horizon are then traced out as they unfold across the canon, finding their fulfillment in Christ.

It also means that we must read the Bible typologically. That is to say that the inner-canonical connections between earlier and later historical realities must be recognized. Typology has to do with the correspondence between historical persons, places, events, and institutions in an earlier era with those in a later era, the anti-type of

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<sup>44</sup> Gentry, “The Significance of Covenants in Biblical Theology,” 22.

<sup>45</sup> Greg Beale describes canonical contextual exegesis as “a careful study of a passage’s literary allusions to other Scripture (whether the Old Testament in the Old Testament or the Old Testament in the New Testament, or allusions within the authors own writings)” G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 23.

<sup>46</sup> Quotation refers to “the direct citation to an OT passage that is easily recognizable by its clear and unique verbal parallelism,” while allusion refers to “a brief expression consciously intended by thy an author to be dependent on an OT passage.” G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 29, 31.

<sup>47</sup> Aubrey Maria Sequeira, “The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Fulfillment in Christ: Biblical-Theological Exegesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 3. Beale describes this in a fuller sense as follows: “A biblical-theological approach attempts to interpret texts in light of their broader literary context, their broader redemptive-historical epoch of which they are a part, and to interpret earlier texts from earlier epochs, attempting to explain them in light of progressive revelation to which earlier scriptural authors would not have had access.” G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 104n41.

the later era, and that anti-type having escalation in its significance.<sup>48</sup> The connections between these types are ordained by God as well as intended by the biblical authors.<sup>49</sup> The correspondence, then, can be validated in the text itself. Thus, there is evidence in the text that the biblical writer intended the type to be a pattern for the future.<sup>50</sup>

When one understands the parts in relationship to the whole. Scripture is like an orchestra playing a symphony. Each part is understood in relationship to the other parts, together they give a grand musical story. When we do biblical theology in this way, we come away with a worldview that is formulated by the Bible that will shape our identity, conduct, as we wait for the return of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible tells a story, and the story is to be the lens through which we view everything. Thus, biblical theology ultimately constructs a true way of viewing all of reality so that its readers can make sense of that reality, navigate it, and engage with the Creator of it.

### **A Survey of the Literature**

The following is a survey of the literature that is critical for the biblical theological preaching of 1 Peter. This survey will look at commentaries that deal with the exegesis of 1 Peter, paying attention to the Greek text, argument, and grammar of 1 Peter as well as to the historical background that is essential for exegeting 1 Peter. I will then give attention to resources that help to capture the themes which are present in 1 Peter.

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<sup>48</sup> For treatments on typology, see Richard M. Davidson, *Typology of Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical ΤΥΠΟΣ Structures* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promised-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022).

<sup>49</sup> Hamilton defines typology as “God-ordained, author-intended historical correspondence and escalation in significance between people, events, and institutions across the Bible’s redemptive-historical story (i.e., in conventional context).” Hamilton, *Typology*, 26.

<sup>50</sup> Peter J. Gentry, in discussing the factors of typology, writes, “There must be exegetical evidence in the original text that indicates that what the text is dealing with is intended to be a model or pattern for something to follow in history.” Peter J. Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 90.

## Commentaries

One of the key components of doing biblical theology is exegeting the texts. Commentaries are vital tools for aid in this task. Paul Achtemeier's commentary is a must.<sup>51</sup> He thoroughly deals with the issues with a complete treatment, and he does good exegetical work in the Greek text. Karen Jobes's work in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series deals wonderfully with text.<sup>52</sup> She gives attention to the LXX text when cited and is helpful in examining the points of connection that Peter makes with the Old Test. J. Ramsey Michaels will help give aid to the structure as is the case with most commentaries in the series in which this one is found.<sup>53</sup> One would do well to work through Thomas Schreiner's work on 1 Peter. This commentary does a masterful job of capturing the argument of each passage.<sup>54</sup> John H. Elliott is a larger work that is written with great clarity.<sup>55</sup> Also written with clarity but much briefer is Peter Davids's treatment in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series.<sup>56</sup> Leonhard Goppelt's commentary helps to capture the theology of Peter as good as any commentary out there.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

<sup>52</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

<sup>53</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003).

<sup>55</sup> John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

<sup>57</sup> Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st Eng. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

## Theological Analysis

Part of doing biblical theology is tracing themes through the storyline of redemptive history. Below are resources that are aids in helping the biblical theologian grasp what themes of redemptive history 1 Peter gives attention. Since the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in the New Testament it is helpful to analyze Old Testament Theologies to see the seeds of what has bloomed in the New Testament. Paul House's work on Old Testament theology is a work that traces the dominant themes of each book, seeking to capture the overall message of each book of the Old Testament canon.<sup>58</sup> Bruce Waltke's Old Testament Theology seeks to take the shape of the canon seriously and builds a coherent theology, keeping in mind themes within and among the different blocks of text.<sup>59</sup> Whole Bible theologies are very helpful in this. Thomas Schreiner, who has written a commentary on 1 Peter, has also written a traditional New Testament theology.<sup>60</sup> He seeks to trace out the themes of God's promises being fulfilled in Christ across redemptive history. He has also written a biblical theology in which he traces the theme of kingdom through the Bible.<sup>61</sup> The theme of salvation has arrived but is not yet consummated runs through the section on 1 Peter. A more classic work to be consulted that emphasizes the concept of the "already and not yet" is George Eldon Ladd's work.<sup>62</sup> A large master work is Gregory Beale's biblical theology which traces the theme of new creation throughout the Bible.<sup>63</sup> A reference work that will be an aid to anyone seeking to do biblical theology is the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. This work contains

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<sup>58</sup> Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

<sup>59</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*.

<sup>62</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

<sup>63</sup> G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

introductory articles that trace the landscape of the issues in biblical theology. Articles are also written on each book of the Bible as well as the dominating themes of Scripture.<sup>64</sup> James M. Hamilton biblical theology argues for that the center theme of the Bible is God's glory in salvation through judgment. In this work one will find helpful detailed analysis of every book of the Bible.<sup>65</sup>

### **Local Context**

New Life Christian Church is in the Sharonville neighborhood of Cincinnati-metro area. As of 2020, Sharonville's population was 14,117.<sup>66</sup> It sits in a residential neighborhood with houses to its left as well as across the street. Behind stands an apartment complex full of diversity, where some of the members reside. To its right is a local dance studio. The neighborhood has many streets populated with many homes. Many souls are represented in the area immediately surrounding the church's building.

New Life came into existence in 1980 as the result of a church split within the Montgomery Assembly of God church in neighboring Montgomery, Ohio. Her first pastor served until 1982. Her second and longest serving pastor to date, served from 1982 until his retirement in 2017. I have had the privilege and honor of serving as the senior pastor since March of 2017.

The congregation is composed of a healthy blend of different demographics. Education background ranges from the high-school level to the doctoral level. There are several ethnicities represented in this multi-generational congregation. The church has been historically characterized by a devotion to the Scriptures. This is especially evident in the older generations of the congregation. There has been an emphasis in Bible

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<sup>64</sup> Rosner, "Biblical Theology," 5.

<sup>65</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

<sup>66</sup> United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts: Sharonville City, Ohio," accessed October 21, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sharonvillecityohio>.

teaching since the congregation's birth with the result that its doctrinal distinctives look very different today than almost forty years ago. The church gathers on Sunday morning for a time of equipping in the Sunday School hour. This is followed by the assembling of the congregation for corporate worship. The church seeks to disciple its members at a more intimate level by gathering in homes. Discipleship is also pursued through smaller Bible-studies as well as individuals meeting together to help one another grow in their faithfulness to Jesus Christ. The congregation is composed of a genuine group of saints who sincerely love Christ and one another. Many are devoted to prayer and gather to pray and encourage each other. There is also a strong spirit of mercy and compassion that is reflected in the generosity of these saints.

The theology of New Life has changed since its inception in 1980. The church originated as the result of a split from an Assemblies of God congregation in the area. The division within that congregation was itself a theological one having to do with aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The first pastor of New Life left this Assemblies of God church because he held the position that not all believers have the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. In keeping with 1 Corinthians 12:11, he held that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to whom he wills as he wills. Thus, even from its inception New Life was seeking to be faithful to what Scripture stated. Over the decades the theological direction has moved from charismatic origins to a more reformed posture. This has been the result of faithful leaders who have sought to be true to the word.

While a strong and encouraging hunger for the Scriptures is present, the average believer struggles to see how the text they are reading fits within the larger story of the Bible. The average member wants to be faithful to Christ but is still learning to allow the storyline of the Bible with its culmination in Christ interpret their identity and inform their practice. One of the goals of preaching through the book of 1 Peter is to disciple the congregation toward a biblical theological reading of Scripture and allowing that reading to interpret their identity and instruct their practice.

New Life does face several challenges. Some experience pressure and discouragement due to work, financial, and family situations. They struggle to navigate these scenarios. Some simply struggle to live holy in their relationships. One of weakness of New Life is that it struggles in doing personal evangelism and needs to grow in the practical expression of concern for God's fame in the community, as well for the many lost souls that exist in Sharonville. While the church has been on a trajectory toward a reformed and baptistic identity, it is still in a young stage. The congregation struggles to grasp the biblical identity of the church and the implications that follow. Several of our attenders are married to non-Christians and face the challenges that come with this. My concern for my people is that they have their hope fixed on the fulfilment of the promises of God and live with hope in those promises. Our culture is growing increasingly and rapidly hostile toward the gospel and those who would seek to advance it.

I believe that these issues are rooted in the absence of individuals knowing how to trace out the God's revelation across redemptive history and its fulfillment in Christ, so that it shapes their identity and practice. I believe that the letter of 1 Peter speaks to the issues that do and will face our congregation. My intention in preaching through 1 Peter is to prepare New Life Christian Church to be Christian in an increasingly anti-Christian time.

### **Summary of the Biblical Passage**

#### **1 Peter 1:3-12**

First Peter 1:3-12 is a doxology expressing praise to God for begetting the saints into eschatological hope of the new creation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet 1:3). In other words, worship is given because believers are now participants in the new realities that have been achieved by Christ announced in the gospel. First, worship is given for the reality of being birthed to a living hope (1 Pet 1:3-5). The living hope that they have looks forward to a certain inheritance. This inheritance,

understood across the canon and redemptive history, is the certain culmination of God's promises to restore, through the seed of the woman, what had been lost at Eden due to man's rebellion (1 Pet 1:4-5). In 1 Peter 1:6-9 we see that God is to be worshiped because believers can experience the reality of joy in the context of suffering. This sure inheritance that God birthed them to produces joy during trials and sufferings, as the operational power of God manifested through their faith causes them to endure until the revelation of Jesus Christ. This revelation will not be marked by suffering but by praise glory and honor as they at last experience the culmination of their salvation. Second, believers can worship because of the experience of the reality of fulfillment (1 Pet 1:10-12). Verses 10-11 set the recipients location on map of redemptive history. They stand in the age of long expected fulfillment that was anticipated in the coming of Messiah. This expectation that was prophesied by the Old Testament prophets was for the believers at this point in redemptive history.

The note of fulfillment is seen in the theme of inheritance which points to the new creation. Inheritance in the Old Testament referred to the land promised to Abraham. That land pointed back to Eden, a sacred space in which worship, service, obedience to, and fellowship with God took place. Israel, Abraham's offspring conquered the land and possessed it. Because of disobedience, Israel was exiled out of the inheritance. Though they returned to the land they never saw the new creation anticipated by the prophets (cf. Isa 11:4-5).

The theme of inheritance reminds the readers of their sojourning as exiles until the establishment of the new heavens and new earth. They are already a part of that reality in the inaugurated sense but await its consummation. The living hope encourages them as they walk through a world that is not their home, enduring many difficulties because their allegiance and values are in a different homeland, to look and rejoice in what is to come. What is to come is the new creation to which they were birthed.

### **1 Peter 1:13-2:3**

This second draws out the practical implications for how believers are to live in light of having been begotten anew by the Father to a living hope (1 Pet 1:3). This section is structured around five imperative verbs (1 Pet 1:13, 15, 17, 22; 2:2). Each command is set against the backdrop of the Exodus and New Exodus motifs found in the Old Testament. It summarizes how Christians are to live as they await the reception of their inheritance. It is responding to God's redemptive paradigm. Each imperative has a point of contact with the theme of deliverance within the exodus paradigm of salvation. One can also see the familial connections that the believers have with God as well as with others in the new covenant community. Considering God's salvation, believers are to (1) have thoughts and attitudes that reflect a hope in the grace that comes at the revelation of Jesus Christ. They have been birthed by God and now have the status of heirs and eagerly await the reception of their inheritance (2). Believers are to reflect the same character of the God who has redeemed the way a child reflects the character traits of his or her father (1 Pet 1:14-16). They live in complete devotion to God as they head toward their inheritance.

(3) Believers revere their father who has redeemed them from idolatry (1 Pet 1:17). Here Peter picks up the notion of the "fear of Yahweh" that pulsates through Deuteronomy. This fear is based off his redemptive work, his great act of deliverance in the exodus event (cf. Deut 6:1-3, 12-13). Just as God redeemed Israel so he has also redeemed the church. However, the redemption of the church has taken place in an escalated way as the ultimate sacrifice, to which the blood of the Passover lamb pointed, has appeared in the time when God is bringing all things to their eschatological goal in Christ (1 Pet 1:18-20). The certainty of this inheritance is seen in the reference to the gospel and its effects upon the believer (1 Pet 1:21). If God rescued Christ from death, he would surely bring the believer to the realization of this hope. Therefore, fear him who has rescued you (1 Pet 1:21).

(4) Believers are those who relate properly to the new covenant community because they have been purified by the eternal redemptive word (1 Pet 1:22-25). This command follows the structure of relationship laid out in the summary of the Law (Matt 22:36-40; cf. Exod 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21). As Jobes observes, 1 Peter 1:14-21 has to do with one's relationship to God. First Peter 1:22-25 focuses on one's relationship to the new covenant community.<sup>67</sup> The imperative to "love" is employed because it summarizes all the commands related to members of the covenant community. Peter grounds this command in Isaiah 40:6-8 in the LXX. The context is one of God making promises of redemption to the exiles of Babylon. God's sure word would be accomplished and bring them back into the land to live with one another the way God intended them to live. This redemption pointed forward to God's final eschatological redemption fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1-3; Matt 3:1-13; Luke 3:1-22).<sup>68</sup> This word would give life to God's eschatological people so that they would act rightly toward one another (1 Pet 1:25).

(5) The last command is a charge to long for the pure spiritual milk (1 Pet 2:2). The command to love finds expression in putting away sinful behavior and attitudes toward others. Believers are to long for the pure spiritual milk, a reference to the word. The sustenance of spiritual life that the word has produced comes as one continues to drink of that word. Psalm 33:8 (LXX) is cited to connect the reader with deliverance of David from his enemies as well as the pattern of deliverance in which he stands. Believers have experienced or tasted an even greater deliverance brought about by God's Word and they should hold fast to that saving message.

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<sup>67</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 123.

<sup>68</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 126.

## **1 Peter 2:4-10**

In this section we see Peter shows how Old Testament realities have become true of new covenant believers as they find their typological fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This identity informs how Christians are to relate to God (1 Pet 2:5) and the rest of the world (1 Pet 2:9). The theme of temple and priesthood dominate this section. This structure and institution run across the biblical narrative or redemptive history and are brought to their fulfillment in Jesus Christ who then caused those who were incorporated into him to be part of this fulfillment as well. The theme of temple and priesthood appear at the very beginning of the canon in Genesis 1-2. As their ultimate reality is met in Christ they are incorporated into the spiritual temple and true priesthood.<sup>69</sup> Christ is the living stone, a statement that points to his resurrection and is confirmed using Psalm 118.<sup>70</sup> He is the true living temple. In Christ believers become a part of that temple and perform the service in the temple and a spiritual priesthood. As believers have come to Christ, they have received a new identity. This identity tells them that they are worshipers of God, living in service to him. The believers' identity, understood in relationship to Jesus, tells us that we do not live for ourselves but for worshipful service to God. God has chosen believers and given them a special status. Exodus 19:5-6 is now applied to believers (1 Pet 2:9). Christ is the great high priest. Those in him perform the mediatorial role of announcing his glory to the rest of the world as his chosen people (1 Pet 2:9-10). This means that the way believers are to be proclaimers of God to the world. The church has an evangelistic role to play. They announce the very deliverance that to others that God has brought about for them.

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<sup>69</sup> Goppelt, *Commentary on 1 Peter*, 136.

<sup>70</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 104.

## 1 Peter 2:18-25

1 Peter 2:18-25 is found in a section where the believer, as an alien, is to be both a warrior and a witness (1 Pet 2:11-12). Peter addresses what this looks like in general (1 Pet 2:13-17; 3:8-12) as well as what it looks like in the relationships in which believers were most likely to participate (1 Pet 1:18-3:7). In 1 Peter 3:18-25, Peter exhorts servants to be submissive to their masters regardless of their reasonableness or lack thereof (1 Pet 2:18). Peter's reason is that God finds favor with those who endure unjust suffering (1 Pet 2:19). He supports this proposition by stating that it is to no credit if you suffer for sin but enduring suffering for doing good pleases God (1 Pet 2:20). Verse 21 furthers the defense of the command, pointing out that believers were called to suffer as followers of Christ. He is the pattern for the life of the believer (1 Pet 2:21). Peter appeals to the Suffering Servant song in Isaiah 53 as the model of suffering (1 Pet 2:22; cf. Isa 53:9). Christ was the direct fulfillment of the suffering servant and set the pattern for his people. This pattern that Peter appeals to models how believers are to suffer for doing good. Verse 23 interprets the Isaiah reference as applying to Jesus. Peter sets Christ's sacrificial work within the context of Isaiah as the example of suffering while doing good. He suffered to free us from sin to live a new existence of righteousness.<sup>71</sup> His wounds heal us (1 Pet 2:24). This healing is freedom from the bondage of sin that Isaiah describes as a sickness (cf. Isa 1:5-6). Christ's suffering has resulted in the restoration of sinners, alluding to Isaiah 53:6, to his care and oversight, thus communicating the honorable outcome for enduring suffering for doing good (1 Pet 2:25).

Peter's use of Isaiah interprets Jesus as the suffering servant and the church as those for whom he suffered. The original context of Isaiah saw Israel as the people of God. Christ as Israel's king is both Israel and her savior and in his cross-work he delivers

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<sup>71</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 145.

his people out from the bondage of sin to live out the righteousness that God desires (cf. Isa 5:7-8). Peter's use of Isaiah 53 in this context shows that he sees the church, in Christ, as the new Israel, the new people of God. The broader backdrop in which Isaiah 53 is located is the return from exile via a new exodus. This new exodus has been accomplished by Jesus Christ and those who come to him can experience it. Believers who have experienced the new exodus endure unjust suffering for doing good because they no longer give into the passions of those who are in exile (1 Pet 2:11) but rather live this way as a witness to display what the life that has undergone the new exodus looks like.

### **1 Peter 3:8-12**

The section that is composed of 2:11-3:12 centers on the household relationships that believers are most likely to experience. These household codes are bracketed by more general commands (1 Pet 2:13-16, 3:8-12). First Peter 3:8-12 functions as the end of this list of instructions found in 1 Peter 2:11-3:12. The passage exhorts believers to exemplify attitudes and actions that characterize those who trust the Lord for deliverance. Verse 9 articulates what not to do.<sup>72</sup> They are to return evil with a blessing. Achtemeier observes that specifics addressed to the subgroups in this section have wider implications for the church at large.<sup>73</sup> Believers were called to be different than the hostile world around them. Peter grounds this summary command in portions of Psalm 34.<sup>74</sup> The reason he does this is because of the historical context of Psalm 34. The psalm seems to place David in a pattern of those who fear the Lord and conduct themselves in righteousness as they endure suffering while awaiting the Lord's deliverance. The superscription of Psalm 34 reads "Of David, when he changed his

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<sup>72</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 163.

<sup>73</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222.

<sup>74</sup> Psalm 33 (LXX). Peter is following the LXX reading rather than the Hebrew.

behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.”<sup>75</sup> It sets the historical context of the psalm within specific events in David’s life recounted in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. Peter probably employed this psalm as support because it revealed both David’s righteous conduct in adversity and his trust in the Lord to deliver him. The superscription states Abimelech drove him out.<sup>76</sup> First Samuel 21:10-15 states that he went down to Achish the king of Gath. David probably uses Abimelech to draw a typological connection with Abraham and his unjust suffering.<sup>77</sup> Both David and Abraham sojourned in a land not their own (Gen 20:1; 1 Sam 21:10). Both are in situations where the line of the promised seed is in jeopardy (Gen 20:2; 1 Sam 21:11-12). Both are sent out by the king of that land (Gen 20:8-18; 1 Sam 21:15). Believers follow in the same pattern of suffering and deliverance and are to exemplify the same righteous conduct that is seen in Psalm 34.

### **1 Peter 3:13-22**

1 Peter 5:13-22 is about the blessing of suffering for doing right. Peter reminds his readers that they are blessed for doing good (1 Pet 3:14). He then quotes the words of Isaiah the prophet (cf. Isa 8:12). The context of Isaiah 8 is a warning not to fear the rebellious people but to fear the Lord and follow him (Isa 8:12-13). First Peter 3:15 applies Isaiah 8:13, which speaks of Yahweh, to Christ. The message is clear: believers are to fear Christ and be devoted to him rather than the rebellious world around them. They live for the hope that he has promised (1 Pet 3:15). This hope allows believers to live a righteous life that their consciences can affirm even when the evil opposition slanders them (1 Pet 3:16). Suffering for good is itself better (1 Pet 3:17). This is supported by

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<sup>75</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the *English Standard Version* (ESV).

<sup>76</sup> See the superscription to Psalm 34.

<sup>77</sup> I am indebted to James M. Hamilton Jr., who pointed this out in a discussion on New Testament theology on January 8, 2019.

Christ as the righteous suffering for the unrighteous to reconcile them to God (1 Pet 3:18). The goodness of this is seen in the benefit for those for whom he suffered, as well as the result for him which is resurrection to a new existence as the head of the new creation. Already Paul has established believers following in Christ's pattern. They will experience the same resurrection if they follow his pattern. Christ also declared victory over the evil spirits (1 Pet 3:19). Believers can have confidence that their confession made in baptism will result in experiencing the fulfillment of this new creation. The narrative of Noah in Genesis 6-9 is placed here because Noah was righteous in his generation (Gen 6:9). Noah feared God while the rest of the world was wicked and had corrupted its way (Gen 6:5, 11-12). God judged the world with a flood but brought Noah through the flood (Gen 7:11-23). Peter makes a correspondence between the flood and baptism (1 Pet 3:21). God brought Noah through the flood waters of judgment in the ark. Our baptism, representing our confession and union with Christ, declares that in Christ we have been taken through the flood waters of judgment. As Noah came through the judgment into a new creation, so, in Christ, believers have come through the eschatological judgment into the new creation. Again, the new creation inaugurated by Christ stands as the theme in this section. The assurance of life in the new creation motivates believers to continue to fear God and do good in the presence of a hostile world (1 Pet 3:22).

### **1 Peter 4:12-19**

The believers' reaction to the intense suffering that comes for serving Christ should not be one of surprise, but of rejoicing because, just as they share in Christ's suffering, they will also share in Christ's glory when he is revealed (1 Pet 4:12-13). Believers should view being insulted for Christ's sake as evidence of God's Spirit in their lives and their future glory (1 Pet 4:14). Both are realities that those who are part of the new creation experience. The same Spirit who revealed the sufferings of Messiah and the

glories to follow, rested on Messiah during his suffering (Mark 1:10), and then raised him from the dead (Rom 1:4) also rests on the believers who endure suffering for him.<sup>78</sup> Believers should be ashamed if they are suffering because of sin but not ashamed if they are suffering for Christ. Suffering is a way of weeding out those who are not truly believers. The true believer endures hostility and continues to glorify God by living righteously. Peter cites Proverbs 11:31 to enforce that the righteous go through suffering. The believer must persevere if they are to experience eschatological salvation.<sup>79</sup> The believers are those who follow in the long pattern seen in redemptive history of suffering awaiting exaltation.

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<sup>78</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 288.

<sup>79</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 228.

## CHAPTER 2

### EXPOSITION 1: 1 PETER 1:3-12

When people purchase a new built home, or they have finished renovating a home, it is common for them to invite people to visit. As part of that visit, they may often show their guests the work of the house. Attention is given to the work of the builders. Often there are words of praise or commendation for what was done or the way it was accomplished. There may be exclamations of appreciation for the quality of the work. It could be praise for the efficiency of the workers. Whatever is expressed, it is nothing less than doxological.

The apostle Peter did the same in this passage. He gave worship to God for the realities which he had brought about through Jesus for the recipients of this letter. Worship toward God should fill the lives of believers when they consider the salvation God has accomplished.

The doxology to God in 1 Peter 1:3-12 functioned to encourage his suffering readers. This chapter will argue that this word of praise drew attention to three aspects of his readers' salvation and that each aspect served as an encouragement to his recipients to persevere through the difficulty they faced as followers of Christ. This thesis will be demonstrated by showing that Peter viewed God's redemption of the reader as (1) having given them hope for the future, (2) enabled them to rejoice during the suffering of the present, and (3) placed them in the age/epoch of the fulfillment of what was promised in the past.

## Hope for the Future

Peter began the body of this letter with praise to God. Such praise was expressed because God had given believers new life with a sure hope through the saving work of Jesus Christ (v. 3). The words contained in verse 3 trumpet the praiseworthiness of God. Peter declared God as “blessed.” This was an expression of worship and it functioned to solicit the same kind of response to God from the readers.<sup>1</sup> The reason he praised God was because of who God is and what he has done. First, he extolled him as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:3). This identification conveyed the intimate connection between the Father, who has foreknown these saints, and the Lord with whom they are in covenant relationship (1:1-2). While both play a role in the salvation of believers, as seen in 1:2, the description here of God as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” highlights the distinct roles between the Father and the Son in salvation and thus accents the Father as the fount of the believer salvation and thus the focus of this praise.<sup>2</sup> As will be seen below, salvation has come *from* the Father *through* the Son. Believers should respond to the source of their salvation with celebration as Peter did.

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<sup>1</sup> Εὐλογητός is a word of commendation or an expression to show the worthiness of praise. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domain* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 429. The LXX uses it to communicate God’s praise worthiness in the Psalms (Pss 17:47; 27:6; 30:22; 40:14; 65:20; 67:20; 71:18; 88:53; 105:48; 134:10; 143:1). It is used in the NT to describe God (Mark 14:61; Luke 1:68; Rom 1:25; 9:5). It is also used in the beginning of Epistles to solicit worship to God (2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3). First Peter does not conform in every way to the structure of Greco-Roman letters of the time. Εὐλογητός signals that 1 Pet 1:3-12 functions as a benediction. This benediction fulfills the place of a thanksgiving or wish for the readers health. F. Watson Duane, “Letters, Letter form,” ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 651. It will be here that several of the themes that run throughout the letter, such as hope (1:3; cf. 1:13, 21; 3:5; 15), suffering (1:6; cf. 2:18-25; 3:9, 13-14, 18; 4:1, 4, 12-19; 5:1, 10), and exaltation (1:7, 9, 11; cf. 1:21; 2:7; 3:9, 13, 22; 5:1, 4, 6, 10), will be introduced in this section.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 60. Cf. Jonah 2:9; 2 Cor 5:17-18. This is not denying that salvation is a Trinitarian work, which is clearly seen in 1:1-2. It emphasizes that salvation come from God the Father. Yet, as will be seen below, how salvation comes is through the son. Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 59.

As the Father's identity is considered, what is seen is that God was praised not only because of who he is but also because of what he has done. God, the source of salvation, was identified by his saving activity. God was the one "who has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet 1:3). God gave the new life. God had caused them to be birthed anew.<sup>3</sup> Here the author drew attention to God's birthing believers as their spiritual father. God had brought about a new existence for them.

The notion that it was a new reality is seen not only because of the language that was used to describe God's saving activity but also because of how God brought forth this new life. God had begotten believers anew "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet 1:3).<sup>4</sup> That this birth is connected to Jesus's own resurrection proves that a new reality has been divinely generated. Jesus's own resurgence was not a return to his same existence prior to his crucifixion. It was a resurrection to an entirely new one (1 Cor 15:35-53; cf. Rom 1:4; 6:4-7). What is seen in the New Testament is that Jesus Christ is the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45; cf. Rom 5:14). He is the head of a new humanity (Eph 2:15) so that anyone who is in Christ is new creation (2 Cor 5:17). As the "resurrection from the dead" is considered, God's begetting of the believer is a birth unto a new creation.<sup>5</sup> This new birth is part of the new covenant reality which was brought about by the finished work of Jesus, fulfilling God's elective purposes

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<sup>3</sup> The participle form used here is from the verb γεννάω meaning "to beget" or "give birth to." BDAG, 59. The focus here is not on the person being born but on the one executing the act of birthing as reflected in the passive voice. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 60.

<sup>4</sup> The prepositional phrase communicates the instrumentality of the verb. G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 324n24.

<sup>5</sup> So Beale, who links new creation and resurrection together: "The language of 'born again' indicates new creation, just as Jesus's resurrection can repeatedly convey the notion of him being the 'firstborn' (Rom 8:28; Col 1:18; Heb 1:5-6)." Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 324.

(cf. 1 Pet 1:2).<sup>6</sup> Such elective purposes find their fulfillment in the begetting work of God.

The New Testament witness testified to the state of those who have not experienced the salvation of Jesus proclaimed in the gospel: hopelessness (1 Cor 15:14-19; Eph 2:12; 1 Thess 4:13). The opposite was viewed as true for those who have experienced the regenerating work of God. Peter stated that they had been born anew “to a living hope” (1:3). Hope is not a minor theme in 1 Peter. It possesses a significant presence in this letter (1:3, 12, 21, 3:5, 15). Its first occurrence is found here in chapter 1. Hope spoke of a certain expectation based on sure promises.<sup>7</sup> It ultimately rests upon God and what he promised.<sup>8</sup> Peter spoke of it as a living hope because it was not an empty expectation but rather one full of life and vitality.<sup>9</sup> The new creation existence gave Peter’s Christians full confidence in a future reality. God-given life produced a sure confidence for the future.

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<sup>6</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 83. Jobes and others have observed that the idea of new birth comes from the teaching of Jesus himself. In John 3 Jesus employs the image of birth to communicate that a new existence must take place if one is to experience the kingdom of God (John 3:3-8). Jesus’s allusion to Ezek 36:25-27 makes it clear that such a new existence will be a reality experienced in the new covenant (John 3:5) which fits well with the context here. Ezek 36:25-27 predicts the Lord bringing his people out of a sin caused exile. God will cleanse them (Ezek 36:25) and will put his Spirit in them so that they walk in faithfulness to him. In the middle of these two promised realities God states another reality that he will cause to take place. He will give them a new heart (Ezek 36:26). It will be a heart of flesh where one did not previously exist. This is a work that God would bring to be that would change the way they lived. It, in essence, would be a new actuality brought about by God. The notion that the covenant formula is used in Ezek 36:28 evidence that this is new covenant reality. Peter understood Jesus’s teaching of new birth. Though he uses slightly different vocabulary, he recognized the new covenant context of which Jesus drew his teaching and understands that such an existence has been brought about by God for his readers.

<sup>7</sup> BDAG, 319.

<sup>8</sup> This is evidenced in 1 Pet 1:21, where Peter states that the purpose of Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation was so that the believer’s faith and *hope* are in God. Here we see the close link between the saving events proclaimed in the gospel and the believer’s hope. Faith and hope are also tied to the resurrection of Christ in 1:21 cf. 3:15 where hope comes as the product of the believers’ faith that Christ will be devoted to his promises.

<sup>9</sup> Schreiner, along with others, notes that “a ‘living hope’ is one that is genuine and vital, in contrast to a hope that is empty and vain.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 61.

## Inheritance

The living hope was elucidated in verses 4 and 5. “To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:4-5). This living hope referred to the readers future inheritance.<sup>10</sup>

This notion of inheritance was significant to the original recipients of this letter. They were believers whom Peter addressed as “exiles”<sup>11</sup> (1:1). Later he described their life in this world as “the time of your *exile*” (v. 17; emphasis added).<sup>12</sup> In 1 Peter 2:11 he addressed them as “sojourners” and “exiles.” This is a people not at home in this present world due to their faith and allegiance to Christ. They had no possession, no inheritance in this present world. But the glory of what Jesus Christ accomplished, as proclaimed in the gospel, had brought about for them an inheritance.

As Peter wrote on this notion of inheritance, he did so to give his readers new categories of thought about themselves and their perception of the world. In other words, one needs to understand Peter’s interpretive perspective.<sup>13</sup> Peter was not drawing from

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<sup>10</sup> So also Schreiner, who sees the hope being described more fully in verse 4. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 62. Some hold that the two prepositional phrases “εις ἐλπίδα ζωσαν” (1:3) and “εις κληρονομίαν” (1:4) refer to two distinct purposes of the participle ἀναγεννήσας. Here we are taking the latter as elucidating the former.

<sup>11</sup> The ESV renders the word “exiles,” but it is probably best to translate the word as “sojourners.” The word is used in Hebrews 11 to describe those who had not received the promises and particularly is highlighting the patriarchs as the dwelt in Canaan as those who were promised this land for their offspring but did not possess the land themselves.

<sup>12</sup> Exile is to be in a strange land without citizenship (Acts 13:17; cf. Pss 118:54; 119:5 LXX). BDAG, 779.

<sup>13</sup> The interpretive perspective is defined as “the framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identification, truths and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world and the events that take place in them.” James M. Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 15-16. Here Peter is using the associations and identifications that are connected to the concept of inheritance from the biblical storyline as it unfolds across the covenants culminating in the person and work of Christ as he establishes the new covenant. Peter is using this framework to convert his readers own self-understanding of themselves, a conversion of the imagination, in view of their obedience to the truth. On this idea of “conversion of the imagination,” see Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scriptures*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1-24. Hays argues that Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, was seeking to have the Corinthian church identity in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel is only “comprehended within the large biblical narrative.” Hays, 5. I propose that Peter is doing the same thing here and throughout his epistle. Here, the gospel is connected to concepts unveiled

the Greek-Roman world but from his own world view which was constructed by the Old Testament Scriptures. This is what informed Peter's understanding of the "inheritance."

What is meant by "inheritance" is the eschatological life experienced in the new creation.<sup>14</sup> Inheritance recalls the land of Canaan that was given to the people of Israel under Joshua's leadership. This was the land that was given in fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham (Gen 12:1-9). These promises were enshrined in the covenant made between Yahweh and Abraham (Gen 15:1-21). Within the biblical storyline that unfolded across the covenants, this inheritance pointed backwards and forwards. It recalled to Eden; it directed attention forward to the new creation. Eden, the promised land, and the new creation are the context in which rest, fellowship with God, and worship were to exist.<sup>15</sup>

God created the cosmos. He made man in his image and as the pinnacle of his creation (Gen 1:26-28; cf. Ps 8).<sup>16</sup> This creation, a cosmic temple (Isa 66:1),<sup>17</sup> would be where he placed his image bearers as well as where they would have solidarity and rest

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in the larger biblical narrative that now redefine Peter's hope for how they understand themselves now and their hope for the future.

<sup>14</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels points out the future eschatological nature of the inheritance rather than a present status is what is in view: "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." J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 20.

<sup>15</sup> John H. Walton, "Garden of Eden," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 205. Since land is spoken of as both the inheritance of the people and of God, it signifies the concord and harmony present between the two parties as covenant partners. J. G. Millar, "The Land," in *NDBT*, 625.

<sup>16</sup> For evidence supporting this point, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 216-20.

<sup>17</sup> For the argument that the heavens and earth were created to be a cosmic temple for Yahweh, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 31-45; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 122-23.

with him (Gen 2:2-3; 8-15).<sup>18</sup> Man lived in covenant relationship with God as his son and vice regent.<sup>19</sup> They had fellowship with God and served him in their role as king-priests. They sought to fulfill the mission God had given them of extending his rule throughout the cosmos.<sup>20</sup> However, rather than extending God's rule, our first parents rebelled against his rule, succumbing to the temptations of the serpent (Gen 3:1-7). In response to their disobedience God announced curses (Gen 3:15-20). They were exiled out of the sacred space where harmony, fellowship, worship, blessing, and life were experienced (Gen 3:24; cf. 2:17). Yet they were not removed without hope. Within this setting of pronounced judgment, God promised that the woman's seed would one day crush the head of the serpent and undo his work (Gen 3:15; cf. 1 John 3:8).

The biblical narrative informed the reader that things only continued to devolve causing God bring judgment, de-creating his world through a flood (Gen 6-7).<sup>21</sup> As the flood waters receded, a new creation appeared on the scene. Noah, who found favor with God (Gen 6:8), and his family were preserved (Gen 6:18; 7:7; 23; cf. 1 Pet 3:20). God re-established the covenant, which had been previously broken by Adam, with Noah. Yet it becomes clear that Noah is a failure in this new creation as well (Gen 9:18-29).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> John H. Walton, "Creation," in Alexander and Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 161, 164.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Gentry has argued that bound up with the image of God has the ideas of sonship and kingship and points to a covenantal relationship. Man serves God as his son and as his servant-king ruling the world for God. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 236.

<sup>20</sup> Beale argues that man being placed in the garden sanctuary as the image of the divine king and with the commission to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:26-28) signals that the presence of God was to extend to the ends of the earth, thus making it a cosmic temple. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 82-83.

<sup>21</sup> The flood narrative in Gen 7 seems to be the undoing of what was accomplished on days 2 and 3 of creation. The undoing of this results in the destruction of all the life created on day 6.

<sup>22</sup> Oren R. Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land Promise in God's Redemptive Plan*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 34 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 47.

After the chaos of Babel (Gen 11:1- 9) Abraham and his offspring emerged on the scene as the family through which God establish his redemptive purposes to restore what was lost at Eden. God called Abram out of his own land and promised him seed, land, and blessing (Gen 12:1-3). Within the narrative of Genesis these promises served as the solution to the tragic events of the fall (Gen 3:1-24; 12:1-9; 15:1-21; 17:1-27; 22:1-24).<sup>23</sup> Abraham (then Abram) journeyed to the land that God would show him. Abraham traveled to Canaan, and there God revealed he would give that land to Abraham's offspring (Gen 12:4-9). Abraham's offspring would eventually find themselves not in the land promised as an inheritance but in Egypt and oppressed by her king. Yahweh would rescue them, redeem them, and bring them to himself.

Following Yahweh's completion of his liberation of Israel from Egypt in which he preserved Israel through the waters of the Red Sea but drowned their Egyptian pursuers (Exod 14:13-31), the people offered praise on the shores of the Red Sea to their deliverer Yahweh (Exod 15:1-19). It was within this song that the promise made to the patriarchs regarding the land of Canaan was reiterated (Exod 15:17). The expression of this notion was articulated with imagery that recalled God's planting of the garden in Eden (Gen 2:6). God's bringing Israel into the land anticipated an entrance into a new Eden.<sup>24</sup> Several points of contact between Eden and the description of Canaan in Exodus 15:17 validate this claim. First, as God planted a garden in Eden so Israel would be described as those whom God would "plant" in his mountain.<sup>25</sup> "Mountain," second, as a

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<sup>23</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr. has argued that the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12 function as the antidote to the curses pronounced in Genesis 3. James M. Hamilton Jr., "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *Tyndale Bulletin* 58, no. 2 (2007): 253-73.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Gentry states, "[T]he song at the sea pictures Israel as a new Adam entering the Promised Land as a new Eden." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 231.

<sup>25</sup> The verb נָטַע is used to speak of God's planting a garden in Eden (Gen 2:8). Already within Genesis one can see that the associations with this verb are intended to evoke recollections of Eden and signal new creation. Thus, Noah as a new Adam in a new creation (as stated above) "planted" a vineyard (Gen 9:20). Abraham planted a tree and called on the name of the Lord a priestly function in the land that would recall the sanctuary setting of Eden and thus signaled that the land of Canaan as the new realm in which the worship of God would be performed (Gen 21:33). It is a picture of a new Eden with a new Adam

description of Canaan served as another point of contact since Eden was understood to be located on a mountain.<sup>26</sup> Third, as seen above, Eden was understood as an archetypal sanctuary and the same description is given to the land of Canaan in Exodus 15:17.

Attached to the notion of sanctuary is the idea of God's presence. This idea of presence was seen both in Eden (Gen 3:8) as well as in Canaan being described both as God's "sanctuary" and "the place of your (God's) abode" (Exod 15:17). Thus, the description of Canaan signaled that the land of Canaan would be a new Eden.

Another link between Canaan and Eden can be seen in Balaam's oracles (Num 24:1-9; esp. vv. 5-6). The dwelling of Israel was described in arboreal terms such as "palm groves," "aloes," and "cedar trees" (Num 24:5-6). This along with "gardens beside a river" and trees beside "waters" would evoke images of Eden (Num 24:6; cf. Gen 2:8-14). The welling of Israel in Canaan was already in view as the oracle goes on to convey the nations dispossessing the existing nations and claiming the land as their own (Num 24:8-9). Finally, the language of blessing and cursing recalls the Abrahamic promises which anticipate a return to Edenic-like conditions (Gen 12:1-3).<sup>27</sup>

Israel would be a new humanity, a corporate Adam in covenant relationship (Exod 19:1-6) with him, living within a kind of new creation (Deut 6:3; 11:9-12; 26:9,

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as the planting of the tree recalls other expressions of worship by the patriarchs that only takes place in the land of Canaan (12:6-8; cf. 13:18; 26:25; 28:18-19). Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 356. The later biblical writers would later describe Israel's being brought into the land of Canaan in terms of God planting Israel there (2 Sam 7:10; Ps 44:2; 80:8, 15; Isa 5:2; Jer 2:21; Jer 11:17; 45:4).

<sup>26</sup> The topographic descriptions of Eden indicate a mountainous region (Gen 2:10-14). Michael Morales points out that in view of the temple ideology of ancient Near East, the garden of Eden would have been located on the summit point of the mountain of God, and he views the validation of this claim as being found in Ezek 28:13-14, in which Eden is identified as the "mountain of God." Along with this, Morales observes that the descriptions of the garden found in Gen 2:10-14 suggest "a high locale that corresponds well with a mountain summit." L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 52. Peter Gentry observes this connection in his observations on Exodus 15:17 when he writes, "[In] this verse the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan is portrayed as the planting of a tree in a *mountain sanctuary*, exactly the picture of Eden presented in Genesis 2 and Ezekiel 28." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 345-46.

<sup>27</sup> See n23 above.

15; 27:3; 31:20)<sup>28</sup> where they would experience God's presence, rest, and worship to him. Israel's king was to lead her in covenantal faithfulness to Yahweh (Deut 17:17-20; cf. 1 Kgs 2:2-4). In fact, this seems to be close to realization during the reign of David, especially in view of the covenant that Yahweh made with David (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17; cf. Pss 89; 110; 132), which advanced the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>29</sup> The anticipated glory is foreshadowed in the reign of Solomon (1 Kgs 4:25; Mic 4:4).

However, the kings led the people into rebellion, resulting in exile from the land. Such exile was warned of in the covenant (Deut 28:63-65). God also graciously sent prophets to warn the rebellious generations of their breaches (Neh 9:30). They announced that judgment in the form of exile was coming. But God also graciously announced a future hope. He, through the mouth of his prophets, proclaimed salvation and a return (Isa 40-66). Yet the descriptions of the land to which they were to return far exceed anything their minds eye could ever imagine. It was spoken of in terms far greater than Canaan could ever fulfill on its best day (Isa 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 9:1-16; 11:1-10).<sup>30</sup> In other words, it pointed to something beyond itself. A faithful Davidic King would one day emerge and rescue his people out of exile, performing an exodus out of sin and bringing them into a new creation, a new heavens and new earth (Isa 65:17; 66:22). However, the prophetic declarations did not take place upon the people's return from Babylonian captivity. Even the rebuilt temple is but a shadow of what Solomon had originally constructed (Ezra

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<sup>28</sup> Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 67. Millar notes that the descriptive language of Canaan as "a land flowing with milk and honey" indicates that the land Israel is about to inherit is a new paradise. Millar, "Land," 624.

<sup>29</sup> Martin succinctly shows the connections between the features of the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant: "The chapters in which the establishment of the covenant is described (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17) are full of allusions to the promises given to Abraham and Moses. For example, David is promised a great name (Gen 12:2; 2 Sam 7:9), a special place (Gen 12:1; Exod 3:8; 2 Sam 7:10), victory over enemies (Gen 22; 17; Exod 23:22; 2 Sam 7:11), a special relationship between his offspring and God (Gen 17:7-8; Exod 4:22; 2 Sam 7:14), and offspring through whom (international) blessing will come (Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; Ps 72:17)." Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 49. One should notice not only the links of these passages by the presence of נִקְוָה (Gen 12:6; Exod 3:8; 2 Sam 7:10) and אָרֶץ (Gen 12:1, 5, 6, 7) but also the use of נָטַע to describe the action of putting in the land. It recalls Exod 15:17 and Gen 2:8.

<sup>30</sup> Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 96, 105.

3:12). Jesus Christ inaugurated this new creation as the resurrected Messiah and Lord (Matt 28:18-20; Rom 1:1-4; 1 Cor 15; Phil 3:20). Here in this new creation this king and his rescued people would have rest, eternal fellowship with God, and worship their Creator forever (Rev 21:1-7). The biblical story line communicates that these Gentile believers were brought into the blessings of God's redemptive restoration and consummation achieved by Christ.<sup>31</sup> Nothing is more hopeful than this.

### **The Certainty of the Inheritance**

Peter evidenced the praiseworthiness of the Father by now addressing the certainty of the inheritance. He emphasized the certainty of the Christian's hope by considering the quality of the inheritance and the secure nature of it.

#### *Its Quality*

The quality of the inheritance was described in three words "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (1 Pet 1:4). "Imperishable" spoke to that which is immortal or devoid of corruption. It referred to that which was eternal and does not experience the decaying effects of a fallen world.<sup>32</sup> This language underlined the eschatological nature of the inheritance even as it described the very God who brings it to be (Rom 1:23; 1 Tim 1:17).<sup>33</sup> The reason the author stated that living hope has come through Jesus was because he achieved for us an inheritance that has an eternal endurance.

A second quality observed when considering the certainty of the inheritance was that it is "undefiled." This denoted an inheritance that was free from sin, its moral

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<sup>31</sup> Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 89.

<sup>32</sup> This can be supported by the way ἄφθαρτος is used in the NT. In 1 Cor 9:25 it is used to describe an "imperishable" wreath in contrast to a perishable one. In 1 Cor 15:52 it describes the state to which the dead are raised. Also, in the same context the synonym ἀφθαρσία is contrasted with φθαρτός "perishable" in 15:43, 53, 54. The words ἄφθαρτος and ἀφθαρσία are used interchangeably so that both are understood to contrast φθαρτός. The citing of Isa 25:8, which is a chant of triumph over death, points to the end of that state which brings about decay (cf. Acts 2:27).

<sup>33</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 96.

corruption, and the consequences that corruption brings.<sup>34</sup> There will be no cause for removal from this inheritance.

Third, Peter characterized this inheritance as “unfading.” It was an inheritance that was described as full of luster that will never diminish. Here he wrote of an inheritance that was attractive with a beauty and brilliance that will not lose its luster. These three qualities communicated the certainty of this inheritance.

### *The Security*

Another evidence of the certainty of the inheritance was seen in its security. Both what is inherited and the heirs themselves were in safe keeping. The security of the inheritance was described as “kept in heaven for you” (1:4). “Kept” spoke of the preservation or reservation of an object for something or someone.<sup>35</sup> This inheritance was reserved in heaven. It was being held for those begotten by God. Heaven referred to the realm of God. In 1 Peter it denoted the sphere from which the Spirit was sent (1 Pet 1:12) and to which the Son has entered (1 Pet 3:22). It is the domain from where God rules with his exalted Messiah next to him (1 Pet 1:22; 3:22; cf. Isa 66:1; Matt 26:64; Acts 7:56; Eph 1:20-22). Heaven, then, denoted the sphere where the hope was kept until it is time to be revealed arrived (Col 1:4). The author described the inheritance as secure

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<sup>34</sup> ἀμίαντος can mean pure, undefiled, or free from stain. LSJ, 83. It is “free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed or debased,” and thus it can be defined as free from or without defect. Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 274. In the NT it refers to ceremonial purity as well as moral purity. It is used in 2 Pet 2:10 to speak of corrupt moral desires. While neither ἀμίαντος nor its antonym μιαντός occurs in the LXX, the verbal cognate μιαίνω is used frequently and carries the idea of “to pollute” or “defile.” It is used to describe the effect upon the land from the abominations practiced by the nations of whom the Israelites would dispossess (Lev 18:24, 25, 27, 28, 30). It would later be used to describe the result of Israel’s idolatrous acts and covenant unfaithfulness in their land which was theirs and Yahweh’s inheritance (Jer 2:7; 3:2; cf. Ps 105:39). Israel polluted her inheritance with her sinful deeds, and it resulted in her exile. However, the eschatological inheritance that Peter speaks of will have no need of an exile because there will be no corruption that will enter or reside in it (cf. Rev 21:8).

<sup>35</sup> It speaks of keeping something for a definite purpose or time. BDAG, 1002. Cf. John 2:10; Acts 25:21a; 2 Pet 2:4.

because it was being held in the very presence of God while Christ prepared it for his people (John 14:2-3).<sup>36</sup>

The reservation of this inheritance was for the people of Christ as seen in the phrase “kept in heaven for you” (v. 4). God’s people have a secure inheritance, but God’s people are also themselves not without security. Their security is seen in that they are depicted as those “who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:5). God provided his protection for the believer.<sup>37</sup> This protection was the exercise of his own power.<sup>38</sup> The question might be asked, “How did such protecting power display itself in the life of the Christians?” Peter gave a clear answer: “through faith.”<sup>39</sup> God gave faith to the believer as the instrument of his powerful protection. The faith that Peter spoke about here is the believer’s exercise of faith.<sup>40</sup> God has graciously worked so that the believer trusted him (1 Pet 1:21). Elsewhere in Scripture the faith of believers was granted to them by God (Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29). The Christian life was to be a life of trust in God and what he has announced in the gospel. Christians believe what God has announced in the message about who Jesus is and what Jesus did. Such faith, brought about by God, was manifested as Christians conducted themselves in a manner consistent with what was preached concerning Jesus.

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<sup>36</sup> The passive tense of the verb should be taken as a divine passive as all the verbals in 1:3-5 are since the context is praise to God for what he has accomplished.

<sup>37</sup> The verb can mean to watch, to detain, or to provide security. BDAG, 1066. This third option is most fitting here and it is God who provides the protection. The divine passive is used here. The prepositional phrase communicating a dative of means fits best with this sense; third, the genitive phrase makes the best sense if we understand the verb to be speaking of protecting rather than detaining or watching.

<sup>38</sup> The prepositional phrase communicates God’s power as the subject of the passive verb.

<sup>39</sup> The genitive prepositional phrase διὰ πίστεως communicates means. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 369.

<sup>40</sup> Πίστεως here is a subjective genitive.

The life that continued to hold fast to the gospel will not apostatize due to temptations and difficulties. The power of God was his enabling the Christian to believe the truth and be governed by that truth. This faith was the power of God at work in the believer. Peter was arguing that the expression of God's power comes through the instrument of the Christian's faith.

The description of those who are protected was concluded with a phrase that stated the purpose of their protection. "For a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:4) tells the reader that Christians are being guarded in order that they might receive the culmination of their salvation. It can be seen here that the church will receive the future aspects of their salvation. The notion that the salvation is future can be seen in that it has yet to be revealed and it will not be revealed until the last time. It was for this salvation that they were being guarded. Salvation in 1 Peter, with the exception 2:2, referred to the culmination of the believer's deliverance (1 Pet 1:6, 9, 10).

Peter here wrote of the aspects of salvation that will be received at the revelation of Christ. The notion that Christ's revelation was in view can be seen by several evidence. He told them to hope in the coming grace that will arrive at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:13). The present sufferings seem to be contrasted with future glory associated with the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:6-7). The outcome of the readers' faith will be the salvation of their souls which related to the revelation of Jesus Christ. The revelation of Jesus Christ (v. 7) was contrasted with the past and present experience of Christ thus indicating that the revelation of Jesus Christ is future. The Asia Minor believers had not presently seen Jesus but when he is revealed they would. If the revelation of Jesus Christ is future, then so are the experiences that come in connection with it, which verse 9 indicates is the salvation of the believer's souls (1 Pet 1:9). When Christ is revealed, their salvation will be revealed as well.

The idea that this salvation is the culmination of their salvation can be seen in that it is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (v. 5). Revealed speaks to a divine

disclosure.<sup>41</sup> The future nature of this disclosure was evidenced by the words “in the last time” (v. 5). The last time denoted the specific event of Jesus’s coming (1:7; cf. 13).<sup>42</sup> It would be on the last day that this salvation will be fully disclosed. These realities were yet to come, and God was preserving his people for them until the last time.

God gave believers new life. This new life awaited the full realization of a hope that was the certainty of the new creation. Such certainty was seen in the quality of this inheritance and the security of it along with the protection of those who will receive it. Such an anticipation was designed to fill the Christian’s heart with adoration and joyful praise to God.

### **Rejoicing While Suffering in the Present**

In verses 3-5 Peter established that believers possess a great hope. What was coming for the children of God in Christ is nothing less than glorious! In 1 Peter 1:6-9 he offered a second reason for his praise to God. The salvation that God brought about enabled the readers to rejoice during the suffering of their present experience. Rejoicing captured the theme of this second part.<sup>43</sup> The Petrine Christians rejoiced in the eschatological salvation while enduring trials because that salvation would be the ultimate outcome of their faith.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The verb is a divine passive. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64.

<sup>42</sup> As Michael’s helpfully notes, “Peter is not speaking of the ‘times’ or the ‘ages’ in a generalized sense (as, e.g., in v. 20), but of one decisive moment when God will bring to an end the world as it has always been (cf. 4:7) and make a new beginning. This moment of the revealing of salvation can also be designated in personal terms as the moment ‘when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (vv. 7, 13), i.e., as the event elsewhere in the NT called the ‘coming’ or *παρουσία* (a word not found in 1 Peter) of the Lord. Or it can be called the revealing of his ‘glory’ (δόξα, 4: 13; 5: 1).” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 23.

<sup>43</sup> The verb *ἀγαλλιάω* occurs in verses 6 and 9 forming an inclusion and framing this section in with the theme of rejoicing. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 91.

<sup>44</sup> Regarding the theme of this section, Schreiner writes, “Now Peter focuses on the joy (vv. 6, 8) and love (v. 8) that fills the lives of believers, even though they are suffering. They are joyful because suffering is the pathway to a godliness that passes the test on the last day (v. 7), because suffering results in eschatological salvation (v. 9).” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 66.

The hope that the recipients anticipated for the future was a hope that produced joy as they endured their present difficulty. The Asia Minor Christians were rejoicing in the hope that had been brought about by the Father through the saving work of Jesus (v. 6; cf. 1:3-5).<sup>45</sup> To rejoice meant to be overjoyed or to be exceedingly glad.<sup>46</sup> Within the letter it expressed the attitude that characterized the Christian even in the face of hardship and suffering (1:8, 4:13). While rejoicing would certainly mark the last day, Peter had in mind his readers present circumstances that were taking place at the time of the writing and reception of his letter.<sup>47</sup>

The recipients of the letter were not rejoicing because the present circumstances of their life were pleasant. In fact, they were rejoicing while they endured suffering and hardship (v. 6). They were “grieved by various trials” (v. 6). While such trials expose the reality of what is in a person,<sup>48</sup> Here the apostle focused on the effect trials have on believers,<sup>49</sup> which encountered the Christians in a multiplicity of ways and forms.<sup>50</sup> These cases of adversity had caused grief in the lives of the recipients. These trials brought about distress and sorrow. The language of grief was used to describe the emotional anguish of the disciples when Jesus predicted his passion (Matt 17:23) as well as when he predicted his betrayal (Matt 26:22). The recipients were experiencing

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<sup>45</sup> The relative pronoun ἐν ᾧ is neuter as in 4:4 and refers to the salvation enunciated in 1:3-5 into which the recipients have been birthed. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 100.

<sup>46</sup> BDAG, 4.

<sup>47</sup> The verb should be taken not as a future but as a present tense. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 66.

<sup>48</sup> See 1 Pet 4:12, where Peter explains that πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν is the purpose for which the fiery ordeal has come upon his readers.

<sup>49</sup> The notion that this is the case is seen first that Peter is setting up the surprising activity of rejoicing in a context where one would not expect there to be any joy. Joy is the antithesis of grief (cf. John 16:20), but the believer experiences these realities simultaneously (cf. 2 Cor 6:10). Second, Peter will explicitly deal with the purpose of what a trial does in verse 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ποικίλοις has the meaning of manifold or diversity and communicates an existence in various kinds. BDAG, 842. See also 1 Pet 4:10-11, where Peter communicates different kinds of gifts with the distinction made between speaking the oracles of God versus gifts of serving.

emotional anguish due to the trials they faced. The trials were a present reality as seen in the word “now” and were also only temporal. Peter was contrasting the trials transient nature with that of the coming glory that will be eternal (1:7; cf. 2 Cor 4:16-18).<sup>51</sup>

It can also be seen that the sufferings had a design (v. 7). Since the process of trials revealed the authenticity of a thing,<sup>52</sup> the purpose of these trials was to reveal the genuineness of the believer’s faith (Jas 1:3; cf. Ps 11:7; Prov 27:2 [LXX]; 1 Macc 2:421).<sup>53</sup> In other words, having persevered through the process of testing, the faith would be found to be genuine or pure because the believers remained faithful.<sup>54</sup> Such a purpose was not surprising when one considers the broader biblical narrative. In the Old Testament God used difficult circumstances to expose what was true about the heart of his people. Abraham was tested when God told him to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:1-12).<sup>55</sup> Likewise Israel went through a time of testing in their wilderness journey (Deut 8:1-3).<sup>56</sup> God also tested his people once they were in the land (Judg 2:21-22). God desires genuine faith in his people.

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<sup>51</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 67.

<sup>52</sup> A trial exposes the authenticity of a thing. BDAG, 793.

<sup>53</sup> So Michaels, who writes, “The long clause introduced by ἵνα explains the divine purpose and the final outcome of the readers’ experience of suffering: i.e., the perfecting of their faith.” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 30. Δοκίμιον refers to being genuine as a result of testing. BDAG, 256.

<sup>54</sup> Most commentators note that τῆς πίστεως refers to “faithfulness.” See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 101n35; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 30; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 57.

<sup>55</sup> That this is an example of God testing his people can be seen in several ways. First, in Gen 12:1 we are given the purpose for the events that are narrated. “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham.” (Gen 22:1). The English word “tested” translates the Greek verb πειράζω which is the verbal cognate of πειρασμός which is used in 1 Pet 1:6. Second, the idea of testing to reveal what is genuine can be seen in the words of the angel of the Lord found in Gen 12:12, “He said, ‘do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from me’” (Gen 12:12 NASB; emphasis added). These words communicate the interpretive significance of Abraham’s actions—he fears God. This connects to the with the idea of faith that is genuine that is present in 1 Pet 1:7. The idea that the fear of Yahweh can be interpreted as “faith” is seen in Heb 11:17: “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son” (NASB).

<sup>56</sup> The same idea as noted above is present in Deut 8:1-3, where Moses interprets the significance of the difficulties experienced by Israel in the wilderness. The idea of testing to know the genuine nature of thing is seen in 8:2. The notion that faith is being tested is seen in 8:3 as to whether Israel will be faithful to the word of Yahweh as their sustenance for life.

The faith that these readers held was valuable. The worth of this commodity becomes evident when Peter compared it to gold and identifying it as “more precious” in comparison.”<sup>57</sup> The high value was also illustrated by the comparison with gold that has been tested by fire, thus indicating its purity. Faith tested by adversity is valuable as gold tested by fire was valuable. The significance of the value of proven faith was seen in its eschatological importance found at the end of verse 7.<sup>58</sup>

The goal of proven faith is that it will receive divine commendation on the last day. God will find<sup>59</sup> the readers faith as genuine and this was of tremendous value to him. Praise, glory, and honor intimated the commendation of the Christian by God on the last day.<sup>60</sup> This commendation stood in contrast to the shame of those who disbelieve and are hostile to Christ (cf. 2:6-8; 3:16). The idea that God will grant them glory and the stamp of his approval evidenced God’s value of the believer’s faithfulness.<sup>61</sup>

Peter told his Asia Minor Christians that this commendation would take place at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The revelation of Jesus Christ referred to his return at his Parousia to judge the wicked and to reveal those who belonged to him, bring to pass the culmination of their salvation (1:5, 13; 4:13; 5:1). It will be at this event that the those faithful to the Lord will be recognized as genuine and vindicated for their faith in Jesus Christ.

The Petrine Christians were insulted, reviled, slandered, and mistreated. They, ironically, suffered for doing good as they submitted to the lordship of Christ. Yet

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<sup>57</sup> Πολυτιμότερο pertains to having high monetary value or of high price. BDAG, 850. Cf. Matt 13:46; John 12:3.

<sup>58</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 30.

<sup>59</sup> εὐρίσκω functions here as a divine passive.

<sup>60</sup> Michaels helpfully points out that the terms praise, glory, and honor can refer speak to both the believer’s commendation as well as worship to God. The two do not need to be set against each other. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 31.

<sup>61</sup> The terms ἔπαινος, δόξα, and τιμή are used elsewhere in 1 Peter to convey approval (1 Pet 2:7, 14; 5:4).

because they remained faithful to Christ and did not forsake him, they would not be despised or persecuted forever. Their faith, having gone through trials, would ultimately culminate in the commendation from God when Christ was to be revealed along with worship to God. They rejoiced even in trial because Christ, at his coming, would bring the consummation of their salvation.

Having spoken of the one who is to be revealed (v. 7), the focus turned to the readers affection for him. Christ, as the one who brings his great reward, was the object of the saint's love and joy. Love conveyed the great affection for the one who would be revealed. These chosen exiles had never beheld Jesus in his earthly ministry.<sup>62</sup> However, this did not prevent them from loving their savior.<sup>63</sup> As they stood in the "not yet" consummated era of redemptive history, they stood with a heart full of love for the deliverer who would pluck them out of their grief forever. Peter's readers' love for Christ was not diminished while they waited for him to be unveiled and they would finally see him. Parallel to this, their faith and their joy were not diminished by the fact that they presently had not seen him. Yet they were those who were characterized as "believing" him. They trusted him and what he had promised. They believed that he would bring it to pass. Thus, they were a people full of joy in him. They rejoiced in him because the outcome of trusting in Christ would be the grasping of their soul's salvation.<sup>64</sup> Such rejoicing had caused the apostle to bless God.

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<sup>62</sup> The participle is concessive. While Peter shares eldership in common with the elders of the recipients to whom he writes, what he does not share with them, and by extension the rest of the recipients, is that he is a witness of the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet 5:1) and Jesus's earthly ministry.

<sup>63</sup> The verb should be read as an indicative, which fits best with the context of 1:3-12.

<sup>64</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 70-71.

## The Age of Fulfillment Promised in the Past

A third and final reality of the readers redemption compelled Peter to praise God.<sup>65</sup> God's redemption had placed them in the age of the fulfillment of what was promised in the past. This doxology informed these believers of their privileged place in salvation history.

First, the idea that the readers were in the age of fulfillment can be seen in that what the prophets promised was not fulfilled in their day. Peter understood their salvation as part of the prophetic content (v. 10). In verse 10 he continued to discuss the salvation of his readers souls. The words "concerning this salvation" connect the reader back to verse 9.<sup>66</sup> This salvation is also called "grace" in verse 10.<sup>67</sup> "Grace" communicated the favor of God manifested in salvation in all its aspects.<sup>68</sup> The verbs found in verses 10-11 indicated that this was the content of the prediction and the prophet's inquiry.<sup>69</sup>

While prophets can refer to those who were prophets in the NT era, the prophets in verse 10 referred to the OT prophets. The prophets are distinguished

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<sup>65</sup> I. Howard Marshall argues that Peter is no longer giving reasons for praise but giving instruction. Yet there are no explicit discourse markers or change in grammar to indicate this. This is reinforced when we consider that the section immediately following (vv. 13-25) begins with the inferential particle διό and is organized around several grammatical imperatives (vv. 13, 25, 17, 22), which clearly mark it as distinct from the doxology found in vv. 3-12. Second, the occurrence of σωτηρία in verse 10 connects verses 10-12 to the previous two units of which this doxology is composed (vv. 3-5, 6-9), as it is mentioned in verses 5 and 9. However, these two things, reason for praise versus instruction, need not be pit against each other. Second Corinthians is a eulogy that is also instructive for how the believer should view the purpose of God's comfort given to the Christian in their distress (2 Cor 1:3-5). In either case, where we can agree is that it contains an important discussion on biblical interpretation. I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter*, IVP New Testament Commentary 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 42-43.

<sup>66</sup> The unity of this doxology can be seen in that verses 3-5 and verses 6-9. Both end with the occurrence of σωτηρία and then are followed by a section that begins with a relative clause.

<sup>67</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 71; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 41.

<sup>68</sup> Within 1 Peter χάρις refers to the favor that is coming at the return of Christ (1:13), the favor of God upon those who live submissively to unjust masters because they are mindful of God (2:19-20), the nature of the relationship between spouses (3:7), the diversity of God's favor in distributing spiritual gifts (4:10), God's favor for the humble as opposed to his opposition to the proud (5:5), and summarizes all that Peter addresses as the Christian experience (5:12). Thus, it should be concluded that Peter here has in view all aspects as he considers what the prophets were predicting. D. Edmond Hiebert observes that the grace speaks to the past and the future. D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992), 74.

<sup>69</sup> Peter understood the prophesied salvation as tied to Christ, his sufferings and subsequent glories which are mentioned in verses 11-12.

temporarily from the content they predicted and from those for whom they predicted it. This distinction can be seen in that the prophets are portrayed as those who were anticipating something that had not arrived in their time, while their prophetic content was expressed as having now been fulfilled and announced to Peter's readers (v. 12). Thus, Peter had in mind OT prophets who were anticipating a salvation that would arrive in an era not their own.

This is verified by the fact they were making Spirit-inspired predictions<sup>70</sup> and that the content of their predictions took place later in redemptive history. The prophecies had to do with the sufferings (1 Pet 1:11; cf. 1:21-24; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1) of Christ and his resurrection and victory over evil (1 Pet 1:12; cf. 1:3, 3:18-22).<sup>71</sup> The prophets were even investigating when these matters would take place,<sup>72</sup> which occurred after their time. This placed them in the era of OT expectation rather than that of the fulfillment revealed in the NT. The fact that the prophetic service was for the benefit of the Petrine community rather than themselves evidenced that these were the OT prophets. These prophets had made promises about salvation that were not fulfilled in their days.

Second, the idea that these believers are in the age of fulfillment can be seen in what was prophesied for the readers. The prophets prophesied of the grace that was to be for the recipients (v. 10). Peter indicated that the prophets had revealed to them that they were not serving themselves in their predictions but these saints (v. 12). The Asia Minor

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<sup>70</sup> The verbs indicate communicating about something in the future. While προφητεύω does convey the telling of an inspired message or tell something that is hidden from view, it also has the meaning of foretelling what lies in the future. BDAG, 890. The foretelling of the future fits best in this context. Προμαρτύρομαι is to solemnly testify to something before it happens. BDAG, 872.

<sup>71</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 74.

<sup>72</sup> Regarding the translation of εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν, it can refer to two things as rendered by the ESV: "what person or time" (see also NRSV, NASB). The NIV renders the phrase "the time and circumstances," interpreting the phrase as referring to time only. Schreiner (following Michaels, *1 Peter*, 41) argues for the reference being to the time only since the prophets knew they were predicting the Messiah. He supports this by appealing to the focus of the text being on the temporal difference between the prophets and Peter's readers and sees the phrase as stressing an emphasis on time. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 74.

Christians were also the recipients of the message that announced the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories that were predicted.

Third, the notion that the readers were in the age of fulfillment can be seen in that what was predicted was now announced as fulfilled. In verse 12, Peter contrasted the prophetic expectation of the past with the revelation of the present manifested in the preaching of the gospel. The same Spirit who previously testified to what was coming (v. 11) has now, in the time of the readers, announced the arrival of these predictions in the preaching of the gospel (v. 12). These readers had the promises made in the past announced to them in the preaching of the gospel which proclaimed the death of Christ and his triumph over the grave and evil. Peter conveyed praise to God for the experience of this reality.

### **Conclusion**

As Christians facing an increasingly hostile world, we need to embrace the reality that things will get difficult. But the difficulties we face as Christians will never accumulate enough haze to cloud the brilliant glory of God. Peter has drawn our gaze to the majesty of God so that we might see his praiseworthiness and magnify him even in midst of suffering. The new life to which God had given Peter's readers is a new life for all who are in Christ. This means that what was true of those Asia Minor Christians is true of those following Christ today. Christians have a future hope. God's salvation also allows believers today to rejoice while they suffer because that suffering will culminate into glory. Christians today can worship God because they too are part of the age of fulfillment of the promises made in the past. Such a doxology gives the Christian reader great motivation to praise God for his salvation.

## CHAPTER 3

### EXPOSITION 2: 1 PETER 1:13-25

Peter has written to Christians who were exiles in their society because of their commitment to Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:1-2). In verses 3-12 he wrote concerning the salvation that God brought about for them. Peter praised God because he had begotten the believers anew to a living hope (1:3). The hope was an inheritance that was certain and secure (1:4-5). The reality of such a salvation had produced joy in his readers even though they were enduring very difficult circumstances (1:6). The trials that they suffered had a purifying effect upon their faith. Peter informed them that this faith would result in their commendation when their beloved savior was revealed along with the culmination of their salvation (vv. 7-9). He also explained that their salvation was predicted by the prophets when they announced the sufferings of Christ and the glories that followed (vv. 10-12). These realities that were stated served as the foundation for what followed in verses 13-25 of the first chapter of Peter's epistle.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will argue that Peter, employing themes and images from the exodus journey, exhorted his audience on how they must live as those begotten by God while awaiting the fulfillment of their salvation.

Several commands were inferred from what was stated in verses 3-12.

Whereas the previous section was marked by indicative statements, verses 13-25 were organized around four imperatives. Verse 13 contained a command instructing the readers to hope in the coming grace that will arrive at the return of Christ. Verses 14-16 contained a call to holiness. This was followed by an injunction to the readers to conduct

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<sup>1</sup> Commenting on this passage, Thomas R. Schreiner writes, "In the following verses the readers are exhorted to live a godly life. But all these exhortations are grounded in God's saving work as explained in vv. 1-12." Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 77.

themselves in fear toward God (vv. 17-21). Fourth, a charge to love the community was administered (vv. 22-25).

These imperatives informed the Christians how they were to live as those begotten by God. This familial theme can be seen as one examines each exhortation. The command to hope connected the reader back to the inheritance (1:13; cf. 1:3-4). The recipients were identified as “obedient children” who were to exemplify the same character of the one who called them (1 Pet 1:14-16). The family of God theme can be seen in that the readers call on God as father (1 Pet 1:17). In the fourth imperative the readers are directed to love others in the Christian community as siblings (v. 22) the reason was because God birthed them anew through his word (1 Pet 1:23). Thus, there was a strong familial theme in this section that added to the understanding of their new identity. Though they were exiles, they possessed a new heritage and are called to live in a way that corresponded with it.<sup>2</sup>

Present also in this section are citations from and allusions to the Old Testament. Verse 13 was an allusion to Exodus 12:11.<sup>3</sup> Verse 16 cited Leviticus 19:2. Several interpreters have seen an allusion to the Paschal lamb in verse 18.<sup>4</sup> In verses 24-25a there was the citation of Isaiah 40:6-8 which began the announcement of a new exodus. A broad exodus motif runs through this passage. Peter drew from texts that address situations of sojourning or were addressed to sojourners themselves. In any case,

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<sup>2</sup> Karen H. Jobes comments, “Peter’s readers are called to recognize the value of their new status as God’s children and to live out their new relationship to their Father by becoming like him, rather than persisting in the old ways that reflected the character of their sinful ancestors.” Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 108.

<sup>3</sup> This may connect the preparation for God’s deliverance at the exodus to the aspect of preparation involved in hoping for the revealing of God’s ultimate deliverance at the return of Christ (1 Pet 1:13a) as will be seen below.

<sup>4</sup> For interpreters who have viewed Peter as making a connection between Jesus and the Passover lamb in 1 Pet 1:18-20, see Bryan D. Estelle, *Echoes in Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 289-91; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st Eng. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 116; James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 524; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 75.

Peter's interpretive lens was on display in this section as he used the OT to fashion his readers self-conception of what it meant to be redeemed. To demonstrate the above stated thesis, this chapter will examine each command, their points of contact with verses 3-12, and their points of contact with the exodus motif.

### **The Exhortation to Hope (1 Pet 1:13)**

In verse 13 Peter wrote to the recipients of the inheritance unto which they had been begotten, instructing them where their hope is to be focused as sojourners awaiting their promised birthright. The readers, having been born of God, have entered a new existence (1 Pet 1:3) and awaited its culmination (cf. 1 Pet 1:5, 7, 9). The completion of their salvation would be brought to them at Christ's coming (1 Pet 1:7).

The imperative of the verse was "to hope." This command was accompanied by two participles which preceded it. the relationship of the participles here was most likely adverbial rather than imperatival, although they carry an imperatival force, functioning to assist in the execution of the command.<sup>5</sup>

### **Mental Preparation**

The readers to whom Peter wrote were addressed as "having prepared your minds for action" (1 Pet 1:13a). Peter saw it necessary for his readers minds to be prepared if they were to fix their hope on the right object. The verb "to gird up" was used of tying or binding up something with a belt (Prov 31:17 LXX; cf. Exod 12:11).<sup>6</sup> This notion of girding up one's loins would have been familiar to those who lived in the ancient world. The people of antiquity wore long and loose flowing robes. When work

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<sup>5</sup> While some see the participles as imperatival, others want to do justice to the subordinate relationship they participles have in relationship to the main verb. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 110; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 77-78. Seeking to clarify the relationship of the participles to the main verb, D. Edmond Hiebert explains, "Two participles precede the controlling imperative and designate the activities that support hope. The two participles, grammatically related to the subject of the imperative, receive an imperatival coloring." D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992), 90.

<sup>6</sup> BDAG, 62.

had to be done or speedy travel was under-taken, they would cincture their loins, usually with a belt of some kind.<sup>7</sup> They did so in order that they would be unhindered in the task before them. Even in modern times, those who do manual labor, outdoor work, exercise, or participate in some athletic event, wear clothing that will not hinder them in those activities. Prior to these activities they put on the appropriate attire so that they were ready.

What was in view here then was a picture of preparation or readiness.<sup>8</sup> Peter had in mind the Israelites own preparation when they were about to be liberated and begin their journey to the land of promise (Exod 12:11). The Israelites were sojourners in Egypt who were also rescued out of slavery to be brought into an inheritance (Gen 15:13-21LXX). As Israel was preparing for God’s deliverance so Christians were to be prepared. However, it may also be that Jesus words on readiness had also informed Peter.<sup>9</sup>

The language here was metaphorical<sup>10</sup> since the readers were called to gird up not their robes but their minds. “Mind” can refer to the faculty of thinking where one reasons and comprehends (Eph 4:18; Heb 8:10).<sup>11</sup> Here, however, it refers to the mental attitude,<sup>12</sup> that is, one’s disposition. In other words, the believer was to have prepared

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<sup>7</sup> In describing the practice in ancient Israel, Peter H. Davids comments, “In Israel an ordinary person wore as the basic garment a long, sleeveless shirt of linen or wool that reached to the knees or ankles. Over this a mantle something like a poncho might be worn, although the mantle was laid aside for work. The shirt was worn long for ceremonial occasions or when at relative rest, such as talking in the market, but for active service, such as work or war, it was tucked up into a belt at the waist to leave the legs free (1 Kings 18:46; Jer. 1:17; Luke 17:8; John 21:18; Acts 12:8).” Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 66.

<sup>8</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 66.

<sup>9</sup> So J. Ramsey Michaels, who suggests that the immediate source for Peter is Jesus’s words recorded in Luke 12:35, while still noting that the verbs are different. J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 54.

<sup>10</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 54.

<sup>11</sup> BDAG, 234.

<sup>12</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 66.

himself or herself with the right mental attitude. They were to have been undistracted and unhindered from loose flowing thoughts that would prevent the believer's hope from being set on the proper thing. This preparation was a mental determination to convey a life focused on the hope brought about by God.<sup>13</sup> Such readiness was to be in hand if one was to keep hope in the coming grace.<sup>14</sup>

### **Mental Clarity**

The second element that Peter conveyed as part of what was necessary in carrying out this command<sup>15</sup> was a mental sobriety. Peter saw this as characterizing the believer.<sup>16</sup> To be sober minded was literally to be free from wine.<sup>17</sup> The inebriated person was one who has his abilities of perception compromised. He cannot see reality for what it is. Not only this but he has less control over his person and sometimes no control at all. Sobriety referred to the exact opposite of such inabilities. However, in the New Testament, this word was only used in a figurative sense and was something that Peter emphasized (1 Pet 4:7; 5:8; cf. 1 Thess 5:6, 8; 2 Tim 4:5).<sup>18</sup>

In terms of being sober minded, Peter also had in mind not just a literal avoidance of drunkenness but a metaphorical use of sobriety.<sup>19</sup> It refers to an ability to

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<sup>13</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 111.

<sup>14</sup> The participle precedes the main verb but is subordinate to it. It carries an imperatival force but should be viewed as what is necessary if the imperative is to be heeded.

<sup>15</sup> There is a change in tense from the aorist to the present. It may be that it indicates that the action of this participle is to be in concert with the actual command. Achtemeier, speaking of the two participles in 1:13, states, "Their respective tenses indicate that girding up (aorist) precedes the hoping, sobriety (present) accompanies it. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 118.

<sup>16</sup> Jobes notes that the present tense suggests ongoing action. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 112.

<sup>17</sup> LSJ, 1175.

<sup>18</sup> BDAG, 672.

<sup>19</sup> Michaels views it not metaphorical in and of itself but as used to summarize the metaphor. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 55. Jobes and Schreiner both view Peter as going beyond simply avoiding alcohol but having a life that is self-controlled and free from confusion. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 111; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 80.

perceive rightly, possessing an alertness and remaining in control. It is the opposite of having a groggy and hazy mind or viewpoint of what is taking place. Peter desired a clear-headed awareness to characterize his readers. If one is going to have one's hope focused on the proper object, then they must have a mind free of any mental intoxication.<sup>20</sup> Mental clarity, with mental preparation, were the essential elements in fulfilling the charge Peter gave in verse 13.

### **The Imperative**

Hope was the task to which the readers were called. As one considers 1 Peter 1:13, this action of hope was the main idea.<sup>21</sup> Since it was the main idea it is necessary to have a proper definition of what hope is.

The hope that Peter addressed in verse 13 was not to be understood in terms of wishful thinking. Expressions such as “I hope I get a raise,” “I really hope he asks me to the dance,” or “I hope the kids sleep during nap time” are a modern way of communicating wishful thinking. However, such expressions were not what was being conveyed by the imperative. Peter was communicating with a sense of certainty consistent with the rest of the NT.<sup>22</sup> Within the context of the NT, to hope was to look forward to something with the confidence that it will come to fruition.<sup>23</sup> It can be understood as an expectation of certainty about the future. An example of such notion can be observed in Romans 8. The apostle Paul had expressed to the Roman Christians their shared experience of groaning with the creation as they awaited with eagerness the

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<sup>20</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 81.

<sup>21</sup> The imperative ἐλπίζατε stands as the main verb of this verse with, as already noted above, the preceding participles being grammatically subordinate to it.

<sup>22</sup> Jobes, commenting on the imperative, states, “Rather, the Greek verb ἐλπίζω (elpizō, hope) as used in the NT involves the idea of assurance that what is hoped for will certainly come to pass.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 109.

<sup>23</sup> BDAG, 319.

redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23). The context made it clear that the redemption of the body in view was future and certain. This is supported by Paul's statement about waiting eagerly (Rom 8:23). They would not be waiting eagerly for something that was not certain. The redemption of their bodies was held by them as certain, and they waited eagerly for it. The redemption of their bodies is referred to in verse 24 as "this hope."<sup>24</sup> They were said to hope for what has not arrived but is expected to arrive and so they waited for it patiently (v. 25). It was this patient waiting that revealed that hope discussed was a certain confidence about the future in the NT (Rom 4:18; 5:1-5; Phil 1:23; Heb 1:1).<sup>25</sup> Peter wrote with the same expectation of certainty as the rest of the NT. He exhorted believers to hope because such action was rooted in the reality that they had been born anew to a living hope through Christ's resurrection (1:3). The resurrection was the basis for their hope (cf. 1 Pet 1:21).<sup>26</sup>

The remainder of verse 13 focused on the object of the main verb. Peter exhorted his readers to "set their hope fully on the grace to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The phrase referred to the culmination or fulfillment of salvation that will arrive when Jesus returned.<sup>27</sup> "Grace" was understood as the culmination of salvation for several reasons. First, in the context "grace" referred to salvation. The "grace" predicted by the prophets (v. 10) referred to the salvation of the believer's soul mentioned in verse 9.<sup>28</sup> Peter used grace as a way of referring the

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<sup>24</sup> In Rom 8:24 the noun cognate ἐλπίς is used, but the verb ἐλπίζω also occurs in the context (see v. 25).

<sup>25</sup> For a helpful biblical-theological survey of hope, see M. W. Elliott, "Hope," in *NDBT*, 559-61.

<sup>26</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 109.

<sup>27</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 65-66.

<sup>28</sup> Σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν is mentioned in (1 Pet 1:9). Verse 10 makes the connection to verse 9 with the words περὶ ἧς σωτηρίας. All that follows in the remainder of verses 10-12 is concerned with the salvation mentioned in 1:9. The phrase περὶ τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος is included. Thus, grace is connected to salvation. The prophetic announcement of salvation is viewed as God's favor to the saints of this context. Favor would arrive in Jesus Christ. In the present context Christ has come, yet there are still aspects of the

believer's rescue. In verses. 9-10 it was an aspect of that salvation which was still to come. This is evidenced by the salvation of their souls being the "outcome" of their faith (v. 9).

Second, the notion that Peter had in view the fulfillment of salvation can be seen in the salvation that this grace referred to contain a future sense in the context (v. 5). As stated earlier, it was "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:5). Peter was describing the future inheritance as well as the heirs who would inherit but who had not yet received it. They were being guarded until its arrival (1 Pet 1:4-5).

Third, the "grace" was described as something "that *will* be brought to you" (emphasis added).<sup>29</sup> This future sense implied that they had not yet experienced this grace (in its fullness<sup>30</sup>). It had not yet arrived.

Fourth, the event at which this grace will be brought to Peter's readers was "at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13). The revelation of Jesus Christ was another way to refer to his second coming which had not yet taken place in history. "Revelation" can mean to uncover with the result that it is made visible or to disclose to be made known.<sup>31</sup> Christ was the resurrected and exalted Lord (1 Pet 1:21; 3:22). However, his glory and exalted status would not be recognized by the world until it is unveiled at his

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salvation that have yet to be fulfilled. As Jobes notes, "Although saving grace is a present reality, the gracious gift of final deliverance awaits a future realization." Jobes, *1 Peter*, 110.

<sup>29</sup> While the ESV has rendered the articular participle as a future, it is grammatically a present tense. However, it probably has the force of a future tense. Kelly, observing the present tense writes, "Although a present participle can have a future force (Luke 2: 34; John 17: 20; etc.), its use here is in keeping with the writer's conviction that the object of their hope is already virtually within his readers' grasp." Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 67. So also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 56. It is future in the sense that what is being brought has not yet arrived. It is probably better to think of it as on the way and thus there should be a readiness to receive what is in transit. So also John Calvin, *Commentary on the Catholic Epistles*, trans. John Owen, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 22 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 44.

<sup>30</sup> This is not to say that Peter was stating that his readers had received no grace whatsoever. As Achtemeier notes, "The implication is not that they presently have no grace, but that their hope is to be grounded in that fulfilled grace which comes with Christ's return, when hope will become visible reality." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119.

<sup>31</sup> BDAG, 112.

return.<sup>32</sup> Peter spoke of both advents of Christ. The first was referred to in 1 Peter 1:20.<sup>33</sup> His second advent or Parousia was what was in view here (1 Pet 1:7; 4:13; 5:1; cf. 1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thess 1:7; Col 3:4; 2 Tim 4:8; Titus 2:11-13; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 5:4).<sup>34</sup> So believers were called to fix their hope on their future salvation that would be brought to them when Christ appeared in glory. Such hope prepared the way for the commands that follow.

### **The Exhortation to Holiness (vv. 14-16)**

In verses 14-16 a second command, rooted in the regenerating work of the Father through Jesus Christ, was given.<sup>35</sup> At the heart of these verses was a call to holy living. Here Peter's point was this: the children of God must exemplify the same character of holiness that describes their heavenly Father. The structure of these three verses was as follows: First they were identified in terms of their relationship to God (v. 14a). Second, they were described in terms of how they are to no longer live (v. 14b). Third, they were commanded in terms of how they must live (1:15). Lastly, the command was supported from the Old Testament (1:16).

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<sup>32</sup> In reference to the coming of Christ, George Eldon Ladd helpfully writes, "[It] will also be an *apokalypsis*, an 'unveiling' or 'disclosure.' The power and glory that are now his by virtue of his exaltation and heavenly session must be disclosed to the world. Christ has already been elevated by his resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God, where he had been given sovereignty over all spiritual foes (Eph 1:20-23). He now bears the name that is above every name; He is now the exalted Lord (Phil 2:9). He is now reigning as King at God's right hand (1 Cor 15:25). However, his reign and his lordship are not evident to the world. His *apokalypsis* will be the revealing to the world of his glory and power that are now his (2 Thess 1:7; 1 Cor 1:7; see also 1 Pet 1:7, 13)." George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 555.

<sup>33</sup> The context of 1 Pet 1:20 indicates that Peter had in mind Christ's first advent.

<sup>34</sup> John H. Elliott sees revelation here as referring to the reception of the good news mentioned in 1:10-12. John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 357. However, it seems that within the letter when Peter speaks of the revelation of Jesus Christ, he has in view a future event. This fits well with the immediate context in which believers are called to look forward to something. More support is gained from 1:7 where it is clear that a future event is in view. In 1 Pet 1:6-9 Peter draws attention to (1) the Christian's present suffering (1:6) and then to their future commendation (1:7); (2) he speaks of their present love for and rejoicing in Christ, in spite of having never seen him in his earthly ministry, and then draws their attention from the present to the future outcome of their belief in the one whom they have not seen, their future salvation.

<sup>35</sup> Jobes sees the commands based in the believer's new status in the father-child relationship. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 108. This is correct and evidenced by the familial language and imagery that runs through 1:3-2:3. "begotten anew" (1:3), "inheritance" (1:4), "children" (1:14), "Father" (1:17), "inherited" (1:18), "forefathers" (1:18), "brotherly love" (1:22), "newborn infants" (2:2).

## Obedient Children (v. 14a)

In verse 14 believers were referred to as “obedient children” (1:14). This Semitic way<sup>36</sup> of describing these Gentiles would remind them of their new existence<sup>37</sup> and its filial nature.<sup>38</sup> Peter’s readers had already been described as having been birthed anew by the Father (1:3). Thus, they can be addressed as such. The address possessed a tone of seriousness, emphasizing the obedience.<sup>39</sup> The relationship of believers to the God who has birthed them anew is one of obedience. In fact, one should understand obedience as the Christian’s fundamental description.<sup>40</sup>

The readers were understood to be in covenant relationship with the Father (1 Pet 1:2). Obedience has always been what was to characterize those in covenant relationship with God. This can be seen here in particular where the Exodus background looms large.<sup>41</sup> Israel, as God’s son (Exod 4:22-23; cf. Hos 11:1) was to walk in obedience to Yahweh and they would be his treasured possession (Exod 19:5). Prior to entering the land, Moses had stressed the priority of being obedient (Deut 4:23; 5:1, 32; 6:3; 7:11; 19:9; 28:1). The Davidic king was regarded as the son of God and was to walk in obedience to the Lord (2 Sam 7:13). God’s covenant partners were to walk in obedience to him and reflect him.<sup>42</sup> Christ came as the seed of David, as the Davidic king who

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<sup>36</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 67; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 57.

<sup>37</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 118. Michaels, recognizing that this was a common Semitic idiom, also suggests that τέκνα was selected for its own sake and not just stylistic and idiomatic reasons. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 57.

<sup>38</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 93.

<sup>39</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 57. Elliott, making the observation that the use of ὡς is part of the letter’s style (as it occurs more than in any other NT writing), remarks that it “often to mark an essential quality of the term or phrase that it precedes.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 357.

<sup>40</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 82. Grudem argues that the genitive is one of definition that obedience is to describe them. The Hebraism does describe their character and thus what they are known as.

<sup>41</sup> This connection has already been established in 1 Pet 1:2, where the imagery Abraham of the covenant entered by Israel with Yahweh is employed to describe the new covenant relationship brought about by Jesus (cf. Exod 24).

<sup>42</sup> This is seen in the case of Adam as well. He is made in the image of God and should reflect and represent God as he administers God’s rule. However, he does not but breaks his covenant. Abraham is also a covenant partner through whom God will work to reflect his own character as Abraham is to teach

represented his people Israel, and was also the true Israel. The NT witness of Christ was that he was the obedient son (John 4:34 Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8). The redemptive work of Christ brought many into the family of God, he is the first-born of many (Rom 8:29; Heb 2:11). Those birthed by God were expected to live in obedience even as Christ was the fulfillment of a pattern of obedience.

### **The Negative Description (v. 14b)**

“Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance” (1 Pet 1:14b) communicated in negative terms what it meant to be obedient children. Peter was saying that God’s children were to have a fundamentally different character. This was essential for the Petrine Christians if they were to live holy.<sup>43</sup> “Conform” had the idea of being molded or shaped to a pattern (cf. Rom 12:2).<sup>44</sup> The readers were to no longer be shaped by the passions of their former ignorance. Former ignorance referred to the pre-conversion time of their lives in which they did not embrace the gospel message.<sup>45</sup> This was supported by the by the fact that the ignorance was said to be “former.” Later, Peter would describe them as those who had obeyed the truth (1 Pet 1:22), and thus were no longer ignorant. Peter reminded his readers that in their former ignorance their lives were

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his offspring to walk in the way of Yahweh (Gen 18:18). Their faithfulness is going to accurately communicate what God is like. What God is like is the very grounds for why these obedient children in 1 Peter are to live holy to him.

<sup>43</sup> While the ESV translates μη συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον as an imperative, it is a participial phrase. Most interpreters see it functioning as an imperative. F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 71; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 357-58. However, some, in wanting to not dismiss its grammatical dependence upon the main verb (1:15), see the participle carrying some imperatival force but with a subordinate sense, such as instrumentality. So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 120; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 79n95. Hiebert sees the participle as preparatory to the main verb. Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 94.

<sup>44</sup> BDAG, 979.

<sup>45</sup> Michaels helpfully clarifies that Ignorance (ἄγνοια) speaks to a moral and religious defect and not intellectual one and that such ignorance belongs to the old existence that was in rebellion against God. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 58. Ephesians 4:18 uses ἄγνοια to describe unbelieving Gentiles in contrast to believing Gentiles who have learned Christ (Eph 4:20) in whom is the truth (Eph 2:21). The notion of “truth” is also present in our context (1 Pet 1:22).

conformed to passions consistent with the pagan life.<sup>46</sup> Such a way of living could not be said to be “obedient.” Rather it was the way of living by those who stood in rebellion against the one whom they would have to one day answer (1 Pet 4:3-5).

### **The Imperative to Be Holy (v. 15)**

Instead of living a life of sin, the Asia Minor Christians were to live a life that corresponded to the character of their redeemer.<sup>47</sup> The holy people of God were then called to live in a way that demonstrated the reality of their relationship with God and with one another.<sup>48</sup> “Called” refers to God’s effective call and evidenced his power (cf. 1 Pet 2:9).<sup>49</sup> Here it referred to God’s work of redeeming people and bringing them into relationship with himself (1 Pet 2:9; 5:10; cf. Hos 11:1). It pointed to God as their redeemer and covenant Lord. This becomes even more clear from Peter’s citation that is used to support his imperative (1 Pet 1:16). God was the one who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9).

The pattern of character that the readers were called to exemplify was holiness. God is holy (Exod 15:11; Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 1 Sam 2:2; Isa 6; 40:25; Hos 11:10; Job 6:10). Every aspect of who God nature was considered holy.<sup>50</sup> His name is holy (Lev 22:32; Pss 33:21; 97:12; Luke 1:19), his arm was regarded as holy (Ps 98:1; Isa 52:10), his word was held as holy (Jer 23:9), and his Spirit was identified as holy (1 Pet 1:12). All that he possessed was holy which meant that his people were to live holy. To be holy

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<sup>46</sup> Achtemeier argues that ἐπιθυμία is characteristic of Gentile behavior (Rom 1:24; Eph 2:3; 4:22; 1 Thess 4:5) and defines those who are not redeemed (Gal 5:16; 1 John 2:16-17). Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 120n45.

<sup>47</sup> Κατά indicates a pattern that is to be followed; The preposition κατά indicates that a pattern is to be followed. Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 120.

<sup>48</sup> D. G. Peterson, “Holiness,” in *NDBT*, 545.

<sup>49</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 80.

<sup>50</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 80.

was to be devoted or consecrated.<sup>51</sup> It spoke to God’s devotion to his own name, ways, and purposes. Those who belong to God are commanded to live holy in all that they do. In 1 Peter, conduct referred to a way of life or behavior (1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1; 2, 16; cf. 1:17).<sup>52</sup> The entirety of their life, both in whatever they might do, and in all that they did do and at all times was to be shaped by their devotion to God.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Support (v. 16)**

The command to be holy was supported with a citation from the Old Testament. The narrative storyline of the Old Testament shaped Peter’s understanding of the world. His lens for life was the storyline of the Old Testament as it had found its fulfillment in Christ. It was because of this fact, that many of the commands in this letter were grounded in OT texts. Here in 1:16 the injunction was supported with an appeal to the conduct that was to be indicative of OT Israel: “since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet 1:16).

This call to holiness was taken from the book of Leviticus. This statement occurred in the book with some variation in the words (Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:7-9, 26).<sup>54</sup> The words match best with those of Leviticus 19:2.<sup>55</sup> The words in Leviticus 19 were part of a section known as the “holiness code” (Lev 17-26). In this section God commanded Moses to address the people, telling them that what was true of him, his holiness, was to

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<sup>51</sup> Most interpreters take “holy” as “set-apart.” So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 121. Grudem acknowledges a separation but also sees it, in speaking of God, as a devotion to God’s honor. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 84. Peter Gentry removes the notion of “set-apart” from being intrinsic to holiness and argues that the separation is more consequential to holiness but not holiness itself. Peter J. Gentry, “The Meaning of ‘Holy’ in the Old Testament.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 170, no. 4 (2013): 400-417. Whatever it means, it cannot be discussed without examining the context of Leviticus to which we will give our attention to in the examination of 1:16.

<sup>52</sup> BDAG, 72.

<sup>53</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 59.

<sup>54</sup> Show the different verses in the LXX; Lev 11:44 reads και ἁγιασθήσεσθε και ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἅγιός εἰμι ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν; Lev 19:2 reads Ἄγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος, κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν; Lev 20:7 reads και ἔσεσθε ἅγιοι, ὅτι ἅγιος ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν.

<sup>55</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 59.

be true of his people. This command was further grounded not only because of the Lord's character but also because of who the Lord was in relationship to them. He was "the Lord their God." In other words, they belonged to him, since they were in covenant relationship with him.<sup>56</sup> It may be the Leviticus 19 is an exposition of the Decalogue.<sup>57</sup> Yahweh's people's devotion to him was seen in their commitment to his covenant rather than being shaped by the laws and statutes of the surrounding nations.<sup>58</sup> Peter was writing to people who were not under the old covenant but under the new. But the holiness required transcended to the new covenant because the God of the old covenant was the same, his character was the same. The correspondence that was seen between 1 Peter and Leviticus was that both the old covenant people and those of the new had been redeemed, both were brought into relationship with Yahweh, and both were to be conformed to God's character and not by their former ways of living.

However, Israel failed to treat Yahweh as holy as well as live holy themselves. This lack of devotion to the Lord by a failure to keep his covenant ultimately brought about judgment. God would remain devoted to his covenant and to his covenantal promises. He would raise up a man who would be the Holy One who would usher in a new covenant in which the members hearts would be inclined to being devoted to him (Ezek 36). The new covenant community, the church, is a people who can, must, and will manifest the same character as their Father who birthed them.

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<sup>56</sup> "Your God" being shorthand for the covenant formula.

<sup>57</sup> John E. Hartley observes several points of contact between the Decalogue and Lev 19 in his analysis on the form/structure of Lev 19. John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 309-12. See also Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 264.

<sup>58</sup> Wenham notes the polemic against Egypt and Canaan, and that every aspect of Israel's life is to be shaped by belonging to the Lord. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 250, 264. Michael Morales observes the parallels between 19 and 20 which frame in the speech of 19. L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 210.

### **The Call to Fear (vv. 17-21)**

In verses 17-21 a third imperative was stated. The theme of these verses was to live with fear toward God during the time of sojourning. These verses were organized as follows: Peter stated a command (1 Pet 1:17). Then he presented a reason in support of the command, and then further developed that reason.

The backdrop of the theme of fear is rooted in the OT.<sup>59</sup> The fear of the Lord was a theme that ran throughout Scripture describing the patriarchs (Gen 22:12; 31:42) and Israel, who were to fear God (Lev 19:14, 32; Deut 4:10; 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 10:12; 1 Sam 12:24). The fear of the Lord was viewed as the beginning of wisdom (Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; cf. 9:10). The prophets admonished the covenant people toward this end (Isa 8:12-13). The Psalms promised blessing for those who feared the Lord (Pss 31:19; 33:18; 34:9; 67:7; 112:8). The writer of Ecclesiastes said that fearing the Lord was what mattered above all else in life (Eccl 12:13). Within the NT witness, Jesus told his disciples to fear only God (Matt 10:28; Luke 12:4). Unbelievers were described as not fearing God (Rom 3:18) while fearing the Lord was one of the motivations for the apostle Paul in executing his apostolic mandate (2 Cor 5:11).<sup>60</sup> Fear can sometimes refer to being afraid or terrified. The disciples were terrified when they saw Jesus's walking on the water, thinking he was a ghost (Matt 14:26). Sometimes it can refer to a sense of awe such as there was toward the things the apostles had done in the first days of the church (Acts 2:43). It can involve terror, regard, or reverence. Fear of God can be defined as follows: to have a high regard for something or someone based on what one understands to be true of them, with the result that they respond in a way that corresponds to those

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<sup>59</sup> Schreiner sees it rooted particularly in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 4:10; 8:6) and the wisdom tradition (Prov 1:29; 3:7; 9:10; Job 28:28; Eccl 12:13), where the fear of the Lord informs all of life. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 81.

<sup>60</sup> S. E. Porter, "Fear," in *NDBT*, 497.

realities rather than disregards them. The fear of the Lord was to take God seriously so that he was given what he deserved.<sup>61</sup>

The recipients were understood to be in relationship with God by the fact that they called him Father.<sup>62</sup> “Call” here denoted the idea of “invoke.”<sup>63</sup> In the Scriptures men called on the name of the Lord with whom they were in covenant (Gen 4:26; 1 Sam 2:17; 2 Sam 22:4, 7) but it was Jesus himself who taught his followers to invoke God as their heavenly Father (Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2). Yet God, whom believers invoked as Father, is the one who was also the judge. Here he was described as an impartial judge. Impartial, used only here in the literature, conveys a judgment that is free from the influence of rank or status.<sup>64</sup> The judgment to be rendered was in accordance with each man’s work. Peter stated that God’s impartial judgment would be applied to all (cf. 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 4:13; Rev 20:12-13). The notion that God judges according to each man’s work indicated that Peter had the judgment on the last day in mind.<sup>65</sup> The reality of future judgment functioned as a motivation or reason for Peter’s readers to conduct themselves in fear

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<sup>61</sup> Porter defines the fear of God as revering him and giving him due respect and honor. Porter, “Fear,” 497. However, Grudem suggests that “revere” may be too comfortable. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 86. Those who do not fear God are not motivated by the terrifying dangers of opposing God. In Luke 18 the judge in the parable describes himself as not fearing God and so makes rulings that disregard God’s standards. In other words, fear is more than reverence, there is, along with reverence, a healthy fear. There is an appropriate fear that does not contradict the Christian’s confidence as one in Christ, yet there is an appropriate fear of God that leads him to faithfulness. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 81.

<sup>62</sup> A perspective communicated by the first-class condition clause used here. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 115.

<sup>63</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 71.

<sup>64</sup> BDAG, 126.

<sup>65</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 81. Grudem argues that the articular present participle could communicate “the one who judges presently,” and he sees the phrase referring to present disciple of the believer, a theme, that is present in the letter. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 86. However, while there is the theme of God’s judgment as present discipline within 1 Peter, this interpretation does not take into account the immediate context. First, the activity of judgment is *κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον*. *ἔργον*, translated “deeds” (ESV), is singular. The picture is probably looking at a person’s life. Second, the immediate context has a strong eschatological theme with words and phrases such as “inheritance” (1:4), “a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1:5), and the “revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:7, 13). The presence of “praise, glory, and honor” (1:7) convey eschatological blessing, while the phrase “obtaining the outcome of your faith” (1:9) communicate eschatological deliverance. Third, Peter will address their conduct of the sojourning which is interpreted here as their time on earth which would lend support to a final judgment.

during the time of their sojourning. “Exile” or “sojourn” referred to being in a strange place without citizenship (Acts 4:31). Here it was used figuratively to communicate that the Asia Minor Christians were not at home in this present age (Pss 118:54; 119:5 [LXX]).<sup>66</sup> Thus, although God was Father, Peter called his readers to fear him. The first motivation toward this end was the reality that God is their judge with whom they should not trifle.<sup>67</sup>

Having stated the command to fear the judge and attached a motivation for the imperative, verses 18-19 informed the reader as to the reason for why they are to conduct their life in fear toward God. The believers are to fear God because they know that they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ.<sup>68</sup> “Ransome” means to set free or liberate by means of payment.<sup>69</sup> Peter’s concept of redemption was informed by the OT Scriptures.<sup>70</sup> “Ransome” was used often to speak of God’s rescue of his people in the Exodus (Exod 6:6; 15:13; Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:6; 15:15; 24:18).<sup>71</sup> The readers were ransomed from “the futile ways inherited by their forefathers” (1 Pet 1:18). “Futile” conveyed that which was worthless or held no value.<sup>72</sup> It was used in Acts to describe idolatry (Acts 14:15; cf. 1 Chr 15:26; Pss 31:6; 96:5; 97:7). The idolatrous life was inherited from their forefathers.

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<sup>66</sup> BDAG, 779.

<sup>67</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 70-71.

<sup>68</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 84. Syntactically, the perfect participle communicates cause.

<sup>69</sup> BDAG, 606. Occurs three times in the NT and only here with the notion of payment present in context.

<sup>70</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 127; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 84. While Michaels concludes that Peter is informed by both the Greco-Roman world and the OT, Kelly posits that, due to extensive use of the related verb and noun, the OT is source of his understanding of the concept. See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 65; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 73.

<sup>71</sup> It is used to speak of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Sometimes it is used in expressions entreating God for rescue. At other times it is used to refer to promises of future deliverance.

<sup>72</sup> BDAG, 621.

Peter had in mind the readers pre-conversion life of idolatry which was passed down from their ancestors.<sup>73</sup> The rest of verse 18 negatively stated the details of this ransom.

God had rescued them out of worthless idolatry, and he did so by means of an incredibly great purchase price. The redemption of the recipients was not purchased with perishable items. “Gold” was already mentioned as a precious metal that perishes (1:7) and was portrayed as less valuable than godly character in 1 Peter 3:3. There is clearly a devaluing of what the world values along with their former life in contrast to what is seen in verse 19.

In contrast to perishable items, the means of the believer’s redemption stated in verse 19,<sup>74</sup> Peter’s readers had been ransomed with the precious blood of Christ. “Precious articulated exceptional value or being of high cost (Rev 17:4; 18:12, 16) or esteem (Heb 13:4). Here the focus was on value as it was contrasted with the monetary items of silver and gold. There may be a sense of irony here as “precious” is often used to describe costly stones associated with silver and gold (1 Cor 3:12; Rev 17:4; 18:12, 16; 21:11, 19). The blood of Christ referred not to the actual liquid but is employed as a euphemism for death.<sup>75</sup> What is in view here is Christ’s sacrificial death on behalf of sinners as the means that has liberated them from their futile way of living. The blood of Christ was likened to a lamb possessing no blemish or spot. The words are employed to indicate the faultlessness necessary to be a sacrifice.<sup>76</sup> Paired with the notion of redemption in these verses, Peter had the exodus event and Passover event in mind.<sup>77</sup> He then was calling his readers to fear God because of the high value of their redemption.

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<sup>73</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 84-85.

<sup>74</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 85.

<sup>75</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 86.

<sup>76</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 75.

<sup>77</sup> Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 289. While many commentators agree that the theme of sacrifice is here, there are differing perspectives as to where in the OT Peter might have drawn. Some have proposed the Isa 53 as a source, while others suggest the Levitical system. However, it may be best to see the

In verses 20-21 Peter elucidated this point as the focus concentrated on the person of Christ whose death has affected their redemption. Their redemption is the consequence of God's eternal plan to bring glory to Christ. Christ was viewed from two vantage points that conveyed God's plan in the history of redemption. First, consideration about Christ from before the foundation of the world is stated (v. 20). The foundation of the world referred to the time prior to creation (Matt 13:35; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Eph 1:4; Heb 9:26; Rev 13:8). From before creation Christ was foreknown. "Foreknown" spoke to God's foreordaining Christ from eternity to come into the world.<sup>78</sup> The other vantage point was communicated by the prepositional phrase "in these last times" (v. 20), a phrase most likely referring to the end of salvation history (2 Tim 1:9; cf. Heb 9:26).<sup>79</sup> Christ was "manifested," which was a reference to his incarnation as the context of verse 21 verifies.<sup>80</sup> God's plan, indicated by his actions of foreknowing and manifesting of Christ,<sup>81</sup> was stated as being for the sake of the readers. In other words, Peter was communicating that redemption was for their benefit. The readers, on behalf of whom all this was accomplished, are then described as those who trust and hope in God (v. 21). Faith and hope have already been mentioned in the chapter (1:3, 6, 8, 9, 13.). God was the one raised Christ from the dead and exalted him. Thus, believers are called to fear God during the time of sojourning. They are motivated toward this by the fact that their

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Passover event due to the strong exodus theme already present in the context. Davids writes, "Furthermore, the Passover image is especially fitting, not only because it was a common image in the NT (1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29, 36; 19:36) but also because it was a central part of the redemption from Egypt, and redemption or ransom is the topic under discussion." Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 73.

<sup>78</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 53.

<sup>79</sup> The prepositional phrase can be literally rendered "last of the times." Χρόνος here and in 2 Tim 1:9 refers to the ages or epochs that make up salvation history. Michaels writes, "The phrase ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων assumes a series of these time periods or 'ages' spanning the world's history and affirms that the last of these has begun with the appearing of Christ." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 68.

<sup>80</sup> The verb φανερώω occurs here and in 5:4 where the context indicates Christ's appearing at his Parousia.

<sup>81</sup> The participles are in the passive voice and should be regarded as divine passives as indicated by 1:21 (cf. 1:2).

father who has given them life is the one who will judge them. The reason they should fear him is because he has redeemed them out of idolatry with Christ's precious blood. Furthermore, his plan of redemption was for their benefit.

### **The Call to Love (vv. 22-25)**

In verses 22-25 Peter presented a fourth exhortation flowing from the saving realities which were stated in verses 3-12. The focus in these verses was love within the believing community. Peter continued the implications for how those who are birthed anew by God were to live. Verse 13 concentrated on the heirs hope of eschatological inheritance and salvation that would be brought by Christ at his Parousia. In verses 14-16 Peter exhorted the believers to live life with the holy character of the one who called them as obedient children should. Peter followed this with an injunction that those same children should fear their father who is also their judge. The family theme was continued in the exhortation for believers to love each other. The imperative to love was reinforced by two participial phrases designed to motivate adherence to it.<sup>82</sup> The first phrase related as a basis for the command to love.<sup>83</sup> Believers have purified their souls by means of obeying the truth. "Purified" can mean cultic cleansing. It was also used to speak of spiritual cleansing (Jas 4:8; 1 John 3:3). Such consecration has come by means of having obeyed the truth, which here stood for the gospel. Thus, obedience to the truth referred to the readers conversion to Christ. The goal stated here for their conversion was mutual love for the members of the believing community. Since they have consecrated their souls toward this end, they were now called to act. The purified life was a new life that brought with it a demand for a new way of living. That demand as it relates to the believing community was an earnest love toward one another.

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<sup>82</sup> Estelle, *Echoes in Exodus*, 293; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 123.

<sup>83</sup> The perfect passive participle communicates cause or basis.

Verse 23 explained where this mandate found its roots. They were found in the reality that the readers were begotten anew and, thus, were experiencing a new existence. The action of begotten anew connected the readers back to the verb's occurrence in verse 3. The new existence brought about a new way of relating to others. In other words, the new birth demanded that the readers live in a way that corresponded to that new life. Since that new life was one in which they were God's children, they were to relate to their brothers in a way that corresponds to their new relationship to one another because of their conversion. The new birth that the readers experienced was brought about by "imperishable" as opposed to "perishable seed." Peter had previously contrasted aspects of his readers salvation in this vein (1:7, 18-19). The contrast in verse 23 was one of quality.<sup>84</sup> The explication of the imperishable seed as the living and abiding word confirmed this. God, by his living and abiding word, produced imperishable life.<sup>85</sup> Thus the powerful word of God has produced a new existence that is entirely different than the readers life prior to their conversion. The citation from Isaiah 40 found in verse 24 grounded this point. Peter used it to show that the word of God is effective to bring about the new reality that is the basis for their love.

The citation from Isaiah was no simple proof-text without any regard for the original context. The book of Isaiah is about judgment and future salvation. Judgment was coming in the form of exile followed by a future deliverance that would involve a return out of exile and much more. Chapters 1-39 were marked by pronouncements of judgment because of Israel and Judah's persistent disobedience. This disobedience was evidence of their failure to believe in the trustworthiness of God. They had placed their confidence in other nations and instead of the Lord. The result would be judgment with

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<sup>84</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 124.

<sup>85</sup> Several times aspects of the readers' salvation are described in this way. In 1:4, the readers' inheritance is described as imperishable. In verse 7 the quality of the readers' faith is contrasted to perishing gold. In verses 18-19 the precious blood of Christ is contrasted to the perishable items of silver and gold.

the instrument being the nations themselves.<sup>86</sup> Chapter 40 of Isaiah introduced the theme of hope and comfort that comes from the promise of future restoration. The message of chapter 40 was that God is both able and willing to deliver his people.<sup>87</sup> Verses 1-11 of Isaiah 40 emphasizes the theme of Yahweh's trustworthiness. First, there was the announcement of comfort (vv. 1-2). This was followed by an announcement from God of a return from Babylon to Israel with exodus allusions.<sup>88</sup> Third, the word of the Lord that comes from his mouth (v. 5) was declared to be eternal over and against the transitory nature of man (and the nature to which he is compared (vv. 6-8). Lastly, this news was to be announced to the exiles of Judah (vv. 9-11).

Peter's words were selected from Isaiah 40:6-8 with some slight variation.<sup>89</sup> Return was announced for the exiles (vv. 3-5), being cast in the dye of the exodus motif and making it a new exodus. As Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt and into Canaan, so he would bring the exiles out of their captivity in Babylon, returning them back to their land. Verses 6-8 functioned to communicate the potency and eternity of Yahweh's word over the transitory nature of the nations,<sup>90</sup> and thus the worthiness of his comforting word which was to be trusted. The citation found in 1 Peter 1:24-25a contrasted the glory of man, which may have been exemplified in the Babylonian Empire, with the word of God. Mankind is compared to grass and his glory is compared to the flower of the field (1

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<sup>86</sup> John N. Oswalt writes, "The recurring theme in chs 7-39 was that God could be trusted in the face of the threats from the surrounding nations. Yet the people of Israel were continually tempted to trust other nations to help them. God's response was to say that those other nations would fail them, and the result would be destruction, sometimes from the very nation trusted for help (8:5-8; 30:1-5; etc.)." John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 45.

<sup>87</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 45.

<sup>88</sup> Estelle has noted Isaiah's allusions to the exodus motif in Isa 40:3-5. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 155n28.

<sup>89</sup> Whereas Isa 40: 6b reads, Πᾶσα σὰρξ χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου, 1 Pet 1:24 omits ἀνθρώπου. Whereas Isa 40:8 reads, τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, 1 Pet 1:25a reads, τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

<sup>90</sup> Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 155.

Pet 1:24; Isa 40:6 LXX). The grass is to wither and the flower to fade (1 Pet 1:24b; Isa 40:7 LXX). Humanity and its glory were viewed as a glory that will fade and be gone like the glory of grass. However, it was announced that the word of Yahweh will stand forever (1 Pet 1:25a; Isa 40:8 LXX). Thus, the word that proclaimed a new exodus for the exiles of Judah was a permanent and effective word, its endurance indicating its potency to bring about what was promised. As God had brought his people out of the oppression of Egypt, he would bring them out of the oppression of Babylon as his word had proclaimed. The result would be a new existence for the exiles as they returned home. The point was that the word of the imperishable word would bring such a reality to pass for Isaiah's readers. It should be noted that Isaiah used the phrase "the word of our God," Peter used the "word of the Lord."

In verse 25b Peter connects the word of God that will remain forever (v. 24) with the word that had been preached to his readers (v. 25b). The verb for "preached" was used in 1:12 to speak of proclamation of the gospel. The gospel of Christ is the living and abiding word spoken of in 1:23 and here in 1:25. That same word that would generate a new exodus and thus a new existence for the people of God had brought about a new existence for Peter's readers. The word of God preached to them to cause them to be born anew was qualitatively different from the human flesh that generated their physical life. The word was living and abiding. The flesh fades and passes away. This same word was used to bring about a new life and, therefore, a way of living, that was qualitatively different from their life prior to conversion: love. This idea of new life was the basis for Peter's exhortation to them to love one another.

### **Conclusion**

Moral imperatives flow out of redemptive indicatives. The saving realities brought about by the Triune God have demands on how the people of God in Christ are to live. Peter's readers had been begotten by God. These children of God were awaiting

the reception of their inheritance. How were they to live. Peter administered four commands that were consequential to the new life Peter's readers had come to experience. These exhortations were cast in the theme of the Exodus motif. In this section allusions or quotes can be seen that are reminiscent of Israel's exodus journey or the new exodus predicted by the prophets.

Several applications are helpful for the church in this. First, the believer's experience must be understood in terms of the overall biblical storyline. The exhortations do not make sense apart from the overall biblical narrative as it has found its fulfillment in the person and work of Christ. The exodus is the paradigm for God's pattern of redemption and that is clear in this passage.

Second, each of these commands refers to an aspect of God's redemption whether past (vv. 15a, 18-19, 23) or future (v. 13). It is a reminder that one can never be too far from the realities of redemption as they pursue the commands of God. God's grace in salvation fuels the Christians obedience to the Lord.

Third, these commands remind the reader of 1 Peter how those in the family of God are to conduct themselves as they persevere in a world hostile to God and his Messiah Jesus. Their hope is to be in the future grace that is coming at the return of Christ (v. 13). Their life is to no longer be characterized by sin, but it is to be a life lived in devotion to the God who has rescued them out of the bondage of sin (vv. 14-16). The new covenant community also lives with an attitude of fear toward God, who will one day judge each man's work (v. 17). Such a reverence is motivated by the redemption accomplished by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (vv. 18-21). Finally, the believing community is to be marked by an earnest brotherly love toward its members (v. 22). The new life brought about through the gospel has produced a new way of living (vv. 23-25). Such commands flow from the saving work of the Living God.

## CHAPTER 4

### EXPOSITION 3: 1 PETER 2:4-10

The thesis of this chapter is that in 1 Peter 2:4-10 Peter concluded the first portion of his letter by describing the corporate identity of his readers: they are those chosen by God. This chapter will argue this in three ways. First, this thesis will be demonstrated by showing that the believers shared in the honor that Christ has as the living stone (vv. 4-5). Second, this chapter will argue that Peter, grounding his claims in OT texts, showed that his readers were part of the people of God by contrasting the fate of human beings based on their response to Jesus, the living stone (vv. 6-8). Third, he ended by appropriating honorific titles which were conferred upon elect Israel to his readers along with a purpose that also belonged to elect Israel, closing with the implication of the readers new identity (vv. 9-10).

#### **Attachment to the Living Stone**

In verses 4-5 Peter asserted that Jesus was elect by God and that those who are in relationship to Christ were being built up as a corporate temple to be a priesthood that offered spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

#### **The Living Stone (1 Pet 2:4)**

Verses 4-10 were written with a close connection to the previous three verses of this second chapter (vv. 1-3). No explicit grammatical markers were present in the text to signal the shift from the second portion of this introductory section (1:13-2:3) to the third. However, there was a shift in content and the mood of the verbs has changed from

imperative (1:13, 15, 17, 22; 2:2) to exclusively indicative.<sup>1</sup> Yet a close connection can be seen in that the Lord of 2:3 is the “Him” of 2:4. While the context of Psalm 33:8 (LXX), which was being alluded to in 2:3, speak of Yahweh of the OT, it referred to Jesus in 2:3. “Him” was the closest referent to “Lord,” and it was distinguished from “God” in 2:5 (cf. 1:3). The “him” that Peter mentioned referred to Jesus Christ. It was him with whom these believers were in relationship. This was indicated by the readers “coming to him.” While some might see an imperatival force here and thus a tone of command, the present participle describes the original readers.<sup>2</sup> While their initial coming was not being excluded here, Peter had more in mind than just their identifying with Christ through their baptism. The language of “coming to him” was used in the OT LXX and described drawing near to God to hear him speak (Lev 9:5; Deut 4:11; 5:7).<sup>3</sup> In Hebrews it referred to drawing near to the Lord for worship (Heb 12:18, 22). Peter had in view the Christian’s perpetual drawing near to Christ in fellowship.<sup>4</sup>

Jesus was identified here (v. 4) as a “living stone.” As the context will demonstrate (cf. 1 Pet 2:6-7), Peter was drawing from stone imagery found in the OT.<sup>5</sup> Such a metaphor as “living stone” is interesting, if not strange, since stones are not animated with life. In fact, when a consideration of stones in terms of the metaphorical imagery of the Bible is examined, it can be observed that they were often used to convey

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<sup>1</sup> The issue of whether to take the main verb of vv. 4-5 as an imperative or as an indicative verb will be dealt with below.

<sup>2</sup> Viewing the main verb of verse 5 as an imperative, Leonhard Goppelt treats the participle here in verse 4 as imperatival. Thus, he sees an exhortation to the readers to live in a state of continual recognition of their baptism and its implications. Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st Eng. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 137, 139. However, several interpreters see the main verb as an indicative, arguing that it makes the best sense of the context.

<sup>3</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 103.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 128; D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992), 129.

<sup>5</sup> For a treatment of stone imagery in 1 Peter, see Norman Hillyer, “‘Rock-Stone’ Imagery in 1 Peter,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 22, no. 1 (1971): 59-81.

the very opposite of life and that associated with it (Ezek 11:19; 36:26). However, Jesus was a “living stone” because he is alive as the resurrected one from among the dead (1 Pet 1:3).<sup>6</sup>

The living stone was further described in terms of his appraisal. This estimation was communicated first in negative terms followed by positive ones. First, the living stone was rejected by mankind (v. 4). This idea of rejection meant to regard as unworthy or unfit.<sup>7</sup> Such a rejection of Jesus, which culminated in his execution, can be seen in the predictions he made during his earthly ministry (Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22; 17:25).<sup>8</sup> While Jesus’s predictions saw him being rejected by the Jewish leaders and his own generation, Peter expanded the category to humankind in general (“by men”). Peter had in mind not only those who were involved in Jesus’s execution but also his readers contemporaries who had rejected the gospel.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in the eyes of the world Jesus was seen as unfit. Such an assessment stood in antithesis to the divine assessment that

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 103-4. It is fitting that the resurrected one, through whose resurrection from the dead the readers have been given a living hope as well as been birthed anew by the living word of which he is the subject, would himself be a living stone. This theme of life connects the readers back to the earlier part of this section. “Living” is a theme in this first section of the letter as the readers have a living hope (1:3) and have been born anew by the living and abiding Word of God (1:3, 23-25).

<sup>7</sup> BDAG, 110.

<sup>8</sup> Schreiner and others consider it helpful to view Jesus’s rejection as climaxing at his crucifixion. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 104.

<sup>9</sup> J. Ramsay Michaels, in interpreting ἀνθρώπων, states, “An interpretive framework is thus created for the quotations before they are explicitly introduced. This framework involves the identity of the ‘builders’ who rejected Christ the Stone (v. 7) not with the Jews or their religious leaders (as in Mark 12:10 // Matt 21:42 // Luke 20:17, and by Peter himself in Acts 4:11), but with “people generally” (ὕπὸ ἀνθρώπων), that is, with the pagan enemies of Jew and Christians alike in the Roman society.” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 99. Michaels is right to recognize ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον as referring to the pagan enemies of Christians. However, this category should include the religious leaders whose rejection culminated in Jesus’s execution. He is incorrect to not include the Jewish religious leaders among the “builders” since the rejection of Jesus, contrasted here with his affirmation by the Father evidenced in the resurrection (Acts 4:10-11), most likely refers to his crucifixion. Schreiner comments, “In Acts 4: 10-11—where Peter also cited Psalm 118—it seems that the rejection of Jesus as the cornerstone was fulfilled in his death, whereas his vindication or being honored by God occurred at the resurrection. The same emphasis on Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection of Christ is likely present here as well.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 104.

followed.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to men, the stone was held as choice and precious in God's estimation. Both terms conveyed the honor conferred upon Christ by God.<sup>11</sup>

The language of verse 4 is taken from Psalm 118:22 which, along with other OT texts, was cited in verses 6-8. Psalm 118:22 spoke of a stone that was selected for the beginning of the construction of an edifice. Stones were used in the ancient world to construct buildings. Within the construction process the first step would be to have the foundation laid. This began with the setting down of the cornerstone. Not only would this be the first stone that would be laid down, but this stone would determine the degree of the angle of the walls, ensuring it was plumb. The cornerstone determined whether the foundation itself would be level. Thus, the builders were very discriminatory in the selection process as they examined and evaluated stones. Many were found wanting and passed over. While there are a variety of texts in the OT that used stone imagery, Psalm 118:22 spoke of this very process of using stones for building. The builders in Psalm 118:22 (117:22 LXX) rejected a stone that became the cornerstone. The differing responses to the stone in Psalm 118:22 are reflected in 1 Peter 2:4. A verbal link was also present between 1 Peter 2:4 and the LXX, both used ἀποδοκιμάζω translated as "rejected." Peter was alluding to Psalm 118:22 because he saw Jesus as the cornerstone by virtue of his resurrection. Jesus was rejected and the proclamation of him as Lord was continuing to be rejected by the readers contemporaries. However, God had chosen Jesus as the cornerstone and signaled this choice by raising him from the dead. In other words, the resurrection of Jesus was the indicator that God had elected Christ as the foundation of his eschatological temple that Peter will discuss in verse 5 (cf. Eph 2:20).

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<sup>10</sup> The presence of the μὲν . . . δὲ construction functions to mark the contrast in this verse.

<sup>11</sup> Michaels writes, "The words ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον, which in the quotation are metaphorical ('choice and precious' in the sense of well-hewn and valuable for building), take on a distinctly theological cast because of the phrase παρὰ δὲ θεῶν: 'chosen' or 'elect' in God's purposes and uniquely favored by him." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 99.

## The Living Stones (1 Pet 2:5)

In verse 5 Peter spoke to the effect upon those who continue to draw near to Jesus as the living stone elected by God. The readers themselves were identified as those who are “coming to him” (v. 4) by the words “you yourselves.” They are further defined as “living stones.” This description connects them with the “living stone” to whom they were coming. This connection served as the basis for why the readers also were identified as *living stones*.<sup>12</sup> They shared in the same “living” nature due to their connection to Christ. Such a connection caused them to share in the response that humanity and God held toward Christ.<sup>13</sup> They, like the living stone, also were viewed as choice and precious (cf. 2:4; 9). The remainder of the verse supported this notion as the effects of coming to Christ were explained.

Believers were choice and precious as living stones that composed a spiritual house.<sup>14</sup> They are added to the construction work that was initiated with the living stone. This spiritual house was what the living stones are built up as. The notion of “being built up” was used in the NT to speak of constructing an object or structure of some kind (Matt 7:24; 23:29; Mark 12:1; Luke 3:29; 12:18). However, it can also refer to the construction of transcendent objects (Matt 16:18; Acts 9:31; 21:32; Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 8:1; 1 Thess

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<sup>12</sup> John H. Elliott observes that “the continual contact with the living stone causes them to share in his identity and life.” He rightly sees this as the basis and motivation for sharing in Christ’s suffering (2:21-25; 3:15-18; 4:1, 12-16; 5:1, 10). John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 413.

<sup>13</sup> Believers, as living stones, are linked with Christ and thus are also choice and precious. Their sharing in Christ’s life, a life that is also derived from him, joins them in the experiences of Christ. In 1 Peter the readers share, because of their attachment to Jesus Christ, in suffering as he did. They persevered with the anticipation that they will also experience the exaltation that he did. Here in verse 5 the focus is on being viewed as choice and precious by God because they are joined to the living stone who is regarded as choice and precious by God. Michaels writes, “[T]he readers of the epistle are identified not as those built on the foundation of the ‘living Stone’ but as ‘living stones’ themselves. Christ’s life is theirs as well (cf. vv 2-3), and like Christ they are elect and precious to God. The shift from the singular to the plural of this phrase comes as naturally to Peter as a shift from Christ the *ἐκλεκτός* to Christians the *ἐκλεκτοί* (cf. 1:1).” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 99.

<sup>14</sup> Again, as seen above, the noun phrase is being interpreted as functioning in apposition to the subject of the main verb found in verse 5. Schreiner helpfully states, “The phrase ‘spiritual house’ probably is appositional, and so the point of the text is not that believers ‘are being built into a spiritual house’ but that they as living stones, as a spiritual house, are being built up.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

5:11). Peter intended this use which was the meaning of the main verb in verse 5. It described an activity being performed upon the readers.<sup>15</sup> These Christians of Asia Minor were not a literal physical house just as they were not literal stones. While “spiritual” can mean that they were not material,<sup>16</sup> here it identified them as “dominated by the Spirit (Rom 1:11; 1 Cor 2:13, 15; 12:1).<sup>17</sup> Thus, the readers, being the community permeated by the Holy Spirit, having been regenerated,<sup>18</sup> fashioned, and sustained by the Spirit<sup>19</sup> were the place in which the Spirit was residing.<sup>20</sup>

While “house” can refer to a structure (Matt 9:7; Mark 5:38; 7:30; Luke 1:23, 40; 5:25; 7:36; 8:41; 18:14; Acts 11:12; 16:15) or a household (Luke 10:5; 19:9; Acts 10:2; 11:14; 16:31; 18:8; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Tim 1:16; 4:19; Titus 1:11), what was in view was a house rather than those who live in it. Peter already referred to his recipients as “living stones” which signaled that “house” in this context denoted a dwelling rather than the members of a household.<sup>21</sup> The structure in view was a temple. This interpretation is confirmed by the presence of the term “priesthood” and its function (the offering of

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<sup>15</sup> Goppelt renders οἰκοδομεῖσθε as an imperative, seeing an admonition to the readers to maintain their membership in the body of Christ. He does seek to take seriously the passive voice rendering the verb “allow yourselves.” Goppelt, *Commentary on 1 Peter*, 140. It is challenging to elucidate any practical meaning to such a command. More so, the metaphor is drawing off the literal use of stones being used to construct a structure. Stones do not allow themselves to be built up. It seems more helpful to render the verb as an indicative understanding the action as something being done to the recipients. Elliott notes that there is no parallel of the middle/passive imperative form of the verb in the LXX or NT, and it is not without discord in relationship to the indicative mood that characterizes verses 4-10. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 413.

<sup>16</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 87n72.

<sup>17</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 105. Dennis E. Johnson, in defining πνευματικός, states, “The point of the adjective pneumatikos is not primarily the immateriality of the new sanctuary and sacrifices, nor their genuineness in contrast to the preparatory physical sanctuary and its cultus, but rather their permeation by the life-giving Spirit of God.” Dennis E. Johnson, “Fire in God’s House: Imagery from Malachi 3 in Peter’s Theology of Suffering (1 Pet 4:12-19),” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 3 (1986): 290.

<sup>18</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 133.

<sup>19</sup> Goppelt, *Commentary on 1 Peter*, 140.

<sup>20</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 100.

<sup>21</sup> Contra Elliott, *1 Peter*, 414-18.

sacrifices) found in the verse. Within the OT the physical temple was referred to as a house (cf. 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 3:2; 6; 8).<sup>22</sup>

### **Temple within the Unfolding Biblical Narrative**

In the OT the temple was God's house (Ezra 5:15; 6:5). It was referred to as a house because a temple was regarded as the place where the deity dwelled. The physical temple in Israel symbolized God's presence with his people. His ultimate dwelling was in heaven (cf. 1 Kgs 8:27, 30, 34, 36, 39). Yet it was in the temple that he manifested his glory to signal his presence among his people.<sup>23</sup> However, the manifestation of his presence with Israel pointed back to his choice or election of them to be his people through whom he would work his redemptive purposes (Exod 33:15-16). In creation the garden of Eden was viewed as an archetypal sanctuary (cf. Ezek 28:13-14, 16).<sup>24</sup> Adam reigned as a priest-king in God's earthly sanctuary. He was to expand this sanctuary to fill the earth.

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<sup>22</sup> The LXX account of the construction of the temple uses οἶκος twenty-one times to refer to temple (3 Kgdms 6:1a, 1c, 1d, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15 [2x], 16, 19, 22 [2x], 27, 29, 30, 36a). In the narrative about the dedication of the temple, οἶκος is used twenty-two times to refer to the temple (3 Kgdms 8:1, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19 [2x], 20, 27, 29, 31, 33, 38, 43, 44, 48, 53a [2x], 63, 64).

<sup>23</sup> 1 Kings 8:10; cf. Exod 40:34-38.

<sup>24</sup> For a treatment on the literary features in the creation account arguing for the garden of Eden as an archetypal sanctuary, see Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary and Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David T. Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994),). See also G. K. Beale, who shows points of contact between the garden of Eden and the later sanctuaries of Israel (the tabernacle and temple) to demonstrate that the garden is an archetypal sanctuary. G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 66-80. He writes in summary, "The cumulative effect of the preceding parallels between the Garden of Genesis 2 and Israel's tabernacle and temple indicates that Eden was the first archetypal temple, upon which all of Israel's temples were based. Some of the similarities drawn may not be as strong as others, but when all are viewed together, they have a significant collective effect, pointing to Eden as the first temple in garden-like form. We are not left, however, with a collection of similarities that show how comparable Eden is to a temple. Indeed, Ezekiel 28 explicitly calls Eden the first sanctuary, which substantiates that Eden is described as a temple because it is the first temple, albeit a 'garden-temple.' Early Judaism confirms this identification. Indeed, it is probable that even the similar Ancient Near Eastern temples can trace their roots back to the original primeval garden." Beale, 79-80.

Humanity was severed from God's presence when the first couple was exiled out of the garden due to their transgression (Gen 3:24). God's redemptive purposes to undo the work of the devil and restore his creation purposes were to be accomplished through Abraham and his offspring (Gen 12:1-3). When God delivered Israel out of Egypt (Exod 12:1-14:31) in fulfillment of his covenant promises made to Abraham (Gen 15:13-14) and constituted them as his people through the Mosaic (Israelite) covenant (Exod 19:1-24:19), the purpose was so that he might dwell among them, recapturing in Israel what was lost in the fall (Exod 6:7-7; 29:46). Thus, a tabernacle was erected in which he manifested his glory among his people (Exod 40:17-38). In fulfillment of promises made as part of his covenant with David (2 Sam 7), Solomon built a permanent structure, a temple in which God's presence would reside (1 Kgs 6, 8; cf. 2 Chr 3-4). Upon completion of that temple God's presence took up residence in the temple as it had in the tabernacle (1 Kgs 8:10-11; cf. Exod 40:34-38). However, there were stipulations if God was to dwell among his people (1 Kgs 9:3-6; cf. Lev 26; Deut 28). Israel's repeated covenant breaches brought about expulsion from the land. Yahweh imposed an exile upon himself (Ezek 10:1-5, 18-19; 11:22-23). Along with the announcement of exile there was the proclamation of return and the future fellowship of God with his people. After the time of judgment was completed, there was a return to the land and the temple was rebuilt under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. Yet, there was no record of God's presence taking up residence in the temple as he did in Israel's sanctuaries in the past (cf. Exod 40:34-38; 1 Kgs 8:10-11).

As the age of fulfillment dawned with the coming of Jesus Christ, the Gospels proclaimed Jesus as the new temple because through his death and resurrection he became the new place in which mankind met with God (John 1:51; 2:18-22; Gen 28:12-13). Jesus, in his death and resurrection inaugurated the new creation that would be filled

by God's glory.<sup>25</sup> The commencement brought about by Jesus would expand to his people who themselves, being in him, are new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Christ would give them a commission to spread his purpose throughout the cosmos (Matt 29:18-20). The church would be the corporate temple in which the Spirit of God resided until it filled the cosmos of the new creation (Eph 2:20-22; Rev 21-22).

Peter saw Jesus as the critical piece in which the eschatological dwelling of God begins. All those who are attached to him, drawing near to him, then become part of this spiritual edifice that is the eschatological temple. In being called a "spiritual house" or a temple, Peter was reminding his readers that they had been chosen for God's redemptive purposes of spreading his glory.

### **The Purpose for the Living Stones**

The purpose of the building up is so that the readers would be a holy priesthood.<sup>26</sup> "Holy" and "priesthood" confirm that the image of a temple was in view when referring to "spiritual house." The occurrence of "holy priesthood" here also anticipated verse 9 which alluded to Exodus 19:6 and the term "royal" is attached to "priesthood" while "holy" is attached to "nation."<sup>27</sup> Priesthood spoke of those who lived in service to a deity. That they were a holy priesthood most likely indicated their

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<sup>25</sup> Beale, in explaining that Christ is called the "temple" since he is the beginning of the new creation, states, "His resurrection was the first, great act of new creation, as testified to explicitly by Paul: 'he died and rose again . . . so that if anyone is in Christ, that one is a new creation . . . (2 Cor. 5:15, 17; so likewise Gal. 6:15-16; Col. 1:18; Rev. 3:14, though the concept occurs throughout the New Testament). This is the best explanation, for example, of why the Gospels repeatedly refer to Christ as 'destroying the [old] temple, and in three days raising it up' (Matt. 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; 15:29; John 2:20-21; cf. Acts 6:14)." Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 170-71.

<sup>26</sup> The preposition εἰς can convey purpose when in the accusative case. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 369. Commentators agree that purpose is in view here. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105. Paul J. Achtemeier sees "holy priesthood" as the purpose for which they are "constituted" as a spiritual house. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 156.

<sup>27</sup> Ἱεράτευμα priesthood occurs only here and in Exod 19:6. Within the canonical books of the LXX, it is found only in Exod 19:6 and 23:22, which is a restatement of 19:6.

consecration and devotion in service to God.<sup>28</sup> Thus, God built up the living stones as the new temple to be the people who lived in service to him. That service can be seen in the goal or function of this priesthood. They were to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

With the goal of offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, the priest's role in the Levitical cult was to offer up sacrifices as they performed service.<sup>29</sup> Those sacrifices were to be the ones God desired and they were to be offered in the right way as well (Lev 10:1-3).<sup>30</sup> In 1 Peter 2:5 sacrifices were also to be offered that were acceptable to God. They were, as the house that the readers constituted, spiritual. Within the NT spiritual sacrifices could refer to a variety of things.<sup>31</sup> Here it seems that the context pointed to the proclamation of the mighty acts of God (1 Pet 2:9) and this may be the main role of the priesthood in the immediate context.<sup>32</sup> The "spiritual sacrifices" were offered through Jesus Christ since he was the only way that anyone can approach God. Christ was the starting point of God rebuilding his temple in which humanity will serve him, those who are attached to him as the elect have been chosen to be a part of this divine work.

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<sup>28</sup> Davids writes, "That Christians are a holy priesthood likely refers to their consecration and separation to God (similar to Aaron in Lev. 8-11) by their conversion and baptism (as in 1:15-23) rather than to their moral qualities per se, which would be implied secondarily." Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 87.

<sup>29</sup> While this might not be the exclusive work of priests, it does seem to be their primary responsibility.

<sup>30</sup> This is evidenced by the detail given regarding the preparing and offering of sacrifices in the book of Leviticus. The seriousness of this is seen in the narrative of Nadab and Abihu's execution for offering strange fire (Lev 10:1-3). Their approach to God in their priestly duty's stands in juxtaposition to Aaron their father and his service narrated in Lev 9. Whereas Aaron did everything the Lord commanded, Nadab and Abihu approached God in some way contrary not prescribed and therefore unacceptable, paying for it with their lives.

<sup>31</sup> Acts 10:4; Rom 12:1; 15:16; Phil 2:17; 4:18; 2 Tim 4:6; Heb 13:15-16; Rev 8:3, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Schreiner writes, "The parallel with 2:9, where the royal priesthood proclaims God's wonders, suggests to some that this is the primary function of the priesthood." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 107.

### **The Fate of the Believing versus the Fate of the Disobedient**

That Peter's readers were part of the chosen people of God can be seen in their positive fate as those who believe, contrasted with the negative fate of those who disobey the word. In verses 6-8 Peter sought to support the assertions made in verses 4-5. In these verses he cited three OT texts drawing different conclusions about the two responses to the gospel. In verse 6 Peter cited Isaiah 28:16 and then drew a conclusion regarding his readers. This conclusion with reference to his recipients was stated in verse 7a. The second half of verse 7 drew attention to those who do not believe the word (v. 7b). This was followed by a citation from Psalm 118:22 (117:22 [LXX]; 1 Pet 2:7). This citation was joined by another, Isaiah 8:14, located in verse 8 along with Peter's explanatory remarks about unbelievers. The explication contrasts the believers and unbelievers, highlighting God's choice of the believers and the peril of those who reject the living stone.

In verse 6 the citations were introduced with the clause "for it stands in Scripture." "For" signaled that Peter was stating an explanation in what follows. "It stands in Scripture," a formula used only here in the NT, has the same essential meaning as "it is written" (1 Pet 1:16).<sup>33</sup> "Scripture" referred to the sacred writings that are the OT.<sup>34</sup> The use of the OT revealed what Peter saw as his authority and interpretive lens of

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<sup>33</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 159. While limited to this one occurrence in the NT, the phrase does occur in the LXX and other Jewish writings (1 Macc 15:2; 2 Macc 11:16, 22; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.104; T. Levi 10:5). So Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 89n28. That this is equivalent to "it is written" (γέγραπται) is supported by the occurrence of these citations elsewhere in the NT being introduced by γέγραπται (see Rom 9:33).

<sup>34</sup> Sometimes used to refer to specific texts of the OT and at other times used to refer to the OT Scriptures as a whole. Here Peter means the latter. The citations that he uses are taken from a larger body of sacred writing. The fact that he quotes several texts probably accounts for the absence of the article. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 151.

reality. The following citations came from the OT and, therefore, explain where these ideas of verses 4-5 originated.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Response of Believers (vv. 6-7a)**

In 1 Peter 2:6 Peter quoted Isaiah 28:16 which was alluded to in verse 5. Those who come to the living stone with the same attitude as the God held toward it will not be ashamed. The book of Isaiah was written to announce God's judgment and hope of future salvation. Chapter 28 of Isaiah headed a section that warns God's people not to trust in the foreign powers but calls for trust in Yahweh.<sup>36</sup> Isaiah 28 declared that destruction would be the result of forsaking God even as he continued his divine purposes.<sup>37</sup> However, there would be safety for those who relied on him. First, chapter 28 expressed that judgment was pronounced upon Ephraim because of their disobedience to the Lord, but also hope for the future (Isa 28:1-6). Second, the people are drunk (Isa 28:7-8) because they have rejected God's word of "rest," that word will serve to be their condemnation (Isa 28:8-13).<sup>38</sup> Third, in verse 14-19, the security is non-existent for those who reject what God said. The people placed their confidence in foreign powers, believing that invasion would not harm them (28:14-15). However, it can be seen in 28:16, from which Peter cited, that fourth, where the only true security lies. It is a security announced by God, given by God, valued by God, and therefore absolutely reliable for those who would embrace it. "Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Behold, I

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<sup>35</sup> Michaels comments on the function of the scriptural citations, "The quotation doesn't function as giving the cause of the being built up but rather supports by giving the source from which his language comes." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 102.

<sup>36</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 191; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 284.

<sup>37</sup> J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 228. Motyer gives a helpful presentation of the argument of this section of Isaiah, showing how the sections relate to one another.

<sup>38</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 231.

am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste’” (Isa 28:16).

Those who have put their trust in the nations were identified as those who made lies their refuge and falsehood their shelter. In contrast, Yahweh declared that he had made the sure foundation in Zion. The stone’s reliability can be seen in that it was described as “choice” and “precious.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, God called for a renewal of trust in him and what he was doing.

While an explicit reference to the temple or Messiah is not clear in Isaiah 28, the mention of Zion points to it. First, verse 16 makes it clear that Zion is the place from which the ultimate fulfilment of hope will come. The work of laying down the cornerstone was being done there. Second, within Isaiah, Zion is the place where God dwells and his presence is manifested (Isa 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 8:18; 12:6; 14:32; 18:7; 24:23; 33:5; 35:10; 60:14). It was also clear that Zion will be the place from which redemption comes. From it the saving kingship of the Lord is proclaimed (Isa 40:9), and the redeemer will come to Zion (Isa 59:20). Zion itself will be redeemed (Isa 1:27). The image of a cornerstone in a place associated with these themes communicated the certainty and reliability of God’s promises and purposes.<sup>40</sup>

While there are several exegetical issues that face this verse,<sup>41</sup> the most significant is to what the stone referred.<sup>42</sup> A variety of specific options are offered as a

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<sup>39</sup> These adjectives are the same ones Peter employs in 2:4. While Peter is quoting from some Greek version, it is not clear from which one. Proposals from Pauline authorship to some early Christian tradition or *Testimonium* make up the options. The MT describes the stone as “tested.” Such a concept is not lost in the Greek version in which the language implies that concept.

<sup>40</sup> This can be seen in that the cornerstone is reliable enough to build off so that the floor is level, and the walls are plumb. It is also seen in the descriptions characterizing the cornerstone in Isa 27:16.

<sup>41</sup> For a list of different interpretations, see John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 518.

<sup>42</sup> Brevard S. Childs observes three primary exegetical issues, the stone’s referent being the chief. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 208-9.

solution. Suggestions include the law, the temple, the saving activity of the Lord, the remnant, Zion, or the Archetypal David.<sup>43</sup> A narrow interpretation of the stone is not prudent.<sup>44</sup> As the broader context of the book is considered, the view that is taken here is that the stone functioned as a metaphor for a variety of themes brought to fruition by Messiah.<sup>45</sup> The stone was placed in Zion as that which can and should be relied upon in contrast to the promises of the nations. God's people were to trust what God had declared. "Promises have been made and the people are summoned to trust."<sup>46</sup> It is a summons to hold fast to him, his promises, and purposes, orienting all their hope around him. The point was that God set a sure foundation to be built upon that will not fall. He encouraged the people to believe with the guarantee that they will not be put to shame. However, those who do not trust what God accomplished, but remain in their alliances would be swept away by God's judgment (Isa 28:17-18).

What is very clear from the citation being placed here is that Peter viewed Isaiah 28:16 as having an eschatological fulfillment.<sup>47</sup> Peter, along with Jesus and the NT writers, saw Jesus not only as the living stone, but also as the cornerstone (Matt 11:42;

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<sup>43</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 518.

<sup>44</sup> Childs, in considering the context of the whole prophecy, offers the following guidance: "The key to the meaning of the verse lies in the larger context, not only of chapter 28, but of the book as a whole, which provides the content of the imagery." Childs, *Isaiah*, 209.

<sup>45</sup> Oswalt, recognizing the more general theme in the book to trust whatever the Lord reveals, writes, "Perhaps no one identification is correct. The cornerstone may be the whole complex of ideas relating to the Lord's revelation of his faithfulness and the call to reciprocate with the same kind of faithfulness toward him. That entire message would one day be summed up in Jesus Christ." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 518. Childs seems to argue on similar lines as he points out that the prophet's message contains an intertwining of themes that comprise the revelation given by the prophet. Any one theme could fit but, as Childs observes, chapter 28 picks up themes already presented in the book in which the response is to be trust. Summarizing the matter he writes, "The error of earlier interpreters has been in trying to isolate only one feature from within this larger whole without adequate attention to the dynamic interplay of texts that together comprise the truth of the prophetic proclamation." Childs, *Isaiah*, 210.

<sup>46</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 233.

<sup>47</sup> Both Paul (Rom 9:33) and Peter apply Christ as the fulfillment of this passage. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 109.

Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20). As the cornerstone he was “chosen and precious.” He was also “appointed” which emphasizes his election by God.<sup>48</sup>

As those in Isaiah’s day were called to trust the Lord and what he promised, the saints to whom Peter wrote were to trust Christ as the fulfillment of what God promised. He was the one who would bring the promises to their fulfillment and so to trust him was to trust in what God has announced. Those who trust in Jesus would certainly not be put to shame because they had come to the one who was the foundation stone for the work that God was building in the world.

Verse 7 announced the implication or conclusion of what infers for believers as living stones connected to the living ‘corner stone.’ The inference is that they share or participate in that same honor. “Honor” occurred in 1:7, where it spoke of the commendation believers will receive on the last day, and in 3:7, where it refers to how Christian husbands should treat their wives. Since 3:7 articulated honor being applied to a sub-set within the readers, and 1:7 and 2:7 refer to all the recipients of the letter, it is best to see this honor as referring to that which makes up the commendation on the last day. This is confirmed by the avoidance of shame in the citation and the contrast of believing and honor with disobeying and stumbling. What was in view was eschatological honor or vindication from God for believing in Christ.

### **A Negative Response to Christ (vv. 7b-8)**

In verse 7b-8 the negative response to Jesus the living stone was elaborated with the consequences of this response. In verse 7b the author presented a contrast between his readers as “those who believe” in verse 7a and those who disbelieve. “Rejected” connected the reader back to verse 4 and the response of mankind to the living stone. Here in verse 7b Peter has quoted from Psalm 118:22 to expand on what was

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<sup>48</sup> Schreiner notes the switch from the LXX reading here, replacing ἐμβάλλω with τίθημι that the Petrine use of “appoint” emphasizes God’s election. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 109.

said in verse 4. Psalm 118:22 was cited because Peter viewed the response to Jesus by the unbelieving world as fulfilling a pattern installed in that verse.

Psalm 118 is in book 5 of the Psalter (Pss 107-50). The theological theme of this collection of psalms is the ultimate triumph of the Davidic Monarch who was to bring eschatological victory over the enemies of God and his people.<sup>49</sup> Psalms 111-118 declare praise to God in view of this motif of kingship.<sup>50</sup> Psalm 118 (117 [LXX]) was a communal psalm expressing thanksgiving to God for his deliverance from enemy oppression.<sup>51</sup> In verse 22 of Psalm 118 the psalmist, having already proclaimed the glory of trusting in the Lord (who had rescued him from all nations [Ps 118:10-17]), verse 22 spoke of the builders who have rejected the stone. The nations had rejected Israel and her king. But now that king has become the cornerstone. God delivered him, and by extension his people, from the oppressing nations. The nations, who are the builders here, have despised the stone. However, that stone became the cornerstone of which the purposes of God would be re-established.<sup>52</sup>

Peter already saw Jesus as the cornerstone (2:4, 6). Here he draws attention to the rejection of Jesus as the fulfillment of a pattern of repudiating God's purposes. As the

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<sup>49</sup> Hamilton writes, "Psalm 107-50 presents the eschatological triumph of Yahweh through the conquering Davidic king, who decisively brings about the salvation that comes to Israel through the exile by means of judgment upon the enemies of Israel." Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 287-88. The theme of the conquering Davidic king is a theme that can be seen throughout the whole book; as House has observed, "Psalms claims that a Davidic Savior will reign as king and priest at a future time that will vindicate the faithful and punish the wicked." House, *Old Testament Theology*, 423.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen G. Dempster, having pointed out royal themes of earlier Psalms in Book 5 of the Psalms (Pss 107-110) and immediately after commenting on the royal Davidic and priestly themes in Ps 110, observes regarding Pss 111-118, "From this point on there is a group of praise songs (Pss. 111-118) that follow the theme of God's kingship." Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 221.

<sup>51</sup> Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 3, *Psalms 90-150*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2016), 443.

<sup>52</sup> Ross argues that the setting of Ps 118 is post-exilic. If this is the case, then this would support the idea of a celebration of a new beginning. Those who were used to discipline the nation and her king have been done away with and God's people have, as it were, a new start looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promises. Ross, *Psalms 90-150*, 444.

nations spurned the stone so now the nations, the Gentile society of Peter's day, also rejected God's purposes fulfilled in Christ and proclaimed in the gospel.

### **Titles of Election**

The Petrine audience was chosen by God. A final and third evidence that this was the case is that Peter appropriated honorific titles, which were applied to Israel, upon his readers. In verse 9 a contrast was made between the readers and the unbelievers described in verse 7. Peter, addressing his readers by way of this contrast, resumed his description of the Christians found in verse 7a.<sup>53</sup> The honor mentioned in verse 7 of which the readers possessed was now unpacked in verse 9.<sup>54</sup> This elucidation was expressed by means of four honorific titles that were descriptions of God's people Israel in the OT. The OT texts from which Peter drew these appellations were Exodus 19:6 and Isaiah 43:20-21. In terms of the arrangement of the four titles that are seen in verse 9 there are two titles drawn from Isaiah 43 and two taken from Exodus 19.<sup>55</sup> The citations from Exodus 19 are preceded and followed by the references to Isaiah 43 so that the allusions to Isaiah frame in the titles taken from Exodus. Peter appropriated these texts to the church for the purpose of emphasizing that God had chosen the readers to be part of his people.

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<sup>53</sup> The *δὲ* is a clear indicator of contrast between what follows and what has preceded in verse 7. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 114. While the contrast is clear, Achtemeier sees the conjunction as more resumptive in function. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 163. However, both can be the case as the *δὲ* indicates contrast while the Ὑμεῖς (v. 9) connects the reader back to the οἱ μὲν describing the believing readers (v. 7).

<sup>54</sup> Michaels, while seeing a future eschatological tone in vv. 7-8, also sees a present reality that describes the readers in vv. 9-10, stating that "vv. 9-10 unfold both present and future aspects of this 'honor.'" Michaels, *1 Peter*, 107. The emphasis, however, may be more on the present in vv. 9-10. See esp. v. 10, where Peter's use of Hosea contrasts the past and the present in view of God's redemptive work. In either case, v. 9 is bringing clarity to the honor, whether present, future, or both, that believers possess.

<sup>55</sup> Elliott renders βασιλῆιος and ἱεράτευμα from one another and interprets them as two different titles. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 435.

## Chosen Race

The first title with which the readers were identified in verse 9 was “chosen race.” “Chosen” communicated being selected and was used to describe Christ in verse 4 and thus connected the readers back to him.<sup>56</sup> Christ himself was the living stone who is himself “chosen” (v. 4) of God. Thus, in describing the readers this way the theme of election is continued.<sup>57</sup> “Race” or “stock” denoted those who have descended from a common origin and thus can refer to those whose descent hailed from a common ancestor.<sup>58</sup> While not sharing in a physical ancestry, the readers did share in a spiritual one as those begotten of God (1 Pet 1:3, 23). They are the chosen stock.

The language used here was taken from Isaiah 43:21. Isaiah 43 announced a deliverance for the captives who were experiencing exile in Babylon. The future deliverance the prophet announced was cast in the dye of the exodus motif (Isa 43:1-3; 15-20). This deliverance was a new act of redemption, a new exodus (vv. 18-19). In describing this new exodus deliverance, the Lord declared that he would give provisions of water in the wilderness for “my chosen race.” Thus, those whom God was promising to one day deliver out of exile were his chosen people. “Race” was used in Isaiah to refer to Judah as a nation or people (Isa 22:4, 6 [LXX]). It was also used to refer to the nations as distinct from Israel (Isa 49:6). In Isaiah Israel is the nation chosen out from among the peoples of the earth.

The exodus itself was the great act of deliverance within the OT. This act of redemption shaped the understanding of God’s subsequent acts of deliverance. The prophecy of return out of exile, as shown above, was a new exodus, a future deliverance out of captivity reminiscent of God’s former deliverance. This typological pattern found

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<sup>56</sup> It points back to the privileges that are because of one’s attachment to Christ (1 Pet 2:45). Grudem, *1 Peter*, 117.

<sup>57</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 163.

<sup>58</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 158.

its fulfillment in Jesus's own act of redemption (cf. Luke 9:31). Peter's readers were connected to the one who was the fulfillment of those OT promises of deliverances and are thus identified in the same way as they were: God's chosen race.

### **Royal Priesthood**

The second title appropriated to Peter's readers was "royal priesthood." These words along with the following "holy nation" were taken from Exodus 19:6. Exodus is essentially a book communicating that the Lord redeems for relationship in his presence. With this summary in mind, Exodus 19 begins the section that focuses on God's relationship with Israel, the covenant (Exod 19-25). Exodus 19 was the setting or background of the covenant and recounts Yahweh's history with Israel (v. 4).<sup>59</sup> He then declared in verse 5-6 the meaning of being in faithful covenant relationship with the Lord. Being in covenant relationship meant being God's treasured possession (v. 5). The notion of treasured possession was then developed with the two phrases that are mentioned here in 1 Peter.

"Royal priesthood" along with "holy nation," was used to describe the people of Israel as God's chosen or elect people.<sup>60</sup> Israel was chosen to be God's royal priests.<sup>61</sup> Believers, collectively, are priests. Priests drew near to God in worship and service to him (Lev 10:1-2). This was an amazing privilege for Israel. This was the first half of what

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<sup>59</sup> Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 347.

<sup>60</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 164. The Hebrew ל preposition found in Exod 19:6 indicates possession. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 357. This is reflected in the LXX by the words ἔσθεθε μοι. These along with the Lord's statement of bringing Israel to himself (Exod 19:4) indicate God's choosing of Israel to be his.

<sup>61</sup> In considering the phrase מְמַלְכֵת פְּהַנִּים with the understanding that "kingdom" (מְמַלְכָה) can be used to refer to realm or domain that is ruled or to a the rule that is exercised by a king, Peter Gentry writes, "[A]ccording to the main options, then, the phrase "kingdom of priests" could mean a domain of priest whom God rules or, alternatively, the exercise of royal office by those who are in fact priests—that is, a royal priesthood." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 357. While recognizing the difficulty between the two options, he points out that the most natural way to read the phrase is to take it as the exercise of royal office by those who are priests. Thus, a royal priesthood rather than a priestly kingship is in view.

it meant to be his treasured possession and what made them distinct from the nations. This privilege Peter now saw being appropriated to the church. The church who was distinct from the rest of humanity because of her allegiance to Christ was composed of those chosen by God to draw near to him (cf. 1:5).

### **Holy Nation**

Peter gave a third description that evidences their election. This description was also drawn from Exodus 19:6. Within Exodus 19:6 this portrayal functioned as the second part of the elaboration of the meaning “treasured possession.” The notion of holy occurred throughout Peter’s letter (1:15, 16; 2:5; 3:5, 15). Its basic meaning carried the idea of devotion and consecrated to God as one who belongs to him.<sup>62</sup> Israel was to consecrate themselves to God as they lived in devotion and service to him. They, unlike the rest of the nations, were the nation that belonged to him and were live a life wholly committed to him. Peter identified the new covenant people as those who were devoted to Christ. This, along with being a royal priesthood, conveyed that just as God had chosen Israel as his own covenant people; the church, his new covenant people, had been elected by him.

### **A People for His Own Possession**

The fourth description stated that Peter’s readers are “a people for his own possession” (1 Pet 2:9). While there were phrases like it (Exod 19:5; Isa 43:21; cf. Mal 3:17), this phrase did not occur in the LXX. It is not unreasonable to think that the idea of possession is informed by both Exodus 19 and Isaiah 43. Peter drew his language from both passages already in this verse. Along with this, both passages are connected by the exodus motif. Both texts also communicate God’s choosing so that the people become his. In Exodus 19 God chose Israel out from among the nations by redeeming them and

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<sup>62</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 363.

entering in a covenant with them. They became his treasured possession out of all that he does possess. In Isaiah 43 God's people were chosen in that he acquires them by redeeming them. The themes from occurring in Isaiah 43 were taken from the original exodus and function as the categories of a new exodus. Yet they conveyed that God's people belong to him, he has chosen them. Peter viewed the church as the fulfilment of these blessings that characterized Israel as her members were in the true Israel Jesus Christ and become the New Israel.

### **Purpose of God's Choosing**

The different ways of conveying the church's status as elected have a purpose which comes at the end of verse 9, "that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Here again Peter alluded to Isaiah 43:21, "my people whom I have preserved to tell forth my praises." In Isaiah 43:21 God preserved his people for the purpose of telling his praises. Peter used a different verb as he describes the purpose for the believer's salvation to be that of proclaiming the excellences of the one who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. "Excellencies," the object of the proclamation, denoted the idea of praises within the context of Isaiah (cf. 42:8, 12; 43:21; 63:7). The idea then was giving worship to God. Since God was described as the one who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light, it was praise for God's saving deeds was in view. Thus, those elected by God have been chosen so that they might worship God for his salvation of them.

### **The Result of God's Calling**

Verse 10 stated what has transpired for Peter's readers consequent to them being called out of darkness into God's light.<sup>63</sup> The first half conveyed what they were prior to being called out of darkness followed by what is now true of the readers as a

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<sup>63</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 167.

result of that calling. The second half conveyed another reality that explained how it was that they are the people of God. Prior to God's calling, believers were not a people. Here Peter alluded to God's words to Israel declared through the prophet Hosea (Hos 2:23).

The prophet Hosea declared the enduring love of God for an unfaithful people.<sup>64</sup> In chapter 2 God takes Israel to court for her unfaithfulness, suing for a divorce (Hos 2:1-13). As an illustration of their unfaithfulness, God told Hosea to take a wife of harlotry, so he married Gomer (Hos 1:2-3). Two of the children born were given the names "No Mercy" (Hos 1:6) and "not my people" (Hos 1:9) to communicate the Lord's response to Israel's spiritual infidelity. God rejected Israel for her adultery. They were no longer regarded as his people due to that unfaithfulness. However, in 2:15-23 God resolved to pursue his unfaithful wife and bind her to himself forever. God's people who were cast off, then, would experience his mercy and be known as his people once again (Hos 2:23). Peter again had taken OT texts referring to Israel as God's covenant people and applied them to his Gentile readers who are now a part of the new covenant community. These Gentiles, prior to the gospel call were in the same precarious situation as the repudiated Israel. They, like Israel, were given over to idolatry (cf. 1 Pet 1:18). They had no access to the saving mercy of God. They were certainly "not my people" as they were outside the covenant community having no access to the blessings of being in relationship with the Lord. Yet, as the word was preached to them (1:25; cf. 1:12), they were called out of darkness (2:9) and brought into relationship with God. God called them as he had done with his old covenant people so that they were no longer estranged. They were now identified as those who were in covenant relationship with him, having experienced his mercy.

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<sup>64</sup> House, concisely summarizing the book, states, "Hosea demonstrates for Israel the persevering love of God for a constantly straying Israel. This love is portrayed in two basic sections of the text. Chapters 1-3 express the love God has had for an idolatrous and adulterous nation. While Hosea 4-15 describes the tough love the Lord has for a corrupt people." House, *Old Testament Theology*, 348.

## **Conclusion**

Peter wrote to Christians who were facing hostility and rejection from the unbelieving society. In closing the first major section of his letter (1:3-2:10), 2:4-10 would have been a great encouragement for the readers. First, it declared the corporate identity of the church as those chosen by God. The readers were joined to the living stone who was chosen by God (v. 4). Such a connection caused them to be part of the purposes God had begun with his elect living stone (v. 5). The idea that Peter's readers were chosen by God can also be seen in the ultimate consequence of them being aligned with Christ in believing the word. Second, they would experience vindication from God (v. 6). In contrast to those who believe the word, those who disobey stumble to eternal destruction (vv. 7b-8). Third, Peter conferred upon his readers honorific titles belonging to OT Israel that identified them as God's chosen people. That he applied them to the church indicated that this was the corporate identity of the church.

How should the revelation in 1 Peter 2:4-10 affect the church today? First, it should recognize its glorious identity that it has through its connection to Jesus Christ. It is the new temple in Jesus where God's presence resides (vv. 4-5). Second, it should faithfully offer up to God the spiritual sacrifices through Jesus (v. 5). Third, the church should take great hope and should persevere as it faces persecution and rejection from the unbelieving world. The church will one day be vindicated by God as the one chosen by him (vv. 6-8). Fourth, the church should recognize who they are as the elect people of God and remember how it is that they came to experience this reality (God's calling) and the purpose for it (proclaiming his glory).

## CHAPTER 5

### EXPOSITION 4: 1 PETER 2:18-25

Jesus Christ sent his followers into the world to be his witnesses and to make disciples of the nations (Matt 28:18-19; Acts 1:8; cf. Rev 5:9). As the NT church grew it not only included individuals of differing ethnicities and nations (e. g. 1 Pet 1:1), but also persons of diverse classes and status (Gal 3:28). Among those who made up the congregations of the NT was a class of people who were slaves. Peter, earlier in this epistle established that the believer's conduct stood in antithesis to their pre-conversion existence (1 Pet 1:14-16, 18; 2:9). What did such conduct look like for the slaves among those to whom Peter wrote?

Christian slaves keep their conduct honorable among the Gentiles when they submit to their masters, even enduring suffering when treated unjustly by owners who are crooked. Such conduct can solicit the conversion of Gentile unbelievers. This thesis will be demonstrated first by showing the place of 1 Peter 2:18-25 within the structure of the letter in general and its relationship to 2:11-12 in particular. Second, attention will be given to the exhortation to the readers and the way it is to be executed (v. 18). Third, it will be argued that Peter supported his instruction with the explanation that submission that endures unjust suffering because of fidelity to Christ is pleasing to God (vv. 19-20). Fourth, believers were called to endure suffering while doing good because this is what Christ did and they are to follow his example (vv. 21-25).

#### **1 Peter 2:18-25 within the Structure of the Letter**

Like most Greco-Roman letters of its time, the letter contained an introduction, body, and conclusion. The body of this letter was divided into three main sections (1:3-

2:10, 2:11-4:11; 4:12-5:12). It is within the second section of the body that the passage under consideration is located. This section can be divided up as follows: (1) the introductory heading which was a call to honorable conduct among the Gentiles (2:11-12). (2) Commands related to the broader society were given to the readers collectively (2:13-17). (3) This was followed by exhortations to household (2:18-3:7). (4) Peter then concluded this section by addressing the readers collectively again calling for right conduct even in suffering (3:8-4:11).

The theme of the section can be seen in 2:11-13. Peter, reminding Asia Minor Christians of how they were viewed in the broader society and culture (“sojourners and exiles”), charged the Asia Minor Christians to avoid fleshly desires (1 Pet 2:11). They were to do this by holding their way of life in an honorable fashion (1 Pet 2:12). The goal was that the effect upon some unbelievers, seeing their good conduct, would lead them to faith in Jesus (1 Pet 2:12). Peter then addressed differing settings in which they were to display such a manner of living. He spoke to them about the broader social setting in 2:13-17. He gave instruction about the household and the relationships within it (2:18-3:7). He then wrote concerning the believing community and the attitudes that were to characterize it (3:8-12). Such honorable conduct could undermine the false accusation leveled against Christians as evil doers (2:12).

First Peter 2:18-3:7 was addressed to the household (though not all the groups that would make up the household<sup>1</sup>). The household was the nucleus of the civilization in Greco-Roman thought.<sup>2</sup> Anything that would cause disruption in the household was

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<sup>1</sup> First Peter stands out when set next to other household codes such as those seen in Eph 5:22-6:9 and Col 3:18-4:1. Within Ephesians and Colossians there are addresses to all the members that would compose a household. Here in 1 Peter only slaves, wives, and husbands are addressed. For an introduction to household codes, see Philip H. Towner, “Households and Household Codes,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 417-19.

<sup>2</sup> Towner writes, “The basic unit of the Greco-Roman society in which Paul lived and ministered was the household (oikos, oikia). Its importance was such that secular ethicists saw the stability of the city-state as dependent upon responsible management of the household. The foundational nature of

viewed to eventually make the society unstable.<sup>3</sup> The words addressed to slaves in this passage (vv. 18-24) directed them how to live honorably within the social order they found themselves. Believing slaves who were submissive to their masters, then, put the lie to any accusation that Christianity was bad for society.

### **The Exhortation**

The exhortation contained a call to submission. Below we will look at this theme of submission, those who received the charge to submit and the object of submission.

### **Submission in the New Testament**

The concept of submission was not foreign but quite familiar in the New Testament. Christians were called to submit themselves to the governing authorities (Rom 13:1, 5; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13). One of the evidences that Christians were governed by the Spirit of God was that they submitted to one-another (Eph. 5:21). Christian wives were exhorted to be subject to their own husbands (Eph 5:22, 24; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1). Believers were expected to be subject to those who had devoted themselves to the service of the saints (1 Cor 16:15-16). Along with these, they were also to submit themselves to God's mighty hand (Jas 4:7) and to his Christ who has subjected all things to himself (Eph 5:24; cf. 1 Cor 15:27-28; Eph 1:22; Phil 3:21; Heb 2:5, 8-9).

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this institution is further seen in the pattern it provided for the structure and definition of larger political institutions." Towner, "Households and Household Codes," 417.

<sup>3</sup> Karen H. Jobes writes, "Because the household was understood in Greco-Roman society to be the foundational unit of civilization, the influence of suspect religions on the family were closely observed. Peter is especially concerned that the freedom of the gospel be expressed in Christian households in such a way so as not to provoke unnecessary accusations against Christianity." Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 179.

## Submission in 1 Peter

The apostle Peter was not silent among the New Testament writers with reference to this subject. The notes of the believer's submission can be heard throughout the epistle as it joined the chorus of the rest of the NT on this theme and its application. Peter called his readers to submit to every human institution (2:13). Here too was an instruction for wives to be subject to their husbands (3:1, 5). The younger men were exhorted to submit to the elders of the congregation (5:5). Thus, Peter is not mute on this topic.

## The Exhortation in 1 Peter 2:18

The exhortation comes in the grammatical form of a participle but functioned as an imperative.<sup>4</sup> The call here is a mandate to be characterized by submission.<sup>5</sup> How should submission be defined? It meant to be under the firm control of someone or something.<sup>6</sup> It was a call for one to willingly bring themselves under the command, direction, or authority of another.<sup>7</sup> I. Howard Marshall in his commentary on 1 Peter is helpful in expanding our understanding when he defines the notion with these words: "Submitting literally means placing oneself below other persons, out of a respect that is expressed in obedience appropriate to the relationship. It may be compulsory or

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<sup>4</sup> The exhortation being in the form of a participle has led some interpreters to view its function in an adverbial sense being dependent on the participles in v. 17. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 194. Yet others have seen the participle in connection with 2:13. J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 137-38; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 137. John H. Elliott points out that the command is rooted in the convention of the social order and thus connects back to 2:13 where the readers are called to submit to every human institution. John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 516.

<sup>5</sup> The function of the participle carries the force of the main verb found in 2:13. The present tense most likely communicates that this is to characterize the subject of the participle.

<sup>6</sup> LSJ, 1897.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 645.

voluntary.”<sup>8</sup> This same conduct was commanded of all the Christians that Peter was addressing in this letter (2:13). Here this same conduct was to be characteristic of Christian slaves.

## Slaves

The United States has its own history with slavery. The institution of slavery, however, was not something that was unique to America’s past. In fact, slavery has been present throughout most of human history. The Greco-Roman world was no exception to this. It was the Greeks and the Romans who transformed it into an institutionalized systems of large-scale slave labor.<sup>9</sup> By the time of Augustus, 2-3 million of the 7.5 million inhabitants of Italy were slaves, and slaves made up about ten percent of the population elsewhere in the Roman Empire.<sup>10</sup>

Slaves were acquired through a variety of means. One became a part of the institution because one’s people were conquered.<sup>11</sup> Such war and conquest by the Roman Empire can explain the high presence of slavery in the realm.<sup>12</sup> Others found themselves in this servitude because they were born into the institution, while others were kidnapped and sold into mancipium.<sup>13</sup> However some slavery was voluntary. There were freemen

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<sup>8</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter*, IVP New Testament Commentary 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 84.

<sup>9</sup> James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 221.

<sup>10</sup> Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era*, 221.

<sup>11</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 514.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffers points to three factors that transformed Rome into a slave state in the later Republic (200 B.C.): “the great increase of the land holdings of rich Romans, depletion of the native workforce as they were conscripted to fight its continual wars and the introduction of massive number of captured enemies into the slave market.” Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era*, 221.

<sup>13</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 514.

who sold themselves into slavery for the purpose of a stable life, while others did so to pay off debt or even as a step toward attaining citizenship post manumission.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike the institution in America, slaves possessed some privileges. Some were educated and found themselves higher up on the socio-economic level than some free men. Slaves could make money, own property, even own their own slaves.<sup>15</sup> None of this however changed what slaves were or how the society viewed them, as property and not equals. If one was a slave, then one was owned and was the property of another. That this notion was the case was evident from Greco-Roman philosophical thought. Plato wrote that one of the first things a young couple would do after marrying is find a place for themselves and begin to acquire property of which would include slaves.<sup>16</sup> As such, then, the slave was viewed as a tool for the use of the owner.<sup>17</sup> Aristotle also viewed slaves as possessions, distinguishing them as living property from that which was inanimate.<sup>18</sup> So the slave existed not for himself but for the master.

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<sup>14</sup> Elliott, *I Peter*, 514.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era*, 227.

<sup>16</sup> Plato comments that conversations would include discussions about what kind of property is most convenient and points out that there is little difficulty in understanding most kinds of property but one kind that does have its challenges is that of slaves. "There is no difficulty in either understanding or acquiring most kinds of property, but there is a great difficulty in what relates to slaves." Plato "Laws," in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 7, *Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett and J. Harvard, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955), 709b.

<sup>17</sup> In his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle argued that there are relationships in which friendship exists, but a master cannot be friends with a slave because he is a tool. While the tool (the slave) may benefit by its master's use of him, there is no friendship or justice between them because he is just a tool he owns. Therefore, friendship is non-existent because they have nothing in common in nature to unite them as friends. "The slave is a living tool and the lifeless tool a slave." Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 9, *Aristotle II*, trans. Benjamin Jowett and W. D. Ross, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955), 413c-d.

<sup>18</sup> He believed that the complete household consisted of slaves and freeman. In Book 1 chapter 3 of *Politics*, he speaks on household codes. He, like Plato, held that part of running a household was the acquiring and managing of property and attaining the right tools. The distinction is made of lifeless tools and living instruments of which the slave is counted as one and the most important. "Thus, too, a possession is an instrument for maintaining life. And so, in the arrangement of the family, a slave is a living possession, and property a member of such instruments; and a servant is himself an instrument which takes precedence over all other instruments." Aristotle, "Politics," in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 9, *Aristotle II*, trans. Benjamin Jowett and W. D. Ross, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955), 447b.

The slaves to whom Peter wrote were addressed as οἱ οἰκέται.<sup>19</sup> The term was used to designate slaves of the house or the estate.<sup>20</sup> Peter understood that his readers were already viewed with suspicion and wonderment, and even thought of as morally evil by the broader culture due to their allegiance to Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:12; 4:4). Knowing that they would suffer for Christ (1 Pet 3:14, 17; 4:12, 14), the apostle did not want any accusation that might be laid against them as evil doers to be found as legitimate (2:12; cf. 4:15). So, he directed the slaves toward a conduct that could not be reprovved or disdained by the culture or give cause for complaint, accusation, or suspicion. This was because they were called to relate to their masters in the way that the society would expect which would not bring disruption.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Master**

The slave was to be submissive to the master. The master held legal control and authority over the slave (1 Tim 6:11; Titus 2:9).<sup>22</sup> Thus, the master's ownership was absolute and unrestrained. His slaves were in his power to do with as he pleased. The encouragement for slaves was to subordinate themselves under that authority.<sup>23</sup> Thus,

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<sup>19</sup> The nominative case with the definite article functions as a vocative. BDF §147; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 137.

<sup>20</sup> BDAG, 694. It is possible that the term is used in a more general sense. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 194. Achtemeier proposed that Peter used δοῦλος to refer to all Christians as those who live in submission to God (1 Pet 2:16), οἰκέτης is employed to designate Christian slaves in general. He used δεσπότης for earthly masters (1 Pet 2:18) instead of κύριος which is reserved, with one exception, for Christ in the letter (1 Pet 1:3, 25; 2:3, 13; 3:12, 15). However, judgment is difficult considering the context of the household code.

<sup>21</sup> Slaves could be viewed as problematic due to rebellion, causing instability in a society. Plato pointed out such a fact before offering solutions to mitigate such potential difficulties: "He [the slave] is a troublesome piece of goods as has often been shown by the frequent revolts of the Messenians, and the great mischiefs which happen in states having many slaves who speak the same language, and numerous robberies and lawless life of the Italian bandit, as they are called." Plato, "Laws," 709c.

<sup>22</sup> BDAG, 220.

<sup>23</sup> Wayne Grudem captures how Peter wants his readers to understand how to relate to their masters as he describes the relationship as a call "to have a continuing mental attitude of acceptance of the legal and economic authority over them, and a willing obedience to the directives given by their owners or master." Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 133.

slavery was not the most humanizing of institutions to say the least. Yet what can be seen from Peter is that Christians who were slaves were able to have a powerful witness by their conduct toward their masters. This is primarily because of the motivation for such action that Peter states.

### **The Motivation**

Believing slaves were to be subject to their masters “with all respect” (1 Pet 2:18). This spoke to the way submission was to be exercised.<sup>24</sup> “Respect” can be rendered literally as “fear.” While the implied object of fear could refer to the master of the slave, it is more likely that the fear referred to here was to be directed at God. When an examination of the occurrences of “fear” in the context of 1 Peter is done, it becomes apparent that fear is always directed toward God.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the obligation to submit was ultimately out of one’s devotion to God.<sup>26</sup> Though the convention and laws which applied to it gave the master authority over the slave, it was God who exercised sovereignty over the Christian slave.<sup>27</sup>

Such a qualifier was necessary for the recipients of Peter’s letter due to the nature of masters. Peter had placed masters into two categories. The first was those

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 372. See also Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 137.

<sup>25</sup> Grudem views φόβος as a fear of being displeasing and that it is directed at “masters.” However, this does not account for the command in the context for all Christians to have God as the object of their fear (2:17; cf. 1:17). Nor does it account for the admonitions in the letter to not fear humans (3:14). As F. W. Beare comments, it is “not fear of the master to whom they are subject, but fear of God. Throughout the epistle, it is always the fear of God that is enjoined (1:17; 2:17; cf. 3:2, 15); any other fear is not to be entertained.” F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 121.

<sup>26</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 195.

<sup>27</sup> Again, commenting on ἐν παντί φόβῳ, Bear writes, “‘All fear,’ then, will mean, ‘the fear of God which governs all your conduct’; it is the spirit of reverence towards Him that induces respect and faithfulness to duty in the sphere of human relationships.” Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 121.

masters who were “good and gentle.” This referred to their proper treatment of slaves.<sup>28</sup> This kind of master was one who was morally upright and reasonable in his dealings with his slaves (cf. Phil 4:5).<sup>29</sup> The second kind was identified as “unjust.” The word translated “unjust” had the literal meaning of being bent or curved.<sup>30</sup> In an ethical sense, the term referred to one who was morally twisted, lacked scruples, or was dishonest, and, therefore, a morally bankrupt person was in view (Prov 2:14-15; 4:24; 8:8; 28:18 [LXX]; Acts 2:40; Phil 2:15). Even to such men a slave was to be subject. In other words, a master’s moral defects did not disqualify him from receiving his Christian slave’s obedience when his orders were not contrary to God’s will. However, when the master’s orders did come into conflict with God’s directives, a slave with an unreasonable and cruel master could have his or her life made very unpleasant, a matter which is examined below.

### **The Explanation**

In verse 18 the believers were exhorted to submit to their masters, even the unjust ones. In verses 19-20 Peter explained that enduring unjust suffering because of fidelity to Christ was pleasing to God. Attention should not only be given to the words and their meaning but also to the structure of these verses in which those words are found. In other words, how these statements are arranged and related to each other matters. The explanation that Peter gave is presented in two parts. In the first part (v. 19), a general principle has been stated. In part two (v. 20), Peter further elucidated that

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<sup>28</sup> Michaels observes Peter’s understanding that there are masters who treat their slaves well but that this should not be taken to mean that this refers to Christian masters. Peter most likely has in view fair and just treatment. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 138.

<sup>29</sup> In 1 Pet 2:18 ἀγαθός, translated “good,” is contrasted with “evil” (3:11) and is used as a synonym for “righteousness” (3:13-14).

<sup>30</sup> BDAG, 3.

statement both negatively and positively to emphasize his point.<sup>31</sup> The general principle will be examined first followed by the elucidation of that principle.

### **Part 1: The General Principle**

The general principle that Peter stated was that enduring through sorrow brought about by unjust suffering found favor with God. Peter's support by explanation of the above is signaled by "for." The rest of the clause, "this is a gracious thing" (2:19a), functioned as the *apodosis* of the conditional sentence that is the content of the verse.<sup>32</sup>

"Gracious" denoted the idea of "grace" or "favor." It often was used to convey God's unmerited favor bestowed upon his people (1 Pet 1:2, 10, 13, 4:10). However, grace here had the meaning of favor in the sense that one is pleased, or an action is commendable (cf. 1 Pet 5:5). A consideration of the structure of verses 19-20 will show that verses 19a ("for this is a gracious thing") stands in parallel relationship to verse 20a ("what credit is it to you") the *apodosis* of the second conditional clause of these two verses. "Gracious" (v. 19a), then, stood in parallel relationship to "credit" (v. 20a). So, it was that which finds favor or is credible in God's sight.<sup>33</sup> This conclusion then raises the question of what it was that Peter referred to as a "gracious thing." Such a question was answered in the *protasis* found in the remainder of the verse.<sup>34</sup>

The *protasis* marked by "when" (v. 19b), stated that the "gracious thing" Peter had in mind was the believing slave's endurance or perseverance through unjust

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<sup>31</sup> Along with this, vv. 19-20 unfolds as the conditional clauses, the first being found in verse 19 while the other two are in verse. 20. The verses are also framed in with the phrase "this is a gracious thing" forming an *inclusio* (vv. 19a and 20c).

<sup>32</sup> As Achtemeier notes, "The τοῦτο ('this') functions as the *apodosis* of the conditional sentence whose *protasis* is the εἰ ('when') clause, with the εἰ clause functioning therefore as the antecedent of the τοῦτο." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 196.

<sup>33</sup> For another example of where χάρις carries the notion of credit or of something that is commendable, see Luke 6:32-34 (cf. 17:9). Charles Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 143-44.

<sup>34</sup> Michaels observes that "for this" points forward to the whole conditional clause. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 139.

suffering. It was suffering that occurred because they were being mindful of God.<sup>35</sup> “Mindful” or “conscious” can be understood as that internal function to distinguish between right and wrong (Rom 2:15; 9:1; 1 Cor 10:29; 2 Cor 1:12; 4:2; 5:11; Heb 9:14).<sup>36</sup> It can also be understood as the awareness of something (1 Cor 8:7; Heb 10:2). This is how it should be understood here since “God” functions as the object of “mindfulness.”<sup>37</sup> Christian slaves therefore are understood here to be those who live in a way conscientious of God. What this indicated was that Peter addressed a situation in which slaves were suffering because they were seeking to be faithful to God above all else.<sup>38</sup>

This faithfulness was the cause of suffering. The situation was described as enduring sorrows. “Sorrows” stands as the opposite of joy (John 16:22; 2 Cor 2:3; cf. 2 Cor 6:9). It can refer to misery or grief in the mental or emotional sense (John 16:6, 20; Rom 9:2; Phil 2:17) as well as pain in the body (John 16:21; cf. 1 Pet 2:20). The sufferings were described as “unjust” which indicated the moral nature of the suffering.<sup>39</sup> Further it pointed to the fact that the cause of suffering was not due to wrongdoing, but to being a Christian. Such injustice was endured because there was nothing a slave could do about this. Indeed, injustice was viewed as a slave’s lot in life.<sup>40</sup> No legal mechanism

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<sup>35</sup> The preposition *διὰ* followed by its object in the accusative case indicates cause. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 369.

<sup>36</sup> BDAG, 968.

<sup>37</sup> Here *θεοῦ* is rendered as an objective genitive.

<sup>38</sup> In other words, as Achtemeier and others have observed, the slave suffers for being a follower of Christ. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 196. See also Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st Eng. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 197.

<sup>39</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992), 179.

<sup>40</sup> Philosophical thought held that death was preferred to being a slave because of the unavoidable injustices that came with it as reflected in Plato’s *Dialogues*: “For the suffering of injustice is not the part of a man, but of a slave, who indeed had better die than live; since when he is wronged and trampled upon, he is unable to help himself, or any other about whom he cares.” Plato, “Gorgias,” in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 7, *Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett and J. Harvard, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955), 271c. This illustrates that a slave was viewed to be powerless to come to his own aid and defense and was subject to whatever wrongs might be done to him.

existed to their advantage.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, these Christian slaves, unable to escape and avoid unjust suffering at times, were told that such enduring of sorrows was commendable.

## **Part 2: The Elucidation of the Principle**

The thought that Peter expressed in verse 19 was now elucidated in verse 20. This clarification was two-fold, having been expressed negatively in the form of an interrogative statement (v. 20a-b). It is then contrasted with a positive declarative statement (v. 20c-d).

### *The Negative Elucidation*

The notion that the whole verse functioned to further explain what was stated in verse 19 was again signaled by “for.”<sup>42</sup> The question raised was presented as a conditional sentence.<sup>43</sup> Although the apodosis appeared first in the text, the protasis will be examined first. The scenario that was raised in the protasis was one in which a slave was beaten for sin. “Sin” referred to a wrong done, as it stood in contrast to doing good (v. 20c).<sup>44</sup> What Peter had in mind then was that which could be legitimately classified a

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<sup>41</sup> Slaves were not citizens, so they held no legal rights. The law provided no limit to the punishment a slave owner could inflict upon a slave. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 515.

<sup>42</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 520.

<sup>43</sup> Like the conditional sentence of verse 19 that it parallels, this sentence is also structured with the apodosis preceding the protasis.

<sup>44</sup> Michaels presents two reasons for why ἁμαρτάνω was used instead of κακοποιέω. He argues, “[T]he choice of ‘sinning’ instead of ‘doing wrong’ (κακοποιούντες) in the first of the contrasting clauses can probably be attributed to two factors. First, Peter is unwilling to characterize Christian believers as wrongdoers even when describing a purely theoretical situation (cf. 2:12, 14; 3:17; 4:15; notice also κακία in 2:1, 16). Such terminology excludes almost by definition any genuine commitment to the God of Jesus Christ (cf. the citation of Ps 33[34]:17 in 3:12b). Second, and more important, ἁμαρτάνοντες helps prepare for Peter’s discussion in verses 22-24 (based on Isa 53) of ‘sin’ (ἁμαρτία) and its removal (cf. 3:18; 4:1-2, 8).” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 141.

misconduct. “Beaten” refers to the striking of fists (Matt 26:57; Mark 14:65; 1 Cor 4:11).<sup>45</sup> Such was the common consequence given to a slave.<sup>46</sup>

Peter, in the apodosis, raised the question of whether credit is deserved for enduring such treatment because of sin. “Credit” can mean fame or glory.<sup>47</sup> In classical Greek it could refer to news, or a report, or sometimes even a rumor.<sup>48</sup> All these words have to do with attention, either being worthy of it or drawing focus to it. In raising the question Peter was saying there was nothing glorious or deserving of fame or noteworthiness. There was nothing commendable in being punished for wrongdoing.

### *The Positive Elucidation*

The positive side of this elaboration is what is contained in the remainder of the verse. Namely that enduring suffering because of doing good found favor with God. “But” conveyed the contrast between this conditional statement and the previous one. “Doing good” stood in contrast to doing evil and had to do with right conduct. It referred to living in accordance with God’s standards. This is supported by the relationship of verse 20 to verse 19. Verse 19 was interpreted as the believing slave enduring suffering *because* of their faithfulness to God. Since verse 20 related as a further explanation of verse 19, “doing good” had to do with doing the conduct God desires.<sup>49</sup> This is also supported by the contrast between doing good and evil in 1 Peter 3 in which doing good stood in opposition to doing evil (1 Pet 3:11), and also stood in parallel relationship to

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<sup>45</sup> Though “beaten” should be taken broadly, as Michaels suggests, it includes more than just striking with the hands. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 141.

<sup>46</sup> Corporal punishment was commonplace in antiquity, as evidenced by the OT ethic against it (cf. Exod 21:26-27; Prov 28:19-21). Elliott, *1 Peter*, 520.

<sup>47</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 197.

<sup>48</sup> LSJ, 958.

<sup>49</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 142.

righteous conduct (1 Pet 3:13-14).<sup>50</sup> The endurance of suffering for faithfulness to God was said to be a “gracious thing in the sight of God.” A “gracious thing” occurred in verse 19 and was viewed to be in parallel relationship with the occurrence here in verse 20. In verse 19 it was interpreted as favor in the sense of being pleasing to God. The parallel relationship would mean that the meaning is the same here. Along with this, the phrase “in the sight of God” can be literally rendered “from God.” Thus, what Peter sought to communicate was that commendation from God was the result of such conduct. Such favor or commendation will be received on the last day (cf. 1 Pet 1:7). Therefore, believing slaves can submit to their masters even when they suffer for doing good because patiently enduring suffering that comes from faithfulness to God pleases him.

### **The Example**

Peter had commanded slaves to submit to their masters out of reverence for God (v. 18). This exhortation was supported by the explanation that enduring suffering for doing good found favor with God (vv. 19-20). In verses 21-25 Peter sought to motivate the slaves by informing them that they were called to this, and that Christ did the same, serving as a model for them.

Peter asserted that the readers were called to endure suffering for doing good (v. 21a). Here Peter gave support to what he said by explaining why God finds favor with saints who suffer for doing good.<sup>51</sup> The explanation given was that believers were called to this. “To this” referred to the suffering while doing good. “This” recalled the other two occurrences found in vv. 19-20 and the content of those verses.<sup>52</sup> The context was

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<sup>50</sup> This parallel is supported by the contrasting relationship between those who are “the righteous” and those “who do evil” (1 Pet 3:12). Thus, the two parallel ideas of righteousness and doing good stand together in contrast to doing what is evil.

<sup>51</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 523. Achtemeier views “for” as answering an implied question raised in verse 20, namely, “why does God look favorably on Christians who endure suffering while doing good?” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 198.

<sup>52</sup> Michaels observes, “The pronoun τοῦτο looks backward rather than ahead, for it corresponds to the repeated τοῦτο with which Peter framed verses 19-20.” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 142.

enduring suffering for doing good. They were “called” to this which was another way of talking about their conversion (1 Pet 1:15; 2:9; 3:9; 5:10). As seen above, slaves were subject to suffering (v. 20). However, conversion brought about a change so that their conduct would no longer grant cause for suffering warranted due to bad behavior. Being called by God meant a call to holiness (1:15) and a forsaking of darkness on the other (2:9). They had been called to do good as their lives were lived in God’s “marvelous light” (2:9).<sup>53</sup> So the readers were converted to do good and endure the suffering that came with it.<sup>54</sup>

They were called to this because Christ also suffered for believers (v. 21b). So, the basis for enduring suffering was Christ himself who served as a pattern (cf. Luke 24:23-24; 1 Pet 1:10-12).<sup>55</sup> Peter wrote his letter to Christians who were suffering (1:6-9; 3:9, 14, 17; 4:1, 4, 12, 14, 16, 19; 5:8, 10) and here, by saying that “Christ *also* suffered for you” (emphasis added) linked Jesus’s suffering with theirs.<sup>56</sup>

The suffering of Jesus that Peter mentioned here certainly referred to the hostile and ill-treatment as he approached the cross (Matt 16:21; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22).<sup>57</sup> However, it can also refer to the entirety of his death (1 Pet 3:18; cf. Luke 17:25; 22:15; 24:26, 46). Peter has in mind the entirety of his sufferings culminating in his death (1 Pet 3:18; 4:1; cf. 1:11). Peter connected these two so that they would recognize the pattern Jesus set for them to follow. “Example” was used of model letters that were to be

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<sup>53</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 142. The connection between conversion and conduct is seen not only here but also in Peter’s earlier command in 1:15 where their rebellious life is forsaken and they are to live devoted to God. The same connection can also be seen in chapter 3 where calling is mentioned (3:9) followed by conduct that is described as “doing good” (3:11).

<sup>54</sup> Achtemeier notes that the present participles ἀγαθοποιούντες and πάσχοντες are “concurrent” with the main verb. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 197n11. Therefore, the doing good continues with the endurance.

<sup>55</sup> ὅτι indicates cause here. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 141.

<sup>56</sup> Both suffered for doing good. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 198.

<sup>57</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 143.

traced to teach children the alphabet.<sup>58</sup> Here it referred to a model of behavior.<sup>59</sup> In other words, the behavior that Christ exemplified in his suffering was to be modeled by Peter's readers. This was seen in verses 22-25.

In verses 22-25 Peter sought to demonstrate that Jesus was the example to follow in suffering by showing that he is the suffering servant of Isaiah who suffered as Yahweh's righteous one (Isa 53:11; cf. 1 Pet 3:18).<sup>60</sup>

The fact that Peter saw Jesus as the suffering servant can be seen in allusions in verses 22, 24-25. He used this because it pictured the servant/slave of Yahweh. Verses 22-23 highlighted that Christ was righteous, and, therefore, suffered unjustly, by concentrating on the fact that in his suffering he was not guilty of wrongdoing but innocent of sin. Verses 24-25 functioned to encourage the readers to follow his example by giving attention to how his sufferings benefited them.

### **Christ the Example of Suffering While Doing Good (vv. 22-23)**

In commending Christ as the example of suffering while doing good Peter pointed to his righteous character evidenced in his absolute innocence of sin and wrongdoing. In Verse 22 Peter asserted that Christ "committed no sin."<sup>61</sup> Peter alluded to Isaiah 53:9b to indicate that Christ was not guilty of any moral wrong.<sup>62</sup> The absolute nature of this sinlessness can be seen in the words, "neither was deceit found in his mouth

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<sup>58</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 199.

<sup>59</sup> BDAG, 1036.

<sup>60</sup> The word "he" (vv. 22, 23, 24) translates the relative pronoun ὃς, the antecedent of Χριστός (v. 21), who left the example that was to be followed.

<sup>61</sup> Peter's allusion reflected the LXX except for Peter having replaced ἀνομία with ἁμαρτία. The substitution is probably due to the occurrence of ἁμαρτία in vv. 20, 24. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 518. Peter probably made the substitution for this reason, recognizing that ἀνομία and ἁμαρτία often occur in parallel relationship to one another within Isaiah in general (Isa 5:18; 6:7; 27:9; 43:25; 44:22; 50:1; 53:5; 58:1; 59:12 LXX) and within this servant song from which Peter alludes (Isa 52:13-53:12) in particular (Isa 53:5 LXX). Theologically speaking, sin and lawlessness are equated in the NT (cf. 1 John 3:4).

<sup>62</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 200.

(v. 22b). “Deceit” had to do with under-handed methods or being cunning (cf. Matt 26:4; Mark 14:1; 2 Cor 12:16). Occurring in lists of vices, as earlier in the chapter (1 Pet 2:1; cf. Mark 7:22; Rom 1:29), It conveyed one who lacked truthfulness (cf. Acts 13:10).

The heart in the Scripture was the essence of who a person was (Prov 4:23) In the Scriptures, one’s mouth and heart were considered linked together (cf. Ps 19:14). What came out of the mouth was an expression of what was in the heart (Matt 15:17-20). So, for no deceit to be found in his mouth spoke to the absolute truthfulness and integrity of his character and life.

As the theme of Christ suffering continues in verse 23,<sup>63</sup> his righteousness and unjust suffering can be seen in that he never conceded to the temptation of sin but rather patiently endured wrong treatment. The situations of mistreatment were continuous,<sup>64</sup> coming in various forms (cf. 1 Pet 1:6), but Jesus never returned the treacherous treatment laid upon him.<sup>65</sup> His patient endurance was then conveyed in positive fashion in the remainder of the verse. Christ entrusted himself to him who judges justly. Christ was able to patiently endure because he believed that God was just and that his judgments were unjust. The theme of God as judge was something that Peter had already established in his letter (1:17). This theme continued to occur in the rest of the epistle (1 Pet 4:5, 6, 17-19). Christ, like others before him, knew that God would act in a way consistent with his character (Gen 18:25). God’s just actions stood in contrast to the unjust treatment that Christ and his people endured. His continual trust in God to vindicate him rather than

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<sup>63</sup> The word “suffering” connects this verse to the motif of the passage (see vv. 19, 20, 21). Elliott points out that this is the theme word that unites the verses together. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 530.

<sup>64</sup> The three temporal participles in verse 23 are present in tense and suggest, then, continuous ill-treatment. Elliott understands the present participles as evidencing continual verbal abuse. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 529.

<sup>65</sup> Michaels suggests that verse 23 further unpacks verse 21h. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 145. If he is correct, then the actions done to Christ recounted in verse 23 could be understood as expressions of treachery. The imperfect tense of the indicative verbs of which Christ is the subject indicate that he never responded in these ways. Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 184.

responding sinfully evidenced his innocence in wrongdoing and, therefore, that he suffered unjustly.

### **Christ's Example Encouraged (vv. 24-25)**

In verses 24-25 Peter sought to motivate his readers to follow his example by concentrating on the good achieved by Christ's vicarious sufferings. In verse 24 attention was given to the purpose of those sufferings while the focus of verse 25 was upon the product of his suffering.

Verse 24 denoted the purpose of Christ's suffering. His vicarious suffering achieved a life of righteousness for believers. The vicarious nature of his suffering can be seen in that "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (v. 24a). Again, Peter drew from Isaiah 53.<sup>66</sup> "Bore" meant to lift up or carry.<sup>67</sup> It denotes the language of sacrifice.<sup>68</sup> The words, "our sins" pointed to the vicarious nature of the sacrifice. The "tree" was a reference to the cross upon which Jesus was executed.<sup>69</sup> Jesus, as the suffering servant, suffered in place of others and bore the penalty of their guilt in their place. The purpose of Christ having borne the sin of believer's was stated in verse 24b. It was so that they would "die to sin and live to righteousness." The word translated "die" carried the meaning "to depart" or "break away from."<sup>70</sup> However, it is best to see death in view here

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<sup>66</sup> As Schreiner has observed, the language of bearing sin that occurs here in verse 24 occurs three times in Isa 53 of the LXX (Isa 53:4, 11, 12). Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 144-45.

<sup>67</sup> BDAG, 75.

<sup>68</sup> Hiebert, commenting on "bore," writes that "in the Septuagint it is used for bringing a sacrifice and laying it upon an altar (Gen. 8:20; Lev. 14:20; 17:4; 2 Chr. 35:16)." Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 187.

<sup>69</sup> It could refer to a stake or to gallows. Michaels observes that in the NT it has basically become a technical term to refer to the one upon which Jesus died. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 148. It should also be noted the in the Scriptures trees are not only places of execution but sites of divine judgment (Gen 3:8-19; Judg 8:29; Isa 6:9-13). This also highlights the vicarious nature of the suffering for the judgment that he endures is for sin not his own. The assertion of Jesus's vicarious death on the cross is a vivid truth for slaves since crucifixion the typical punishment for slaves who proved to be too much trouble for their masters. Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 51-53.

<sup>70</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 123.

since it is parallel with “live.” In any case, the cessation of living a life of sin was in view in the statement. The goal was so that a life devoted to righteousness would ensue and characterize the readers.<sup>71</sup>

The words of the third clause were another allusion to Isaiah 53 and they provided a theologically summary of the verse that indicated the good accomplished by Christ’s sufferings. The words were taken from Isaiah 53:5. Here Peter declared the healing that has been performed upon believers and how it was accomplished. “Wounds” can refer to scourging’s, but in view of what was just stated in verse 24a, it also included his death. Thus, this was a reference to his sufferings in their entirety. His sufferings brought about healing. This healing was the departure out of a life of sin into a life of righteousness. Peter received this understanding from the book of Isaiah. The language of the atoning work of the suffering servant was described in terms of healing because the sin atoned for was described in terms of sickness in the book of Isaiah.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the sufferings of Christ brought about healing that was a life lived in righteousness. This was the good that Christ’s sufferings accomplished, which were designed to further motivate them to also endure suffering.<sup>73</sup>

Verse 25 verified this interpretation of the previous clauses, as it operated as a further explanation of it as indicated by “for.” In verse 25 Peter demonstrated that the purpose of Christ’s suffering was achieved in their own experience. He did this by communicating what their life was like prior to experiencing the benefits of Christ’s

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<sup>71</sup> “Righteousness” here should not be understood as forensic. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 145. Rather, it referred to that conduct which accords with God’s revealed standards.. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 202.

<sup>72</sup> That the people’s sin and rebellion is described in terms of sickness from the very beginning of the book can be seen in Isa 1:2-4 where the people’s rebellion is announced. This is followed by a poetic description of their condition, which is communicated in terms of being sick or diseased. Thus, if the rebellion is described as sickness, then the healing of that sickness would be the turning away from that rebellion.

<sup>73</sup> Kelly argues that the point of Peter making mention of healing is to show that Christ’s “passion was vicariously beneficial.” Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 124.

suffering,<sup>74</sup> followed by the description of their life after experiencing the benefits of the same. Prior to experiencing the benefits of Christ's passion, they were wandering sheep. The image was again taken from Isaiah 53.<sup>75</sup> Within Isaiah 53 wandering had to do with going away from God's instruction.<sup>76</sup> Peter here described the unconverted past of himself and his readers in the categories used by Isaiah to express the unfaithfulness of the old covenant people. His purpose in doing so was to convey that the Christian's former life was also a life of rebellion. Such wandering exposed sheep to all sorts of peril, which indicated that their pre-converted life had exposed them to spiritual danger (cf. 1 Pet 1:18; 4:5, 18).

In the second half of the verse Peter contrasted their past with their present ("but now") to indicate that the life of rebellion had come to an end and a return to the shepherd, and thus allegiance to him, indicated that the healing spoken of in verse 24 had indeed taken place in their experience. "Returned" was another way to speak of the readers conversion (cf. 1:22; 2:9).<sup>77</sup>

While in the OT, Israel's leaders were seen to be the shepherds of God's people (2 Sam 5:2; 7:7; 1 Chr 11:2; Jer 2:8; Ezek 34:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10), but it was Yahweh himself who was seen as the ultimate shepherd who led, protected, and provided for his

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<sup>74</sup> Achtemeier notes that the use of *πλανάω* in the imperfect tense indicates that Peter had in view the readers life prior to their conversion in verse 25a. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 203n201.

<sup>75</sup> The language is found in Isa 53:6. It is likely that Peter followed the sequence found in Isa 53:4-5 so that what can be seen in 1 Pet 2:24-25 is the same sequence: the bearing of sin (1 Pet 2:24a; cf. Isa 53:4); the healing from sin (1 Pet 2:24c; Isa 53:5); and straying as sheep (1 Pet 2:25a; Isa 53:6). Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 204. Peter's switch from Isaiah's first-person plural to second-person plural could be due his specific application to his readers experience. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 124.

<sup>76</sup> This is confirmed from within the context of Isa 53:5 in which the Lord lays upon the suffering servant the iniquities of the wandering people (Isa 53:6).

<sup>77</sup> Achtemeier writes, "The act of being turned 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), the more so since this verb could be used as virtually a technical term for conversion of Gentiles." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 204. Bigg also recognizes this notion in the secular thought world of the day as "turning from error" and sees it as equivalent to what the NT understands as conversion. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 149.

people (Pss 23:1; 28:9; 80:1). Within the OT, in response to the unfaithful leaders, God promised that he would come as a shepherd seeking his people (Ezek 34:12, 15). He promised to appoint a Davidic king who would be the shepherd to his people and care for them (Ezek 34:23). Not only would the Davidic king be shepherd over the flock, but the people would walk in the ways of the Lord (Ezek 37:24). The NT proclaimed Jesus as the fulfillment of this promised reality (John 10:1-18). In 1 Peter 5:4, Jesus was described as the chief shepherd, which would also imply that he did the work of a shepherd, exercising oversight (1 Pet 5:2). Peter saw Jesus as the shepherd to whom his readers had returned, who provided the care of their souls and led them. They had come to follow him because of his sufferings. Such sufferings had been to their benefit. Such a shepherd would faithfully lead them and care for them, as he guided them through unjust suffering as they were faithful to God.

Now they have returned to the shepherd and overseer of their souls, which communicates both submission and benefits as they follow him under his protective care.

### **Conclusion**

Peter understood the threat of Christians being slandered as evil doers. He did not want believers to live in such a way where an accusation of wrongdoing could be deemed as credible. His desire was for his readers, though strangers and sojourners in the world, to keep their conduct honorable. Such honor would be demonstrated by not bringing unnecessary disruption to the social order. Thus, he commanded Christian slaves in what would be honorable conduct. He called them to submit themselves to their masters. This submission was to be offered to both good masters and crooked ones. Ultimately, they were to do this out of reverence for God. However, being directed by God had the potential to bring believing slaves into conflict with the directives of unjust masters. Their ultimate allegiance could result in suffering because they had chosen to obey God rather than dishonor him. Peter informed his readers that God was pleased

when they endured suffering for doing good. Peter demonstrated that Christ endured unjust suffering for them, and it resulted in their benefit, for they had been converted.

Christians should be ready to endure suffering that comes because of faithfulness to God, confident that he is pleased when a believer endures suffering while doing good. They should also remember the vicarious sufferings of Christ, for they serve as an example to believers, and they resulted in the salvation of many. It is not that the Christian who submits has a salvific effect on a person, but the Christian's endurance of unjust suffering can be used by God to draw unbelievers to Christ.

## CHAPTER 6

### EXPOSITION 5: 1 PETER 3:8-12

How were Peter's readers to live in general with those inside the Christian community and towards those outside the Christian community, especially toward those who were antagonistic? Concluding his section on honorable conduct as it related to both public and domestic life, Peter, gave a two-fold injunction to his readers. The first, consistent with other New Testament teaching, called for proper conduct centered on love within the believing community. The second, also in line with NT teaching, called the readers to respond to hostile outsiders with blessing because they were called to such behavior, which was necessary to inherit eternal life; a notion that was supported with Psalm 34 (LXX 33).

This thesis will be argued by first showing the relationship of verses 8-12 to the literary unit of 2:11-3:12. Second, this chapter will examine the injunctions and their points of contact with other instruction within the New Testament. Third, the commands found in verses 8-9 will be examined. This will include how the readers were to relate to one-another, how they were to relate to those external opponents, the reason given, and the motivation for the charge. Fourth, and finally, attention will be given to Peter's use of the LXX Psalm 33:13-17a in verses 10-12.

#### **1 Peter 3:8-12 in Its immediate Context**

First Peter 3:8-12 is in the second major portion of the body of the letter. That portion is contained in 2:11-4:10 with 2:11-12 functioning as the heading of the literary

unit.<sup>1</sup> 2:13-3:7 addressed how the believers were to live in the society. Verses 13-17 addressed the readers' public life. In 2:18-3:7 Peter addressed conduct within the household as it applied to particular groups in the household.<sup>2</sup> Verses 3:8-12 then served to conclude these matters before the authors attention turned to instructing his readers how to navigate suffering for righteousness's sake (3:13-4:6).<sup>3</sup> Several features show that these verses have continuity with what has proceeded. First, these verses followed the same structure as the instructions given to the sub-groups addressed in the preceding household codes.<sup>4</sup> Second, the phrase "all of you" signaled that the following words were addressed to all the recipients and that the specific directives for sub-groups have come to an end. The movement back to exhortations for the recipients collectively, then, formed an *inclusio* around the instructions specific to the groups of the household (2:18-3:7). Thus, the household instructions were framed in by instructions to all the readers (2:13-17; 3:8-12). Just as the members of the household were addressed,<sup>5</sup> so the entirety of the readers are also addressed on the front end and back end of this section (2:13; 3:8).<sup>6</sup> Such a structure conveys the close continuity with what has preceded. Third, the word "finally"

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<sup>1</sup> For an outline of the structure of 1 Peter, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 842.

<sup>2</sup> Karen H. Jobes has observed this same flow of thought: "First Peter 2:11-17 provides instruction about how the Christians of Asia Minor are to relate in general to the structures of their society, and 2:18-3:7 guides their conduct within their households." Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 213.

<sup>3</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier also understands 3:8-12 in this manner when he writes that "[it] serves as a transition by moving from speaking to specific groups of those addressed to now addressing all and preparing for what follows." Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 221-22.

<sup>4</sup> Achtemeier has observed the structure as follows: (1) address, (2) instruction, (3) support. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 221.

<sup>5</sup> Within the household code (2:18-3:7), there is a specific address to slaves (2:18), wives (3:1), and husbands (3:7).

<sup>6</sup> John H. Elliott has observed the literary framing with the use of  $\pi\alpha\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$  in 2:13 and 3:8: "The note of inclusiveness here (*pantes*, 'all of you') parallels that in 2:13 ('every [*pasēi*] human creature') and perhaps is intended as a literary inclusion framing 2:13-3:12." John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 601.

indicated that Peter was concluding his words on this particular topic, which signaled that verses 8-12 were to be read in connection with what preceded.<sup>7</sup> It therefore functioned as the concluding portion of appeals regarding public and domestic life.

### **The Injunctions' Points of Contact with Other New Testament Texts**

Peter stated attributes and actions that were to characterize the believing community. They were expressed in the form of imperatival adjectives and participles.<sup>8</sup> The adjectives of verse 8 were five-character traits that gave an overall summary of the relational dynamics among Christians. These adjectives and participles continued Peter's emphasis of proper attitudes, affections, and good behavior (1:22; 2:17).<sup>9</sup> However, while some of the words themselves may be unique to Peter, the notions they convey have points of contact with other NT instruction. This evidenced that what Peter desired for his readers was consistent with early Christian teaching.<sup>10</sup>

For instance, the characteristics found in 3:8 can be seen in the teaching of the apostle Paul with the description of "unity of mind."<sup>11</sup> These characteristics occurred in Paul's exhortation to the Philippians to "think the same thing" (Phil 2:2). Another example can be found in the epistle to the Romans in which the readers were called to "live in harmony with one another" (Rom 15:5).<sup>12</sup> The word translated "sympathy" in 3:8

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<sup>7</sup> As Peter H. Davids has pointed out, that idiom is an "unusual expression" that indicated the summary of a topic. Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 124.

<sup>8</sup> Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st Eng. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 229.

<sup>9</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 601.

<sup>10</sup> The recognition of similarities to ethical codes elsewhere in the NT has led interpreters to conclude that the ethic was part of early Christian tradition. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 221; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 124; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 601.

<sup>11</sup> Though Paul expresses the quality with different forms than the one occurring here. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222.

<sup>12</sup> "Harmony" translated the phrase τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν which conveys a similar idea as ὁμόφρων (1 Pet 3:8).

occurred only here but the verbal form can be found in Hebrews 4:15 and 10:34. While the adjective translated “brotherly love” is also a hapax legomena its concept occurred throughout the NT as well. Not only can it be seen in 1 Peter (1:22), but in many other passages outside of Peter, as it was expressed in different forms (Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 3:9, Heb 13:1). The fourth adjective was much more common in this particular form within the NT occurring predominately in the Gospels (Matt 9:36; 14:14:15:32; 18:27; 20:34 Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; 9:22; Luke 1:78; 7:13; 10:33; 15:20) and Pauline literature (2 Cor 6:12; 7:15; Eph 4:32; Phil 1:8; 2:1; Col 3:12; Phlm 7, 12, 20), though also occurring in other places (Jas 5:11; 1 John 3:17). The final adjective rendered “humble mind,” appeared only here, while the noun form can be found elsewhere (Acts 20:19; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3; Col 2:18, 23; 3:12; 1 Pet 5:5). The virtues represented by these adjectives can be seen in many NT texts that were prescriptions as it related to conduct in the early church. The notion that these qualities were not limited to one NT author indicated their importance in early Christian tradition and that they were to be regulative.

This same claim applies to the conduct to which Peter called the readers in 3:9. The participles, translated “repay” and “bless,” and the concepts to which they are employed to convey, can be seen in Jesus and Paul. Jesus taught to not respond in kind to the hostility expressed by opponents (Luke 6:27-29). Jesus also instructed his followers to “bless” those who were hostile toward rather than to respond to such by retaliating. Likewise, in a list of instructions, very similar to what is found here in verses 8-9, Paul charged the Roman Christians to not “repay evil for evil” (Rom 12:17). A similar directive can be observed in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 in which Paul instructed the Thessalonians to make sure evil was not being responded to with evil. Thus, as the descriptions in verse 8 corresponded to early Christian tradition, so also the prescriptions in verse 9. Peter, then, was no different, as he called for the same virtues to characterize the recipients of his letter.

## **The Injunction for the Internal Relationships of the Christian Community**

As demonstrated above, 3:8-12 concluded the exhortations on how the believers were to act in public and domestic spheres. The marker of this conclusion was signaled by the word “finally.” As was already shown, the phrase “all of you” returned the focus of the address back to all the recipients. The following adjectives were to describe the readers attitudes toward each other. As can be seen in different parts of the letter these Christians faced difficult circumstances (1 Pet 1:6-7; 2:18-19; 3:1, 9, 13-14, 16; 4:4, 13-14; 5:8, 10). Comfort and unity would be found in the Christian community while they endured challenges on the outside due to faithfulness to Christ.<sup>13</sup> The arrangement of these five adjectives form a parallel structure with “brotherly love” at the center.<sup>14</sup>

### **Unity of Mind**

The first quality that Peter mentioned as a characteristic of Christians in their relationships toward one-another was “unity of mind” (1 Pet 3:8). “Unity of mind” had to do with thinking the same thing. It was to have a like mindedness or a unity of spirit.<sup>15</sup> It was not that the same thoughts were held by all with absence of any nuance of distinction, rather, it referred to the unity of a shared objective.<sup>16</sup> The shared goal would have been Christ and his own purposes. Thus, the readers, having been made alive by God (1:3, 23), having submitted to the message concerning Christ (1:12, 22, 25), and

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<sup>13</sup> Elliott, commenting on these descriptions, says, “The first part (v 8) of a double injunction (vv 8, 9) is positive and concerns attitudes and actions vital for the internal cohesion of the community.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 601.

<sup>14</sup> A chiasm can be seen in this A-B-C-B<sup>1</sup>-A<sup>1</sup> arrangement. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 163.

<sup>15</sup> BDAG, 709-10.

<sup>16</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222.

even holding a common hope (1:4, 13; 3:15), shared in a common purpose (2:5, 9).<sup>17</sup> A shared common purpose, then, would have produced a unity manifested as a community marked by harmony. Considering the greeting of the letter, and those identified in it as the addressees, such harmony in the community would be essential for facing a society antagonistic to Christ and his followers.<sup>18</sup> Such a virtue was valued among the NT writers because without it the mission would not advance (Phil 1:27; 2:2). Such agreement would foster a concern and sensitivity due to being bonded together by the adhesive of the purposes of God in Christ.<sup>19</sup>

### **Sympathy**

The second characteristic that Peter desired to see exemplified among the believers was “sympathy.” The noun form occurred only here but the verb form can be found in Hebrews 4:15 which spoke of Christ’s ability to sympathize with the Christian’s weaknesses, having endured similar temptations. It meant, then, to have the same feelings. The writer to the Hebrews, in seeking to encourage his readers to persevere in the faith because of the supremacy of Christ, reminded them that they once recognized that greatness and had suffered for it. They were sympathetic to others who suffered because they had the same experience (Heb 10:34; cf. 1 Cor 12:26).

So, if harmony was like-mindedness, then sympathy was understanding or being affected by like feelings.<sup>20</sup> It was, therefore, the joining with someone in what they

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<sup>17</sup> As Goppelt comments, “The community’s thinking and striving are to have the same content and be directed at the same goal.” Goppelt, *Commentary on 1 Peter*, 233.

<sup>18</sup> Elliott has pointed out the necessity of this exhortation considering the hostility from outsiders and possible diversity of ethnic backgrounds: “In view of the embattled situation of the addressees of 1 Peter and the likely diversity of opinion among the converts of different ethnic backgrounds, unanimity of thought and vision was essential for both the internal harmony and stability of the household of God and for the united front it should present to outsiders.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 603.

<sup>19</sup> J. Ramsay Michaels comments on this adjective, saying, “Think the same not in the sense of holding identical opinions but in the sense of being agreeable and sensitive to each other’s concerns (Acts 4:32) and so united in common spiritual bond.” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 176.

<sup>20</sup> LSJ, 1680.

are feeling.<sup>21</sup> The same concept was captured well in Paul’s exhortation to “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15). The necessity of such a virtue could be easily understood in view of the challenges mentioned in the immediate context and elsewhere (3:9, 14; cf. 1:6-7; 2:11-12, 18-21; 4:4, 12; 5:8-9). Peter’s believers would need to show sympathy to one another because they were also enduring suffering and hardship. As Christians they were marginalized by the surrounding society. They were slandered, reviled, treated badly, even though they were trying to live righteously. It was unlikely that they would receive any compassion from the outside world. Thus, it was a call to care and have concern for each other.<sup>22</sup>

### **Brotherly Love**

The third characteristic that Peter listed was the centerpiece of them all, “brotherly love.”<sup>23</sup> “Brotherly love” spoke of the love one exhibited toward a sibling and so referred to the love that one should have for their brother or their sister in Christ.<sup>24</sup> The relationship of siblings is that of love and that undergirds the word used here.<sup>25</sup> What this virtue then communicated was that these Christian readers were to regard each other as family and thus to relate to each other with a familial affection, holding for one another the devotion and fidelity that one would expect to see in those who are kin.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Elliott helpfully captures the notion succinctly, stating that it is “the solidarity of affection that forms group unity.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 603.

<sup>22</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 163.

<sup>23</sup> Peter has arranged these adjectives in a chiasmic structure A-B-C-B<sup>1</sup>-A<sup>1</sup>. The first adjective *ὁμόφρων* and the fifth adjective *ταπεινόφρων* correspond to each other with reference to the believers thinking. The second adjective *συμπαθής* and the fourth adjective *εὐσπλαγχνος* correspond in that they both have to do with the community’s emotional disposition toward each other. Thus, these seem to frame in the third adjective *φιλάδελφος* at the center for emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 176.

<sup>25</sup> Hans Freiherr von Soden, “Ἀδελφός, Ἀδελφή, Ἀδελφότης, Φιλάδελφος, Φιλαδελφία, Ψευδάδελφος,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:145.

<sup>26</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 604.

The familial identity of believers to one another was established early in the letter. Peter had identified the Father as the one who had begotten them anew (1:3; 23). The readers themselves had been identified as “obedient children” (1:14). God was said to be the one who was evoked by them as Father (1:17). Already, Peter had made it clear that they had been converted for a sincere “brotherly love,”<sup>27</sup> calling them to an earnest love consistent with that purpose (1:22). Thus, the family motif, with God as father and Christians as spiritual siblings had been established so that Peter could call for his readers, though made up of different ethnicities, to be characterized by familial love.

### **Tender Heart**

The fourth description that was to mark the Petrine readers was a “tender heart.” Here again Peter addressed the internal attitude of Christians toward one another. In the literal sense the word has to do with bowels, especially good or strong bowels (Acts 1:18).<sup>28</sup> In the Greek mind bowels were the seat of all the possible emotions one could feel.<sup>29</sup> In the Christian era it came to have the idea of compassion or tender mercy.<sup>30</sup> It communicated the deep care the readers, as Christians, were to have for one-another.<sup>31</sup> The Greek word was used to describe Jesus’s attitude toward others that moved him to act for their well-being (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:22; Mark 1:41; 8:2; Luke 7:13; 10:33). The antithesis, which was to not describe Christians, then, was to have no compassion on the plight of others with the result that they do nothing to their benefit (1 John 3:17). In concert with other NT writers, Peter called for compassion or a tender

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<sup>27</sup> This is the noun form rather than the adjectival form found in 3:8.

<sup>28</sup> LSJ, 732.

<sup>29</sup> Helmut Köster, “Σπλάγγνον, Σπλαγγνίζομαι, Εὔσπλαγγνος, Πολύσπλαγγνος, Ἄσπλαγγνος,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:549.

<sup>30</sup> LSJ, 732.

<sup>31</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 125.

heart to be descriptive of the readers (Eph 4:32; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12; cf. Phil 1:8). Such feelings were to be demonstrated in the care exercised toward each other.<sup>32</sup> The demonstration of which was manifested in gracious attitudes and actions within the community (cf. Eph 4:32).

### **Humble Mind**

Now as tender-hearted paralleled sympathy, so humility of mind paralleled unity of mind. Just as Peter began these virtues addressing what believers think, so he ended with what was to be in the mind of the believer. Here it has to do with their own view of themselves in that mind. It denoted an attitude of lowliness.<sup>33</sup> Such a mindset was not considered a virtue by the secular culture, which saw humility as being associated with low status in society.<sup>34</sup> In view of the preceding commands related to subordination within the structure of society, one can see how such an attitude would be necessary even internally in the community.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Injunction for Responding to Hostility External to the Christian Community**

A second injunction can be seen in verse 9. The previous verse dealt with the dynamics of relationships within the believing community. The appeals of this section directed Christians about their attitudes toward one another, but they also went beyond the Christian community. Peter, having understood that his readers resided in a social setting in which they were foreigners metaphorically speaking (2:11-12), understood that

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<sup>32</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 606.

<sup>33</sup> Davids describes it as “a willingness to take the lower place, to be the less exalted service, and to put the interest of others ahead of one’s own.” Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 125.

<sup>34</sup> Elliott writes, “In the highly competitive and stratified world of the Greco-Roman antiquity, only those of degraded social status were ‘humble,’ and humility was regarded as a sign of weakness and shame, an inability to defend one’s honor. Thus, the high value placed on humility by Israelites and Christians was remarkable.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 605.

<sup>35</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992), 213.

his readers could suffer ill-treatment from the broader society because of their devotion to Christ (2:12; cf. 3:13-14; 4:4, 16). Thus, in verse 9 Peter's focus shifted to how his readers should respond to being wrongly treated by unbelievers.<sup>36</sup> The command was presented first negatively, conveying to the readers what not to do, and then positively, directing them as to how they should react to opponents.<sup>37</sup>

### The Wrong Response

Peter first instructed the recipients not to retaliate with the same ill-treatment with which they were assaulted by unbelievers.<sup>38</sup> "Repay" can simply mean give out.<sup>39</sup> Here in 1 Peter 3:9 it referred to the idea of recompense (cf. Matt 5:26; Rom 13:7).<sup>40</sup> Evil treatment was not to be responded with evil treatment and likewise with reviling. "Evil" can refer to a moral or social wrong.<sup>41</sup> Here it referred to harm or misfortune (1 Pet 3:10, 11, 12; cf. Luke 16:25; Acts 8:24; 1 Pet 3:13).<sup>42</sup> "Reviling" spoke of speech that was

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<sup>36</sup> Schreiner writes, "[I]f v. 8 focuses on relationships among fellow believers, it seems that verse 9 directs attention to how believers should respond to unbelievers who mistreat them, one of the central themes of 1 Peter. On the other hand, it is possible that both believers and unbelievers are in view, and in any case the admonition remains the same." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 164. While it may be possible to *apply* the principle seen in this verse to fellow-believers, the letter's focus seems to indicate that hostility and opposition were coming from sources external to the community. This is seen especially in 2:11-4:10 in which unbelievers are labeled as "Gentiles" (2:12; 4:4); believing slaves suffer unjust treatment from morally bankrupt ("crooked") masters (2:18-19); believing wives seek to win unbelieving husbands (3:1; cf. 2:8); the support from LXX Ps 33 seems to be used in such a way that categorizes the Christians as "righteous" (3:12) and those who treat unfavorably as evil doers in opposition to God (3: 12); it seems that in 3:13-17 those who cause the suffering for believers who seek to live righteously are unbelievers (see esp. 3:16).

<sup>37</sup> The participles here are imperatival, as Elliott has observed: "In the antithetical parallelism of the two participial clauses, verse 9ab and verse 9c, both participles (*mē apodidontes* ['do not return'] and *eulogountes* ['bless']), like the foregoing adjectives, have imperatival force." Elliott, *1 Peter*, 606.

<sup>38</sup> The negative particle μὴ negates the non-finite verbal action.

<sup>39</sup> BDAG, 109.

<sup>40</sup> Hiebert comments, "[T]he participle rendered 'repay' (*apodidontes*) strictly means 'giving off,' but in the context it receives the force of 'giving back, rewarding, recompensing,' whether in a good or bad sense—here the latter." Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 214.

<sup>41</sup> BDAG, 501.

<sup>42</sup> BDAG, 501.

highly insulting.<sup>43</sup> It meant to speak abusively or to rail against someone.<sup>44</sup> Peter understood that there would be times when his readers faced hostility for Jesus's sake (3:13-14; 4:12), and that there would be those who sought to bring injury, disaster, or misfortune to Christians. Peter comprehended the temptation his readers had to respond in like manner, and he prohibited it.

### **The Right Response**

Having imparted how not to react, Peter stated how his readers were to respond to those who sought to bring misfortune upon them. Rather than retaliate in kind they were to bless those who mistreated them. To bless can mean to speak well of someone or something (1 Pet 1:3). It can also mean to act favorably, which can be expressed in word or deed (Eph 1:3). This stood in stark opposition to the evil and reviling. Now what is meant by blessing is praying for them, invoking God's favor upon them.<sup>45</sup> Noah invoked God to deal favorably with his sons, Shem and Japheth (Gen 9:26-27). Aaron invoked God to bless his people (Num 6:23-27). In contrast, Esau implored his father to invoke the favor of God upon him, but he did not (Gen 27:35). The blessing was an invocation to God to show favor by saving the unbeliever. Within the biblical storyline it is through the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham that the curses of the fall will be done away. Jesus, through his death and resurrection, fulfilled that promise, bringing those blessings to those who have turned to him. Those who are joined to him experience eternal blessing.<sup>46</sup> This can be seen even in the immediate context. Later within this same

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<sup>43</sup> BDAG, 602.

<sup>44</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 214.

<sup>45</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224.

<sup>46</sup> M. J. Evans, examining blessing as it unfolds across the canon, states, "Those who belong to God, who are part of the kingdom of God, who keep the words of God, whose sins are forgiven, who are invited to the wedding feast—these are the ones who are blessed (Matt. 5:3-11; 25:34; Luke 6:20-22; 11:28; Rom. 4:7-8; Eph. 1:3; James 5:11; Rev. 19:9; 20:6; 22:14). These blessings are closely linked to the work of Jesus. It is Jesus who, through his life, death, and resurrection, enables Jew and Gentile alike to inherit the blessings promised through Abraham." M. J. Evans, "Blessing/Curse," in *NDBT*, 400.

verse the readers were told that they will inherit a blessing. As will be seen below, this referred to the eternal life. Thus, the call to bless was likely a call to pray for the opponent's salvation. Only a people who were already called to be "humble in mind" (1 Pet 3:8) could be called to respond this way to ill-treatment. Peter undoubtedly learned this principle at the feet of Jesus himself. "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27-28; cf. Matt 5:43-48). It is indeed the instruction learned from the one who died, so that his enemies might have eternal life.

### **The Reason for This Response**

In the second half of verse 9 Peter sought to ground the injunctions made to the readers. "For" indicated that Peter was giving the reason for what he had just stated.<sup>47</sup> What was the reason for why believers were not to respond to ill-treatment with retaliation but rather with blessing? It was because they were called to this. The question is: to what did "this" refer? There are two possible interpretations. "This" could refer to what had preceded, namely, that Christians are called to bless in order that they might inherit a blessing. However, if the "this" is pointing forward, then the meaning is that Christians are called to inherit a blessing.<sup>48</sup>

It could be argued that "this" points forward because (1) the construction is less awkward if it points forward; (2) the presence of a similar construction in 4:6 indicates that the demonstrative pronoun can function the same way in the present context;<sup>49</sup> (3) it would seem that this position keeps the inheritance conditioned on

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<sup>47</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 609.

<sup>48</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224.

<sup>49</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 137.

Jesus's resurrection rather than something else.<sup>50</sup> However, the close proximity of this verse to 2:21, which also points backward, and 3:7, with the blessing of a husband's answered prayer is contingent upon how he lives with his wife, favor the "this" pointing backward.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the support from the immediate context found in verses 10-12 in which Ps 34 (LXX 33) is quoted lends support to this interpretation as well. "Called" referred to the conversion of the readers. They had been called out of a life of rebellion to be devoted to God in holiness (1 Pet 1:15-16). They were called out of darkness into God's marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9). Thus, part of experiencing conversion was to bless those who displayed hostility toward them.

### **The Purpose**

While the following clause could be viewed epexegetically, the particle translated "so that" functioned to communicate purpose.<sup>52</sup> The purpose was so that the readers could inherit a blessing. "Blessing" due to its connection to "inherit" probably referred to eschatological blessing. Peter had spoken of the inheritance that Christians were awaiting to receive at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:3-5, 13). Thus, believers blessed those who treated them with hostility so that they might inherit eternal life.<sup>53</sup> This may seem like salvation based on works, but there are other NT passages that place a close tie between conduct and eschatological glory (Matt 7:21-23; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Heb 12:15-17; 1 Pet 4:13). The new existence that the readers experienced from God through Christ would culminate in them receiving a sure inheritance (1 Pet 1:3-5). However, that new existence was indeed just that, a new existence. Thus, connected with this new life was a new way of living consistent with the nature of the one who birthed

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<sup>50</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224.

<sup>51</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224.

<sup>52</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 224.

<sup>53</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 165.

them (1:14-16, 22-25; 2:1-3; cf. 2:21-25; 4:1-2). In other words, those who were heirs, then, were to demonstrate their lineage and right claim to the inheritance by living in a way consistent to the character of the one who generated their spiritual life.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Confirmation of the Old Testament**

The support for the author's argument came from Psalm 34 (33 LXX) in which he grounded his claim that the eschatological life would come to those who walked righteously rather than in unrighteous. If one wanted to experience the eschatological inheritance, then one needed to live the way God desired his people to live because he distinguished between the righteous and unrighteous. These verses functioned to support what Peter had already stated, which was indicated by the word "for" (1 Pet 3:10). He then cited from Psalm 34 (33:13-16 LXX).

Peter had previously alluded to Psalm 34 in his letter (1 Pet 2:3). The psalm is found in Book 1 of the Psalms which focused on David's afflictions.<sup>55</sup> This may be the reason for the use of this psalm as it has several points of contact with the context of 2:11-3:7. Present in the psalm was the theme of suffering (vv. 7, 18, 20). The psalm has the idea of sojourning (Ps 33:5; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:11). Another theme that can be seen in both 1 Peter and Psalm 33 is the fear of the Lord (Ps 33:8, 9, 10, 12; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:17, 18, 3:16). Hope, which was another prominent theme in 1 Peter also occurred in the psalm (33:9, 23; 1 Pet 1:3, 13; 3:15). Finally, the theme of blessing for those who live righteously appeared as well (Ps 33:15, 18, 20, 22; 1 Pet 3:9, 14; 4:14).

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<sup>54</sup> Edmund P. Clowney is helpful along similar lines: "God who calls us to inherit his blessing calls us to follow the path of peace that leads to blessing (3:11). The Christian's knowledge of the blessing that he will receive from the Lord encourages and enables him to bless others, even his enemies." Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 142.

<sup>55</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr. writes, "The impressionistic narrative in Psalms seems to have David suffering in Book 1 until his establishment as king (cf. 1 Sam 15-2 Sam 5)." James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, vol. 1, *Psalms 1-72*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 8.

### **The Historical Setting of Psalm 34 (LXX 33)**

Along with these themes, the historical setting of the psalm served as motivation for Peter to use it as support for his argument. The psalm began with a superscription that contained historical note and thus gave the reader the events surrounding the composition of the psalm as well as identifying the author. “Of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.” The events surrounding this psalm were recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. David, having it confirmed by Jonathan that Saul was seeking to kill him, fled away into exile. He escaped to where it was unlikely that Saul would pursue him further, going to the land of the Philistines. David arrived at Gath, Goliath’s hometown whom he had slain, and sought asylum there from King Achish (1 Sam 21:10). However, David encountered a problem. The Philistine nobles knew him as the slayer of Goliath, which was reflected by their question about the identity of David. The nobles of the Philistines referred to David by the anthem of celebration sung about David by the Israelites when David defeated Goliath (1 Sam 21:11; cf. 18:1-8). David quickly recognized the unfavorable nuances of the words, namely, that they were not expressions of celebration by the Philistines. Having rightly perceived the danger of persecution, he became afraid of Achish the king of Gath and the harm he could be subject to as a foreigner (1 Sam 21:12). David’s response was to pretend to be a madman. The result was that he was sent away (1 Sam 21:13-15).

Having gained a sense of the historical context of this psalm it can be seen why Peter appealed to it. Did David know what it was to be mistreated? Yes, he did. David knew what it was to stand for God’s glory and to face hostility because of it.<sup>56</sup> David knew what it was to be an exile and sojourner.

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<sup>56</sup> The events noted in the superscription of Ps 34 draw attention to David changing his behavior in 1 Sam 21:13-14. The Philistine elders recite the words of the Israelite women about David after he kills Goliath to king Achish. The repetition of these words in their mouths serves as a contrast in attitude toward David between the women of Israel and the elders of the Philistines. Within the narrative of 1 Samuel, David’s slaying of Goliath comes as a result of David standing for the glory of the Lord. He is now

Along with identifying the psalm with the events of David's life, the superscription functioned to indicate that the events of David's life were part of a pattern of the people of God enduring hostility as sojourners. David may have seen himself fulfilling a pattern of facing threatening situations as a sojourner. While the superscription connected the psalm to the time when David was among the Philistines at Gath where Achish reigned, it presented a different name for the Philistine king than that which was found in the 1 Samuel narrative.

In the superscription the name referenced was Abimelech, not Achish, from whom David is sent. Several possible solutions have been proposed for the apparent discrepancy. It could be that Abimelech is the Semitic name for the king of Gath.<sup>57</sup> The difference could be due to scribal errors but more likely than that could be that Abimelech is a title of honor worn by the one serving as king.<sup>58</sup> However, it could be possible that David intentionally used the name Abimelech, not as a title, but to forge a connection between his own experience and earlier events in the biblical narrative.<sup>59</sup> The last is the position taken here.

The name Abimelech was also the name of the Philistine king of Gerar in the time of Abraham and Isaac. Both patriarchs had interactions with him (Gen 20:1-18; 21:22-34; 26:1-35). Several connections can be seen between David, the psalm, its

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facing hostility from the Philistines that evoke fear in him and lead to the subsequent action of changing his behavior.

<sup>57</sup> Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms I (1-50): A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 16 (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 37.

<sup>58</sup> Peter C. Craigie sees it as more plausible that "Abimelech" refers to a royal title much the title Pharaoh for the king of Egypt rather than the discrepancy being due to a scribal error. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 19, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2004), 278.

<sup>59</sup> Hamilton comments, "Another possibility—the view I take—is that David refers to Achish by the name of Abimelech to forge an identification between the Philistine kings who caused trouble for both Abraham and Isaac and the Philistine with whom David had trouble. This move would likewise identify David with Abraham and Isaac. The upshot of these identifications would be that David is like Abraham and Isaac in having the same kinds of problems with the same kind of Philistine opponents in their land." Hamilton, *Psalms 1-72*, 378.

historical background, and the patriarchs and the events of their lives. First, both David and the patriarchs found themselves sojourning in Philistine territory. Abraham and Isaac sojourned in Gerar (Gen 20:1; 26:1, 6). David fled to Gath (1 Sam 21:10). Second, both the patriarchs and David experienced opposition while sojourning in the land of the Philistines. Both Abraham and Isaac perceived their own lives to be at risk on account of their wives' physical beauty (Gen 20:2; 26:70).<sup>60</sup> David feared his life was at risk due to the Philistine noble's knowledge of him (1 Sam 21:11-12). Third, both the patriarchs and David, to preserve their safety, portrayed either their person or their relationships as something other than what they were. Both Abraham and Isaac stated that their wives were their sisters (Gen 20:2; 26:7). David pretended to be an insane person (1 Sam 21:13). Fourth, both Isaac and David were sent away by the Philistine king (Gen 26:16; 1 Sam 22:1).<sup>61</sup>

Thus, David, using Abimelech rather than Achish, recognized a pattern in the patriarchs of suffering during their sojourning and concluded that the events of his life fell into that same pattern.<sup>62</sup> If this conclusion is correct, then Peter grasped the connections David saw between himself and his ancestral patriarchs in their sojourning

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<sup>60</sup> In Gen 20:2 Sarah, Abraham's wife, is taken from him and becomes part of the Philistine king's harem.

<sup>61</sup> This point may give more support to this argument since the Samuel narrative never explicitly states that David was sent away by Achish but only that David went out (1 Sam 22:1). Thus, it is likely that the words in the superscription of Ps 34, "so that he drove him out," function to interpret 1 Sam 21:14-15, which are interrogatives raised by Achish about David's sanity. This interpretive move of Achish's questions may be done to connect David's being sent away with Isaac's been sent away. Second, there may be a verbal link between Gen 26:16, 1 Sam 22:1, and LXX Ps 33:1 in which the verb ἀπέρχομαι occurs in all three.

<sup>62</sup> There may be a connection between the psalm and Isaac since the theme of the fear of the Lord in the psalm is also a summary statement of Isaac's life (Gen 31:42; Ps 34:9, 11). Out of the three patriarch's Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Isaac is given the least amount of attention. Genesis 26 is devoted to him and his sojourning in Gerar. The chapter is framed by two appearances of the Lord to Isaac in which he reiterates covenant and blessing to him (Gen 26:3-6, 23-24). Following the first appearance of Yahweh to him, Isaac's actions flow out of fear (Gen 26:7, 9). After the second appearance, Isaac responds with acts that show his trust and devotion to Yahweh (Gen 26:24). The narrative then shifts to Jacob and Esau as the primary focus. In Gen 31:42 Jacob describes Yahweh as "the fear of Isaac." This may function as a summary statement of Isaac's life from the events recorded in 26:23-24 onward. Considering the theme of the fear of the Lord in Ps 34, this may serve as another reason for David identifying with Isaac and his sojourning.

and drew upon it because of the sufferings of his readers in their own sojourning.

Instructions, then, for how his readers were to respond to opponents was thus grounded in a psalm connected with David's own experience of opponents in his own sojourning.

Psalm 34 can be divided into two sections: declarative praise (34:1-10) and descriptive praise (34:11-22).<sup>63</sup> In the first section David worshiped God for the deliverance he had provided for him and called men to fear the Lord (Ps 34:9). In the second part of the psalm, instruction on what it is to fear the Lord was given (Ps 34:11). Peter cited verses 12-16 to show that those who live righteously were those who would inherit the eschatological life (1 Pet 3:10-11; cf. Ps 34:12-14).<sup>64</sup> Peter pointed out from this psalm the righteous conduct of one who trusts the Lord in the face of hostility. These verses serve to support the logic of verse 9.

Verse 10 appropriated Psalm 33:10 (LXX) with minor changes.<sup>65</sup> In the psalm, the "life" and "good days" seem to refer to life in the present age.<sup>66</sup> Thus, what the psalmist was indicating was the desire for an existence marked by security and pleasantness.<sup>67</sup> Peter, however, saw this in eschatological terms, that is, the eschatological life.<sup>68</sup> That life had been inaugurated through the death and resurrection of Jesus and was being experienced by the readers, though not consummately, who were

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<sup>63</sup> Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 1, *Psalms 1-41*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2011), 746.

<sup>64</sup> Psalm 34:12 is referring to life in this age, but Peter interpreted it as the eschatological life; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 166. This can be seen from the use of κληρονομέω (3:9), which points back to the theme of inheritance found in 1 Pet 1:3-5, 13. Moreover, John saw Ps 34 being typologically fulfilled in the death of Christ (John 19:31-36). This psalm already was being interpreted with notes of escalation.

<sup>65</sup> In the psalm the statement about "life" and "good days" was presented as interrogative statement. Here in 1 Pet 3:10 Peter had changed it to a declarative statement.

<sup>66</sup> Elliott points that "for the psalmist the parallel expression 'life' and 'good days' describe the full and prosperous daily life resulting from upright behavior." Elliott, *1 Peter*, 612.

<sup>67</sup> Goppelt, *Commentary on 1 Peter*, 236.

<sup>68</sup> Michaels argues that Peter saw the "life" of which the psalmist spoke as the same "grace of life" mentioned in 1 Pet 3:7, which was the eternal salvation for which his Christian readers hoped. He writes, "[T]o 'love' that life is equivalent to loving the still invisible Christ who will come revealing that salvation. To 'see good days' is to see what is now unseen, the glory in store for Christians at that revelation." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 180.

begotten anew (1 Pet 1:3-5, 23-25). Peter then saw those who were experiencing this life and hoping for its fulfillment as being called to live in a certain way consistent with those who would inherit it (cf. 1 Pet 3:7).

### **The Words They Say**

Notice first should be given to the words they say. “Let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit” (1 Pet 3:10b). The anatomy used here reflected what was already seen as modeled by Christ (1 Pet 2:23). The parallel relationship between “tongue” and “lips” was used to convey speech. The readers were not to speak evil, which referred to the “evil” mentioned in verse 9. In other words, the exhortation was to not speak harm or misfortune on those who brought them harm or misfortune. Their whole way of life was also to be marked as truthful or one of integrity rather than deception.<sup>69</sup>

### **The Works They Do**

Second, Peter drew from this psalm the works they do. Verse 11 stated, “let him turn away from evil and do good” (1 Pet 3:11a). Along with proper speech there was to be proper conduct. “Turn from evil” most likely indicates a forsaking of all that God opposed (cf. 1 Pet 3:12). This would also make any accusation against the readers difficult in terms of finding any legitimate basis (2:12).

### **The Way They Pursue**

Third, Peter noted that the Psalmist stated a third action which has been cited (v. 11). It has to do with the way he pursues. He writes, “let him seek peace and pursue it” (1 Pet 3:11b). In the Scriptures, “peace” was not just the absence of conflict, it is God’s blessing in all of life. It was the life of satisfaction found in God. When it came to

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<sup>69</sup> The entire life is to be characterized by one’s restraint from such actions as indicated by the aorist infinitive τοῦ λαλεῖν and the negative particle μή. Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 216.

those who would do evil to the believers, Peter called the Christians to pursue not their demise but their peace, that is, their health, their prosperity, and their salvation.<sup>70</sup> The pursuit of such peace would then start with helping unbelievers be reconciled to God.<sup>71</sup>

The exhortation closed with what is a warning to forsake evil and encouragement to pursue God (v. 12). The citation continued with “for” and provided support to the exhortation by way of reason. “The eyes of the Lord” can refer to God’s sovereign judicial assessment of one’s conduct (1 Kgs 15:5, 11; 2 Kgs 12:2; 14:3; 15:3). It can also speak of God’s favor and care, indicating his attentiveness to something (Gen 6:8; Deut 11:12; Judg 18:6; 2 Sam 15:25; Ps 33:18). This is probably the idea here, especially since the parallel phrase has to do with his ears being open to their cry, which may echo an earlier portion of the psalm (Ps 33:7 LXX). Thus, the Lord will vindicate and protect the righteous, those who do good. In contrast, he stood in opposition to the evil doer, ready to judge them.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, Peter’s readers were called to live righteously, doing good to their enemies, rather than retaliating. Such conduct was befitting of those who would inherit eternal life. It evidenced that they were indeed truly heirs.

### Conclusion

First Peter 3:8-12 ended Peter’s instructions on navigating society at its public and domestic levels. Their internal cohesion as a community would have a compelling impact on the unbelieving society around them (3:8; cf. 2:11-12). This would also be seen

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<sup>70</sup> Willem VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 3: 1046.

<sup>71</sup> One aspect of peace that is communicated in the Old Testament is peace with God. This a strong theme in the Pentateuch as evidenced in peace offerings as well as in the prophets who predicted the one who will come and bring peace and is the embodiment of peace (Isa 9; 11). S. E. Porter, “Peace,” in *NDBT*, 682. In the NT this peace comes in the person of Christ, who grants us peace with God and becomes our peace (Eph 2:14).

<sup>72</sup> Michaels notes that “safety and vindication for the just means judgment on their enemies.” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 181.

in their response to opponents outside the community (3:9). These injunctions were not unique to Peter but were consistent with teaching found elsewhere in the NT and thus demonstrated that Peter was giving instructions that were part of the early Christian teaching. The hostility that the believers faced was to be responded to with blessing. Such a response showed their break from the world and its evil conduct. It also showed that they were walking a path that would culminate in the full consummation of their eternal hope. Peter supported this from Psalm 33 (LXX). He recognized in this psalm David's own experience of suffering and being a sojourner and that God delivered him. Such deliverance should lead God's people to fear him and live in a way that displays their trust in God.

## CHAPTER 7

### EXPOSITION 6: 1 PETER 3:13-22

First Peter is a book that gave great hope to its readers in view of what God accomplished in the person and work of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:3-5). This hope was critical for the recipients of this letter as they faced suffering from a hostile society. This hostility took the form of slander (2:12) and unjust treatment (2:18). They were treated by outsiders in an evil manner and with reviling (3:9; cf. 2:23). They even suffered for righteous conduct (3:13). They experienced various trials that were intense (1:6; 4:12). While it may have not been a state organized persecution, the recipients of Peter's letter experienced a social persecution that threatened their status in society, their familial relationships, and their livelihood.<sup>1</sup> These difficulties, consequently, set before the readers two temptations. The first temptation was to abandon Christianity altogether due to the suffering, even though it is part of the Christian experience (2:21; cf. Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:11-12).<sup>2</sup> Second, there was the temptation to respond sinfully to the situation of suffering (2:11, 20; 4:15). The readers were to live in a manner faithful to Christ. How were they to respond in view of their hope when they suffered for doing what pleased God?

The thesis of this chapter is that the eschatological hope should lead believers to not fear opponents but trust Christ, ready to explain their hope with an attitude of gentleness and reverence because they knew that they would be vindicated for suffering for Christ, just as Christ was vindicated for his suffering for them. This thesis will be

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<sup>1</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 42.

<sup>2</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 58.

argued by first showing that believers are blessed when they suffer due to the eschatological hope. Second, in view of that hope, they should follow the biblical pattern of not fearing opposition but trusting the Lord. Third, it will examine how this trust was to be expressed by Peter's readers. Lastly, consideration will be given to the hope of glory that serves as the basis for the above.

### **Blessing and Eschatological Hope**

First Peter 3:13-22 was written to deal with what a believer should do when suffering faithfully for Christ. Peter addressed how they should consider themselves (3:13-14a). Verse 13 functioned as a logical progression to what preceded as signaled by the word "now."<sup>3</sup> Peter here had raised the question of who would harm the readers if they were zealous for what is good. "Harm" denoted mistreatment.<sup>4</sup> Its use was to describe the persecution of Israel in Egypt (Acts 7:6, 19), as well as the persecution against the early church (Acts 12:1; 14:2). The question assumed that they were zealous for what is good. "Good" referred to righteous conduct as can be seen from verse 14, and it stood in antithesis to evil (3:11). "Zealous" spoke to the serious commitment to doing what is good (Acts 21:26; 22:3). Peter probably had in mind the day of judgment and who could ultimately do his readers harm if they were living according to God's revealed standards.<sup>5</sup> The question implied a negative answer. No one would harm them. God's favor already was toward those who submit to him by living righteously (3:13). This being the case, no one can ultimately do harm to the readers.

Verse 14a reiterated this by way of clarifying what was said. Believers should view themselves as blessed if they do suffer for righteousness's sake (cf. 4:14). "If"

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 169.

<sup>4</sup> BDAG, 502.

<sup>5</sup> The articular participle is future, looking forward. This coupled with the context of judgment from verse 12 is an indicator that Peter had the final judgment in mind. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 170.

indicated that they were not in a continuous scenario of suffering but that it may have been of a more intermittent nature.<sup>6</sup> “Blessed” spoke to the joy that accumulated and culminated in the *eschaton* as one participated in the life of God under the reign of Messiah.<sup>7</sup> They are blessed because the outcome of their faith, which was drawing the persecution, was the eschatological inheritance of eternal life (1 Pet 1:6-9; 4:14; 5:10; cf. Matt 5:10). Those who walked faithfully toward Christ were the ones who inherited eternal life, even if they suffered. Thus, they regarded themselves as blessed by God, his favor residing upon them.

### **The Proper Response toward Hostility**

In 1 Peter 3:14b-15, Peter exhorted his readers as to how they were to conduct themselves in the face of opposition. In giving these imperatives Peter drew from the prophet Isaiah and applied what was written originally for Isaiah’s audience to his readers. The imperatives will be examined in view of the OT backdrop from which Peter drew.

### **The Context of Isaiah**

Peter’s use of the Old Testament came from Isaiah 8:12 and 13 (1 Pet 3:14b-15). The book of Isaiah is a prophecy that announced judgment and future salvation in response to the covenant people’s unfaithfulness. It can be divided into two broad

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<sup>6</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 141.

<sup>7</sup> It is likely that Peter drew off Jesus’s teaching found in the gospels (Matt 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23) in which the promise of eschatological consolation gives hope to those who participate in the kingdom ethic laid down by Jesus but find themselves in situations of travail or suffering. Friedrich Hauck and Georg Bertram write, “In the impressive form of beatitudes basic statements are here made about those who may regard themselves as citizens of the kingdom of God. The power of the statements lies in their reversal of all human values. In Lk. the beatitudes consist more of eschatological consolation. Men in certain circumstances, the poor, the hungry, the weeping, the hated, are promised the blessings of the kingdom of God. In Mt. the factor of their own moral and religious conduct is more prominent, and the connection between right conduct and heavenly recompense is emphasized.” Friedrich Hauck and Georg Bertram, “Μακάριος, Μακαρίζω, Μακαρισμός,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:368.

sections with chapters 1-39 as the first section and chapters 40-66 composing the second division. This first part focused on the Assyrian threat while the second half of the book announced a return from exile.<sup>8</sup> Present in the first section<sup>9</sup> was the announcement of Judah's sin, coming judgment, and future hope (Isa 1-5). Chapters 6-12 included the commission of Isaiah (Isa 6) and a section exhorting the nation to trust in Yahweh who is "God with us" (Isa 7-12). Chapters 13-23 announced oracles against the nations and chapters 24-27 articulated Isaiah's Apocalypse. Chapters 28-35 declared the glory of Yahweh's power, and chapters 36-39 communicated the deliverance of Hezekiah from Assyria. The verses employed by Peter was set within 7:1-8:18, a sub-section of chapters 7-12 that called an unfaithful and sinful Judah and her king to trust in Yahweh. The setting takes place during the reign of Ahaz the king of Judah. Ahaz and his line, and thus the house of David, faced the threat of invasion from Israel and Syria (Isa 7:1-9). Within these two chapters Yahweh addressed the situation with several oracles: The first oracle (7:4-9) addressed Ahaz about the threat of invasion and called him to have faith in Yahweh. Following this was another oracle (7:10-25) which refers to the birth of a child called Immanuel (7:14) and the announcement of difficult times for the nation (7:17). Chapter 8 opened with another oracle concerning another child called Mahar-Shalal-Hash-Baz, Isaiah's son, whose birth and name function as a sign of impending Assyrian invasion into the lands belonging to Judah's threat from the north (Isa 8:1-4; cf. v. 18).<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 8:5-10 warns of the overflow of that invasion into Judah. However, because Judah was the place where Immanuel dwells, the flood that was the Assyrian horde will not ultimately drown Judah (Isa 8:8). Because Judah belongs to Yahweh, who is present with

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty: A Biblical Theology of The Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 327.

<sup>9</sup> These subsections of Isa 1-39 are based on James M. Hamilton Jr.'s outline of Isaiah. James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 191.

<sup>10</sup> J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 94.

Judah, the plots and schemes of foreign powers will not ultimately triumph over them or the Davidic house (Isa 8:9-10). Yahweh will not forsake his commitment to the Davidic house (cf. 2 Sam 7). This brings us to the section from which Peter cited.

Isaiah 8:11-15 was an oracle which summoned the faithful remnant of Judah to trust in Yahweh. Isaiah was giving a strong warning in a setting where uncertainty was swirling around the city of Jerusalem (Isa 8:11-12). He was told not to conduct himself with the mindset of the people of Jerusalem (Isa 8:11). Verse 12 elucidated this: “do not call conspiracy all that they call conspiracy and do not fear what they fear or be in dread.” Whatever the conspiracy was, it was not specified in the text. It referred to whatever the people may propose as the cause of supposed treason.<sup>11</sup> The second half of the verse spoke of the effect upon the people as they sought to determine the cause of the impending menace. Isaiah was commanded not to join in this. In verse 12 and 13 he was given a twofold response. The first part of the response was stated negatively, and the second part of the response was stated positively. The prohibition was presented in verse 12: “do not fear what they fear and do not be in dread” (Isa 8:12). This is followed by the contrasting command: “you shall sanctify Yahweh of hosts as holy, and he shall be your fear and he shall be your dread” (Isa 8:13).<sup>12</sup>

### **Fear and Dread**

What is the meaning of the term’s “fear” and “dread”? The verb for “fear” can mean “to be afraid” or “to fear.”<sup>13</sup> “Dread” translated a Hebrew verb that denoted the idea to be in awe, to be terrified, or “to show dread.”<sup>14</sup> The verbs can be found paired

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<sup>11</sup> Brevard Childs writes, “Invasion into Judah after it had become a vassal state may have led the populace who had put their trust in Assyria rather than Yahweh to conclude that some kind of treason must have taken place for their benefactors to now seek to become their conquerors.” Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 75.

<sup>12</sup> Translation mine

<sup>13</sup> *HALOT*, 432.

<sup>14</sup> *HALOT*, 888.

together in Isaiah's prophecy only here.<sup>15</sup> Outside Isaiah they can be seen paired together frequently in Deuteronomy (1:29; 7:18-21; 20:3; 31:6), and once in Joshua (1:9), and once in Psalms (Ps 89:7). In Deuteronomy these verbs were given as commands to express how Israel was to not face her enemies. In Joshua 1:9 Yahweh commanded Joshua not to fear or tremble as he led Israel against the inhabitants of the land to possess it. In each context there was a threat of opposition that can cause fear, namely, facing enemies in combat. Deuteronomy 1:29 recounted Israel's response to the bad report given by ten of the twelve spies who spied out the hill country of the Amorites (Num 13:25-33). The people responded with grumbling and accusations against Yahweh, saying that he brought them out of Egypt to kill them (Num 14:1-4).<sup>16</sup> Such a response exposed Israel's unbelief in what God promised and revealed the heart of rebellion in the congregation.<sup>17</sup> This is confirmed by Moses exhortative rebuttal which also functions as the interpretation of their response. Moses's words in Deuteronomy 1:29 referred to what was stated in Numbers 14:9. He charged them not to rebel against Yahweh. This was immediately followed by a command not to fear, which is what was driving the rebellion. Again, in verse 9 he told the people not to fear and supported this command by reminding them that God was with them, which functions as an implicit call to trust him (cf. Deut 1:32). Israel's succumbing to fear was taken as an act of rebellion. This can be observed not only in the interpretive words of Moses at the beginning of Numbers 14:9 but also in the

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<sup>15</sup> In Isa 8:13 the noun מִוֶּדָּא is used instead of the verb יָרָא.

<sup>16</sup> These statements imply that Yahweh has no intention of keeping his promises and that he has even lied about such things. That this is the case is seen in that Moses must mediate on behalf of the people based on God's revealed character so that the surrounding nations will not believe the very accusation that the Israelites make in their grumbling (Num 14:15-19).

<sup>17</sup> That the people want to appoint a new leader who will lead them back to Egypt indicates the congregation's opposition against Yahweh and his redemptive purposes for Israel in the world. They, in essence, seek to undo his redemption. Stepping back to view such an act from the larger purposes of God, this act of rebellion pushes back not only against his rescue of Israel but also his purpose for them in world (Exod 19:1-6) and the purposes he was seeking to accomplish in his promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15). One cannot help but notice the similarities of such opposition in the northern kingdom of Israel and Aram in Isaiah's day who wanted to depose the Davidic monarchy and put a puppet king into power who would serve their own purposes (Isa 7:1-2). Such a move would also stand in opposition to what God was seeking to accomplish through the Davidic covenant (cf. 2 Sam 7).

act of response to these words in verse 10: “But the congregation said to stone them with stones” (Num 14:10 NASB). Such a statement highlighted the firmness of their rebellion against God’s word and purposes. Yet, though these are the words of the congregation, there is present among this people a faithful remnant who hold fast to what God has promised (Num 13:30; 14:5-6). The consequence of giving into fear resulted in Yahweh preventing that entire generation, save Joshua and Caleb, from obtaining their inheritance (Deut 1:35-38;<sup>18</sup> Num 14:22-25). Moses’s words in Deuteronomy 1:29 serve to remind Israel that giving into the fear of opposition leads to rebellion against God and the consequence is destruction.

In Deuteronomy 7:18-21 Moses spoke to the generation about to enter the promised land, calling them not to fear or be dismayed at the enemies they will face in dispossessing the land. This exhortation to a new generation looking forward, having already been reminded of the failure of the previous generation, was designed to motivate them not to repeat the failure of their parents. Deuteronomy 20:3 occurred in a context that exhorted Israel to not fear whenever they are facing their enemies in war. Deuteronomy 31:6 also expressed a command to not fear the enemies they will encounter. What these Deuteronomy passages, along with Joshua 1:9, have in common with the context of Isaiah 8:12-13 is the promise of Yahweh’s presence with his people as he calls them to not fear (Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10).<sup>19</sup> The paring of these verbs in Deuteronomy and Joshua articulated how the people of Israel were to not respond to their enemies. Connected with these prohibitions the fact that Yahweh was Israel’s God, and his presence was with them. With the events of Numbers 13-14 being brought to attention with the first paring of these verbs in Deuteronomy the reader is reminded that fear of

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<sup>18</sup> Even Moses is excluded for his own unbelief (Deut 1:37; Num 20:13; 27:13).

<sup>19</sup> Following Deut 1:29 is the promise that Yahweh will fight on Israel’s behalf as “the God who goes *before* you” (Deut 1:30 NASB; emphasis added). Deuteronomy 7:21 states, “For the LORD your God is in your midst” (NASB). Likewise, in Deut 20:1-3 God is present with them (20:1) and goes before them (20:3). In Josh 1:9 Yahweh promises to be with Joshua wherever he goes.

those in opposition to God will lead to rebellion against God instead of holding fast to his promises.

This seems to fit the context of Isaiah 7:1-8:18 in which the theme of “Immanuel” operated as the reason for why Judah was to not fear potential threats (Isa 7:4, 14; 8:8, 10, 12). Isaiah recognized, from earlier biblical writers, a pattern of truth that was to be descriptive of the covenant people and this truth was informing his own interpretive perspective.<sup>20</sup> Isaiah was viewing the issues of his day through the lens of what was written in Deuteronomy.<sup>21</sup>

The covenant people were not to fear and dread their enemies, so that they would not be led away from obedience to what Yahweh commanded. The word from Yahweh to Isaiah in Isaiah 8:12 exhorted the faithful remnant not to conduct themselves in a way contrary to how God’s covenant people were to walk. The words reminded the faithful that Yahweh, the God of the covenant and Isaiah’s God, will be with them. Isaiah did not need to fear and be in dread because God promised his presence.

## **Sanctify**

In contrast to fear and dread, Isaiah was also given a positive directive to sanctify Yahweh of hosts (Isa 8:13). The LXX reads “the Lord himself” as the object. In both cases the object refers to the same person. The verb in the Hebrew can have the meaning of “holy, to remove from common use, to dedicate, or consecrate.”<sup>22</sup> The Greek

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<sup>20</sup> The interpretive perspective is “the framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identifications, truths and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world or events that take place in it.” James M. Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), chap. 2, Kindle.

<sup>21</sup> Isaiah begins with an allusion to Deut 30:19 (Isa 1:2; cf. Deut 4:26; 31:28; 32:1) in which heaven and earth function as witnesses to whether Israel will keep the covenant. That Isaiah begins this way signals that he is allowing Deuteronomy to be the lens by which he views Judah’s conduct as he calls the two luminaries to the stand. See John N. Oswalt, who points to the covenant being the backdrop of Isaiah. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 233.

<sup>22</sup> *HALOT*, 1073.

word used in the LXX is ἁγιαζω having the meaning “to hallow, to make sacred, to sanctify, or to consecrate.”<sup>23</sup> “Yahweh of hosts” was the object of this verb here in Isaiah 8:13.

Yahweh already appeared in Isaiah’s prophecy as one who shows himself holy (Isa 5:16). He was also declared emphatically “holy.”<sup>24</sup> In the song of the vineyard of Isaiah 5:1-7 Israel was indicted for their failure to practice justice and righteousness (Isa 5:7). The evidence and response of what the people of God did can be seen in Isaiah 8:8-30. Yahweh responded in judgment by sending his people into exile or death (Isa 5:13-14). This was the humbling of the sinful people (Isa 5:15). In contrast Yahweh stated through the mouth of the prophet: “But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness” (Isa 5:16). This response of judgment via exile communicated that although his people were not committed to justice and righteousness, a way of summarizing how Torah calls them to treat each other,<sup>25</sup> Yahweh is committed to it and thus brings judgment on his people as an expression of his devotion to justice and righteousness and even to the Torah as a whole.<sup>26</sup> This devotion is what it means to be holy.<sup>27</sup> Peter Gentry helpfully argues that Isaiah’s response to the vision of God in Isaiah 6 in which his holiness is proclaimed affirms that this is the

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<sup>23</sup> Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), s.v. “ἁγιαζω”; LSJ, 9.

<sup>24</sup> In Isa 6:3 the threefold annunciation of “holy” gives emphasis to the holiness of Yahweh of hosts.

<sup>25</sup> See Peter J. Gentry, “Isaiah and Social Justice,” *Journal of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary* 12 (Spring 2013): 1-15.

<sup>26</sup> Notice in Isa 5:24 that the second half of the verse gives the explanation for the judgment that is stated in the first half of the verse. The reason for judgment is that “they rejected the law of the LORD of hosts and despised the word of the holy one of Israel.” The verbs סָמָא and יָרָא communicate the forsaking of commitment to their objects “the law of the LORD of hosts” and “the Word of the Holy one of Israel.” Those two titles for God connect the reader back to Isa 5:16 and to its connection with Isa 5:7. The second half of 5:24 probably functions as an interpretation of Isa 5:7. Thus, the absence of justice and righteousness communicates a lack of devotion to the covenant. Yahweh responds with promised judgment and will show himself as devoted to his covenant.

<sup>27</sup> Peter J. Gentry, “The Meaning of ‘Holy’ in the Old Testament,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 170, no. 4 (2013): 400-417.

meaning of holiness.<sup>28</sup> Isaiah states that his lips and the lips of his people are unclean (Isa 6:5). They cannot join the seraphim in the proclamation of Yahweh's holiness because they have impugned that very holiness, having accused him of not bringing the Day of the Lord, and, thus, not being devoted to justice and righteousness (Isa 5:19).<sup>29</sup>

Committed or devoted seems to be the meaning of holy in this early near context of Isaiah. This line of argument fits well with earlier occurrences of the concept of holy (Exod 3:19).<sup>30</sup>

While we cannot give attention to all that proceeds, we should consider those passages in which Yahweh was the object of the verb "sanctify." In Leviticus 10:1-3 Nadab and Abihu offer up strange fire and Yahweh consumed them before the alter. The reason given was that "among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev 10:3). What had these men done? They were disobedient to what God had prescribed. The commands he gave to the priest were for the purpose that the Lord might appear before his people and display his glory (Lev 9:4, 6). Nadab and Abihu did not regard Yahweh as committed to stipulations he had revealed through Moses and the purpose for which he had given them. In response Yahweh consumed them so that his people will respond to his glory with worship.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Gentry writes, "Now in Isaiah 6:3, the repetition of the word three times means that God is absolutely holy. 'Holy' means that He is completely devoted and in this particular context, devoted to His justice and righteousness, which characterizes His instruction of the people of Israel in the covenant, showing them not only what it means to be devoted to Him but also what it means to treat each other in a genuinely human way, in short, social justice. The holiness of God is clearly seen in Isaiah 5:16. Isaiah's response confirms the understanding that the basic meaning of holiness is being devoted. Holiness is not identical with moral purity, although there is a connection. Holiness should not be defined as moral purity, but rather purity is the result of being completely devoted to God as defined by the covenant." Gentry, "The Meaning of 'Holy' in the Old Testament," 413.

<sup>29</sup> Gentry, "The Meaning of 'Holy' in the Old Testament," 413.

<sup>30</sup> For a helpful treatment defending this understanding of holiness from these passages, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 363-65.

<sup>31</sup> In the preceding context Aaron drew near (cf. Lev 8:9; 10:1) and offered the prescribed sacrifices in the right manner (Lev 9:8-22). Yahweh's glory is manifested (Lev 9:23-24a), and the people respond by giving him glory. The acts of shouting and falling down are acts of worship in response to God's glory (Exod 34:8). God's words in Lev 10:3, explaining his response of judgment, communicate that since Nadab and Abihu did not regard him as devoted to what he prescribed so that he might manifest his

In Numbers 20:12 God prevented Moses from entering the promised land after he struck the rock to which he was told to speak (Num 20:10-12). Because Moses did not believe in God to uphold him as holy, God forbade him from the land (Num 20:12). It was Moses's doubt of Yahweh's promise to bring them into the land that functioned as the reason for why Yahweh responded the way he did. His unbelief in that moment led him to not treat Yahweh as devoted to bringing his people to the land promised to their forefathers. In short, he disbelieved his promise and thus did not treat Yahweh as devoted to his commitment. Verse 13 revealed Yahweh's devotion in both providing and punishing. He preserved his people by providing water, showing that he is committed as well as punishing Moses for his unbelief in his devotion to his promise (cf. Num 27:14; Deut 1:37; 32:51).

We have examined a few examples of what it is to sanctify Yahweh. The idea of holy in the context prior to Isaiah 8 pointed to a meaning of devotion. In Isaiah 8:13 Yahweh directed Isaiah to regard him as devoted. In this context he is to treat Yahweh as committed to dwell with his people. Those who regarded the Lord as such will fear and dread him rather than other persons or things (Isa 8:13). For those who do fear him, he will become a sanctuary (Isa 8:14).<sup>32</sup> Treating Yahweh as holy would show itself by trusting him and the promises he made.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Use of Isaiah in 1 Peter 3:14-15**

The Christians of Asia Minor were enduring suffering due to persecution. Peter argued that his readers must be zealous for what is good (1 Pet 3:13). Should Christians

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glory to be glorified, he will consume them as he did the offering so that his people will see his glory and not fail to worship him.

<sup>32</sup> A sanctuary is a place where God meets with his people, and they experience his presence and his fellowship (Ps 27:4; Isa 6). This fits well with the theme of this section "God is with us."

<sup>33</sup> That this is the case is confirmed by Peter's use of Isa 8:14 in 1 Pet 2:8 where he contrasts the consequences of the right response to Christ. The response to Christ is put in terms of "belief" and "unbelief" (1 Pet 2:7). Thus, Peter's use of the Isa 8 context in 1 Pet 2 signals to the reader that "trust" is in view in Isa 8.

suffer for the sake of righteousness, they should consider themselves blessed (1 Pet 3:14a). Verses 14a-16 instruct the readers how they were to respond, should they come under harm for doing good. The response was stated negatively in verse 14b and then positively in verses 15-16. In the former, Peter cited Isaiah 8:12 in which Isaiah, and by extension the true believers, were to not fear whatever supposed threats may be present that the unfaithful in Jerusalem feared. Isaiah should not fear what they fear. Peter alluded to Isaiah 8:12 not because the object of fear for those in Isaiah's day was identical to that which his readers faced in their own context. Rather he employed Isaiah 8:12 because the heart of the verse, "do not fear and do not be in dread," expressed the practice which Peter hoped will take place in the life of his readers. The heart of which was not to fear anything or anyone except Yahweh. This attitude was to characterize the old covenant people who, in Isaiah's context, faced potential threats from beyond their borders. While those in Peter's day faced threats from within their borders, they likewise were not to be governed by fear. The object of fear may be different but what is similar is that both contexts have a potential threat. Fearing danger so much that unfaithfulness could take place was not something that should characterize God's people. Peter recognized in Isaiah the use of language employed in Deuteronomy that was utilized to describe the exodus generation's rebellion (Deut 1:29; cf. Num 14:9). The language was used several times later in Deuteronomy, probably to draw attention back to the sin and consequences that took place in Numbers 14 as Deuteronomy anticipated future conflicts that could cause fear and dread leading to rebellion (Deut 7:18-21; 20:3). This same command given to Joshua, if not heeded, would keep his own generation from inheriting the land, like the exodus generation before them. Isaiah's audience, if they gave into fear and dread, would be exiled out of their inheritance.<sup>34</sup> In the same way, fear of persecution

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<sup>34</sup> The rebellion that comes from fear and dread would lead Judah to be disposed of their land because of their sin against God like the former inhabitants of the land.

was not to characterize the new covenant people of God. Fear was not to govern them with the result that it prevented them from living faithfully to Christ and ultimately inheriting the fulfillment of their own inheritance. Suffering for righteousness may result even in death but believers must not let fear drive them to abandon their confession and the promises.

In terms of their positive response toward suffering for righteousness's sake, the Christians were instructed to sanctify Christ the Lord in their hearts (1 Pet 3:15a). Here Peter adapted Isaiah 8:13 which also functioned as the positive response to the situation of its own context. The people of Isaiah's time were exhorted to sanctify the Lord and hold him as the object of their fear, something the people of God are told to do repeatedly (Deut 4:10; 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:5; 14:23; 17:19; 28:58; 31:12-13). Here Peter's readers were told to sanctify Christ. To sanctify here does not mean to make holy, but to treat or regard as holy.<sup>35</sup> The meaning must be informed by the context of Isaiah from which Peter drew. Holy meant to treat as devoted. In Isaiah, Yahweh was to be regarded as devoted to his promise to be with his people (Isa 8:13). Treating him as devoted would manifest itself in not fearing or dreading whatever was the supposed threats, but rather in fearing Yahweh (Isa 8:13). Those who would fear him would find him to be a sanctuary those who did not would stumble to their demise (Isa 8:14; cf. 1 Pet 2:6-8). Peter's readers were to treat Christ as devoted to his promise of deliverance.

Both the basic meaning of "holy" and the context point to this. First, 1 Peter is a letter that is informed by the Old Testament. The entire flavor of his letter tastes of the Old Testament. He made four references to the Old Testament in chapter 3 alone (1 Pet 3:10-12, 14-15, 20). Because Peter drew so heavily from the OT, the concepts he used were shaped by it. This was the case with the idea of "holy." Most of the occurrences of this theme were referencing the OT (1 Pet 1:15-16; 2:5, 9; 3:2). Thus, holy or treating as

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<sup>35</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 142.

holy, for Peter, was a concept that came from the OT. As seen above, the basic meaning is “consecrate to” or “devoted to.”<sup>36</sup> Thus Peter was saying to treat the Lord Christ as one who is devoted. The question then arises “devoted to what?” He is to be regarded as devoted to his people and the promises made to them in the gospel. Believers need not fear when suffering comes because of righteous living because Christ is devoted to his people, and to the promises he has made to them. That promise is the fulfillment of the eschatological life (1 Pet 1:3). This can be seen in that the eschatological life has just been referenced in Peter’s citation of Psalm 33:13-15 (LXX) speaking of “life” and “good days” (1 Pet 3:10-12).<sup>37</sup> Those who desire this life “do good” (1 Pet 3:11; cf. Ps 33:15 [LXX]). “Good” (1 Pet 3:11) was referred to in 3:13 and was called “righteousness” in 3:14a, thus linking the eschatological life in close connection with 3:13-17.<sup>38</sup>

What should also be considered, since it functions as the consequence or practical outworking of sanctifying Christ,<sup>39</sup> is the hope within the believer of which they were to always be ready to give a defense of the reason they have it (1 Pet 3:15b). Hope was a theme prominent through Peter’s letter (cf. 1:3, 13, 21; 3:5; 15). The hope was an eschatological expectation achieved by the death and resurrection of Christ that was certain (1 Pet 1:3-4). While it was viewed as certain it was also an aspect of the believer’s

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<sup>36</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 363. Regarding holiness, Peter uses several passages that draw from Exodus and Leviticus and applies them to the church. Holiness for God’s covenant people in the OT is introduced in Exodus. Leviticus, which Peter also uses (1 Pet 1:15-16), builds off what is presented in Exodus. Thus, later OT writers would have been informed by the understanding of holiness in the Torah and used it in the same line of thinking. Peter’s use of these texts indicates that he would have been operating in the same pattern of thought.

<sup>37</sup> Schreiner *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 166.

<sup>38</sup> Also worthy of note is that the two OT passages Peter is drawing from, Ps 34 (33 LXX) and Isa 8:12-13, both emphasize the fear of the Lord (Ps 33:8, 10, 12; Isa 8:13). Another connection to note is Peter’s use of δικαιοσύνη in 3:13 in such close connection with a psalm that stresses both the conduct of “the righteous” ὁ δίκαιος and their deliverance (Ps 33:15, 18, 20-21). “The righteous” and those who “fear the Lord” are synonymous in Ps 33 (33:12, 16). In both contexts of Ps 33 and Isa 8 there is deliverance for those who fear the Lord.

<sup>39</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 233.

salvation that had yet to be fulfilled (1 Pet 1:5; v. 13). This future deliverance (1 Pet 1:9), anticipated and predicted by the prophets (1 Pet 1:10), was to be granted when Christ was revealed (1 Pet 1:13) in the last time (1 Pet 1:5). Thus, believers were to hope fully for this salvation that will bring them out of the world in which they resided as aliens and into the world of their inheritance (cf. 1:1, 3, 13, 17, 2:11). Such a hope was rooted in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:3, 19-21).<sup>40</sup> Christ was to be treated as the one who is devoted to bringing this deliverance. That Christ was devoted to the promise of deliverance is what allowed them to live with hope (cf. Ps 33:23 LXX). First Peter 3:15b assumed that believers were living in a way that demonstrated that their hope is not bound in their experience in the present age but in him who will be revealed in the last time. The observing world watched their hope-filled response to suffering, and the Christian was asked to explain it. Such a visible display of hope evidenced that the believer trusted and related to Christ as devoted to his promises.

In the OT there was a pattern of God's people being exhorted to not succumb to fears that would lead them away from faithfulness to God and his purposes for them. The faithful remnant of Isaiah's time was a part of that pattern. Not only this, but also those who have come into covenant relationship with Yahweh were to treat him as holy. This expectation was even higher for those in the old covenant community who drew near to him (cf. Lev 10:3). The faithful remnant of Isaiah's day was commanded not to be afraid due to controversies' that were being espoused, but they were also to treat Yahweh as holy. In the context, it meant treating him as devoted to the promise that he would be with them. Those who treated him in this way also would respond to him as the appropriate object of their fear, resulting in their deliverance by the one who is "God with us." Peter employed Isaiah 8:12-13 to communicate to his readers that as the faithful

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<sup>40</sup> Because believers have been ransomed by the blood of Christ and have hope bound up with the reality of his resurrection (1 Pet 1:19-20), they are to fear God during their time of sojourning (1 Pet 1:17). The hope of 1:21 looks forward to a time when the sojourning will be over.

remnant of Judah was not to fear and tremble at threatening situations, so they were not to fear and tremble at the hostility brought against them for faithfulness to Christ. As the faithful remnant was to treat Yahweh as devoted to his promise of being with them and fear him, so the new covenant community was to treat Christ as devoted to his promise to bring their living hope to realization, thus living in a way that shows they have that hope in the face of suffering.

### **The Manner of the Response**

The eschatological hope has already been mentioned by Peter. The following phrases were subordinate to the action of sanctifying Christ. Peter called for a readiness to give a reason for the confidence about the future that they possessed to those who would ask. Since there would be some that would ask about their certain expectation, this implied that they had an observable manner of life that indicated or evidenced the hope that Peter's readers held. In other words, they believed Christ would be faithful to his promises and so they faced their sufferings in view of the coming reality (cf. 1:6-9, 13). Therefore, the unbelievers observed that the Christians were not deterred from their allegiance to Christ in the face of hostility, but rather endured it because of the hope they held. The inquiring unbelievers would have then been able to deduce that the Christians confidence was not bound up with their temporal circumstances in the present age. Peter anticipated that such living by his readers would induce inquiries from the outside observer. He encouraged his readers to be always prepared for such situations.

“Ready” referred to preparation for a purpose.<sup>41</sup> The continuous duration of this state of readiness was reflected in the term “always.”<sup>42</sup> The readers were to continually be prepared with an “answer.” It denoted a defense. This could refer to a formal defense in a court setting. However, the context of persecution in which these

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<sup>41</sup> BDAG, 401.

<sup>42</sup> BDAG, 22.

Christians resided more likely indicated something outside a courtroom setting and more personal. What was in view was a defense of the rationale of the expectation of the Christian community. They were to always be ready to explain Christianity and the hope of the gospel.

The way this was to be done was with an attitude of humility that would have manifested itself in a gentleness or considerateness toward others. But it was also to be done with a reverence for God. In other words, the way they defended the faith was done in such a way that their conscience would not indicate the readers of anything amiss. Their interaction to others before God would be commendable. The good conduct must be slandered as something other than what it is. The Christians suffered probably because living for Christ did not fit with the broader culture. “Good behavior” probably referred to “what is good” (v. 13) and “righteousness’ sake” (v. 14). Such conduct was viewed with animosity as indicated by the word “revile.” “Revile” denoted threats or mistreatment.<sup>43</sup> Thus, faithfulness to Christ was being responded to with ill-treatment but believers were to communicate their hope in a way that would not give credence to the slander from non-Christians. Such ill-treatment would be dealt with on the last day as those who persevered in their hostility would be put to shame (v. 16) “Shame” was mentioned in 2:6 in which those who trusted in Christ would not experience the shame of eschatological judgment. Here it can be seen that the outcome for those who persecute the people of Christ is eschatological judgment.

The statement of contrast between suffering for doing good verses suffering for doing evil functioned to explain what was stated previously. It is better to suffer for doing good because eventually one will inherit eschatological blessing. Suffering for doing evil would result in eschatological judgment in which the unbeliever was put to eternal shame (3:17; cf. 3:12; 4:18).

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<sup>43</sup> BDAG, 362.

## Vindication

Christians who suffer for righteousness's sake will be vindicated. In verses 18-22 Peter relayed to his readers the support for his exhortation (vv. 13-17). Peter sought to demonstrate that the Christian's suffering for the sake of righteousness would result in exaltation/glory. This verse conveyed that they would be vindicated because the one who suffered for sins vicariously, Jesus Christ to lead believers to God, had himself through his resurrection, proclaimed triumph over angelic powers and entered the place of honor in God's presence.

### **Christ Suffered Vicariously to Bring Believers to God**

In verse 18, Peter brought the reality of Christ suffering to the attention of his readers yet again (cf. 2:23-24). "For" indicated that what followed functioned as the support for what was stated in verses 13-17.<sup>44</sup> Christ, like Peter's readers, had "also" suffered unjustly.<sup>45</sup> "Suffered" served to connect these verses to the theme of the passage (3:14, 17), along with the theme of suffering present elsewhere throughout the letter (1 Pet 2:19-21, 23; 4:1, 15, 19; 5:10; cf. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1, 9).<sup>46</sup> While death is included in his sufferings (and will be specified later in the verse), Peter had in mind Christ's suffering that culminated in his death, as opposed to merely death. This is where the primary connection between the suffering of Christ and the readers lays: both suffered. However, although he suffered, the nature of Christ's suffering was qualitatively different from that of the readers. Christ suffered "once" (v. 18), which conveyed that his sufferings were unique and complete.<sup>47</sup> The immediate concern for Christ's sufferings can be seen in the

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<sup>44</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 246n72.

<sup>45</sup> John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 639.

<sup>46</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 247.

<sup>47</sup> Michaels helpfully points out that ἅπαξ conveys the sufficiency and completeness of Christ's suffering. It is a "once for all" rather than a repeated action. Such uniqueness "limits the analogy" between Christ's suffering and the sufferings of the readers. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 202.

words “for sins.”<sup>48</sup> This phrase denoted the sacrificial nature of Christ’s sufferings and, along with the following, stated the vicarious nature of his passion, therefore emphasizing the redemptive aspect of his suffering.<sup>49</sup> The following phrase elucidated the vicarious nature of the suffering. Christ was described as the “righteous” one who suffered in the place of “the unrighteous.” “Righteous” which comes to be a NT description of Jesus,<sup>50</sup> here conveyed his innocence of being guilty of any wrongdoing.<sup>51</sup> The notion that the sufferings of the righteous were “for the unrighteous” signaled who exactly benefited from the sufferings.<sup>52</sup> They were for the good of those who were in the class of the unrighteous. If righteous meant innocent of wrong and sin, then unrighteous conveyed guilty of sin and breaking God’s standards (1 Pet 2:24; 4:18; cf. Matt 4:45; Acts 24:15).<sup>53</sup> Thus, what is in view is the sacrificial suffering of Christ in the place of sinners.

The purpose for Christ’s suffering was to bring Peter and his readers to God.<sup>54</sup> “Lead” has the idea of bringing someone to something or someone.<sup>55</sup> In view here is the

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<sup>48</sup> Περὶ indicating reference here.

<sup>49</sup> Elliott is helpful when he points out the prepositions occurrence in passages involving sacrifice. “For sins” stresses the redemptive nature of the sufferings and its vicarious character. “The phrase *peri hamartiōn* is used for a sacrifice for sins (Heb 5:1, 3; 7:27; 10:18, 26; 1 John 2:2; 4:10), as is the related phrase *peri hamartias* regarding a propitiatory sin-offering (Lev 5:6, 7; 6:30; Ezek 43:21). In Isa 53, which provided much of the language for 2:21-25, it is the suffering servant who is described as bearing the sins of the people (53:11), and this thought may well have inspired the formulation here. The phrase serves to stress again both the redemptive nature of Christ’s suffering (cf. 1:2, 18-19; 2:24a) and its vicarious character.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 641.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Matt 27:19; Luke 23:22; Acts 3:14; 7:42; 1 John 2:1, 29; 3:7; cf. 2 Cor 5:21. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 247.

<sup>51</sup> Within the context righteous conduct and doing good are used interchangeably (3:13, 14). “Righteous” also stands in antithesis to “those who do evil” (3:12; cf. Ps 33:17 LXX). The very phrase in which the word occurs signals that the sufferings are underserved since the term stands in contrast to the “unrighteous.”

<sup>52</sup> Michaels notes how “for” translates ὑπὲρ and is used for the persons benefited while περὶ was used “for sins.” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 202.

<sup>53</sup> Elliott rightly sees the term as that which “covers all humans acting contrary to what is right or consonant with God’s will.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 642.

<sup>54</sup> The “us” (v. 18) refers to the author and the readers who formerly stood in the category of “unrighteous,” but from the viewpoint of the author at the time of writing are believers.

<sup>55</sup> BDAG, 875.

idea of access or fellowship with God.<sup>56</sup> Such suffering to provide access for the readers would point to future vindication for those who suffered due to their submission to Christ.<sup>57</sup>

The two phrases that follow referred to the death and resurrection of Christ. “Put to death” meant to cause the cessation of life<sup>58</sup> and was passive with Christ as the subject. This phrase connected the reader back to Christ having suffered and elucidated how it happened.<sup>59</sup> The second phrase, standing in antithesis to the previous phrase,<sup>60</sup> referred to Christ having been “made alive” and was a reference to his resurrection, as being made alive was another way to speak of being raised from the dead.<sup>61</sup> Both of these actions were qualified by a noun in the dative case. They can be interpreted one of several ways. “Flesh” and “spirit” could refer to the person of Christ, speaking of his body as the material self, and his spirit as the immaterial self.<sup>62</sup> However, it has already been established that the action of “made alive” was a reference to his bodily resurrection

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<sup>56</sup> The verb means to bring in the presence of someone (Matt 18:20; Acts 16:24). BDAG, 875. It is used in the Exod 19:4 in describing God’s redemption and bringing Israel to himself for the purpose of relationship. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 642. Achtemeier has observed that the nominal form in the NT conveys access to God (Rom 5:2; Eph 2:17-18; 3:12), while the verb in the LXX the verb conveys the same (Exod 29:4, 8; 40:12; Lev 8:25; Num 8:9-10; cf. Exod 21:6; Lev 27:5). Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 258nn103-10.

<sup>57</sup> This purpose statement may point to eschatological salvation as the goal of Christ’s sufferings has yet to be fully realized. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 203.

<sup>58</sup> BDAG, 443.

<sup>59</sup> Schreiner comments, “[T]he participle ‘being put to death’ (RSV, *thanatōtheis*) obviously refers to the death of Christ, showing specifically how he suffered (cf. *epathen* earlier in the verse).” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 183.

<sup>60</sup> As marked by the μὲν . . . δὲ construction.

<sup>61</sup> William Joseph Dalton has noted in the usage of both ζῳοποιέω and ἐγείρω that they can refer to resurrection: “There can be no doubt that ‘brought to life’ refers to the resurrection of Christ, that is, his bodily resurrection. The meaning of ζῳοποιῶ is well illustrated in Rom 8:11: ‘If the Spirit of him who raised (ἐγείρας) Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised (ἐγείρας) Jesus from the dead will give life (ζῳοποιήσει) to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.’ Note that here and elsewhere ἐγείρω is seen to be the equivalent of ζῳοποιῶ (John 5:21; Rom 4:17; 2 Cor 1:9).” William Joseph Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6*, *Analecta Biblica*, vol. 23, 2nd ed. (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989), 137.

<sup>62</sup> Bo Reicke argues that “spirit” refers to Christ’s “vital principle” that survived the destruction of his body. Bo Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Peter III. 19 and Its Context*, *Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis* 13 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1946), 99.

and makes clear that the whole person is in view, and thus rules out this interpretation.<sup>63</sup> Some construe the terms as denoting sphere. This refers to the human sphere of existence while spirit refers to spiritual realm of existence.<sup>64</sup> But it is difficult to grasp a clear understanding of what it means that Christ went to the spiritual realm and made proclamation to imprisoned spirits.<sup>65</sup> Others interpret them as adverbial, construing them as a dative of respect or reference. Thus, Christ was put to death with respect to his flesh but was made alive with reference to either his spirit or the power of the divine Spirit.<sup>66</sup> Still some take them as instrumental, while there are also those who understand the two datives as agency. Another option suggested is that “flesh” be taken as reference while spirit is taken as agency.<sup>67</sup> Thus, Christ was put to death with respect to his flesh, but he was made alive by the Spirit. It might be contested that the parallelism demands that the nouns function the same,<sup>68</sup> but such strictness is not always held by interpreters to be the case.<sup>69</sup> Christ, with reference to the sphere of his flesh, was put to death. On the other hand, he was made alive by the Spirit.

### **Christ Triumphed over the Evil Imprisoned Spirits**

In verse 19 Peter continued to elucidate this notion of vindication by pointing to Christ’s own triumph over imprisoned spirits. “In which” (v. 19) refers to “spirit” (v. 18).<sup>70</sup> “Spirit” was interpreted as the Holy Spirit who was the agent of the resurrection (v.

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<sup>63</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 151.

<sup>64</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 184.

<sup>65</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 184.

<sup>66</sup> Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits*, 141.

<sup>67</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 184.

<sup>68</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 645.

<sup>69</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 184.

<sup>70</sup> Some see the clause as temporal. So Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 103-15. However, others see it as a general antecedent. So Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*,

18). It was thus by the Holy Spirit, that is, by his power, that the following actions of the verse were accomplished.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, Christ, having been made alive by the Spirit, also<sup>72</sup> had gone and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.

To what does this verse refer? Several views have been proposed. Augustine interpreted this as Christ preached through Noah, and thus not present, to those who were alive, imprisoned in their sin, while Noah built the ark.<sup>73</sup> John Calvin held that this referred to saints who had died prior to the first advent of Christ who were raised from the dead in the interval between his death and resurrection.<sup>74</sup> A third view is that this refers to Christ descending into hell to preach to the human souls that perished in the flood, extending to them another opportunity for salvation.<sup>75</sup> A fourth view is that the imprisoned spirits are the fallen angels of Genesis 6:1-4 to whom Christ went and made a proclamation of victory.<sup>76</sup> This is the best interpretation.

First, the view that Christ was preaching through Noah, although not present, fails to make sense of the verb “went.” Second, the difficulty with the view that the spirits

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ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st Eng. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 255-56. Dalton takes the “in which” as referring to πνεῦμα, arguing that if this is the case, then it becomes equivalent to the prepositional phrase, something that is not rare in the NT, as he points out. “If ἐν ᾧ is taken as dependent on the previous πνεύματι, then it is the equivalent of ἐν πνεύματι. Now this expression is extremely frequent in the New Testament: it occurs more than forty times, apart from phrases which are the equivalent. Thus, when there is a relative, ‘in which,’ following immediately after a noun, ‘spirit,’ it is difficult to see how they can fail to be united in meaning. This remains true despite the frequency of the wider use of ἐν ᾧ in 1 Peter.” Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits*, 145.

<sup>71</sup> Thus, taking the clause as instrumental.

<sup>72</sup> καὶ, left untranslated by the ESV, is adjunctive and thus has a meaning of “in addition.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 253.

<sup>73</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 153.

<sup>74</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Catholic Epistles*, trans. John Owen, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 22 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 114.

<sup>75</sup> Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata, or Miscellanies,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1885), 490.

<sup>76</sup> Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits*, 184; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 188; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 140.

refer to those who rose from the dead between the time of Christ's death and his resurrection is that the verbs in verse 19 are after his resurrection. That the verse referred to a descent into hell cannot be the case because the verb translated "went" is never used that way in the NT. It predominately means to journey or travel. In a few cases it referred to one's conduct (Acts 9:31; 14:16). It was never used to speak of a descent into a place outside the earthly realm. However, it was employed to refer to Christ's ascension to God (Acts 1:10, 11), including here in the immediate context (1 Pet 3:22). Thus, based on the usage in the NT as well as in the present context, the evidence points away from this view. This, therefore, leaves the last view. The last view makes the best sense of what is seen in the verse and the immediate context.<sup>77</sup>

It has already been seen in that "went" does not refer to a descent into hell and in the context here most likely refers to his ascension (3:22; cf. Luke 1:10, 11). Second, the second verb in the verse, "proclaimed," was often used in the NT for preaching Christ. However, in its most general use it simply means to herald, with the context identifying the content of the message.<sup>78</sup> It can refer to a proclamation of victory which was the case here. Third, "prison" can refer to a place of punishment (Matt 14:3, 10; 18:30). Yet, it was never used to describe a place of punishment for the human deceased.<sup>79</sup> However it was used this way in Jewish and early Christian tradition (1 Enoch 6–16; 18:12–19:2; 21:1–10; 54:3–6; 64–69; 106:14–15 ;Rev 20:7; cf. 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 20:1-3).<sup>80</sup> The imprisoned spirits of verse 19 were further described in verse 20 as those who formerly disobeyed in the days of Noah. This would then make

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<sup>77</sup> Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits*, 184.

<sup>78</sup> This is the only place where Peter uses this term. That he used it in its more general sense may be seen in the use of εὐαγγελίζω to denote the preaching of the gospel (1 Pet 1:12, 25; 4:6).

<sup>79</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 256.

<sup>80</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 256-57. So also Dalton writes, "On the other hand, φυλακή is used in the New Testament for the prison in which Satan is chained: 'And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison.' This usage is quite normal." Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits*, 160.

connections with the events narrated in Genesis 6:1-4. That this is the case can be seen in Peter's second epistle in which he comments on these events in 2:4.<sup>81</sup> The same theme of disobedience is captured when Peter describes angels as having "sinned (2 Pet 2:4). There too Peter gives through imagery a description of being held in "chains of gloomy darkness." In Genesis 6:1-4 the sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men.<sup>82</sup> Their sin seems to be the marital union and propagation of offspring that come from that union (cf. Jude 6).<sup>83</sup> Thus, the sinful angels were imprisoned for this treachery while rebellious humanity was punished with the deluge. The disobedience may have been crossing boundaries that then resulted in the halting of the Adamic commission of spreading God's image through the earth.<sup>84</sup> Christ's proclamation, then, was a proclamation of victory with the triumph of God's anointed king over those powers that

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<sup>81</sup> The events recorded in 2 Pet 2 seem to be a reflection upon events narrated in Genesis. 2:4 seems to refer to the sons of God marrying the daughters of men (Gen 6:1-4). Verse 5 reflects on God's judgment of the world through the flood and the preservation of Noah (Gen 7-8). Verses 6-8 comment on the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah and God's rescue of Lot (Gen 19). Thus, in view of this, it is best to take the "angels" mentioned in 2 Pet 2:4 as referring to the "sons of God" in Gen 5:1-4. It should also be noted that *ταρταρόω*, translated "hell" (ESV), is a place distinct from Hades and thus not abode of the human dead. BDAG, 991.

<sup>82</sup> While some take "sons of God" as referring to human beings, it seems best to interpret *בְּנֵי הַאֱלֹהִים* as angelic beings for the following reasons: (1) the phrase elsewhere in the OT refers to angelic beings (Job 1:6; 2:1). In Genesis 19 the men of Sodom seek to rape the angels whom they believe to be human beings. These angels do other human activities like eat and sleep, and therefore it is not unreasonable to think that they could perform sexual intercourse while on earth.

<sup>83</sup> The NT seems to understand this as a cobelligerent act (2 Pet 2:4-5). Since the taking of wives is mentioned in Gen 6:2, it seems best to take the marriage of fallen angels and human women entering a marriage covenant. They then engage in sexual union in the marriage context (v. 4). The evil angels thus crossed boundaries they should not cross (Jude 6). It may be that the human women were seeking to propagate supernatural offspring with these angels. To take a wife is used predominately of entering the marital relationship in Genesis, therefore more than just sexual cohabitating is in view here. This may signal a formalized joining in rebellion against God.

<sup>84</sup> Human women marrying and having relations with fallen angels would have disrupted the mandate of creation to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth (Gen 1:26-28) with those made in the image of God and thus the visible representation of God's rule in the cosmos. Thus, the joining of fallen angels and women could have been an attempt to weed out any visible representation of God's rule by propagating demon spawn rather than the image of God upon the earth. One can only hypothesize, but such a hypothesis may not be farfetched when the sin of humanity recorded between the fall and flood are all acts of violence against image bearers (Gen 4:8, 23) and that the evidence given for mankind courting his way (Gen 6) is violence (Gen 6:11-13). It is clear from the narrative that violence is an assault on God's image and thus on God himself and would be a threat against the creation purposes at this point in the narrative. His rule is being spread by mankind, who are made to be his vice regents, especially when the image of God still exists in them (Gen 5:1-2; 9:6). Thus, I would suggest that the fallen angels in coming into the daughters of men whom they had married were trying assault the reign and rule of God on earth by seeking to weed out his image bearers and fill the earth with their own offspring.

had resisted the rule of God in the world. The resurrected Christ proclaimed his triumph over the evil forces as he ascended into heaven (Eph 1:21-22; 4:8; Col 2:15).<sup>85</sup>

### **Participation in the Eschatological Salvation Typified in Noah's Deliverance**

In verse 20 Peter made the connection between Christ's triumph, the events mentioned in Noah's day, and his readers. Within verse 20 there is a shift in focus from those who were punished to those who were rescued. Thus, the first part of the verse highlighted the triumph over those who rejected the rule of God. The second part of the verse then began to concentrate on those who submitted themselves to the rule of God during the time of Noah and the flood. This group was composed of Noah and his household. Noah had constructed an ark into which the eight persons went. The verb "brought safely" denoted preservation or deliverance from danger or destruction (Matt 14:36; Luke 7:3; Acts 23:24; 27:43, 44; 28:1, 4). The "water," through which they were brought,<sup>86</sup> was the flood as the immediate context indicated with the mention of "ark," "Noah," and "eight souls," a reference to all who were rescued. The flood functioned as the judgment of God. The fact that the eight persons were brought safely through communicated that they were rescued from the judgment.

A point of contact can be seen between the few souls and Peter's readers both at the end of verse 20 and into verse 21. First, as Noah and his family were few in a world who had rejected God, so also, the readers stood in contrast to the whole of humanity who have rejected God's chosen one, the Messiah (1 Pet 2:4-5).<sup>87</sup> The second connection

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<sup>85</sup> The summary of Achtemeier is helpful: "As a result of his resurrection, the powers of evil have been defeated, and the risen Christ, on his way to the right hand of power (3:22), announces to the imprisoned angelic powers his victory and hence their defeat." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 260.

<sup>86</sup> The prepositional phrase could point to how the deliverance was carried out, or it could refer to that which was the threat from which they were preserved. It is best to take it as the latter. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213.

<sup>87</sup> As Achtemeier comments, "[T]he use of ὀλίγοι to identify those saved reflects sayings of Jesus but is probably chosen here rather to encourage the readers who, although they were also a small

that can be seen is that Noah and his family experienced salvation and the readers could anticipate the same. In verse 21 a connection was made between “baptism” and “water” (v. 20). “Corresponds” was used to connect these two terms together. The flood waters served as a type or pattern for the readers as it corresponded to baptism. The waters of flood and baptism both have to do with submersion. The flood submerged the ancient world under water completely (Gen 7:1, 19-20; 2 Pet 2:5; 3:6). So, also in baptism a person was submerged in water. The participation in the rite portrays death (Rom 6:3-5; cf. Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50).<sup>88</sup> Thus, baptism was regarded here as a type of flood water that destroys. However, just as Noah and his family were brought through the waters of judgment, so too believers are preserved through the waters of judgment by virtue of Christ’s resurrection.<sup>89</sup> Peter’s readers were in the “last time” (1 Pet 1:5). The eschatological age had dawned with the coming of Christ. He had brought a greater salvation which was a rescue out of a greater judgment as baptism “now saves you,” referring to the readers.<sup>90</sup> What Peter meant was clarified by what followed with a statement of denial followed by a statement of affirmation. It was not the actual act that has salvific power, because Peter stated that he was not referring to the “removal of dirt from the body.” What he referred to was an appeal for a good conscience. “Appeal” referred to a request. As believers were identifying with Christ, they were requesting a good conscience based on Christ’s death and resurrection. That good conscience was

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minority in the midst of the hostile Greco-Roman world, could similarly look forward to their salvation.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 264-65.

<sup>88</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 194.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, “Baptism in the Epistles: An Initiation Rite for Believers,” in *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, NAC Studies in Bible and Theology (Nashville: B&H, 2006), chap. 5, sec. 3, Kindle.

<sup>90</sup> “Now” referred to the eschatological age inaugurated by Christ (1 Pet 1:12). Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 194.

given with the forgiveness of sins based on Christ sacrifice.<sup>91</sup> Thus, they participated in the salvation achieved by Christ which was typified in the events of the flood.

### **The Hope of Vindication in the Triumph of Christ**

Believers can have confidence that they will be vindicated because the one who has suffered for them and been raised, and to whom they have appealed to for a good conscience has triumphed over the evil powers and was at the right hand of God. As seen already, the resurrected Christ went to heaven. This was alluded to with the same verb in verse 18. The verb there was used to denote his ascension. Now, in verse 22, this was made explicit by the mention of the same verb translated “has gone” and “heaven” as the place where he went. The resurrected Christ ascended into the presence of God. He also is at the right hand, which is the place of honor. Peter was likely alluding to Psalm 110.<sup>92</sup> The mention of “right hand” in relationship to God as well as the theme of subjugation in the rest of the verse recalls the oracle of Psalm 110:1 (109:1 LXX). There David recorded Yahweh declaring to David’s lord to sit at the right hand until his enemies are made a footstool under his feet. This text was commonly seen by the NT writers as fulfilled in Jesus’s resurrection and ascension (1 Cor 15; Eph 1:22-23; Heb 2:9ff.; cf. Phil 2:11). Here Peter operated in the same line of interpretation seeing the psalm as fulfilled in Jesus Christ’s ascension. The picture of triumph can be seen in that spiritual forces have been subjected to him. This reality would have been an encouragement to believers. As Christ triumphed over his enemies, so they too would triumph in him over those who were hostile to them.

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<sup>91</sup> Schreiner, “Baptism in the Epistles,” chap. 5, sec. 3.

<sup>92</sup> Psalm 110 was a popular text in the early church as being understood as fulfilled by Jesus in his resurrection and ascension. First Peter 3:22 is probably an allusion rather than a citation as it does not follow the LXX rendering exactly but rather a phraseology that was common in the NT.

## **Conclusion**

The people of God have always faced opposition. In our present day the story is no different. Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are those who have turned from their rebellious raging against God and his Messiah to kiss the Son, manifested in these last days for their sake so that their faith and hope are in God (Ps 2:1-2, 12; 1 Pet 1:20-21). Such faith and hope have a practical expression of righteous living that marks believers as foreign to this age (1 Pet 2:11). As American society continues to secularize at an unprecedented rate of speed, the righteous conduct of the followers of Jesus stands out to contrast the world the way the beauty of a diamond does against a black cloth. The world is hostile toward the beauty of living righteously before Christ (1 Pet 3:14). It has, does, and will respond with hostility (1 Pet 4:12). One need only consider a movement like the homosexual agenda, the rapid removal of formal Christian presence represented by Christian student groups on public university campuses, or the ‘virtue signaling’ of corporate America. These represent a lining up against the lordship of Jesus Christ. Christians experience pressure and hostility that is ultimately intended to lead them to abandon Christ. As the persecution in the early church was both frightening and difficult so it will be for the American Christian. Not only this, but those who reject the futile ways inherited from their forefathers (1 Pet 1:18) and embrace the call out of darkness and into the marvelous light of the Lord (1 Pet 2:10) find themselves having trouble even from loved ones perplexed by their devotion to Christ (1 Pet 4:4).

How is the believer to respond? First, they should regard themselves as blessed because of the eschatological hope they will one day inherit. Second, they are to be zealous for what is good. Christians know the brokenness of slavery to sin, and they know the glory of coming out from under such a cruel taskmaster. Third, Christians should consider themselves blessed when they experience suffering for the sake of righteousness. They stand in a long pattern of faithful people in redemptive history who experienced the same sufferings. Even the Lord was not exempt. Fourth, believers must

not give into fear. They should take heed to Israel, whose fear led them into rebellion against the Lord and against his appointed deliverer. The followers of Christ must understand that giving into fear can lead to apostasy. It is, after all, the cowardly who were mentioned first among those to be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 21:8). Fourth, Christians should treat Christ as devoted to the promises and purposes of God in redemption. He will not turn away from bringing his people into their inheritance. Such a belief practically means that believers trust him and hope in what he has promised. A life filled with such glorious confident expectation is a compelling life to the onlooking world devoid of hope. Believers should be ready for the opportunities to defend the reason for their hope. One of the ways the church can do this is to grow in her grasp of the overarching storyline of the Bible and worldview that story constructs. As believers better know the story, they come to see with more depth and clarity the Triune God who does not walk away from his purposes and promises in redemption. He will fulfill all of it. Fifth, Christians should be ready to give a defense of the reasons for their hope. There should be an expectation that the way they face hostility for being a believer will generate questions about their hope. Preparation to give a rationale that explains this should be indicative of the followers of Christ. Sixth, this should be done with humility and reverence. Finally, Christians should face suffering knowing that the suffering for following Christ will result in glory and triumph just as it did for Jesus.

## CHAPTER 8

### EXPOSITION 7: 1 PETER 4:12-19

How should Christians respond to persecution for being a follower of Christ in a hostile world? Christians can rejoice in response to the suffering they experience for being a believer because suffering is the prelude to glory, and they should therefore trust God as they faithfully follow Christ. This thesis will be argued as follows: First, by showing that the appropriate response to persecution was not surprise at its existence. Rather it was to respond with rejoicing that they might share in the future joy that was to come at the revelation of Jesus Christ (vv. 12-13). Second, we will see that Peter supported this exhortation by giving a detailed explanation to steer them on the right course. He explained that their suffering meant that they were already beginning to experience the blessing of eschatological realities (v. 14). This was followed by a qualifier on the nature of the suffering (v. 15). The explanation ended with an implication in the form of another command as it relates negatively and positively to their reaction toward legitimate suffering (v. 16). Third, the author explained why suffering has occurred. The reason given was that the eschatological judgment of God had begun. Finally, this section was concluded by inferring what the path forward for the readers should be. They were commanded to trust God while following Christ faithfully when suffering.

#### **The Appropriate Response to Suffering**

In 1 Peter 4:12-13, an exhortation was given to the readers not to be surprised at suffering/persecution but rather to rejoice in response to it. The third major section of

this epistle began here in verse 13.<sup>1</sup> For a second time Peter addressed his readers by referring to them as “beloved” (4:12; cf. 2:11). He had identified the Asia Minor Christians this way in 2:11 which began the second major section of his letter (2:11-4:11). Here, the same address was employed again as he began the third major portion of the body of this letter. “Beloved” was a term of affection that communicated to the readers that they were dear and highly valued.<sup>2</sup> In addressing them as such for a second time, he reiterated his own personal affection for the recipients of his letter. The word expressed the care and concern that should accompany any pastoral exhortation to believers having to navigate the hardships associated with faithfulness to Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

The mandate that Peter charged them with was delivered both negatively and positively. In terms of the negative aspect of this injunction, Peter commanded his readers to not be surprised at the fiery ordeal they were facing as though something strange were happening (v. 12). The “surprise” of which Peter addressed referred not to being in a state of petrified stupefaction.<sup>4</sup> The verb was used in 4:4 to convey the Gentiles reaction to the refusal of Christians to participate in sinful conduct characteristic of unbelievers. The unbelieving Gentiles were perplexed or confused by the Christians,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner writes concerning the vocative with the imperative verb, ““Beloved” plus the imperative marks a new section in which Peter takes up the topic of suffering.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 218-19.

<sup>2</sup> BDAG, 7. J. N. D. Kelly notes that such word would have reminded the readers that they were in “a fellowship that was knit together by love.” J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 184. Such a reminder is critical to a community facing hostility from outsiders.

<sup>3</sup> This term was used in 2:11. It connects the readers and author together in affection as he addresses their suffering and such expression is consistent with the emphasis upon love within the letter (1:8, 22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14). John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 771.

<sup>4</sup> F. W. Beare interprets “surprise” along such lines when he comments that “this outbreak of organized persecution has come as paralyzing shock, and the first effect is a numb inability to understand why they should become the victims of such assault.” F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947), 163. However, it does not seem that the context supports taking the word this way.

and this is how the word should be understood here.<sup>5</sup> Thus confusion was not to describe them as they experience the fiery trial.

The “fiery trial” described the situation that the readers found themselves facing. “Trials” was used earlier in the letter to describe the cause of grief the readers were enduring (1:6). This earlier situation was what Peter was addressing since nothing in the context indicated that what Peter had referred to here was a new development.<sup>6</sup> The trial was described later in the verse as something that was “happening” to the reader. The context mentioned only “insults” as an expression of the suffering that the readers were enduring (v. 14) and, so, the ordeal probably did not indicate violence. “Fiery” had to do with burning or being exposed to fire. This could refer to cooking, the destruction of a city (Rev 18:9, 18), or the purification of an object.<sup>7</sup> The background of the Old Testament informed Peter’s understanding here in which it was used to describe the process of burning in order to separate metal from dross for the sake of purification (Prov 27:21; cf. Ps 66:10; Mal 3:1-4).<sup>8</sup> Metaphorically “fiery” communicated the intensity of a painful experience that served to purify the readers.<sup>9</sup>

Such happenings were pointed to as something that was not still out in front of them yet to be faced. Rather, he was writing about their present experience.<sup>10</sup> The trials, as seen in 1:6-7, were not meaningless. They were intended to serve a purpose which was

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<sup>5</sup> Kelly sees it as bewilderment or confusion rather than shock. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 174.

<sup>6</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 219.

<sup>7</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 184.

<sup>8</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 771.

<sup>9</sup> Schreiner notes that there is a conceptual link here with Mal 3: 1-4, in which the presence of the Lord is with his people “testing them to purify his house.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 219. Having been referred to already in 1 Pet 1: 6-7, the process of purifying is implied here as well. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 772.

<sup>10</sup> This is indicated by the tense of the verbs. J. Ramsay Michaels sees this as pointing to a present reality rather than an eschatological one. J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 250. Michaels is correct in that that the suffering is present rather than yet to come. This does not deny that there are eschatological realities that have broken into the present situation as well (4:14, 17-18).

to test the readers.<sup>11</sup> “Test” can refer to a temptation in the sense of enticing a person to do that which is wrong or to a trial as that which simply reveals the nature or character of a thing. Within the purposes of God, it is the latter and should be understood as that which will unveil the quality of the readers’ faith.<sup>12</sup> Thus such trials should not cause confusion but rather should be expected.

In fact, such trials should not be regarded as something strange in their experience. “Strange” translated a Greek word meaning something unfamiliar or not known (Matt 25:33, 38, 43, 44; 27:7; Acts 17:21; Eph 2:12, 18; Heb 11:13; 3 John 5). These sufferings were not to be regarded as something foreign or alien to those who faithfully followed Christ. therefore, if the trials were regarded rightly, the recipients would be safe guarded against the confusion of which Peter spoke.

In verse 13 Peter addressed the positive side of the exhortation. If verse 12 gave instruction of what Christians were not to do in the face of persecution, then verse 13 expounded on what they were to do in the same situation.<sup>13</sup> Rather than respond with surprise to the fiery ordeal, they were to rejoice in suffering for Christ because, for Christians, suffering was the prologue to glory. The phrase “insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings” might be understood as “since you share in Christ’s sufferings,” which denotes a sense of cause.<sup>14</sup> However, Peter had degree rather than cause in mind.<sup>15</sup> In

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<sup>11</sup> The preposition πρὸς can denote purpose. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 380.

<sup>12</sup> Kelly comments that such testing “should be viewed by the readers as divinely ordained as a test of their faith and discipleship.” Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 185.

<sup>13</sup> The contrast between the actions is signaled by adversative particle ἀλλὰ (v. 13).

<sup>14</sup> Elliott sees the actuality of suffering being the focus and thus views the sense more as “since” as opposed to degree. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 774.

<sup>15</sup> The adverb καθό is a marker of similarity or degree (cf. 2 Cor 8:12). BDAG, 493. So also Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 186.

view of what is about to be said, this fits better with the context.<sup>16</sup> So Peter had in mind the degree that his readers share in the sufferings of Christ. “Share” referred to their participation or partaking and thus their solidarity with Christ in his sufferings. He suffered, and because they follow him, they had an identical experience (cf. 1 Pet 4:1). So, Peter had in mind the sufferings his readers experienced because of being faithful to Christ.

Their response to such suffering was to “rejoice.” This was a rejoicing that they could practice in their present moment. Such a reaction in the face of persecution was important. Those same sufferings, though ordained by God, could be co-opted by the enemy to tempt Peter’s readers to an attitude that could lead them to defect from the faith. Such an exhortation would serve to protect the Christians from apostasy that might be tempting to embrace due to a fiery ordeal if it were not regarded and responded to properly.

This rejoicing that Peter called for would also set the stage for future rejoicing. The second half of the verse pointed to the goal of responding to suffering for Christ with joy. These Christians, having participated in the sufferings of Christ, might also be able to participate in his glory (cf. 1 Pet 1:7; 5:1, 4). The joy that they are called to while suffering anticipated the eschatological fulfillment of what has already broken into the present age with the resurrection of Christ. That eschatological fulfillment was marked by Christ’s glory being revealed (cf. 1:7, 13). The believers will receive their eschatological commendation that will arouse the expression of rejoicing and gladness. Thus, Peter wanted his readers to understand that suffering for Christ was not a strange thing that should bring about bewilderment. Rather, he wanted them to rejoice because suffering for Christ was the prelude to eschatological joy when Christ was revealed. Those who

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<sup>16</sup> Schreiner argues that “Peter anticipated here what would be explained in the subsequent verses. Suffering for Christ is a cause for joy but being mistreated because of one’s own sin is nothing to brag about.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 220.

participated in his sufferings, not forsaking him, would one day participate in his glory (cf. 2 Tim 2:11-12).

### **The Explanation of the Exhortation**

In verses 14-16 Peter sought to steer his readers toward continual faithfulness to Christ by giving a detailed explanation of what he had just stated.

#### **Blessings of Eschatological Realities (v. 14)**

The explanation began in verse 14 and informed the recipients how they were to interpret what suffering for Christ indicated. The verse was presented in a conditional clause. The first part brought up the situation of being insulted for Christ and was understood by the author to be the case for the readers.<sup>17</sup> This situation was one in which the readers were being insulted because of their commitment to their Lord. The word translated “insulted” meant demeaning someone as a result of viewing them as having some deficiency or fault.<sup>18</sup> It was part of the standard vocabulary that described verbal abuse.<sup>19</sup> Such language was uttered against the people of God by those who stood against them in the LXX (Pss 34:7; 41:11; 43:17; 68:10).<sup>20</sup> In the NT it can be seen that such speech was hurled against Jesus as evidence of his being rejected (Matt 27:44; Mark 14:22; Rom 15:3; Heb 11:26; 13:13). Here it was applied to his followers. “For the name of Christ” reflected the cause for the verbal abuse.<sup>21</sup> The idea of name had to do with one’s reputation, one’s character or conduct in the world (Exod 34:6-7). One could also

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<sup>17</sup> The *εἰ* plus the indicative verb indicate a first-class condition in which the *protasis* is an assumed reality for the sake of the argument.

<sup>18</sup> BDAG, 710.

<sup>19</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 778-79.

<sup>20</sup> Kelly comments that “‘insult’ refers to reproaches heaped on God and his people by the wicked (esp. in LXX) esp. Psalms.” Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 186.

<sup>21</sup> *ἐν* in the dative case can function to denote cause. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 372. So, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 779; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 264; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 186.

be associated with the name of another by being in relationship with them (Num 6:27; Matt 28:18-20). In the present context the Christians faced verbal insults because they were associated with one whom the world had rejected (cf. 2:4). Such insults could lead the followers of Jesus to feel ashamed. Peter, in contrast, wanted his readers to regard themselves as “blessed.” The source of Peter’s teaching was Jesus himself (Matt 4:12-13) and a truth Peter had stated earlier (3:14). Peter saw blessing as a reality of their present situation. The reason for why they were blessed was “because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

What was meant here? Did Peter have in view one distinct ideas or two? In other words, does the phrase “the Spirit of glory and of God” refer simply to the Holy spirit?<sup>22</sup> Or did Peter have in view a notion concerning glory and a notion concerning the Spirit of God?<sup>23</sup> Peter was indicating the latter. “Glory” was mentioned in verse 13 in reference to Christ’s glory being revealed. When that glory came to be revealed, believers also would participate in it (1 Pet 5:1, 4). This glory then was another reference to the eschatological glory already mentioned, while Spirit of God referred to the eschatological Spirit. Two distinct but related experiences were viewed as present in the life of the Christian. The first was the experience of the eschatological glory. Glory in 1 Peter, in relationship to the believer, referred to a future reality, something the Christian will experience at the return of Christ (1 Pet 1:7; 4:13; 5:1, 4). Yet Peter made it clear that this glory rested upon his readers in the present.<sup>24</sup> This explanation fits well with the context because the clause functioned to support the assertion that the readers were presently blessed as they endured the suffering that Peter assumed was a present reality for them.

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<sup>22</sup> So Elliott, who sees the phrase as a hendiadys. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 782.

<sup>23</sup> So Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 309; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 221.

<sup>24</sup> The verb ἀναπαύεται of which both τὸ τῆς δόξης and τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα are the subject is in the present tense.

Thus, Peter had in mind both future (v. 13) and present (v. 14) glory. Peter had in mind here (v. 14) the first fruits of glory. In other words, to some degree, they were already experiencing the eschatological glory of the age to come. They had already begun to experience in their new birth (cf. 1 Pet 1:3; 23; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:6; Phil 1:6).

The other reality that was present was the Spirit of God in their lives. Both rested upon them. The words recall the language of Isaiah 11. Isaiah prophesied a shoot coming from the stump of Jesse (Isa 11:1) upon whom the Spirit of Yahweh would rest (Isa 11:2). Peter used the language with some adjustments. Whereas Isaiah was looking to the future, Peter spoke of a present reality. Whereas Isaiah spoke of an individual, Peter applied this to the believing community. The changes found in Peter indicated that Peter saw the fulfillment extended to the church. Isaiah, writing to give God's remnant hope, announced the future coming of a new David (Isa 11:1).<sup>25</sup> In view was the future Messiah who would be endowed with the Spirit of God (Isa 11:2).<sup>26</sup> Thus the presence of the Spirit would be upon the Messiah. This hope was born at the baptism of Jesus in which the Spirit descended upon him (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:33-34; cf. Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1). Jesus had promised that he would send the Spirit and that he would be present with Christ's people (John 14:6, 16; 15:26; 16:7). Such a fulfillment took place in Acts 2:1-5, 14-21. This reality of the Spirit being upon all God's people had already been anticipated in the OT (Num 11:25-29). So, Peter saw the believing community endowed with the presence of God, a reality achieved by Jesus's ascension into heaven (John 16:7; Acts 2:32-33; cf. Acts 1:8). Therefore, the Spirit resting upon them signaled his presence among the people of Christ.

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<sup>25</sup> That it is a new David and not just merely a Davidic king is seen in that the figure is said to come, like David, from Jesse, the father of David. J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 121.

<sup>26</sup> The seven-fold description is headed with the person of the Spirit followed by three pairs of words that characterize him and thus the coming Messiah. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 122.

## The Qualification (v. 15)

Peter continued his explanation with a qualification about the nature of the suffering Christians experience. Peter wanted his readers to understand that they should only consider themselves blessed in their suffering, when that suffering is not a result of doing what is wrong.<sup>27</sup> The qualification was expressed with a negative imperative. Peter gave a list of conditions that should be avoided to convey that suffering should only be because of faithfulness to Christ.<sup>28</sup> First, they were not to suffer as a murderer. Murder was forbidden both in the OT and NT (Exod 20:13; Rom 1:29; 1 Tim 1:9). It was an act of those who stood contrary to God's purposes (Gen 4:27), revealing one's spiritual heritage (John 8:44), and revealing a spiritual character that was antithetical to God's own (1 John 3:12). The second category to be avoided was "as a thief." Also forbidden in the OT (Exod 20:15) and the NT (Eph 4:28), thieves would not inherit the kingdom of God. Third, Peter mentioned "evildoer." The noun could refer to a magician, but this is unlikely here.<sup>29</sup> The verb was used in the letter to denote wrongdoing (cf. 3:17) and indicated that which is out of step with the standards of what is viewed as right (1 Pet 3:17).<sup>30</sup> The last category mentioned that the readers were to avoid was that of being a "meddler." The word could refer to a busybody or to one who is involved in embezzlement. Since embezzlement can be a kind of theft, and the words "even as" would point to something less grave than the afore mentioned crimes, it is best to take

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<sup>27</sup> The ESV uses the "but" to signal the qualification as there is no adversative conjunction that would translate this. The verse functions to support what was just stated in verse 14 as indicated by the untranslated *γάρ*. So Achtemeier, who comments as follows: "The untranslated *γάρ* indicates a basis for what was previously said. In other words, the divine Spirit rests on believers, or believers can trust that the divine spirit rests upon them provided they are not suffering for other reasons than being Christian and following Christ." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 309.

<sup>28</sup> The repetition of "as" both indicates categories as well as a "stock list" from which the author drew. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 188; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 784.

<sup>29</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 310.

<sup>30</sup> Elliott writes, "[T]hus it is likely that *kakopoios* here refers in general to "one who does what is wrong," acting contrary to prevailing customs and norms of conduct. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 785.

this as a prohibition against being a busybody.<sup>31</sup> All these words were contrary to what it means to follow Christ, which was equated in the letter with righteousness or doing what is good (2:15, 20; 3:11, 12, 13, 14, 17; 4:19). So, the kind of suffering that was legitimate was not that which was a result of doing actions contrary to the Christian life.

### **The Practical Implication (v. 16)**

In verse 16 Peter added the final statements to his explanation. Here Peter identified legitimate suffering and how the Christian community should conduct itself in response. The notion that the legitimate reason for suffering was presented here can be seen in that verse 16 stood in contrast to the categories that were to be rejected found in verse 15, as signaled by “yet.”<sup>32</sup> What stood in contrast was the suffering as a Christian. The difference distinguished this kind of suffering from the above, and while Peter was not assuming that his readers were suffering for doing wrong, this statement pointed to the reality that they were indeed suffering for being Christians.<sup>33</sup> “Christian” was a term mentioned only two other times in the NT (Acts 11:26; 26:28). The term reflected a common practice in which followers were identified by the name of the one they followed.<sup>34</sup> It was originally used by outsiders to identify those who followed Christ.<sup>35</sup> Peter used it here in a positive way to identify those who were loyal to Christ.

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<sup>31</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224.

<sup>32</sup> The kind of conduct that was mentioned in verse 15 is antithetical to the Christian life. D. Edmond Hiebert comments that “[‘yet’] implies contrast and suggests that to suffer for the causes just indicated (v. 15) would not be to suffer as a Christian.” D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1992), 290.

<sup>33</sup> Here again is another first-class conditional statement giving more the sense of “when” (cf. 4:13). Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 313.

<sup>34</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 313. Tacitus writes, “Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos et quaesitissimis poenis adfecit quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat.” Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales (Latin)*, ed. Charles Dennis Fisher (Medford, MA: Perseus Digital Library, 1906), 15:44 (XV [44]).

<sup>35</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 268.

The situation, then, being one in which the readers were suffering as Christians, what were they to do? Peter gave directions both in negative and positive terms in his apodosis. The first imperative Peter stated here was negative. The readers were to “not be ashamed.” Peter had more in mind than mere internal subjective feelings.<sup>36</sup> He had in mind that which can lead a person away from a certain course of action or position (Mark 8:38; 2 Tim 1:8, 12, 16; 2:15). Since this was contrasted with glorifying God, shame referred to disavowing Jesus.<sup>37</sup> Thus, this command guarded the readers by exhorting them not to give into that which could lead them away from Christ.

On the positive side, the suffering readers were called to “glorify God in that name.” To “glorify God” was to give him honor, praise, and confession (Luke 2:20; 5:25; 7:16; Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 9:13).<sup>38</sup> “In that name” probably referred to the sphere in which the action takes place and indicated they were suffering because of being a Christian. So, Peter desired them to endure rather than defect. He wanted them to continue to be devoted to Christ and to confess him even as they faced the rejection of the surrounding society. Suffering signaled that they were blessed, provided that the cause of the suffering was because of faithfulness to Christ.

### **God’s People Experience the First Phase of Judgment**

Having given his detailed explanation as to why Christians should rejoice as they suffer for Christ, Peter then turned his attention to why they should glorify God in response to the suffering his readers were experiencing. The suffering that these Christians were facing indicated that the eschatological judgment of God had begun. In

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<sup>36</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314.

<sup>37</sup> Hiebert sees it as a warning to guard the readers from a moral cowardice. Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 291. This would be supported in other texts such as 2 Tim 1:6 in which Paul exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of Christ or Paul but to suffer hardship. Timothy was not to be ashamed to avoid the difficulty that came from following Christ.

<sup>38</sup> So Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 315; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226.

verses 17-18 Peter explained that the opening phase of judgment began with the people of God (before it expanded to the rest of humanity).

### **The Beginning of Judgment (v. 17a)**

In verse 17a the recipients were told that judgment begins with the church. “For” connected what followed to what preceded in verses 14-16 by way of explanation or reason, particularly in verse 16 and the exhortation to glorify God.<sup>39</sup> The explanation then explained why responding to suffering rightly, that is, in the manner toward which Peter has just admonished his readers, was essential.<sup>40</sup> It was essential because of the judgment of God started with the people of God. Here then is an eschatological basis to the instructions already given above.<sup>41</sup> Time referred to the critical point at which the judgment commenced.<sup>42</sup> Peter had in mind the opening phase of judgment.<sup>43</sup>

The theme of judgment is not scarce in the OT or NT. From the very beginning God is revealed as judge and renders judgment in his capacity as such (Gen 3:15-24; 4:11-12; 6:7, 17; 7; 15:14; 18; 19:29). The prophets anticipated a final judgment (Jer 7:8-15; Amos 3:2; 5:18; Zech 13:7-9). The Writings viewed God as judge and announced a final judgment that would occur at the end of human history (Pss 96-99; Dan 12:2-3).<sup>44</sup> The NT proclaims this reality as well (Matt 7:21-29; 16:27; John 5:25-29; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:6; 2 Thess 1:5-10; 2 Pet 3:7-13).

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<sup>39</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 170; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 193; Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 291.

<sup>40</sup> Achtemeier writes that “it gives further reason as to why glorifying God in suffering is both possible and necessary.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 315.

<sup>41</sup> As Elliott has rightly observed, “‘for’ provides the eschatological warrant for the forgoing exhortation.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 797.

<sup>42</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 797.

<sup>43</sup> This can be supported by the phrase in verse “and if it begins with us” (v. 17b).

<sup>44</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, “Judgment,” In *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 621.

Within 1 Peter the idea of judgment had already been touched upon. The Father was identified as the one who judges men impartially (1:17). He had also asserted the just judgment of God as that to which Christ himself trusted when he was treated unjustly by sinners (2:23). Along with this, Peter had stated that the unbelievers would have to give an account to the one who judges the living and the dead (4:5). The judgment within Peter was a final judgment. This can be seen in that the mention of judgment was used to motivate the readers to live faithfully (1:17; 4:5). The readers present conduct was shaped by the reality of what was to come. Judgment was not only a constituent of the gospel, but also to the perseverance that flowed from it.<sup>45</sup> So, Peter brought up this matter of judgment to explain why it was necessary for the believers to continue to glorify God while suffering.

This final judgment was to begin at the house of God. “House of God” was one of the ways that Peter referred to the church as God’s eschatological temple (cf. 2:5).<sup>46</sup> Peter was alluding to the language of Ezekiel 9, but not necessarily the theological message.<sup>47</sup> In Ezekiel 9, God was announcing the judgment he was going to bring on the city of Jerusalem (Ezek 9:4). As the judgment was executed, a distinction was made between those who lived righteously (9:4) and those who did not (Ezek 9:5-6a). The starting point in the city where the judgment was to begin was the temple, referred to as “my sanctuary” and the “house.” (Ezek 9:6). Thus, the judgment, which separated those who truly belonged to God from those who did not, began at the place of God’s dwelling and where his glory was manifested, the temple. The difference between Ezekiel 9 and 1 Peter is that the theology is not the same. In Ezekiel 9 the ungodly are destroyed, while in

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<sup>45</sup> Seifrid, “Judgment,” 621.

<sup>46</sup> Kelly notes that the church is pictured as God’s temple. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 193; contra Elliott, *1 Peter*, 800.

<sup>47</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 227.

1 Peter the judgment refines the people of God rather than bringing about their destruction.

Malachi 3:1-4 was closer to the theme of judgment as refinement that can be seen here in 1 Peter. Here also is the mention of God's presence at his temple (Mal 3:1) and his people are refined (Mal 3:2-3) rather than destroyed, resulting in them living righteously (Mal 3:4).

Peter already established that the physical structure of the temple was pointing forward to something beyond itself, namely, the Christian community with Christ as the cornerstone (1 Pet 2:4-7). Thus, the church was the temple and just as judgment had begun at the house of God in the OT, so also the final judgment. This judgment functioned to purify God's people preserving them for glory. Such a theme was already articulated in the letter (1:6-9; 4:13).

The suffering that was judgment indicated the reality of the eschatological age breaking into the present.<sup>48</sup> As the eschatological age had dawned in the coming of Christ and the salvation he brings (1 Pet 1:20-21), so also that eschatological judgment. There was present suffering that the people of God experienced. However, there was a far greater suffering that could be anticipated for those who abandoned or reject the gospel (v. 17b). This is what Peter meant as he drew his readers attention to another condition.

### **The Judgment of the Wicked (vv. 17b-18)**

While judgment began with God's people, those outside the covenant community would eventually experience God's judgment which would be far more severe. "And it starts with us" was a phrase that indicated that Peter understood that believers were the temple and reaffirmed that judgment began with the people of God. That it starts with God's people indicated that the other group, those who disobey the

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<sup>48</sup> Elliott points out that believers suffering for their faith as a mark of the end times is a theme that reoccurring in the NT (Rom 8:18, 22; 1 Cor 7:26; Phil 1:29-30; 1 Thess 3:3-4; 5:3; 2 Thess 1:4-10; 2 Tim 3:1, 12; Heb 13:13; Rev 2:10; 3:10; 12:1-8). Elliott, *1 Peter*, 798.

gospel, were not yet experiencing suffering and thus judgment in its final sense. This second half of the verse was presented as a conditional statement in which the reality was assumed by Peter. The reality assumed was that the believing community was already experiencing suffering as the mark of the beginning phase of God's judgment.

“Outcome” denoted the product or consequence of a matter as in 1:9.<sup>49</sup> There it referred to the outcome of the faith of those who persevere to the end. Here it was used to raise the question regarding non-Christians. Peter described them as “those who do not obey the gospel of God.” Used only here in the letter, the phrase “gospel of God” denoted the message proclaimed concerning Jesus Christ.<sup>50</sup> This message as something that was to be responded to with obedience can be seen in earlier parts of the letter and was synonymous with believing the message (1 Pet 1:22; 2:7a). In contrast to this, to disobey conveyed rejection and was equated with unbelief (1 Pet 2:7b, 8; 3:1).

The logic of Peter's argument was as follows: if judgment started with God's people, and the judgment was the suffering of those who believed the gospel, then how much more severe it must be for those who reject the gospel? It will be far worse for them. Thus, the idea that Peter was seeking to convey to these harassed saints was that it was better to suffer now as a believer than to have to endure the suffering of those who reject Christ.<sup>51</sup> In other words, Christians were to persevere in faithfulness to Christ as they suffered because what was coming for those who did not submit to the lordship of Jesus, those who disobeyed the word, was infinitely more severe than what the readers were enduring.

Verse 18 sought to support this line of argument with another rhetorical question that was a citation from the OT. Here Peter quoted Proverbs 11:31. In Proverbs

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<sup>49</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 801.

<sup>50</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 272.

<sup>51</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 316.

11:31 the righteous on earth will be repaid by the Lord. It points to the same idea as it relates to the wicked and the sinner. This verse should be read in connection with Proverbs 11:30, which stated the idea that the fruit of righteousness is a tree of life (Prov 11:30). The phrase “tree of life” was used in Proverbs 3:18 to describe the blessing upon those who take hold of wisdom. The image recalled the life of blessing humanity experienced prior to the fall. The tree of life has eschatological overtones in its original context (Gen 3:22).<sup>52</sup> Those same ideas were found here as well.<sup>53</sup> The righteous man is parallel to the one who is wise in verse 30. In Proverbs, wisdom comes because of fearing the Lord as manifested by submitting one’s existence to his instruction (Prov 1:7). Proverbs 11:31 indicated that the righteous man will reap the blessing of this submission, while those who have refused to submit will also be recompensed for their response to God’s rule.

Peter used this Proverb because living righteously was viewed by him as synonymous with following Christ. He was showing that those who remain faithful will inherit the eschatological life. They receive the fruit of a life lived in faith filled submission to Christ. Peter did follow the LXX here which has “scarcely” rather than “on earth.” The idea here was not the sense of barely but in the sense of “with difficulty.” Christ himself lived out this pattern (1 Pet 1:11-12; 3:18; cf. Luke 24:26; Acts 2:23-24). His people follow in the same. The righteous are saved but they go through the difficulty of suffering/persecution. The sinner who will eventually experience the eschatological judgment will not escape the ferocity of God’s wrath for his or her rejection to the gospel.

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<sup>52</sup> G. K. Beale argues that the tree of life represented eschatological blessing to which Adam is forbidden access due to his failure to obey God’s word. G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 37-39.

<sup>53</sup> Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs: A Theological Exposition*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2009), 296.

## **The Implication for Enduring Suffering**

In verse 19, Peter brought to bear the implication for the Christians inferred from all that he has stated. They were to trust God and persevere in following Christ. “Therefore” marked a conclusion or inference from what was just said. “Those who suffered according to God’s will” referred to those who suffered because of their submission to what God wanted rather than suffering due to sinful actions. Those who suffered because of their allegiance to Christ were to entrust themselves to God. God was identified as the “faithful Creator.” This is a statement regarding his sovereignty over the affairs of creation and mankind. It also indicated that he would judge and that they could trust him to vindicate them in the end.<sup>54</sup> Such an approach to suffering was exemplified by Christ as detailed earlier in the letter (1 Pet 2:23). Thus, the Christians manifested that trust while doing good and other phrases that referred to ordering their conduct under the rule of Christ as faithful followers of him.

## **Conclusion**

Peter sought to encourage his readers as they persevered through the suffering that was emitted toward them from a hostile world. His desire for them was that they continue to trust the God who had given them life. He wanted them to recognize his sovereign care for them so that they would trust him and continue to follow Christ, to do good even as they suffered for the sake of their allegiance to Jesus Christ. With this objective in mind, he instructed them not to be confused by the suffering they were facing from outsiders. Such suffering was not an anomaly, not something that should be perceived as a foreign reality for Christians. This fiery ordeal was there to test them. Rather than being surprised, they were to rejoice that they may rejoice and be glad in the

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<sup>54</sup> Seifrid writes, “The NT expectation of a final judgment is derived from biblical tradition and therefore is based on God’s right as Creator to execute justice in the earth.” Seifrid, “Judgment,” 621.

end when Christ was revealed, having not allowed persecution to lead them to abandon the faith.

This exhortation was supported by a detailed explanation. First, he informed them that they were blessed because already the eschatological glory and God's Spirit was resting on them. Second, he qualified these words by saying that their suffering must not be because of sinful conduct. In that case, their suffering would be deserved. Third, with the assumption that that they were suffering for faithfulness to Christ, he charged the readers not to give into being ashamed of Christ since this had the potential to lead them to apostatize from the Christian faith. Peter then informed them that the suffering meant that the eschatological judgment of God was at play. They were experiencing this judgment because they were the people of God, his temple, and this judgment began at the house of God, the church. Then, with an argument from the lesser to the greater, he asserted that as difficult as the judgment for believers was, it would be far greater for those who did not obey the gospel when judgment came to them. He grounded his point in the OT by citing Proverbs 11: 31. He then closed by drawing a final implication mentioned above. They were to entrust themselves to the sovereign Creator while doing good.

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## ABSTRACT

### STANDING FIRM IN THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND PREACHING IN 1 PETER

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This project is a series of expositions on passages from the book of 1 Peter that contain either Old Testament quotations or allusions. It investigates both the contextual meaning of each passage and the biblical theological connections to the rest of Scripture. Chapter 1 introduces the project by giving a brief survey of biblical theology, defining its meaning, and stating a practical approach to the task of interpretation. The remainder of the project is a seven-part expositional treatment of selected passages within 1 Peter employing a biblical-theological approach.

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