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FIRE AND GLORY:
PREACHING FIRST PETER TO PREPARE CENTRAL
BAPTIST CHURCH IN ROUND ROCK, TEXAS,
TO ENDURE SUFFERING

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FIRE AND GLORY:
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BAPTIST CHURCH IN ROUND ROCK, TEXAS,
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To my beloved wife, Helen. Your strength sustains me. Your grace astounds me.

Your love for Jesus challenges me. Your kindness restores me.

Your patience reassures me. I love you. On to the next adventure.

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PREFACE

I began this project in the summer of 2020. The world was in turmoil, and it was a strange time to study at Southern. Nevertheless, it was an absolute joy to work on this project. All glory belongs to God. He alone is worthy to be praised. I thank him for teaching me and sustaining me for the duration of my study. I owe everything to him.

The title page of this project displays my name as if I have accomplished this on my own. However, this project represents the sacrificial investment of several people whose names deserve to appear on these pages. First, my wife, Helen, encouraged me, prayed for me, carried extra responsibility around the house, and spent countless hours reading and discussing this work. I owe the completion of this project to her. The books can go back on the shelf! Second, our kids, Charlie, Emma, and Clara, shared their dad for three years. Their patience and understanding are an example to me.

Third, the Elders, Operations Team, and Staff at Central Baptist Church allowed me to pursue this dream. They represent the whole congregation, many of whom supported and encouraged me along the way. There is no way I could have completed this project without their support.

Fourth, I developed strong relationships with the men in my cohort. Foster Toft, Nathan Cobb, Landon Byrd, and Doug Ponder all encouraged and challenged me throughout the program. Double Dogs, Momma's, and Saints Pizza will never be the same without us. Fifth, Southern Seminary has been a wonderful place to study. Specifically, I am thankful for Dr. Jim Hamilton's scholarship, insight, and critique. I also appreciate how Dr. Brian Vickers challenged my thinking and writing. Every professor who lectured brought something fresh and exciting to my learning. The staff at the seminary's Writing

Center sharpened this project in numerous ways. Southern has developed an incredible program that I commend to anyone looking to further their theological study.

Throughout the course of my work, I read and studied more than I ever have before. I have immersed myself in the Bible. Consequently, my love for the God of the Bible has grown. Knowledge of God and love for him is the great reward of this project. Praise the Lord!

Brett McDonald

Round Rock, Texas

May 2023

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Biblical Theology

The Road to Hana carves a bending path through the jungles of Maui and ascends Mount Haleakala toward a village called Hana. Though breathtaking stops punctuate the path, a traveler may be unaware of its waterfalls, rainforests, lava beaches, and overlooks without a guide. If travelers rush to Hana and skip the treasures along the way, they miss the richness and purpose of the journey. They miss the Road to Hana. The hidden grandeur of the Road conceals itself from a traveler without a guide. But *with* a guide, a traveler will swim among cascading waterfalls, collect black lava rocks from beaches, swim in the cool Pacific, and be filled with awe at the beauty of the tropical landscape. A guide makes it possible to truly experience the journey.

In a similar way, biblical theology guides readers to experience the fullness of God's Word. A cursory reading of the Scriptures affords enough understanding for a sinner to know his plight and turn to Jesus in faith. Reading the Bible without biblical theology may bring someone to a right knowledge of God, but it might not. Without stopping to observe the Bible's symbols, patterns, and themes, one misses much of what the biblical authors communicate about God and neglects the framework for understanding Scripture.

Defining Biblical Theology

Biblical theology guides readers to interpret the Bible, know God, and walk in his ways. Brian Rosner writes that biblical theology "proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyze and synthesize the Bible's teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible's overarching

narrative and Christocentric focus.”¹ Beginning with a historical-grammatical interpretation, biblical theology pursues the authors’ perspective and a passage’s locus in the metanarrative of Scripture. Certain presuppositions lay the groundwork for a sure-footed biblical-theological approach, and these principles endeavor to unpack the Bible on its own terms. To read the Bible *biblically* is to presuppose and investigate dual authorial intent, to read canonically, and to grasp the authors’ grid of symbolism.²

Dual authorship. Readers of the Bible do not possess the authority to determine meaning on their own but instead must uncover the meaning intended by the authors.³ Biblical theology is an author-oriented discipline. One cannot separate what the author meant from what the text means to the contemporary reader.⁴ The biblical authors observed the works of God in human history and interpreted these actions in their writings. The words they wrote had certain meaning, and readers of Scripture must uncover that meaning through historical-grammatical exegesis.⁵

At the same time, faithful biblical theology affirms Scripture’s testimony about itself and recognizes that Scripture is a product of “dual authorship, human and divine.”⁶

¹ Brian Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 10.

² Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 36-50. Gentry and Wellum compare two kinds of biblical theology. The first developed roots in the Enlightenment and does not begin with a Christian worldview. These biblical theologians deny the Bible as God’s revelation from the beginning. Gentry and Wellum embrace a second kind of biblical theology: “Scripture is to be interpreted in light of its own categories and presentation since Scripture comes to us as divinely given, coherent, and unified” (45). For these conclusions, Gentry and Wellum cite D. A. Carson, “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology,” in Alexander et al., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 89-104.

³ Aubrey Sequeria and Samuel C. Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis and the Nature of Typology,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 15.

⁴ Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 15.

⁵ Sequeria and Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis,” 14.

⁶ Sequeria and Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis,” 15.

Though written by men, the Bible is “*God’s Word written.*”⁷ The Holy Spirit “carried along” the biblical authors so that they freely wrote exactly what God intended (2 Pet 1:21).⁸ The task of the biblical theologian must include discovering both human and divine authorial intent. One may ascertain the divine author’s intent *by* uncovering that of the human author. This “fuller sense” of meaning unfolds by reading Bible passages against the backdrop of the whole canon and through the grid of biblical symbols.⁹

Canonical reading. A canonical reading of a passage points in the direction of divine authorial intent. The Bible includes stories, poems, and letters written in three languages by dozens of authors from across multiple continents. One might think this wide range of source material lays the foundation for a fragmented or incoherent narrative, but the Bible is far from disjointed. Instead, the Scripture is unified—telling one cohesive story. No part of Scripture dangles unattached to the whole canon. Every story, song, law, and letter collectively explains who God is and what he has done in Christ. Reading the Bible canonically—and thus *biblically*—means reading every part of it in light of the whole.¹⁰

The unfolding of this story suggests divine intent and the fuller meaning of a text. As history progressed, the biblical authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit began to interpret their own circumstances through the patterns and themes evident in earlier Scripture. By the time contemporary readers approach the biblical text, it has

⁷ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 46, emphasis original.

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

⁹ Sequeria and Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis,” 15. Sequeria and Emadi discuss *sensus plenior* and dual authorship.

¹⁰ James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 12.

already been handled and its meaning “shaped” by later authors in the canon.¹¹ Edward Klink and Darian Lockett write, “The canon is a path that has been traversed by many travelers, each of whom has left many footprints.”¹² When reading the Bible today, one must read it as a part of a whole. Then one must allow the whole to interpret the part. Doing so will reveal the fuller meaning intended by the divine author.¹³

Reading symbols. Biblical theology also requires an immersion into the symbols and types used by the authors to describe God’s acts in redemptive history.¹⁴ The biblical authors identified symbols and patterns in redemptive history and highlighted them in their own writings.¹⁵ For example, the authors of the Bible use exodus imagery to describe God’s actions throughout history and to point forward to the future deliverance of his people. The Lord delivered his people from bondage in Egypt, led them through the wilderness as sojourners, and then brought them to the land of promise. Moses narrates this story, and the prophets pick up on this imagery to describe their contemporary circumstances. Isaiah speaks of the return from exile as a new kind of exodus (e.g., Isa 43:2-4; 16-19). God’s people dwell in a foreign land against their will. The Lord delivers them, and they return to the promised land. The New Testament also uses new exodus imagery to describe God’s actions in relationship to his people. He has saved believers

¹¹ The divine author shapes the text without contradicting or changing the human author’s intent. The Spirit does not give a new meaning but a fuller, extended one. See Sequeria and Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis,” 15.

¹² Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 127.

¹³ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 118-37. Gentry and Wellum suggest reading the canon along three horizons: textual, epochal, and canonical. Not only must one interpret Scripture in its historical-grammatical context, but one must also read it as a part of the whole.

¹⁴ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 65.

¹⁵ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 67.

from their bondage to sin, and he leads them as they sojourn on their way to the new heavens and the new earth.¹⁶

This “symbolic universe” of the biblical authors contains many images, types, and patterns that can all be discovered through careful study of the Bible.¹⁷ The practice of “steeping ourselves in [the Bible’s] tone or temper,” as C. S. Lewis suggests, allows readers of Scripture to “become familiar with the contours of the text, its poetic detail, its texture, its wordplays and distinctive logic, its overall shape and design.”¹⁸ In other words, readers who enter the symbolic universe of the Bible have mastered the content of Scripture itself and embraced the interpretive perspective and worldview of the biblical authors. Immersed readers understand the biblical symbols that point toward their fulfillment in Christ. Reading the Bible canonically and understanding its symbols allows readers to gain the perspective of the human and divine authors and discover their intended meaning. Applied this way, biblical theology guides readers to understand how all of Scripture points to the climax of God’s revelation in Christ.

The Purpose of Biblical Theology

The Bible is literature, and anyone who wishes to understand it must analyze and interpret the text. God, however, has supplied humanity with more than a textbook for literary analysis and intellectual growth. God has revealed himself in the pages of the Bible, providing the means by which one can know him and truly know himself. God reveals himself through the Scriptures, and one knows him in truth through this story. What better way to understand this revelation than from the perspective of its authors? Biblical

¹⁶ James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 522-28.

¹⁷ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 64.

¹⁸ Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 19. Dempster discusses C. S. Lewis’s literary approach to biblical interpretation in his book *Reflections on the Psalms*. C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958).

theology interprets the authors on their terms to unearth their intended meaning, which leads to the knowledge of God.¹⁹

This knowledge of God leads to a true knowledge of self. John Calvin writes, “It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he have previously contemplated the face of God and come down after such contemplation to look into himself.”²⁰ A person knows himself and can interpret his circumstances only after he has a right view of God. Biblical theology helps one know himself since it first can help him understand God’s self-revelation. The biblical authors interpreted their own circumstances and observations through the perspective of earlier Scripture. Biblical theology helps a contemporary person do the same. If God has so acted in the past, then one can confidently suppose that he will continue to act in similar ways in the present.

Those who know God and know themselves will trust in Jesus and understand that they have also been commissioned to make him known. Just as Israel provided light to the nations (Isa 49:6), Jesus commands his followers, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19). To teach all the commands of Jesus, one must first understand them. Biblical theology guides a person along the way and helps him discover the full meaning of the text in order that he may know God, know himself, and make God known to others.

Biblical Theology and Preaching

The Brooklyn Bridge stands as one of the most recognizable features of New York City, joining Manhattan and Brooklyn over the East River. A nineteenth century engineering marvel, the Brooklyn Bridge boasts two limestone towers and steel cables

¹⁹ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 45.

²⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 5.

that suspend the bridge over the river.²¹ A bridge provides a way of transportation between two places separated by a divide. Though a simple concept, building a bridge of this magnitude requires a studied, experienced engineer.

The same can be true of preaching. Preaching is bridge building. Preachers attempt to connect the world of the Bible to the circumstances of the congregation.²² Preachers explain the text to their people so they can understand it and apply it to their lives. An effective sermon helps the audience view their own lives through the lens of biblical principles.

If preaching is bridge building, then biblical theology is the steel cable that suspends the bridge over the “cultural gulf” between the original and contemporary audiences.²³ It serves several functions which support faithful preaching. First, biblical theology sets the foundation for right interpretation.²⁴ A preacher does not need to invent meaning in a text, nor does he await new revelation from the Spirit. Instead, he interprets the text in view of the whole canon and allows the Bible to speak on its own terms.

Second, biblical theology influences the preacher to preach the whole counsel of God since the Bible’s continuity necessarily draws in the whole canon. It may be impossible to preach the entire Bible to a congregation in one lifetime, but biblical theology influences the preacher to consider texts in light of the canon. A preacher has the responsibility and opportunity to help his congregation see each text in its full context, and as a pastor preaches this way over time he in turn proclaims the whole counsel of God to his people.

²¹ David McCullough, *The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 28-31.

²² I owe this analogy to John Stott’s work. John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

²³ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 137-38.

²⁴ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 46.

Third, the people of God learn how to read Scripture by exemplary sermons. A preacher who uses a biblical text as a springboard to say what he really wants to say, even if completely detached from the original intent, teaches his congregation to impose meaning on the text. Similarly, a preacher who mystically derives meaning creates an expectation for a church member to receive a new revealed word, sometimes devoid of historical-grammatical context. Preachers teach their congregations how to read the Bible by the way in which they preach. A preacher committed to biblical theology in his sermons does his congregation a great service. They no longer have permission to impose their own meaning on the text nor do they passively wait for another revelation from the Spirit. Instead, they examine the historical-grammatical context, study the text's place in the canon, and interpret the symbols used by the author by embracing the interpretive perspective of the biblical author.

Biblical Theology in 1 Peter

My preaching project attempts to use biblical theology to build a bridge from the world of Peter's audience to the circumstances of my own contemporary congregation. The preacher must begin in Peter's world and allow him to speak on his own terms. When Peter refers to his audience as "exiles" (1 Pet 1:1) and "sojourners" (1 Pet 2:11), he is employing types and symbols from the Old Testament and suggesting that the church now participates in the eschatological fulfillment of Old Testament redemptive-historical patterns. The same could be said of Peter's description of his audience as a "holy priesthood" (1 Pet 2:5).

Biblical theology attempts to interpret these concepts by reading them canonically. For example, the new exodus undergirds much of 1 Peter. Reading 1 Peter canonically draws the reader to reflect on the first exodus and the events surrounding God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Biblical theology causes readers to ask questions like, how does the whole Bible speak about exiles, sojourners, the priesthood, and being

sprinkled by blood? Why did Peter choose these terms? How does Peter's use of the first exodus inform an understanding of his message to the people of Asia Minor?

In this way, biblical theology helps the preacher broaden his view toward the whole canon. As the congregation receives the rich fare of biblical-theological-infused preaching, they will be well-nourished and learn to crave and feed themselves the pure milk of the word (1 Pet 2:2). They will learn to interpret their own circumstances in light of the principles gleaned from a biblical theological understanding of 1 Peter.

Relevant Literature

A significant biblical theological analysis of 1 Peter requires wide-ranging awareness of relevant literature. I have divided my resources into three sections. The first section includes commentaries. I do not provide an exhaustive list, but I do mention biblical theological, exegetical, and critical commentaries. The second section of literature contains biblical theological theologies that have shaped my thinking for this project. The third section includes monographs exclusive to themes in 1 Peter.

Commentaries

I found several commentaries to be useful to me for this project. Those who wish to understand 1 Peter must understand his biblical theological use of the Old Testament. D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale's *Commentary on the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament* examines many New Testament references to the Old Testament.²⁵ Carson writes the chapter on 1 Peter, and his comments were useful in my exposition of 1 Peter. I also found several valuable exegetical commentaries. Thomas Schreiner's volume in the New American Commentary series and Paul Achtemeier's critical commentary became

²⁵ D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1015-45.

the most trusted companions to my study.²⁶ Schreiner's work serves the reader by balancing detailed scholarship and pastoral application. Achtemeier likewise considers grammar, syntax, and cross references in detail. Other helpful commentaries include works by J. Ramsey Michaels, Leonhard Goppelt, Karen Jobes, Peter Davids, and Craig Keener.²⁷ Additionally, Greg Forbes and Mark Dubis provide the most technical detail of the commentaries I used.²⁸

Biblical Theologies

Several biblical theologies include broad analysis on key themes such as the new exodus, the temple, the priesthood, and the people of God. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* collects many of these themes.²⁹ Jim Hamilton's work has largely influenced my project. *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment* treats each book of the Bible from a biblical theological perspective.³⁰ *What Is Biblical Theology* is a primer on biblical theology and explains how patterns, symbols, and images function.³¹ When studying biblical theological themes, *Typology* proved to be most useful.³² Other biblical

²⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003); Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996).

²⁷ J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021).

²⁸ Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2014); Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010).

²⁹ Alexander et al., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

³⁰ Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation*.

³¹ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*

³² James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022).

theologies have shaped my thinking including works by G. K. Beale and Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum.³³

Monographs

A biblical theological study of 1 Peter requires an understanding of key themes throughout the canon. Peter Davids treats the biblical theology of 1 Peter.³⁴ Bryan Estelle, Alastair Roberts and Andrew Wilson, and Michael Morales all survey the exodus theme as it surfaces throughout Scripture.³⁵ Matthew Harmon and Lee Beach each detail a canonical examination of the exile theme.³⁶ Though not as scholarly as some of the other resources, Elliot Clark takes up the exile theme in 1 Peter as well.³⁷ Beale also provides an exhaustive study on the temple;³⁸ Andrew Malone traces a biblical theology of the priesthood;³⁹ Benjamin Gladd also treats the priesthood;⁴⁰ and Benjamin Sargent examines Peter's use of the Old Testament and often argues contrary to some of my other

³³ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011); Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*.

³⁴ Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

³⁵ Bryan D. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2018); Alastair J. Roberts and Andrew Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing Themes of Redemption through Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020).

³⁶ Matthew S. Harmon, *Rebels and Exiles: A Biblical Theology of Sin and Restoration*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020); Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015).

³⁷ Elliot Clark, *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in our own Land* (n.p.: Gospel Coalition, 2019).

³⁸ 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, 2004).

³⁹ Andrew S. Malone, *God's Mediators: A Biblical Theology of the Priesthood*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 43 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017).

⁴⁰ Benjamin L. Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church: A Biblical Theology of the People of God*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019).

resources.⁴¹ Each of these volumes contributes to a robust biblical theological study of 1 Peter.

Local Context

Jesus and the apostles promised that Christians would suffer. Jesus told his disciples, “In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33). Paul told Timothy, “All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12). Peter warned his readers not to be “surprised by the fiery trial when it comes upon [them]” (1 Pet 4:12). While the Bible guarantees suffering for followers of Jesus, it also proclaims a message of hope. Peter leans heavily on new exodus imagery and connects the experiences of the old covenant people of God with the experiences of the new covenant people of God. Like the people of Israel, those who belong to God through the new covenant should expect both suffering and victory, fire and glory. This is the message of 1 Peter that is relevant for believers at Central Baptist Church in Round Rock, Texas, a suburb of Austin where I serve as the Worship and Groups Pastor.

The religiously unaffiliated are on the rise in America, and the Austin area stands as an example of this trend.⁴² Though geographically located in the Bible Belt, Austin is a hub of those who claim no religion and those who are not active in a church congregation.⁴³ Members of Central who wish to associate themselves with Jesus find

⁴¹ Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, The Library of New Testament Studies 547 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

⁴² Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project, “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” October 17, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace>. Over the last decade, adults who describe themselves as Christians have declined about 12 percent, while those who identify as religiously unaffiliated have increased 17 percent.

⁴³ According to the Barna Cities Report, when compared to other cities in the southwest region of the United States, Austin ranks fifth in population with no faith identity, third in “dechurched,” and seventh in “never churchd.” Furthermore, millennials represent just 4 percent of Christians in Austin while they represent 14 percent of Christians nationwide. Christian millennials in Austin are underrepresented by almost 70 percent. Barna Report: *Cities, Austin, TX: City Report 2017-2018 with Comparative Data from the Southwest Region*, Barna Group, 2017.

themselves outside of the mainstream, and the idea of a Christian majority is fading into memory.⁴⁴

The decline of the influence of the Bible in culture signals societal unfamiliarity and misunderstanding of the Christian worldview, which sets the stage for Christian suffering. A firm grasp of Peter’s message will enable members of Central to stand firm when under fire because glory will certainly come. As Austin increasingly becomes post-Christian and its paganism bleeds into the suburbs, what does it look like for believers in Jesus to stand firm while they are marginalized in their communities?

Chapter Previews

Trials are certain for the new people of God. God’s relationship with his old covenant people sets the pattern for and encourages confidence in the surety of a glorious deliverance. The seven passages that follow explain to Christians how to live in light of their status as the sojourning new people of God. Each chapter of this project traces a biblical-theological theme and expositis a particular passage.

Chapter 2—Christian Identity and Joy in Suffering (1 Peter 1:1-12)

Peter opens his letter by establishing the identity of his Christian readers as God’s chosen people just like the old covenant people of God. He addresses the letter to the “elect exiles of the dispersion” (v. 1). By using this phrase, Peter frames the suffering of Christians in Asia Minor within the context of the sufferings of God’s chosen people in the Old Testament.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ A Mission Insite study of a five-mile radius of the Central Baptist Church campus in Round Rock shows a 16 percent increase of those religiously inactive over the last ten years, representing 63 percent of people in the study area. On the other hand, Austin’s change is almost identical to Round Rock’s. Austin has seen a 17 percent increase of religiously unaffiliated which represents 65 percent of the city. MissionInsite, *The MinistryInsite Priorities Report 2017*.

⁴⁵ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 38-41.

Peter also highlights the status of his readers in the conclusion of his greeting by declaring that the people in these churches have been chosen for the purpose of obedience to Christ and for “the sprinkling with his blood” (v. 2). “Sprinkling with his blood” highlights the correspondence between Jesus’s sacrificial death and Old Testament sacrifice.⁴⁶ Again, Peter connects people in the old covenant and the new covenant in order to frame the experiences of suffering Christians.

From that foundation, Peter then makes a bold proclamation: because of their status as chosen family members of God, Christians may rejoice in suffering. Peter uses the metaphor of fire to describe suffering. Believers should rejoice in suffering because they have a hope rooted in their newfound identity (vv. 6-7). Peter further alludes to this new identity by indicating that Christians have been born again to “an inheritance” which is a major Old Testament theme (v. 4).⁴⁷ Though they suffer through fire, Christians will be refined, and these experiences will “result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 7).

Chapter 3—Hope, Holiness, and Fear: New Exodus Essentials (1 Pet 1:13-21)

The biblical authors identify the exodus as a pattern whereby God saves his people from seemingly impossible circumstances.⁴⁸ Peter uses this pattern to describe the salvation of his audience. Just as the Lord delivered the people of Israel from Egypt, so too has God delivered the new people of God from sin and death. Like the people of Israel journeyed toward the land of promise, believers journey on their way to the new heavens and the new earth. In 1 Peter 1:13-21, Peter places his audience on their

⁴⁶ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1016-17.

⁴⁷ Oren Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land of Promise in God’s Redemptive Plan*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 34 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 148.

⁴⁸ For examples, see Hamilton, *Typology*, 254-84; Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*; Roberts and Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus*; and Morales, *Exodus Old and New*.

wilderness journey and gives them three commands to obey: set their hope in God, be holy like God, and conduct themselves in the fear of God.

Chapter 4—Living Stones: The Purpose and Expectation of the People of God (1 Pet 2:4-8)

Peter further describes the status of the new covenant people of God by continuing to use Old Testament themes. In 1 Peter 2:4-8, Peter connects the people of God across epochs by way of three Old Testament stone passages. Jesus is the cornerstone, and Peter dichotomizes the world into two categories of people: either a person will be a living stone joined to him or they will stumble and be crushed by him.⁴⁹ On the one hand, God gives the living stones a special function. They are built up “as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood” (v. 5). Christians are the new temple of God, and the presence of God is among them. They also serve as priests of God who offer spiritual sacrifices.

On the other hand, those who reject Jesus will be crushed by him. Peter alludes to Isaiah 28:16 to indicate that Christ fulfills the promise of the Lord to use a cornerstone to lay Zion’s foundation as he brings about righteousness and justice on the earth.⁵⁰ Peter reminds his readers that those who are joined to Christ by belief “will not be put to shame,” but those who do not believe will suffer dishonor (v. 6). Peter also calls on Psalm 118:22 to show that people have made a grievous error when they reject what God has chosen. Peter finally turns to Isaiah 8:14 to announce that the chosen and precious cornerstone may be rejected by men, but it will eventually cause their downfall.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1029.

⁵⁰ Grudem, *1 Peter*, 108.

⁵¹ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1028.

Chapter 5—A Privileged People: The New Exodus (1 Pet 2:9-10)

Those who are joined to Jesus as living stones have a special status before God. Once again, Peter uses the Old Testament to illuminate his point and to encourage his first century readers who were enduring persecution. In 1 Peter 2:9-10, Peter alludes to Exodus, Isaiah, and Hosea to describe his audience as participants in a new exodus.⁵² Just as the Lord promised water in the wilderness to his chosen people (Isa 43:20), so also does he help his chosen people on their new exodus. The Lord crowned the people of Israel as a kingdom of priests at Sinai (Exod 19:6); the new people of God represent a new installment in the role of the royal priesthood. Peter announces that believers are also a holy nation, just like the people of God at Sinai (Exod 19:6). Christians are God's possession employed to proclaim his excellencies. Just as the Lord rescued Israel through the exodus and the exile so they might proclaim his mighty acts, so too should the people of the new covenant herald the Lord's mighty act of redemption through Jesus Christ (Isa 43:20-21).⁵³ Believers have now received mercy. Peter alludes to Hosea and explains that Christians have moved from the status of those who are condemned to those who have received mercy (Hos 1:6-11; 2:23). In this way, Peter alludes to the Old Testament exodus pattern to explain the status of his Christian audience.

Chapter 6—Exile, Suffering, and Holiness: The Use of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter 3:10-12

Christians who understand their status as members of the new people of God have an advantage when faced with unjust suffering. Peter outlines a godly response for a Christian in the midst of difficult circumstances (1 Pet 2:13-3:12). He provides Old Testament examples throughout to demonstrate how to please God while suffering. Peter

⁵² Carson, "1 Peter," 1030-33.

⁵³ Carson, "1 Peter," 1031.

concludes this section by summarizing the expected behavior for God’s people when they endure suffering in any situation and in any relationship (1 Pet 3:8-12).

Psalm 34 sets the table for Peter’s message, and 1 Samuel 21 serves as the background for Psalm 34. David feared Saul, lived with Philistines, and had to change his behavior before Abimelech in order to survive. Peter’s Christian readers should imitate David’s confidence in the Lord. Themes of exile, suffering, and holiness connect the people of God across epochs. If God delivered David from his suffering and exile, so too will God deliver believers from their suffering and exile.⁵⁴ Thus, believers are free to respond just like David.

Chapter 7—Fire in the Temple: The Normative and Formative Nature of Christian Suffering (1 Pet 4:12-19)

In this passage, Peter converges biblical-theological fire and temple metaphors to show how suffering is both normative and formative for the people of God. Believers should “not be surprised at the fiery trial” (v. 12). The people of God across epochs have suffered. Peter also describes his audience as a temple (v. 17) who should expect the suffering of God’s refining fire. Not only is suffering normative for the people of God, but it also forms them. Peter uses the fire metaphor to demonstrate that God refines his people through suffering.⁵⁵ As Schreiner observes, “God uses suffering as the means to purify his house.”⁵⁶ In this way, difficulty for a believer shows “not a sign of God’s absence but his purifying presence.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1037.

⁵⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 219.

⁵⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude*, 219. Schreiner cites Prov 27:1; Ps 66:10; Zech 13:9; and Mal 3:1-4.

⁵⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 219.

Therefore, they should rejoice in suffering (v. 13) because Jesus’s future glory secures future joy. If believers wish to rejoice, then they should suffer as Christians and not as evildoers (v. 15). Christians who suffer must refuse to be ashamed (v.16). They must remain in the faith because the judgment of God on the unbeliever outmatches the suffering experienced by the believer (vv. 17-18). Instead of denying Christ to avoid suffering, believers should glorify God by confessing Christ (v. 16). Believers who suffer can rejoice and glorify God as Christians because they trust in their faithful Creator (v. 19). In these ways, suffering is formative for the people of God.

Chapter 8—Suffering Then Glory: The Character of Righteous Sufferers (1 Pet 5:6-11)

The biblical-theological pattern of the righteous sufferer influences 1 Peter, particularly undergirding 1 Peter 5:6-11. Though believers suffer now, they can know that God promises eschatological glory. This pattern should shape the lives of Peter’s audience. They should be humble. Peter reminds his readers of Proverb 3:34: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” He also calls back to the exodus by urging Christians to humble themselves under the “mighty hand of God” (v.6).⁵⁸ In the same way that God saved the people of Israel from the hand of Egypt, so too will he deliver Christians from their sufferings.⁵⁹

Christians should also be alert, since “the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (v. 8). Satan intends to cause the people of God to turn away from the Lord, and Christians should be prepared to stand firm by faith in the midst of this persecution. Peter again promises his readers that they will certainly suffer, but this suffering has a definite end (v. 10). And when suffering has come to completion, “the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore,

⁵⁸ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 311.

⁵⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 239.

confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (vv. 10-11). Though the devil may prowl and cause believers to walk through fire, the dominion belongs to God who promises glory for those who endure.

CHAPTER 2

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND JOY IN SUFFERING

Poor beginnings often result in poor outcomes. Consider the Leaning Tower of Pisa. No one planned for the tower to lean, but at the very beginning of its construction the foundation settled asymmetrically. It leans askew because its foundation is faulty. For decades experts have expressed concern about the potential collapse of the tower, and many throughout history have tried to stabilize it. Only recently have engineers been able to stop the lean by making corrective adjustments to the foundation of the tower.¹ Similarly, Christians must establish a biblical foundation in order to thrive as sojourners in this world. This biblical foundation grounds a person's understanding of identity. Identity centers a person and gives right perspective. Many Christians fail to properly interpret their circumstances because they fail to view them through the lens of their identity. Peter addresses the basis for the identity of his audience in his first letter. His readers are suffering, and Peter writes to help them endure and rejoice.

In this chapter I aim to show that the people of God should rejoice in suffering. First, Christians stand in continuity with the people of God in the Old Testament, though they also represent a new installment in God's redemptive plan. Second, as a result of the new birth, Christians are identified as those who have a living hope in a future inheritance. Though Peter describes the identity of Christians in many ways throughout his letter (e.g., 1 Pet 2:8-9), the basis for this identity is what God has done and what he will do for

¹ Mark Duff, "Pisa's Leaning Tower Stabilised," BBC News, May 28, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7423957.stm>. See also Paulo Heiniger, "The Leaning Tower of Pisa," *Scientific American* 273, no. 6 (1995): 62-67.

believers (1 Pet 1:3-5). Third, Peter's audience should rejoice in suffering on the basis of their identity as those who are born again (1 Pet 1:6-10).

The Christian Identity

Peter identifies his readers from the beginning of his letter. He writes, "To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pet 1:1). The most important fact about his audience, however, lies not in their geography but in their ontology. Peter's letter describes the identity of his Christian readers and suggests a measure of continuity and discontinuity between the people of God in the Old and New Testaments. Christians are both connected to what God has done in the Old Testament and also the result of a new thing God has done in Christ. This section will examine how Peter connects the people of God across epochs. Then I will observe how Peter describes the new people of God.

The People of God across Epochs

I will now attempt to show how Peter connects the people of God from the Old and New Testaments. In immediate context, Peter writes to believers in Asia Minor. In canonical context, Peter's readers are the people of God just like Old Testament believers. Peter links the people of God across epochs by Old Testament allusion and by the theme of suffering.

Old Testament allusion in 1 Peter. Benjamin Sargent observes, "1 Peter, for its size, has the highest density of explicit references to the Scriptures of Israel out of all the books of the New Testament."² The Old Testament stands as the base from which Peter

² Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, The Library of New Testament Studies 547 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 1. I assume Peter knew the Old Testament very well. He not only knew the citations included in his letter, but he also knew their context. Sargent takes a different approach to the use of the Old Testament in 1 Pet. He seems to question whether Peter could have known the contexts of the passages he cites in his letter. For example, see Sargent's disagreement with D. A. Carson (107-9). See D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed.

will construct his message. From the beginning of the letter, Peter wants his readers to view themselves as the new covenant people of God. They are “elect exiles” who enjoy the benefit of sprinkled blood: not the blood of bulls or goats but rather “his blood,” the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:2, 18-19; cf. Heb 9:13-14). The sprinkling of blood calls to mind the sacrifices of the Old Testament (cf. Lev 16:14), particularly when Moses ratified the covenant by sprinkling blood on the people (Exod 24:8).³ Peter seems to identify Christians as members of a new covenant. Christians are also a part of a new family. They have been born again to a living hope which leads them to an everlasting inheritance (1 Pet 1:3-4). Similar to the inheritance of land promised to Israel, God promises new covenant believers an inheritance of eternal life. Christians also have a new calling: be holy. While Israel camped at Sinai, the Lord urged his people to be holy since he himself is holy (e.g., Lev 19:2), and Peter transposes this calling for his Christian readers (1 Pet 1:16). He argues that Christians should be holy because of their new status. They are children of God, and their Father is the Judge (1 Pet 1:17). They should be holy because they know that their redemption comes at a great cost: the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet 1:19), calling back to the Passover of the exodus by referencing Christ’s blood as a lamb without blemish (Exod 12:5).

G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1016-17. How much a passage’s context contributes to interpretation of its use may be debated.

³ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1017. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 87-89. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 72. Though, G. K. Beale and Benjamin Gladd assume a Gentile audience, they note the significance: “These Gentiles have been graciously brought into God’s people through Christ’s death so that they may obey his will.” G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020), 410. Whether Jew or Gentile, Christians enjoy a new identity as members of the new covenant ratified by the sprinkling of blood. Leonhard Goppelt de-emphasizes the allusion to the ratifying of the covenant, arguing that “sprinkling with blood” probably points to baptism and what it symbolizes. See Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 70-75. Though, as Frank Thielman points out, Goppelt ignores Peter’s emphasis on the covenant in 2:9. Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 573n15.

Peter seems to use Old Testament allusion to associate the people of God across epochs. Just as Israel was exiled from the land of promise and lived in Babylon, so too are Christians living among a people of different values. Just as Israel was consecrated into covenant by the sprinkling of blood, so too are Christians brought into a new covenant by the blood of Jesus. Just as Israel was promised an inheritance of land, so too are believers in Jesus promised an inheritance of eternal life. Just as Israel was called to be holy while they sojourned, so too are Christians called to be holy. Just as Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage by the blood of an unblemished lamb, so too are Christians forgiven of their sin by the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God.

Suffering in 1 Peter. The theme of suffering also highlights the New Testament believer's position in the pattern of the people of God. The suffering of Peter's audience shapes the message of the letter. Peter explains that his readers rejoice in their hope even though they have been "grieved by various trials" (1:6). Their faith has been "tested by fire" (1:7). He encourages servants that "it is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly" (2:19) and that suffering because of good works is gracious in the sight of God (2:20). Believers may suffer, but Peter calls them to bless their oppressors (3:9). Though one may "suffer for righteousness' sake," Peter promises a blessing from God (3:14). One should be prepared to suffer "in the flesh" like Christ (4:1). He should "not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you," but instead he should rejoice (4:12-13). One who suffers as a Christian, according to God's will, should "entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good" (4:16; 19). Peter's audience does not suffer alone either since "the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world" (5:9). This Christian suffering is only temporary, and God himself will one day bring it to an end, replacing it with eschatological glory (4:10).

The most notable example of suffering in 1 Peter is expressed in the language of exile. For example, Peter's letter is addressed to the "elect exiles" (1:1). He exhorts his

readers to “conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile” (1:17). He urges them to “abstain from the passions of the flesh” since they are “sojourners and exiles” (2:11). Additionally, Peter relies on Psalm 34 to encourage believers to live godly lives in response to persecution. The superscription of Psalm 34 provides context for David’s writing: “When he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away” (Ps 34 superscript). David wrote this Psalm as commentary on his own experience in exile, and the LXX even cites “sojourning” in verse 4 (cf 1 Pet 1:17; 2:11).⁴ These references to exile suggest that exile is an important theme in 1 Peter. But in what way does exile connect to suffering?

Suffering serves as a reminder that Christians are exiles. I. M. Duguid explains, “Exile, in theological terms, is the experience of pain and suffering that results from the knowledge that there is a home where one belongs, yet for the present one is unable to return there.”⁵ Peter’s point is not that Christians were physically displaced from their homeland, nor is he suggesting that exile is a kind of divine punishment, like Israel’s exile.⁶ Rather, as Lee Beach explains, “Exile implies much more than simple geographical dislocation; it can be a cultural and spiritual condition as well. It is the experience of knowing that one is an alien, and perhaps even in a hostile environment where the dominant values run counter to one’s own.”⁷ Christians experience an exile in this world because they are separated from their “ultimate eschatological community,”⁸

⁴ I explore the theme of exile in Ps 34 in more detail in chap. 6 of this project.

⁵ I. M. Duguid, “Exile,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 475.

⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 50.

⁷ Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 21. Duguid observes that Peter writes to a people who face exile in the sense that they “are living in a world to which they do not belong . . . while they long for a world which they do not yet see.” Duguid, “Exile,” 477.

⁸ Beach, *The Church in Exile*, 21.

and they live among a people who do not share their worldview or values. Because of exile, they are a suffering people. Thomas Schreiner writes, “Believers are exiles because they suffer for their faith in a world that finds their faith off-putting and strange.”⁹ If a Christian wonders why they experience rejection and ostracism, they should look no further than their status as an exile.

Peter uses suffering to link the peoples of God across epochs. Christians are the people of God. Throughout history, the people of God have suffered. The Old Testament bears witness to the sufferings of God’s people. Peter recognizes this theme and relates to these sufferings with the language of exile. Though there are many examples of exile in the Old Testament, Peter highlights at least two instances. First, David, the anointed son of God, suffered as he was forced into exile by his enemies. As noted, Psalm 34 testifies to the inner thoughts of David as he fled from Saul and attempted to hide among the Philistines in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. David also suffered exile at the hands of his son Absalom (2 Sam 15). Samuel notes David’s deep emotion as he flees Jerusalem: “David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went” (2 Sam 15:30). In these ways, David suffered exile. Second, the people of God in the Babylonian exile mirror David’s experience. In 586 BC, Jerusalem finally fell. The Babylonians killed many and took many captive to Babylon. The Law and Prophets testify that God allows the Babylonians to exile his people due to their sinfulness (e.g., Deut 28:36-37; cf Hab 1:5-11). These stories of exile serve as background material for Peter’s letter and thus establish a pattern that God’s people suffer through exile.

Peter not only recognizes the sufferings of God’s people in the Old Testament, but he also identifies the sufferings of Jesus as the focal point of the biblical narrative. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets “predicted the sufferings of Christ and his subsequent glories” (1:11). Peter challenges believers to endure persecutions with good deeds because

⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 50-51.

“Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous” (3:18). Believers also “share in Christ’s sufferings” (4:13). The Old Testament people of God suffered. Christ, who represents the people of God as covenant head, also suffered.

Because of this, Peter argues that suffering is normative for believers. Christians should “not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you” (4:12). Instead, they should rejoice because they “share in Christ’s sufferings.” (4:13). They should take Jesus as their example as they suffer. Christians are joined to Jesus as living stones (2:4), and so they should expect to suffer as he suffered. God’s people suffered in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ, true Israel, suffered. Therefore, the people of God, united to Jesus, should also expect to suffer.

In these ways, Peter associates the people of God in the New Testament with those of the Old Testament. God’s people are a persecuted, suffering people. They suffer *because* they are God’s people—suffering exiles just like Jesus.

A New Identity

Christians continue in the line of the people of God, but they also differ from Old Testament believers. They are born again. Peter begins the body of his letter by launching into a blessing of God. He writes, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!” (1:3)

The flow of Peter’s thinking begins with regeneration. God has given Christians a new identity. Though this identity may cause suffering, they can know that their identity springs from God’s hand as an act of mercy. Peter writes, “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again” (1:3). “He has caused us to be born again” gives the sense that Christians have a new origin established by God.¹⁰ This identity diverges from

¹⁰ Achtemeier explains that one should render the Greek not as “born again” but rather as “rebegotten.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94. See also Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 59-60. Since this verb does not appear anywhere in Scripture but 1 Pet, Jobes traces the origin of the idea to the teachings of Jesus, most notably in John 3. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 82-83.

the previous identity. They now belong to a new family with new priorities and values that run contrary to the worldly culture. Though Peter uses Old Testament terminology to connect Christians to the Old Testament people of God, God has not simply rebranded Jews with a new name. Instead, God has established a new people. Christians are exiles and sojourners because of this new identity wrought by God.¹¹ Peter's language also emphasizes the passive nature of Christians in the process. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ represents the subject in the clause.¹² Thus, the Father, not believers themselves, assumes responsibility for the new identity of Christians. Christians can no more give themselves a new identity than a baby can make itself be born.¹³ Christians should not despair, however, since the new birth is "according to his great mercy." New identity given to Christians may result in suffering as exiles, but they must remember this identity is the merciful gift of God.

In summary, Peter indicates that Christians are the people of God. They are connected to Old Testament believers but they also represent a new stage in God's redemptive plan whereby they have been born again. The next section will examine a consequence of this new birth.

Result of the New Identity

When Christians suffer, they should associate themselves with the people of God throughout history. They should interpret their circumstances as normal for those who are connected to Christ, the one who also suffered. They should also understand that they have a new identity established by God. This Christian identity prepares them to not only endure suffering, but to also rejoice while in it. This section will consider the opening passage of

¹¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94.

¹² The article functioning as a relative pronoun is anteceded by God the Father. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 157-58.

¹³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 61.

the letter where Peter announces a result of the new birth: hope in an inheritance. The reason for Peter's exclamation of praise in 1:3 is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus and the subsequent outcome for Christians. Because of Jesus's resurrection, Christians are identified as those who have living hope in a future inheritance.

A Living Hope

Having established the new identity of Christians, Peter then describes a result of their new birth. Christians are born again *into* a living hope. Peter uses the preposition "into" (*eis*) to denote result,¹⁴ and this provides some structure to verses 3-5.¹⁵ First, God the Father established a new identity for Christians which resulted in a living hope. "Hope" is warranted expectation.¹⁶ Christians have an eschatological expectation for glory even though their current circumstances may suggest otherwise. Peter describes the hope of a Christian as living, in contrast to a dead or vain hope.¹⁷ The reason this hope is living is because it is grounded in sure fact and not an "empty wish."¹⁸ Today, people use the word *hope* with a measure of doubt. One may hope traffic is manageable for the morning commute, but it may not be. Parents may hope for their kids to have a great day at school, but it is entirely possible that they may have a bad day. Peter here explains that a Christian's expectation is warranted because it is rooted in the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus really rose from the dead, and Christians can really hope in the completion of God's plan. The temporary suffering of this world does not compare

¹⁴ Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer discuss the variety of uses of the preposition in *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*, 403.

¹⁵ This structure indicates that "hope is the consequence of God's begetting and not its cause." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 61.

¹⁶ BDAG, 319.

¹⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 95.

¹⁸ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 95.

to the eternal glory God intends for Christians. This is warranted expectation—living hope.

An Inheritance

Their new identity also makes Christians qualified for an inheritance (1 Pet 1:6).¹⁹ The Old Testament people of God looked forward to the land of promise as their inheritance. They even possessed it for a time until foreign armies conquered and exiled them. The land was their inheritance. The people of Reuben and Gad promised to go over the Jordan and fight “until each of the people of Israel has gained his *inheritance*” (Num 32:18). The Lord himself also refers to the land as the people’s inheritance. When instructing the people about worship in the promised land, he says, “You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes, for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the *inheritance* that the Lord your God is giving you” (Deut 12:8-9).²⁰ For the people in the Old Testament, inheritance was many times synonymous with the land. However, when Peter lists benefits the new birth affords for believers, he lists an inheritance along with eschatological realities such as hope and salvation. He thus seems to mean much more than a land inheritance.²¹ In other words, Christians have been born again to an inheritance not merely of land but of eschatological proportions.

This has particular implications for believers who may be suffering as exiles. Their hope is not for this world in which they have found themselves “on the wrong side of history.” Peter’s audience lived in the reality that they might be stripped of all their earthly

¹⁹ Peter Davids distinguishes between an inheritance that might be received upon someone’s death and an inheritance received upon reaching adulthood. The latter is in view here. Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude: Living in Light of the Coming King*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 125.

²⁰ See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 62.

²¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 95.

possessions.²² Rather, the new birth has given them a future inheritance in which they shall not be disappointed—this inheritance is “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Pet 1:5).²³ The believer’s inheritance is kept safe in heaven, and awaits the day when the believer takes hold of it.²⁴ The things of this world are perishing, spoiling, and fading, but the things God has planned for Christians are eternally glorious. This inheritance cannot be taken away from them since God keeps it in heaven. Christian exiles should be encouraged that God promises this kind of eschatological glory to those who may be experiencing temporary fire.

Salvation

What is this cherished treasure promised to Christians? Peter describes believers as those who “are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time” (1:5). This salvation corresponds to the inheritance promised in verse 4. While Achtemeier rightly argues that the *eis* preposition serves as a controlling phrase in verses 3-5, he incorrectly isolates salvation from inheritance.²⁵ The preposition in verse 5 is not part of the structure control but rather a preposition modifying the believers being guarded by God’s power.²⁶ This is a minor distinction but is important enough to recognize that

²² Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 125.

²³ Beale and Gladd note, “The nation of Israel in the Old Testament did indeed possess some inheritance in the Promised Land, but it was snatched away by the Assyrians and Babylonians. Peter’s audience, though, has a secure inheritance.” Beale and Gladd, *The Story Retold*, 411.

²⁴ Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 125.

²⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97. Both Schreiner and Jobes observe the future nature of the salvation Peter describes, making “inheritance” an appropriate way to refer to salvation since it is a future-oriented term. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 63-64. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 87-88. Jobes writes, “For Peter, [salvation] is the coming inheritance, to which they are now fully entitled but do not yet fully possess” (88).

²⁶ Jobes observes that *eis* occurs every time a preposition precedes “salvation” in the New Testament: “This suggests that *eis* in 1:5 is not resumptive: it does not add ‘salvation’ to the preceding ‘hope’ and ‘inheritance’ but is simply the idiomatic preposition to use with this noun.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 84.

the inheritance for which believers hope is not distinctly different from the salvation for which they are being guarded.

Salvation also describes God's plan for the universe. Many contemporary believers perceive salvation through an individualistic lens.²⁷ They may emphasize, "God saved me from my sins," which is certainly true, but salvation is also a way of describing the outworking of God's plan in the world. The prophets "searched and inquired carefully" about this salvation, though their eyes were veiled from seeing its fullness even as they prophesied about it (1 Pet 1:10-11). Israel knew that God intended to save them, and the Old Testament indicates that God's plan to save Israel is the plan to save the whole world (e.g., Isa 49:6; Ps 67:1-3). The prophets knew about this salvation, and even knew that the sufferings of Christ would lead to it somehow.

Peter describes this salvation in three ways. First, God guards believers for this salvation. Note the passive voice in "being guarded."²⁸ They are not preserving themselves; rather, believers are being guarded for salvation by God's power.²⁹

Second, believers take hold of salvation by faith and are not completely devoid of a role. Schreiner writes, "Obtaining the final inheritance therefore does not bypass human beings, as if we are mere automatons in the process."³⁰ Faith is the responsibility of those who would receive the eschatological inheritance. The Christian's faith and God's power relate to one another. Achtemeier rightly explains that faith is "the instrument

²⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97.

²⁸ Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 19. Forbes explains that "being guarded" must be passive and not middle. "By God's power" is an instrumental dative showing how believers are guarded. God is the one doing the guarding—the voice is passive and not middle. For an explanation of the instrumental dative, see Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*, 130-31.

²⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97.

³⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64.

whereby the divine protection becomes a reality.”³¹ Faith is the means by which believers may take hold of salvation, but this faith is subordinate to the power of God.³² Faith is not only subordinate, but it also reveals the “unseen reality” of God’s power.³³ There is no salvation apart from faith. Peter emphasizes this point in verse 9: the outcome of faith is the salvation of one’s soul (1:9). Thus, as Schreiner explains, “Faith *is a condition* for obtaining the eschatological inheritance.”³⁴

Third, this salvation is eschatological. There are many ways to understand salvation. Some people may understand salvation as deliverance from current circumstances. For example, David can pray for God to send salvation as he runs from the Philistines (Ps 34:18). It would make some sense if Peter here were reassuring believers that God will soon deliver them from their oppressors. Other times, however, some people understand salvation in an eschatological way, which seems to be the sense in which Peter uses it here. Though Christians find themselves in spiritual exile, they can know that salvation will be theirs. This salvation does not ensure rescue from exile in this life, nor does it mean that their persecutors will be brought to justice in human court or that they will be vindicated before their communities. Surely justice and vindication will come, but the promise is not for immediate deliverance. Rather, the promise of salvation points forward to a future deliverance much more spectacular than worldly justice and vindication. Peter notes that the salvation promised by God is ready to be revealed at the last time. Though its effects are working behind the scenes, the reality of the salvation promised by God may not be visible until the end of all things.

³¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97.

³² Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010), 8.

³³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97.

³⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64, emphasis original.

Summary

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has resulted in a living hope for believers. Rooted in the sure fact of the resurrection, the believer's hope rests in a promised inheritance manifested in God's plan of salvation for his people. Deliverance is certainly the promise of God, but he takes the prerogative to define what deliverance means. Believers may pray to God to end their suffering immediately, and God may choose to do that. But the promise of 1 Peter 1:3-5 is a promise of eschatological glory. Despite what the world says and even though believers may experience rejection and hardship, God promises to guard them for an eternally glorious salvation—their inheritance qualified for them by faith.

Christian Identity Is the Grounds for Joy in Suffering

Like Old Testament believers, Christians are the people of God who have hope in an inheritance of an eternally glorious salvation. Their exile and suffering do not negate the truth of their identity. Instead, this Christian identity is the grounds for joy in suffering. In verses 6-12, Peter makes the claim that believers rejoice in their identity even though they suffer in exile. I will first examine Peter's assumption that believers will suffer. Then I will observe that Peter identifies a purpose for the pain of suffering. Finally, I discover how Christian identity reframes suffering in such a way that believers should rejoice.

Present Suffering

Peter begins this section by acknowledging that suffering is normative in the life of a believer. I have already noted that suffering is a major theme in the letter because it is a common theme for the people of God. Peter writes, "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials" (1:6). Verse 6 provides at least three truths about the nature of suffering for believers. First, suffering is temporary. Suffering is only for "a little while." Peter affirms that suffering will soon be over, but does not indicate that the end of it will be in this life. The duration of suffering will seem short when compared with eternity. This is similar to Paul's statement

in 2 Corinthians when he calls his suffering “light, momentary affliction” (2 Cor 4:17). If Paul were only referring to his suffering in this life, then he is being less than truthful. There is nothing light or momentary about his suffering since he was physically abused multiple times and finished his race in chains (2 Cor 11:23-33). Though suffering may last a lifetime, it is still light and momentary when compared to the “eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor 4:17). Peter makes a similar argument. In light of the last time (1:5), suffering is only for a little while.

Second, suffering is the will of God. Peter includes a conditional clause: “If necessary.” Schreiner notes, “The sufferings believers experience are not the result of fate or impersonal forces of nature. They are the will of God for believers.”³⁵ Nothing happens outside the will of God, and believers should not assume that God only allows pleasant things in their lives. Job makes this plain to his wife, “Shall we receive good from God, and not receive evil?” (Job 2:10). Isaiah makes a similar point: “Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’ or ‘Your work has no handles?’” (Isa 45:9) God reserves the right to allow suffering in the lives of his people. Thus, Peter indicates here that it may be necessary for believers to suffer. Forbes argues this phrase “if necessary” functions as a concessive condition such that there is no indication that suffering is only a “remote possibility.”³⁶ Rather, suffering is necessary for believers. They should not panic, nor should they despair. Instead, they should rejoice since they are in God’s hands.

Third, suffering is painful nevertheless. The knowledge of a relatively short duration for suffering under the hand of God does not mean that suffering is easy to endure. Rather, these sufferings still “grieve” believers. This grief can either mean physical or

³⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 67.

³⁶ Forbes, *1 Peter*, 24.

emotional pain³⁷ and probably means both since the trials endured by believers are “various.”³⁸ There is no hint that suffering is lessened or shortened simply because one is a believer. Instead, Peter indicates it is necessary that believers suffer grief by means of various trials.³⁹

However, Peter does not draw back but instead insists that believers should rejoice during their grief. Their joy springs from the headwaters of their identity. Peter begins verse 6 with “in this you rejoice.” The antecedent for this phrase is debated, but the most likely referent is the content of verses 3-5.⁴⁰ In other words, Peter’s Christian readers should rejoice in their hope of an inheritance and salvation made possible by the resurrection of Jesus. Even though they are grieved by trials, they should rejoice in hope.

Suffering Has a Purpose

Peter further explains that Christian suffering has a purpose: “You have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:7). After Peter acknowledges that believers are grieved by various trials, he introduces a purpose statement which modifies “grieved.”⁴¹ The purpose for the grief caused by various trials is that the genuineness of a

³⁷ BDAG, 604.

³⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 67.

³⁹ Forbes, *1 Peter*, 24.

⁴⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 66-67; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 23; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 100. The nearest potential antecedent is “the last time” in v. 5, but as context indicates, the rejoicing is a present indicative with present meaning. I will examine this later in this chapter. One may also look to “God” in v. 3, but it is too far from the pronoun. Davids highlights that “this” agrees grammatically with “hope” and not “inheritance” or “salvation,” but concedes that those two concepts are enveloped in Peter’s discussion about hope. Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 54-55. Thus, the best choice for an antecedent is all of the content in vv. 3-5.

⁴¹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 12.

Christian's faith may be tested and found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus, suffering is useful in the life of a believer.

A Christian's faith must be tested to prove its genuineness. While Achtemeier and others assert that "faith" here denotes faithfulness in action more than belief in something,⁴² Schreiner rightly clarifies that faith and faithfulness cannot be separated: "Those who truly believe will persist in their faith, continuing to trust in God when difficulties occur."⁴³ Thus, the concept of faith here encompasses a trust in God that results in action. Peter argues that this faith is authenticated by trials.⁴⁴ To emphasize his point, Peter uses a metaphor and argues from lesser to greater.⁴⁵ Fire burns away impurities in precious metal.⁴⁶ Peter argues that just as gold is refined by fire so too is the genuineness of faith proven by suffering. When a believer suffers, the Lord uses the difficulties to forge and reveal the authenticity of the believer's faith. Peter argues from lesser to greater. Gold is refined by fire but will one day pass away. Faith is proven by difficulty, but this authentic faith lasts forever.⁴⁷ Thus, trials prove authentic faith. Though someone may be grieved through difficulty, he can know that there is design to his distress.

⁴² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 101n32; J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 30.

⁴³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 68.

⁴⁴ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 12.

⁴⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 102. The ancients knew this metaphor very well (Ps 66:10; Prov 17:3; 27:21; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:3). Jobes notes, "Particularly in the prophetic passages, the refining fire of God's testing is preparation for eschatological perfection." Jobes, *1 Peter*, 94-95. Similarly, Peter argues that the various trials serve as a refining fire through which a person's faith is proven to be genuine.

⁴⁶ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 57.

⁴⁷ Jobes writes, "Genuine faith is more valuable than anything the world can offer." Jobes, *1 Peter*, 95.

Suffering Reframed

Peter began this section (1:6-9) by announcing to believers that they rejoice in what their new identity affords for them (1:6). Now he reassures them that though their current circumstances may suggest otherwise, their identity is the grounds for joy. Present joy, future glory, privileged status, and good company all belong to the believer in Jesus. Christians should reframe their pain with this knowledge in view.

Present joy. Peter writes in verse 6, “In this you rejoice.” One should take the verb “you rejoice” as present indicative with present meaning. Dubis explains that three options for interpretation exist. One might take the verb as present indicative with present meaning, present indicative with future meaning, or present imperative. He convincingly demonstrates that the verb should be taken as present with present meaning, noting its correspondence with “you love” (1:8), which also is present indicative with present meaning.⁴⁸ Schreiner observes that if the “the last time” (1:5) serves as the antecedent of “in this,” it would be prudent to interpret “you rejoice” as a present indicative with a future meaning. However, as Dubis and Schreiner⁴⁹ ultimately agree, “in this” must refer to the content of verses 3-5, and it is best to take “you rejoice” as present indicative with present meaning. Furthermore, this interpretation better matches verse 8. Peter writes, “Though you have not seen him, you *love* him. Though do not now see him, you believe in him and *rejoice* with joy that is inexpressible” (1:8). As Schreiner and others have observed, “love” and “rejoice” parallel one another in verse 8 and thus should both be interpreted as present indicatives with present meaning.⁵⁰ Believers both love and rejoice in Jesus in the present with a view toward the last days.

⁴⁸ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 10.

⁴⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 66-67.

⁵⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 67.

Future glory. Though believers presently rejoice, their joy partly springs from their perspective of the last days. In present trials, believers are able to rejoice because they understand what their identity affords for them—both now and in the future. They “find present joy in what the future time will bring.”⁵¹ “Eschatological reward” awaits those with authentic faith since genuine results in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:7).⁵² Achtemeier argues for a divine passive in “may be found.”⁵³ God alone finds genuine faith to result in eschatological reward. Some question whether the praise, glory, and honor are directed toward the faithful or toward God alone. G. K. Beale and Benjamin Gladd assume that the reward belongs to God alone.⁵⁴ J. Ramsey Michaels. However, notes the ambiguity here. The text does not explicitly say who is receiving the eschatological reward. Michaels suggests this is by design, since the New Testament speaks of praise, glory, and honor as belonging to God and also given to believers as a gift: “In honoring, he is honored, in glorifying he receives glory, and in praising he is praised.”⁵⁵ Still, Michaels insists that Peter primarily refers to the eschatological reward bestowed on those found to be faithful. This makes the most sense of the context. The truly faithful receive the reward in the end (cf Matt 25:14-46).⁵⁶

Peter does not guarantee praise, glory, and honor in the immediate present for genuine believers. The glory will come at “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Peter witnessed the Lord Jesus ascend into heaven (Luke 24:50-51; cf. 24:33-36). He heard the words of the angels who said, “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in

⁵¹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 10.

⁵² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 68-69.

⁵³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 102n43.

⁵⁴ Beale and Gladd, *The Story Retold*, 411.

⁵⁵ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 31.

⁵⁶ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 58. Davids views the eschatological reward in 1 Pet as similar to Jesus’s statement in Matt 25. The glory, honor, and praise corresponds to Jesus’s “well done.”

the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). Peter also knew that when the Lord Jesus returns, the end will come, and believers will receive reward. For this reason, believers can hope for the day when Jesus is revealed. For on that day, faith will be sight, and believers will receive the eschatological reward promised here by Peter. Peter’s audience and those who read his letter have not eye-witnessed Jesus. Nevertheless, believers still presently love him and presently rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy—for a future glory is still to come (1 Pet 1:8). In this way, believers may suffer throughout their days without any promise of immediate respite. Instead, they must cling to their hope and joy that glory awaits them in the last days.

Peter calls for a “massive reframing of the existential situation” of suffering believers.⁵⁷ Peter has established that suffering is normative for the people of God. Though temporary, the pain is real. But Peter exhorts believers to zoom out and look their pain through the lens of heaven. God is in control. Suffering has a purpose. Believers also have significant advantages. Eschatological blessings await those who prove their genuine faith through fire. Peter’s audience also enjoy privileges over both Old Testament prophets and the angels in heaven.

Privileged status. Believers in Jesus enjoy a privileged status.⁵⁸ I already demonstrated that they receive eschatological blessing as a result of their identity proved by genuine faith (1:6-7). Glory, honor, and praise may be enough to help a Christian persevere in suffering, but Peter gives even further reason for believers to hope and rejoice in suffering: they are more privileged than prophets and enjoy an advantage over angels (1:10-12). Peter writes, “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or

⁵⁷ Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 128.

⁵⁸ Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 128.

time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories” (1:10-11).

The New Testament people of God have the privilege of knowledge over the Old Testament prophets, who wrote with clouded perspective about the eternal inheritance of salvation for the one with genuine faith in Jesus. Schreiner says it succinctly: “What was predicted in the past was intended for Peter’s readers.”⁵⁹ Christians do not appear onto the world stage *ex nihilo*. Rather, they exist as a fulfillment of what the prophets proclaimed several centuries before.⁶⁰ These prophets, however, did not and could not understand the fullness of God’s plan in Christ. Peter says they “searched and inquired carefully” (1:10). The prophets deeply desired to know the details of God’s plan. The terms *searched* and *inquired* are practically synonymous and highlight their desperation.⁶¹ “It was revealed to them” that the details of the suffering Christ and his glory were not for them to know but rather for the benefit of a future generation (1:12). Peter explains that the prophets of the Old Testament testified to Christ, but they did not know him. Peter’s audience has the benefit of knowing the prophecy and its fulfillment. The prophets knew of Christ’s suffering and glory centuries before (e.g., Isa 52:13-53:12). Peter’s Christian readers now know both the prophecy and the fulfillment and should rejoice in the inheritance his saving work has provided for them.

Believers also have an advantage over angels. Though angels have knowledge and they see heavenly things that would cause a human being to faint with fear, they cannot experience the salvation prophesied by the prophets and experienced by the people of

⁵⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 71.

⁶⁰ Jobes writes, “[Christians] are not to understand themselves as practitioners of yet another new religion in the world, founded on the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, they are being privileged with the knowledge of the gospel that fulfills God’s mysterious plan as revealed to the prophets of the OT and that brings them into continuity with what God has already been doing through ancient Israel.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 98.

⁶¹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 17-18; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 108.

God.⁶² They “long to look” into these matters (cf. John 20:11; Jas 1:25).⁶³ That is, they long for the windows of heaven to open⁶⁴ so that they may gaze upon the wonders of Christ crucified and then glorified for the salvation of mankind. Believers have the advantage over the angels in that they can experience what angels can only long to observe.

Believers have reason to rejoice because they have a privilege over the prophets and an advantage over the angels. Believers in Jesus experience what the prophets saw from afar and the angels long to gaze upon.⁶⁵ This inheritance is afforded to the people of God. Though their present suffering may threaten to overwhelm them, they may hope and rejoice in their privileged status.

Good company.⁶⁶ Peter reframes his readers’ suffering. Suffering stands as an important theme in the letter, and it also describes the common experience of the people of God throughout the ages. Thus, pain should be no surprise to someone who identifies as part of the people of God. As observed, Peter associates his Christian readers with the Old Testament people of God by Old Testament allusion, and he also connects them by way of Christ. Old Testament Israel is fulfilled in Christ. Israel’s suffering points to Christ’s suffering. Similarly, as those who would be joined to Jesus, believers should also expect to suffer as he did. At the end of this opening section of his letter, Peter notes that the prophets knew about Christ’s suffering *and his subsequent glories*. The pattern for the

⁶² Schreiner explains, “Old Testament prophets saw it from afar, and angels also marvel when gazing upon what God has done in Christ, while the Petrine readers actually experience it.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 76.

⁶³ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 104.

⁶⁴ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 22. Michaels notes that the point is that the angel’s *long* to look into these matters. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 49.

⁶⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 76.

⁶⁶ Ross King’s song “Good Company” helped me make the connection in this section. Jesus endured many of the things Christians endure today. Ross King and Jason Gray, “Good Company,” *We Know How This Thing Ends*, Simply Perfect Tunes, 2017, 962646, streaming audio, <https://open.spotify.com/track/7zAkaDLERlcBhNcZMHnJAp?si=79c2951555934399>.

people of God is more than just suffering. The suffering of God’s people will be followed by glory.

The story of Israel demonstrates that God will not forsake his people. I could provide many examples of suffering and subsequent glory. King David seems to follow this pattern as he endured the persecution of Saul until the day he is enthroned as King over Israel. This seems to be the pattern for the people of God—suffering then glory. More relevant to 1 Peter, the suffering of Israel’s exile precedes the glory of their return.⁶⁷ The Lord promised to bless the nation if they obeyed him and to curse them if they disobeyed (Deut 28). When the people chose to disobey, the Assyrians and Babylonians brought about their demise. But the promise of blessing and curse had a third part. The Lord told the people of Israel as they prepared to enter the promised land that if they returned to the Lord, he would restore them (Deut 30:1-3). Not only would they return, but they would build a glorious temple (Ezek 40-48), a Davidic king would sit on the throne (e.g., Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-5; Jer 23:5; Amos 9:11), and they would rule the nations. In other words, though Israel suffers, restoration and glory will certainly come.⁶⁸

Similarly, the prophets understood that Christ would suffer with glory to follow. On the road to Emmaus, after Jesus’s resurrection, some disciples encountered the Lord Jesus. They did not understand the things that had taken place in Jerusalem, and Jesus lamented, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25-26). Jesus thinks his disciples should have understood from the testimony of

⁶⁷ Matthew Harmon examines this theme in Matthew S. Harmon, *Rebels and Exiles: A Biblical Theology of Sin and Restoration* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020), 60-79.

⁶⁸ Israel’s suffering was self-inflicted. This is not the same as Christ’s suffering and the suffering of Christ’s people. Davids demonstrates a shift in the way the Bible emphasizes the reason for suffering. Sometimes the Old Testament seems to indicate that suffering is the result of sin (e.g., childbirth in Gen 3). The New Testament explains the complexity of this dynamic. “While there is not a total negation of the sin-suffering equation . . . it can no longer be used as *the* explanation for suffering.” Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 36.

the prophets that the Christ should suffer and then be glorified. They should have interpreted Isaiah 52:13-53:12 this way. The suffering servant was wounded, crushed, oppressed, and afflicted, but then “out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied” (Isa 53:11). He will receive a “portion with the many and he shall divide the spoil with the strong” (Isa 53:12). Suffering and glory. This matches Peter’s observation in his letter. The prophets knew that the Christ would suffer and subsequently receive glory (1:11). They simply did not know who or when it would be.

Thus, for the people of God, glory follows only after suffering, just as it did for Christ. Part of Peter’s message in his letter is that his Christian audience is in good company (cf. 5:9). As Davids poetically reflects, “Neither Christ nor his people receive the crown of glory without the crown of thorns.”⁶⁹ Suffering is the mark of an exiled people, and glory always seems to follow afterward for the people of God. Even though the promise is not for immediate relief, joy comes in knowing that eschatological glory is secure.

Conclusion

Peter begins his letter by establishing the identity of his audience. Whether primarily Jew or Gentile, they are the people of God in continuity with the Old Testament people of God. Their Christian identity produces living hope since an inheritance of eternal life has been secured for them by God. For this reason, Christians can rejoice even though they suffer. They know this eschatological glory awaits them, and they know that their suffering has a purpose. Their faith will be authenticated, and their reward will be indescribable. Peter encourages suffering Christians to reframe their suffering and interpret their circumstances through the lens of these truths.

This passage suggests several points of application for the contemporary Christian. First, Christians should refuse to identify themselves under the banner of a

⁶⁹ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 64.

sufferer. Instead of despairing as a victim, Christians should rather understand themselves to be the people of God. Suffering may play a part in the story of believers, but it does not define them. Their identity as the people of God is the primary description. Their hope is not ultimately for immediate relief from present suffering but rather for the eschatological glory promised in 1 Peter 1. Fear, despair, and hopelessness should not describe a Christian. Instead, a Christian has every reason to be hopeful and joyful even though they suffer.

Second, though believers' suffering does not define them, it will still surface in their lives. A suffering Christian will find joy if he understands that the Father has a purpose for their pain. He is sovereign and wise and uses suffering to authenticate faith. The proper response to pain is not to abandon Jesus, but rather to faithfully press into the Lord through it. Believers should also recall that they are not alone in their suffering, but instead the people of God throughout history have suffered. They are in good company.

Third, Christians must continue to trust the Lord. As simple as that sounds, it is the underlying foundation for this opening section of 1 Peter. Believers' pain does not surprise him nor is it outside of his control. He promises deliverance, but he retains the prerogative to define what that means. He promises to refine them, but they may not realize the results until the last day. Believers walk by faith and not by sight. They may not see the whole staircase, but by faith they continue to take the next step.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Martin Luther King is popularly attributed with a quotation about faith, a staircase, and taking the next step. I cannot locate an original source, nor can I verify its authenticity.

CHAPTER 3

HOPE, HOLINESS, AND FEAR: NEW EXODUS ESSENTIALS

When Peter announces that believers have been born again (1 Pet 1:3), he expects them to heed his apostolic commands. Peter established in 1:1-12 that Christians are the people of God even though they suffer. They have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Their glorious inheritance is guaranteed, and so their sufferings will result in a proven genuine faith. Verse 13 begins with “Therefore,” indicating that what follows (1:13-21) develops out of the previous section (1:1-12).¹ In this way, the indicative precedes the imperative.² The identity of believers in Jesus assumes particular perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors. Those who have been born again have hope, and this hope is accompanied by apostolic imperatives.

In this chapter I aim to show that as participants in a new exodus, believers should set their hope in God, be holy like God, and conduct themselves in the fear of God. I will begin by demonstrating that the biblical authors use the exodus as a pattern to describe how God saves his people. Peter joins in this tradition and likewise identifies his audience as participants in the new exodus. Next, I will analyze three imperatives in 1 Peter 1:13-21, noting how exodus language influences Peter’s commands. Finally, I will seek to apply the imperatives to believers.

¹ Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 118. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 77.

² Many have said this in varying contexts. Schreiner uses this phrase in the context of the opening section of 1 Pet. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 77.

The Exodus Pattern

Those who wish to master the biblical text must immerse themselves in the biblical authors' literary universe.³ One must carefully examine symbols, patterns, and images to gain the authors' perspective and intended meaning. One prevalent type in the canon is the exodus. The biblical authors use the exodus to describe God's saving work among his people.⁴ In this section, I will first consider the exodus itself and then observe a few examples of how the biblical authors employ the exodus as a way of describing God's saving acts in redemptive history. I will argue that Peter does the same thing when he uses the exodus to describe the identity of believers and their essential perspective and conduct.

The Exodus

The exodus begins with God's people in bondage. They cry out to the Lord for deliverance (Exod 2:23-24). The Lord hears their cries and sends Moses to them as their deliverer (Exod 3:7-10). Moses stands before Pharaoh and demands that he release the people of Israel, but due to his hard heart Pharaoh refuses (Exod 7:13). The Lord sends a series of plagues as judgments on Egypt to persuade Pharaoh to let Israel go.

The final plague is the setting for the Passover. The Lord gives Moses specific instructions to Israel. Each Israelite man should take an unblemished lamb, kill it on the fourteenth day of the month, spread some of its blood on the doorposts of their houses, roast its flesh, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They should be prepared to leave quickly. They should fasten their belts, put their sandals on their feet, and hold their staffs in their hands (Exod 12:10). The Lord tells Moses specifically: "You shall eat

³ James Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 64.

⁴ For treatments of the exodus motif in the canon, see James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 254-84; Bryan D. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2018); Alastair J. Roberts and Andrew Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing Themes of Redemption through Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020).

it in haste” (Exod 12:11). On the night of this meal, the Lord would judge the gods of Egypt by striking the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. The only way Israel could be saved from this judgment would be by following the Lord’s commands for the Passover meal. The Lord would see the blood on the houses of Israel and would pass over them. This first Passover meal sets the pattern for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread to be celebrated by Israel throughout their generations (Exod 12:14-20).

This final plague causes Pharaoh to expel Israel from Egypt (Exod 12:31-32). The Red Sea blocks Israel’s path, but the Lord pushes back the water so that the people of Israel walk through it on dry ground. As Pharaoh’s army enters into the parted sea, the Lord releases the waters to crash down on them (Exod 15:1). Israel escapes the Egyptians into the wilderness.

The Lord may have delivered the people of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, but their salvation remains incomplete until they possess the promised land. They wander through the wilderness for decades as the Lord leads them toward their new home. They receive the Law at Sinai, and there the Lord sets the terms for their covenant.⁵ If the people obey the Lord, they will be his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exod 19:4-6). The people swear that they will obey “all that the Lord has spoken” (Exod 19:8).

A New Exodus

However, they did not keep the covenant. Even though they possess the land of promise, they break the Law, and for that God rejects them and sends them into exile. He expels them from the land just like the previous inhabitants (Lev 18:3-4, 25; 2 Kgs 17:8). Once again, Israel dwells away from the land of promise. Though, the Lord does not intend to leave his people exiled forever.

⁵ James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 98.

The Prophets herald a day when the exiles would return, and they use exodus imagery to explain this deliverance. The exodus serves as a kind of metaphor used by the biblical authors to describe the pattern of salvation in history. A metaphor may include a root idea as well as related ideas.⁶ Thus, one need not observe the whole story of the exodus in a passage to identify an author's use of the exodus pattern. Rather, one may look for symbols and images located in the different scenes of the exodus.⁷

For example, Isaiah declares that the Lord is "doing a new thing" (Isa 43:19). He "makes a way in the sea" (Isa 43:16) and a "way in the wilderness" (Isa 43:19), and even though they pass through the waters, he promises to be with them (Isa 43:2).⁸ He promises "to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise" (Isa 43:20-21; cf Exod 17:6). Just as the people of Israel walked through the Red Sea on dry ground, so too will the exiles return to the land of promise through miraculous circumstances. Just as Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years and experienced the provision of God (e.g., Exod 17:6), so too will the exiles experience the deliverance and provision of God through a new exodus.

Isaiah also uses the plagues of Egypt as imagery to describe the exiles' return. "I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are

⁶ See Timothy Laniak's discussion of "associated commonplaces." Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 42.

⁷ Hamilton identifies historical correspondence and escalation in significance as the two features of typology. Words, phrases, sequences of events, and escalation can alert the reader that the biblical author has identified a type. See Hamilton, *Typology*, 18-28.

⁸ Gary Smith argues that "passing through the waters" in Isa 43 does not refer to the crossing of the Red Sea but to the trials of God's people. He connects the theme of water to the Assyrian invasion in Isa 8:7-8 and the defeat of Israel in Isa 28:2. According to Smith, water is a reference to the trials of God's people, and the crossing of the Red Sea is not a trial but deliverance. However, a bigger picture of the trials of God's people reveals salvation in the midst of judgment. See Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*. The Lord uses water as an image of judgment, and in Isaiah he is judging Israel and Judah. In Isa 43, he promises to be with them in the midst of the judgment, and in this way they will find salvation through judgment. Additionally, Isaiah directly alludes to the exodus event later in the chapter and gives further support to an exodus motif in 43:2 (cf. 43:16). See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15b (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 193-94.

precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not” (Isa 43:3b-5a).⁹ The Lord poured out judgment on Egypt, and he delivered Israel from bondage. Isaiah tells the exiles that the Lord will deliver them from a foreign land, even judging other nations to do it. Gary Smith writes, “This past demonstration of God’s sovereign power is something of a guarantee of God’s future intentions to graciously intervene on behalf of his people.”¹⁰ Since God has acted mightily to deliver his people in the past, he can be counted on to act similarly in the future. The Lord promised this deliverance because he had “formed” and “fashioned” his people (Isa 43:1).¹¹ Israel belonged to God, and for that reason he intended to deliver them. Their status as God’s own people indicated a promised salvation from their suffering.

The prophets noticed the exodus pattern in their own circumstances. They viewed the coming return from exile as a new exodus when God would deliver his people. Since they were the people of God, they knew deliverance would come, and they used symbols and images of the exodus to express it.

New Testament Use of the Exodus Pattern

The New Testament authors follow the lead of the prophets, interpreting their circumstances through the lens of the exodus. The apostles told the story of Jesus and his people as another new exodus. The exodus pattern is present in the Gospels. The beginning of Matthew’s Gospel incorporates it. Babies are threatened (Matt 2:16; cf. Exod 1:16). Jesus escapes to Egypt (Matt 2:13-15). He returns from Egypt (Matt 2:19-23; cf. Hos 11:1).

⁹ Smith notes that these verses may refer to the Lord defeating Egypt in the exodus or to the Assyrians’ defeat of Egypt which also delivered Israel from Egypt’s grasp. Smith seems to favor the latter due to the direct context of Isaiah, but why choose one over the other? The Lord defeated Egypt in the exodus event (though admittedly not Cush or Seba), and then defeated them again by way of the Assyrians. Isaiah’s point stands: the Lord has made a habit of defeating other nations on behalf of Israel in the past, and for that reason Israel should expect him to do it again. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 194-95.

¹⁰ Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 195.

¹¹ Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 192.

He enters the Jordan River (Matt 3:13-17; cf. Matt 3:6; Exod 14; Josh 3:14-17). He abides in the wilderness for forty days (Matt 4:1-17; cf. Deut 8:4). He ascends a mountain to give a kind of new Law (Matt 5:1-7:29; cf. Exod 19:2-3). Luke is even more straightforward, describing the events surrounding Jesus's suffering, death, and resurrection as an exodus (Luke 9:30-31).¹²

Other New Testament books include the exodus motif as well. John alludes to the plagues of Egypt in his Apocalypse and presents the end of the world as a new exodus whereby the Lord will deliver his people through the judgment of the people of Earth.¹³ Paul uses the exodus to warn the Corinthians against idolatry. Just as the Lord saved Israel from Egypt, so too has the Lord saved Christians from sin, and they should not fall into idolatry like Israel did in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:1-13).¹⁴ As with the opening of Matthew's Gospel, sometimes the New Testament writers use the exodus pattern to shape the narrative of a text.¹⁵ For example, the apostle Peter experiences an exodus in Acts 11 and 12.¹⁶

¹² Alastair Roberts and Andrew Wilson indicate that Jesus's exodus was more than just his death but rather his "glory, authority, revelation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus is not just leaving. He is starting an exodus: a long-awaited escape from the land of slavery into a new world flowing with milk and honey, in which the slave masters are thrown down and drowned into the sea, but the multitude of faith, both Jew and Gentile, find freedom." Roberts and Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus*, 131-33.

¹³ E.g., the plagues associated with the trumpets in Rev 8:7-12. James M. Hamilton Jr., *Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 202-3.

¹⁴ Paul E. Deterding, "Exodus Motifs in First Peter," *Concordia Journal* 7, no. 2 (1981): 58.

¹⁵ I could also point to examples from Jesus's life as recorded in the Gospels. For some examples, see Roberts and Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus*, 131-36.

¹⁶ Alastair Roberts explains these details in "Acts 12 and the Resurrection and Exodus of Peter," April 27, 2018, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfFDhR5bfz4&ab_channel=AlastairRoberts. He also cites James B. Jordan, "The Resurrection of Peter and the Coming Kingdom," *Biblical Horizons*, no. 34, February 1992, <http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-horizons/no-34-the-resurrection-of-peter-and-the-coming-of-the-kingdom>.

Peter's Use of the Exodus Pattern

Whether Law, Prophets, Gospel, or New Testament epistle, the exodus pattern is apparent throughout the biblical text. Naturally, Peter follows this tradition and also employs the exodus theme in his own writing. He intends to show his readers that new covenant believers are like the old covenant people of God who cried out and were delivered from Egypt. Believers in Jesus experience a spiritual exile and wait for the Lord's eschatological salvation. Thus, Peter weaves images and symbols from the exodus into his letter to identify his Christian readers as participants in the new exodus.¹⁷

When the Lord delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt, he set the pattern for how he intends to save his people throughout redemptive history. This pattern shines forth in the promised return from exile and escalates as Jesus saves his people from their sins. The prophets and apostles notice this pattern and use exodus imagery to describe the moves of God among his people.¹⁸ In the same way, the apostle Peter uses the pattern of the exodus not only to explain the identity of his audience, but also to command their perspective and behavior. The indicatives which describe the status of believers in 1 Peter 1:1-12 promote the imperatives in 1 Peter 1:13-21. Three imperatives form the structure of the text and are influenced by the exodus.

Be Hopeful

The first imperative of the section is also the first imperative of the entire letter. In this primary place, Peter commands his readers to be hopeful. Hope is a prevailing theme in the beginning of Peter's letter, not only bracketing the entire opening unit (1:3-21), but also starting a new division in 1:13. Peter commands his readers to be hopeful as participants in the new exodus. In this section, I will first examine the nature of Christian

¹⁷ I will observe some of these allusions later in this chapter.

¹⁸ I owe this language and summary of the exodus pattern to Jim Hamilton's introduction to biblical theology, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 87-91.

hope. Then, I will consider the means by which hope should come. Finally, I will consider whether there is new exodus imagery in 1:13.

The Nature of Hope

Peter writes, “Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:13). I will make several observations about the nature of this hope. First, hope needs activating. Despite their circumstances, believers should choose to hope. Peter has already proclaimed that believers have been born again to a living hope for an inheritance of salvation (1:3-5). Here, Peter commands them to activate this hope. The aorist imperative “implies an undertaking in contrast with prior activity.”¹⁹ Thus, believers should “begin to hope.” Not only should this hope inaugurate at Peter’s command, but it should also continue to characterize the lives of believers going forward. Additionally, “set your hope” has a programmatic sense in which believers should possess “a particular resolve to orientate one’s life accordingly when worked out as a way of life.”²⁰ In other words, Peter’s audience should be a people of ongoing hope, come what may. Believers are not passive in hope, but rather Peter gives them an active command, expecting his readers to obey for the rest of their lives.

Second, hope is warranted. This call to hope is not unfounded. Peter’s command is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus (1:3). Believers may have been tempted to despair as they observed their dire circumstances, but they have also observed the faithfulness of God in the past—most notably, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Hope is warranted expectation. Because of Jesus’s resurrection from the dead, believers have excellent ground to expect God’s continued faithfulness toward them. So, Peter commands them to hope

¹⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119.

²⁰ Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 37.

since, as Achtemeier contends, this hope will “sustain them in the hard labor of remaining faithful to Christ despite the hostile opposition of the culture in which they live.”²¹

Third, like faith, hope is future-oriented.²² While suffering, one may long for instantaneous deliverance. However, Peter urges his audience to look toward a future event when they will be delivered and vindicated.²³ Peter has already oriented his readers to the future by describing an inheritance of salvation which is ready to be revealed at the last time (1:4-5). He also connects his readers to the future with the statement “at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (cf. 1:7). Their hope is set toward the future day when the genuineness of their faith is finally disclosed. In the midst of their fiery trial, believers should turn their attention toward their coming eschatological salvation.

Fourth, hope is undivided. Peter describes the degree to which his audience should set their hope: “fully.”²⁴ The hope Peter expects of believers should not be divided among several objects. Those suffering at the hand of society may be tempted to hope in their own devices or worldly saviors. Peter commands his readers to reject the temptation to hope in anything except for what God has promised them in Christ Jesus. They should set their hope on one thing.

The one thing for which believers should hope is “the grace that will be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:13). One should begin to hope on a future gift of grace. “Grace” likely compresses the eschatological rewards waiting for those with genuine faith in 1:7.²⁵ Though believers may suffer in the present, they should set their

²¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119.

²² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 77.

²³ Hope is similar to faith as it looks toward a future event. Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 107-8. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 77.

²⁴ Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010), 23. Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 93.

²⁵ Forbes, *1 Peter*, 38.

hope on a future day when the genuineness of their faith results in grace. Believers may long for instant relief from suffering, but Peter commands them to set their hope not on immediate deliverance but on one thing: eschatological reward.

Lodged in Peter's first imperative in the letter is a promise. Believers can set their hope fully on an eschatological reward because grace "will be brought" to them.²⁶ Thus, even though they now suffer, believers can hope in God's promise to bring them grace at the end of all things. They do not have to worry or attempt to deliver themselves. Rather, they can wait in warranted expectation for the Lord to bring salvation to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Instruments of Hope

Peter explains the way in which his audience should set their hope, qualifying the imperative with two participles. He writes, "Preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope" (1:13). Only one word in verse 13 is actually an imperative.²⁷ One should take these participles as instrumental rather than attendant circumstances. They may be interpreted with imperatival force, but they also explain the means by which one should set his hope.²⁸ Thus, believers should "set their hope" *by* "preparing their minds for action" and *by* "being sober-minded."²⁹ To illustrate his point, the two participles in 1:13 correspond to two illustrations.

²⁶ Φερομένην serves as a present participle with future referent. God is the implied subject. The fulfillment of this promise is in the future since it comes "at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Forbes, *1 Peter*, 38. Dubis, *1 Peter*, 24. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119.

²⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 77-78.

²⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 78; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 23. Contra Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 118, who argues for attendant circumstances. Jobes contends that the participles are adverbial: "The first specifies the mode in which one is to set one's hope fully, by preparing one's mind for action; the second indicates the mode by which one 'binds up the loins of one's mind,' by being self-controlled. They both acquire an imperative sense by virtue of their relationship to the main verb." Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 110-11.

²⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 77. Also, Keener, *1 Peter*, 93.

Preparation. First, one is able to set hope by “preparing your minds for action” (1 Pet 1:13). The Greek word behind this phrase (ἀναζωσάμενοι) suffers from contemporary unfamiliarity. Scholars attempt to interpret it for today’s readers by translating it in a variety of ways (see table 1).

Table 1. Various translations of ἀναζωσάμενοι in 1 Peter 1:13

Achtemeier	People whose minds are girded for action
ESV	Preparing your minds for action
ESV footnote	Girding up the loins of your mind
Dubis	By girding up the loins of your mind
Keener	Keep your minds ready
Michaels	Gird yourself for action in your mind
NIV (Schreiner, Jobes)	By making your mind ready for action

These varying translations demonstrate a singular idea: preparedness of mind. The image provided by the Greek text recalls an idea common to the first century reader. Ancient Near eastern people wore long robes which were appropriate for the climate but troublesome for physical activity. To gird one’s loins is to tuck one’s robe into one’s belt. Thus, to gird one’s loins is to prepare for action (e.g., Exod 12:11).³⁰ Peter applies this image not to the clothing of his readers but to their minds. For believers to set their hope, they first have to prepare their minds.

Priorities. Second, to set their hope, Peter explains that his readers should also be sober-minded. He uses the image of a drunkard who cannot see clearly or make wise choices. His vision is blurred and he cannot be trusted with anything of importance. So, Peter calls for sobriety. Since the genitive “of the mind” qualifies the previous participle, one may assume that it also characterizes this participle. Therefore, the ESV interprets “being sober-*minded*.” Peter opposes those things which may cloud his audience’s mind. If girding the loins of one’s mind indicates a prepared mind, then a sober mind suggests a

³⁰ I will consider how the exodus influences this image later in this chapter.

prioritized mind. The sober minded understand that “the end of all things is at hand” and can pray appropriately (1 Pet 4:7). They also know the ferociousness of their enemy and remain watchful (1 Pet 5:8).³¹ In other words, a sober-minded person sees clearly enough to keep things in proper perspective.

Those suffering may find it challenging to hope in anything at all. They may be given to despair. But there is a reason to hope. One is not passive in hope, but rather must prepare and prioritize his mind for the task of hoping. It seems that preparation and prioritization work together. One should prepare the mind for the task of sobering the mind to set his hope in God. After all, as Achtemeier writes, “Drunken people in long garments are not very good at hard labor.”³²

Exodus Influence

As I endeavored to demonstrate in table 1, translators attempt to smooth out the ancient idiom of girding one’s loins. Unfortunately, some of these renderings blur a potential allusion to the exodus. I also argued that the biblical authors use images and symbols from the exodus to explain how God intends to save his people. Sometimes those images are clear, but other times they are debatable. The grammar and context of 1:13 suggest an allusion to the exodus.

The grammar. Peter instructs his readers to “prepare your minds for action.” The ESV notes the literal rendering in its footnote, “girding up the loins of your mind.” While this is a common ancient idiom, the grammar connects this passage to the exodus account. In Exodus, the Lord gives his people instructions for surviving the final Egyptian plague. He tells Israel how to eat the Passover meal, “with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste” (Exod 12:11).

³¹ Keener, *1 Peter*, 93.

³² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 118.

Those who eat the Passover should be ready to move at a moment's notice. Thus, their robes should be tucked into their belt about their waist. Jesus uses this phrase almost exactly in Luke 12:35 to urge his disciples to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man. Peter's use of the phrase serves a similar purpose but with a slightly different lexical form. Table 2 compares "with your belt fastened" in Exodus 12:11, Luke 12:35, and 1 Peter 1:13.

Table 2. Gird up your loins

Reference	Greek	ESV
Exodus 12:11	αἱ ὀσφύες ὑμῶν περιεζωσμένοι	Having girded your loins about you
Luke 12:35	Ἔστωσαν ὑμῶν αἱ ὀσφύες περιεζωσμένοι	Let your loins stay girded (cf Exod 12:11)
1 Peter 1:13	ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν	Gird up the loins of your mind

The main difference among the three references is the participle. Exodus and Luke use *περιεζωσμένοι* (perfect passive participle) while Peter uses *ἀναζωσάμενοι* (aorist middle participle). Both verbs share the root *ζώννυμι* but include different prepositional prefixes. Exodus and Luke envision girding one's loins in the belt that wraps around the waist while Peter emphasizes the upward motion of tucking one's robe into a belt.³³ Thus, though the prefixes are different, the meaning is basically the same. I attribute the difference in tense to the author's use of the image. Exodus and Luke *describe* a person ready to take action while Peter *exhorts* his readers to be prepared.³⁴

J. Ramsey Michaels proposes that Peter's use of the exodus metaphor originates in Luke's Gospel even though the vocabulary is slightly different: "Peter is indebted to

³³ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 62; 801.

³⁴ J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 54. Michaels suggests, "Peter's formulation changes the image of girding the loins from the description of a state, as in Luke 12:35 and Exod 12:11 (with their perfect participles) to a call for immediate action (indicated by his aorist participle). The change of prefix from *περι-* to *ἀνα-* ('gird up' rather than 'gird about') may have been intended to heighten this effect" (54).

the Gospel tradition not for the precise vocabulary and not even for the metaphor in itself, but for the application of the metaphor to the Christian eschatological hope. The style and the vocabulary are his own.”³⁵ In other words, Peter learned from Jesus to apply the pattern of the exodus to the Christian waiting for the new exodus. The grammar in 1 Peter is close enough to Exodus and Luke to suggest that Peter has the exodus in mind.³⁶

The context. One may argue that similarity in grammar alone does not suggest an exodus allusion. After all, “gird up your loins” is a common Semitic idiom. I propose that the context of 1 Peter 1:13 also implies that Peter invokes the exodus.

First, the eschatological context of 1 Peter 1:13 indirectly links it to the exodus.³⁷ I have observed the similarities and differences in grammar between Luke 12:35 and 1 Peter 1:13. The immediate context of these passages seems to match as well. In Luke 12, Jesus urges his disciples to be prepared for the coming of the Son of Man. In 1 Peter, Peter exhorts his audience to be prepared to hope in the grace that will come *at the revelation of Jesus Christ*. In this way, both texts are eschatological in nature. This suggests that Peter was mindful of Jesus’s use of the exodus to describe his return. The pattern is established in Exodus, Jesus speaks of his return as part of a new exodus, and then Peter exhorts his readers to hope as those who participate in the new exodus. Thus, the grammar and eschatological context of 1 Peter 1:13 link it to the exodus by way of Luke 12.

Second, when one locates 1 Peter 1:13 within the context of the first two chapters of 1 Peter, one may observe an abundance of references to the exodus story. Peter

³⁵ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 54.

³⁶ The word does not have to be the exact cognate to be classified as an allusion. In Acts, an angel uses the root ζώννυμι without a prefix to tell Peter to get dressed for his apparent exodus from jail (Acts 12:8). Polycarp uses ἀναζωσάμενοι in his letter to the Philippians in the same way that Peter does. He even includes a reference to fear just like Peter. See 1 Pet 1:13;17 cf. Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians*, 2:1, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0136.htm>, cited in BDAG, 62.

³⁷ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 54.

does not retell the exodus story, but rather alludes to various parts of the story as it aids his argument. Peter describes his Christian audience as exiles (1:1)—those who are living in a land that is not their home. Just as the people of Israel lived as exiles in Egypt, so too are God’s people exiles on the earth. The living hope of believers is for an eschatological inheritance (1:4). Just as Israel pursued the inheritance of the promised land, so too are God’s people setting their hope on a future inheritance of salvation. Peter alludes to the tabernacle and the priesthood when he explains that believers are “being built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices” (2:5). He returns to Sinai to declare that his Christian audience is a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for God’s own possession (2:9; cf. Exod 19:5-6). All these allusions at least suggest that the exodus pattern is an important way for Peter to communicate to his Christian audience.³⁸ If the exodus pattern is so primary for Peter, then it is likely that ἀναζωσάμενοι is a call back to the Passover meal.

Some may object that if these are allusions to the exodus, then Peter should mirror the chronological order of the story. It is true that Peter’s allusions are not chronological, but a sequential retelling of the exodus story is not the only way the apostles write. As James Hamilton contends, the apostles assumed their readers were already familiar enough with the exodus and did not need them to “mention its components in the order they actually took place.”³⁹ Therefore, Peter uses an exodus allusion to strengthen the imagery of his command.⁴⁰

³⁸ Deterding perceives more allusions than just these in “Exodus Motifs in 1 Peter,” 58-64.

³⁹ Hamilton, *Typology*, 273. For example, Paul in 1 Cor 10:1-13 is not concerned with chronologically ordering the events of the exodus. He assumes his audience already knows the order of events, and he is free to use the parts of the story which serve his purpose (273-80).

⁴⁰ Many scholars agree that this is a likely reference to the exodus. See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 118; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 78; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 111; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 66; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 53-54; Keener, *1 Peter*, 92. Goppelt does not specifically identify the exodus allusion, but he does cite Exod 12:11. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 108n23.

A deliverance like the exodus is coming. Just as the people of Israel had to prepare themselves for salvation from Egypt by girding their loins, so too should the new covenant people of God prepare themselves for eschatological salvation by girding up the loins of their minds. Though their circumstances may influence them to doubt, they should set their hope by training their minds to focus fully on the eschatological reward promised to them at the end of all things.

Be Holy

The second imperative of 1 Peter 1:13-21 alludes to Sinai. Peter writes, “As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy for I am holy’” (1:15-16). Having established Christians as the new people of God, Peter applies an Old Testament command for Israel to participants in the new exodus. Just as God commanded Israel to be holy at Sinai, he also commands Christians to be holy. While Peter roots this command in the Old Testament, the new realities of the people of God shape the command in fresh ways. In this section, I will observe how the command to be holy is rooted in God’s own holiness. Then I will examine the Old Testament command to be holy. Finally, I will observe Peter’s application of this command to participants in the new exodus.

God Is Holy

A biblical theology of holiness must begin with the holiness of God. D. G. Peterson states, “God is wholly other, distinct and separate from everything that he has made, and different from the gods of human imagination.”⁴¹ The authors of the Old Testament often use “holy” as an adjective to describe the nature of God.⁴² Peterson summarizes, “God’s holiness is particularly associated with his majesty, sovereignty, and

⁴¹ D. G. Peterson, “Holiness,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 544.

⁴² Peterson cites texts such as Job 6:10; Isa 40:25; 43:15; Ezek 39:7. Peterson, “Holiness,” 545.

awesome power. . . . As the one who is supreme over all, he is transcendent, exalted and different from everything he has made.”⁴³ Holiness is otherness. In his nature, God is separate from everything he has made. He alone is omniscient, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. Furthermore, God alone possesses moral perfection. Every aspect of the nature of God is holy. Isaiah therefore proclaims that God’s “name is holy” (Isa 57:15); that is, the very essence of God’s nature is wholly other. Because of his holiness, he alone possesses the authority to demand holiness from others.

God Calls Israel to Be Holy

While a biblical theology of holiness begins with God, the term *holy* does not only apply to God. For example, when God creates the heavens and the earth in six days, he sets aside the seventh day, making it holy (Gen 2:3). God sanctifies days (e.g., Exod 20:8) and objects (e.g., Exod 28:36). He also sanctifies people. When the Lord delivered the people of Israel from Egypt, he set them aside for himself.⁴⁴ He further defines their relationship by explaining that if they keep his commandments, then they will be “a holy nation” (Exod 19:5-6). Though the Lord reigns over all people, he sets aside the people of Israel as a particular people for his possession and for his purpose. Thus, like the Sabbath (Exod 30:14), anointing oil (Exod 30:25), priestly garments (Exod 28:2), and anything that touches the altar (Exod 29:37), Israel is holy. They are set aside for the possession and purpose of God. The holiness of Israel emanates from the holiness of God.

Peter’s Command to Be Holy

Just as God commanded Israel to be holy, so too does he command the new people of God. Lee Beach explains, “This is the same call issued to Israel and represents the fundamental calling of God’s people in all times to represent him in the world by

⁴³ Peterson, “Holiness,” 545.

⁴⁴ Peterson, “Holiness,” 546.

portraying his otherness to those around them.”⁴⁵ Peter particularly grounds his command in the exodus.⁴⁶ The people of Israel stopped at Sinai and received a command to be holy. Peter writes to his audience who are participants in the new exodus, also commanding them to be holy. He quotes Leviticus: “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1:14; cf, Lev 19:2). Peter qualifies the command to be holy in verses 14-16 and demonstrates that his audience comprises the people of the new exodus.

Holiness and identity. Peter grounds the command to be holy in the identity of his audience. Peter’s language seems to echo the exodus. First, believers are children of God. The word *ὡς* introduces a family metaphor.⁴⁷ The father-son relationship is an apt metaphor for Peter’s argument. The Greco-Roman world expected children to be obedient to their fathers.⁴⁸ Thus, Peter draws on a known relationship to make his point.

Peter may have also used a familial metaphor because of the near context of Leviticus 19.⁴⁹ If Peter quotes Leviticus 19:2 in 1 Peter 1:14, then his “obedient children” metaphor may be a nod to Leviticus 19:3: “Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father.” This reinforces the Sinai context of Peter’s quotation.

⁴⁵ Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2015), 127.

⁴⁶ D. A. Carson distinguishes between the exodus and the Levitical code given at Sinai: “The context in Peter’s mind as he quotes these words is not the Passover or exodus theme (as would have been the case had he quoted from Lev. 11:44 [cf. Lev. 11:45]) but rather the so-called Holiness Code (Lev 17-26).” D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1017. However, I am including events from the whole journey from Egypt to the land of promise in the exodus pattern as associated commonplaces.

⁴⁷ This is an expected use of *ὡς* in 1 Pet. As noted by Dubis, *ὡς* can “identify the role or capacity in which someone acts,” and it “almost always introduces a metaphor.” The metaphor “introduces a comparison between the topic and the image . . . and is best translated ‘in the capacity/role of . . .’” Dubis, *1 Peter*, 24-25. See BDAG, 1104.

⁴⁸ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 115.

⁴⁹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 61.

Furthermore, Peter's use of a father and child relationship stands in canonical continuity. The Old Testament often describes God as Father and Israel as child, particularly with regard to the exodus motif (Exod 4:22; Deut 32:18; Ps 80:15; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1). In the context of Hosea's prophecy about the new exodus from the impending exile, the Lord says about Israel, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1). Just as the people of Israel were children of God, so too are the people of the new exodus. The Old Testament associates the exodus with the father-child relationship.

Thus, God's command to be holy is not baseless but rather comes as from a father to a child. New Testament believers have already been "born again" (1:3) and are children in the family of God. They should long for pure spiritual milk like newborn infants (2:2). Peter assumes that the nature of the believer grounds his behavior. Since they are obedient children of God, Peter's audience should be holy like their Father.⁵⁰

Second, Peter also identifies his audience as those who have been called by God. God is the one who calls the Christian unto salvation (1:16; cf. 2:9).⁵¹ Once again, Peter's language of "calling" stands in continuity with the Old Testament especially regarding the exodus. Hosea describes the exodus event: "Out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1b). The people cried out to the Lord, and so he sent a deliverer. Hosea describes this deliverance as "calling." Peter echoes this language and reminds his readers that just as the Lord called the children of Israel out of Egypt, so too does he call new covenant believers from their bondage (2:9). He is the one who maintains the authority to demand obedience. Peter's careful language illustrates that "grace precedes demand."⁵² A person does not earn God's call by their holy living. Rather, the one who called a believer is also

⁵⁰ "Like the obedient children that you already are." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 57. See also Dubis, *1 Peter*, 24-25.

⁵¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 80.

⁵² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 80.

the one who demands holiness. Because Christians do not call themselves unto salvation, they must respond to the will of God who has called them.

Peter identifies his audience as participants in the new exodus. They are the called children of God. Peter's use of Leviticus connects the people of the exodus to the people of the new exodus. He directly quotes Leviticus 19:2: "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16). Just as the Lord called Israel his child, he also calls believers in Jesus his children. Just as the Lord called his child out of Egypt, he has also called his children from their bondage to darkness (cf. 2:9). Just as the Lord commanded Israel to be holy, Peter also commands that the participants of the new exodus be holy (1:1).

Holiness contrast. Peter contrasts the holiness of his audience with conformity to their passions. Peter writes, "Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance" (1 Pet 1:14).⁵³ Whether Jews or Gentiles, Peter's audience could be tempted to return to their former passions. Schreiner notes, "The Christian life is not passive."⁵⁴ There is a temptation to return to one's former ignorance. Before Peter's audience became believers, they did not know God, and that led to wicked behavior.⁵⁵ But now a believer possesses knowledge of God, and he must refuse the passions "which wage war against your soul" (2:11). He must take an active role in rejecting the behaviors associated with former ignorance.⁵⁶ The ignorance is former, and thus the behaviors associated with that

⁵³ The ESV is probably correct to translate the participle as an imperative. While *συσχηματιζόμενοι* is a participle, it operates with imperatival force. The *ἀλλὰ* at the beginning of the following verse suggests that the participle should be taken in contrast to the imperative located in v. 15. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 79.

⁵⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 79.

⁵⁵ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 109n26. Goppelt, citing Acts 3:17; 17:30; Eph 4:18, observes that ignorance in the New Testament is "always of failure to know God." BDAG, 13, explains that ignorance is a "lack of information that may result in reprehensible conduct" such that it can almost be equated with sin.

⁵⁶ Schreiner notes that the "Christian life is not passive. Ungodly desires still beckon believers and tempt them to depart from God. They must refuse such desires and choose what is good." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 79.

ignorance should also be in the past. The passions, however, are in the present and must actively be rejected.

This command parallels the Lord's injunction in Leviticus 18:2-4.⁵⁷ He warns the people that they should not behave in the ways of the Egyptians and the Canaanites. Instead, they should be holy in their actions as they separate themselves from other nations. In the same way, Peter commands his readers to separate themselves from the ways in which they used to behave. Therefore, one must gird up the loins of one's mind and be sober-minded (1:13) since the battle for the mind does not stop at one's regeneration. In this way, the new people of God can reject fleshly passions that lead to wicked behavior and instead be holy, as the obedient children they are.

Comprehensive command. The command to be holy encompasses all of life. Peter makes the wholesale command, "As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1:15). Abraham Kuyper is oft quoted, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'"⁵⁸ Similarly, there is not one sphere of the life of a believer over which God does not command, "Be holy!" Karen Jobes emphasizes that the influence of God's holiness command is not limited to religious practice. Rather, "The call is to live differently, not just practice religion differently. The sweeping nature of the transformation is commensurate with the sweeping nature of the new birth and the consequential new identity of the people to whom Peter writes."⁵⁹ Thus, believers should reject their old way of thinking which led to lustful desires and wicked behavior, and instead heed God's command to come out from among the nations and be holy in all their conduct.

⁵⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 80.

⁵⁸ E.g., Tim Keller cites Abraham Kuyper in Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (London: Penguin, 2012), 243.

⁵⁹ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 113.

Summary

God is holy. While Israel was at Sinai, God commanded them to likewise be holy. Peter views his Christian audience as participants in the new exodus. They are children who have been called by God. Consequently, it follows that they should heed the call given to the Old Testament people of God to be holy in all their conduct.

Be Fearful

Peter concludes 1:13-21 by commanding his readers to be fearful. He writes, “Conduct yourselves with fear” (v. 17b). Fear is an appropriate posture for participants in the new exodus. In this section I will consider the nature of Peter’s command to fear, and the reason believers should conduct themselves with fear.

“Conduct Yourselves with Fear”

Some have attempted to encourage believers by telling them that the Bible commands them to “fear not” 365 times—once for every day of the year.⁶⁰ While this provides great encouragement for someone tempted to succumb to difficult circumstances, this is too simplistic a soundbite. The problem with fear is not fear itself, but whether a person places fear in the proper place. Jesus warns his disciples against misplaced fear: “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). Peter likewise warns his readers, “Conduct yourselves with fear.”⁶¹ A believer should be fearful as long as that fear is rightly placed.

Peter emphasizes rightly placed fear in his letter. He tells wives to be subject to their husbands, and their conduct may win over unbelieving husbands. Peter describes

⁶⁰ E.g., Katherine Weber, “Rick Warren: Why God Encourages Christians to ‘Fear Not’ 365 Times in the Bible,” *Christian Post*, April 30, 2016, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/rick-warren-why-god-encourages-christians-to-fear-not-365-times-in-the-bible.html>.

⁶¹ I agree with Dubis who takes *ἀναστράφητε* as an aorist middle imperative. A believer is not passive in this command. Dubis, *1 Peter*, 35. So, “Conduct yourselves.”

this soul-winning conduct as “respectful (ἐν φόβῳ) and pure” (3:2). God is the most likely object of this fear, not unbelieving husbands.⁶² Thus, while fearing God, wives should be like Sarah and not “fear” anything that is frightening (3:6). Additionally, Peter uses “fear” to connect the section written to wives to the section he writes to anyone who is suffering unjustly (3:13-17). Fear of God should characterize the way Christians defend their faith to persecutors (3:15).⁶³ This is not a unilateral fear, however, because then he commands his readers, “you shall not be afraid of them,” just like wives should not fear anything that is frightening (3:14). Therefore, fear is permissible only when rightly placed.

The command to fear is a command to adjust one’s deeds according to the will of God. The thrust of Peter’s command to fear stands in continuity with the Old Testament concept of the “fear of the Lord.” Fear of the Lord influenced Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen 22:12). When the Lord spoke to Moses from the mountain, the people were afraid. So, Moses said, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin” (Exod 20:20). If the people remember to fear the Lord, then they will remember not to sin. Moses likewise reminds the people that the Lord does not require anything else but to fear him and to walk in his ways (Deut 10:12-13). The Psalmist echoes Moses and proclaims that everyone who fears the Lord and walks in his ways is blessed (Ps 128:1-6). The fear of the Lord undergirds the wisdom in Proverbs since “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1:7). Peter continues the association between fear and behavior when he commands his readers to conduct themselves with fear. The one they are to fear is the one who “judges impartially according to each one’s deeds” (1:17). The one who fears the Lord will walk in his ways and should expect a favorable judgment at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

⁶² Dubis, *1 Peter*, 86.

⁶³ ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου (with gentleness and fear)

The Reason for Fear

Peter provides the motivation for why believers should conduct themselves with fear. The reasons include the identity of their Father and their identity as new exodus participants.

The identity of their Father. A believer's Father is the Judge. "And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear" (1:17). "If" begins a first class conditional statement where the protasis is given for the sake of argument.⁶⁴ One might wish to translate verse 17 as an assumption: "And *since* you call on him as Father."⁶⁵ However, as Thomas Schreiner rightly notes, the first class conditional "provoke[s] the readers to consider whether they call upon God as their Father, desiring, surely, that they would answer in the affirmative. The word 'since' does not have the same effect."⁶⁶ Peter directs his command to fear toward those who would call on God as Father.

Though, why should God's Fatherhood rouse fear in believers? Peter champions twin theological truths: God is both Father and Judge. Achtemeier writes, "God's tenderness and love as Father is mingled with his judgment and the fear that should mark Christians in this world."⁶⁷ Knowing that their Father is the Judge should motivate believers to live in the fear of the Lord. After all, he judges impartially according to each one's deeds.

⁶⁴ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 29.

⁶⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 124.

⁶⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 82.

⁶⁷ Achtemeier observes, "The contrast between God as benevolent Father and as impartial judge of the world." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 124. However, Schreiner notes the complementary nature of the fatherhood and judgeship of God: "The relationship we have with God is both tender and awesome." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 82-83.

The identity of Christians. Christians are new exodus participants. Knowledge of this identity should motivate them to fear God. In 1:18-21, Peter connects his readers to the exodus story in a few ways. First, he hints that his audience awaits redemption. The occasion for which Peter’s audience should conduct themselves in fear is “the time of your exile” (τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν).⁶⁸ Scholars vary in their rendering of παροικίας.⁶⁹ “Exile” seems to match BDAG’s definition: “The state of being in a strange locality without citizenship.”⁷⁰ Michaels suggests that the most likely referent in Peter’s mind is Israel’s exile in Egypt. The only other New Testament use of this word is Acts 13:17 where the clear referent is Israel in Egypt (cf. Wis 19:10).⁷¹ If that is the case, then Peter envisions his readers as waiting for deliverance. Just as the people of Israel sojourned in Egypt and waited for the Lord to redeem them, so too are believers in Jesus sojourning in an ungodly society and waiting for their redemption at the revelation of Jesus Christ.⁷² Thus, Peter draws upon exodus imagery to explain to his readers that, as Michaels observes, “wherever you are, spend your allotted time there in reverent fear.”⁷³

Second, Peter uses the exodus story to describe God’s work of redemption through Christ. “Conduct yourselves with fear . . . knowing that you were ransomed” (1:17-18). One should take “knowing” as a causal participle.⁷⁴ The reason believers should fear is because they know that they have been redeemed (ἐλυτρώθητε). Jobes describes how a Greco-Roman slave could be freed by bringing payment into the temple

⁶⁸ τῆς παροικίας is a genitive of time Dubis, *1 Peter*, 31.

⁶⁹ See, for example, the differences in the renderings of Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 70-71; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 106; 113; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 41, and the NIV.

⁷⁰ BDAG, 779.

⁷¹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 62.

⁷² Michaels, *1 Peter*, 62.

⁷³ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 51.

⁷⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 84.

of a god. Then, from the perspective of society, that slave was freed from his master and a new slave of that deity.⁷⁵ While one can see obvious similarities between Greco-Roman policy and Peter's proclamation in 1:18, Peter's use of "redeem" more closely relates to the Old Testament.

Sometimes in the Old Testament, "redeem" simply refers to the manumission of slaves (e.g., Lev 25:25). Other times, "redeem" can mean the deliverance of individuals from precarious situations (e.g., Ps 34:22). However, Peter's use of "redeem" seems to stand in continuity with the exodus. In Deuteronomy 7:8, Moses uses "redeem" to refer to the first exodus: "It is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (cf. Deut 9:26; 15:15; 24:18).⁷⁶ Likewise, Isaiah uses "redeem" while explaining the second exodus: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be *redeemed* without money" (Isa 52:3). Peter continues this language in his letter. Just as the Lord *redeemed* the people of Israel out of Egypt, and just as he *redeemed* them from their exile in Babylon, so too will he *redeem* believers from their futile ways. In this way, believers are participants in the new exodus.

Not only does Peter's use of "redeem" hearken back to the exodus, so too does his use of sacrificial imagery. He writes, "You were ransomed . . . not with perishable things such as silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1:18-19).⁷⁷ When the people of Israel escaped Egypt, they did not make a payment to the Egyptians for their manumission. Rather, on the night of the

⁷⁵ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 116-17. BDAG explains that *λυτρόω* describes the situation when a "slave is freed by paying a ransom." In a figurative sense, this word means "to liberate from an oppressive situation." BDAG, 606.

⁷⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 84.

⁷⁷ Jobes notes a possible wordplay here. The redemption payment for a slave was called *timē*. The redemption payment for Peter's audience was the precious (*timiō*) blood of Christ. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 117. Carson also observes the play on words. Carson, "1 Peter," 1019.

Passover, the people of Israel departed with the silver and gold of their Egyptian masters (Exod 3:22; 12:35). While Israel's freedom did not cost them silver and gold, they did have to slaughter a lamb without blemish.⁷⁸ The cultic sacrifices of Israel required the animals to be without blemish (e.g., Exod 29:1; Lev 22:18-21; Num 6:14). In the same way, the Lord also required the lamb of the Passover memorial to be without blemish. Some scholars contend that the reference to the unblemished lamb alludes not to the Passover lamb in particular, but to the whole Israelite cultus.⁷⁹ Others disagree and aver that Peter does allude to the Lord's instructions for the Passover meal in Exodus 12:5.⁸⁰ I conclude that Peter likely refers to the Passover meal. While the LXX uses different Greek words to describe the lamb in Exodus 12:5 and the sacrificial animals in other passages (e.g., Exod 29:1), the Hebrew is the same. Thus, there is no difference in the descriptions of these sacrificial animals. Further, the Passover lamb is the first of Israel's national sacrifices. It seems probable that Peter's allusion at least *includes* the Passover in Exodus 12. Additionally, the Passover lamb is not associated with the forgiveness of sins but with the redemption of Israel.⁸¹ Peter's reference to redemption along with an unblemished lamb seem to point specifically in the direction of the Passover. Therefore, when Peter explains to his readers that the cost of their redemption was the blood of a lamb without blemish, he seems to invoke the exodus. The blood of an unblemished lamb protected Israel from the Destroyer (Exod 12:23) and redeems Christians from their former ways.

⁷⁸ See Deterding, "Exodus Motifs in First Peter," 59. Deterding connects the silver and gold of 1 Pet to the silver and gold in Exod 12 and Ps 105:37. Achtemeier sees this as "fanciful." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128n68. Achtemeier may be correct to deny any allusion, but the abundance of other exodus allusions in the paragraph makes it at least possible that the silver and gold in 1 Pet 1:18 points to the silver and gold in Exod 12. Carson does not comment on the possible Old Testament allusion but rather associates silver and gold with the old way of life of Peter's audience: "Nothing from their old way of life could have redeemed them, certainly not silver and gold; rather, they have been redeemed by God's own powerful act in the death and resurrection of his Son." Carson, "1 Peter," 1019.

⁷⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 86; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128-29.

⁸⁰ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 73; Deterding, "Exodus Motifs in 1 Peter," 58.

⁸¹ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 53.

Thus, Peter identifies his audience as participants in the new exodus. Christians should meditate on the great cost of their redemption. They should consider the eschatological consequences of being outside the realm of this redemption. As John Piper explains, they should “fear conducting [themselves] in a way that shows that the blood is not precious to [them].”⁸² This meditation should provoke the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the stimulant to Christian conduct.

Summary

Believers should conduct themselves in fear while they live among nonbelievers. Their fear should be directed toward the Lord and not toward society. They should tremble knowing their deliverance at the revelation of Jesus Christ was secured by the death of Jesus. Karen Jobes explains, “To continue to live in one’s useless former ways is implicitly to deny the value of Christ’s death.”⁸³ Their fear is the result of their identity. While they are children of God (1:3), they should remember that their Father is the Judge and will judge each one according to his deeds. They should also contemplate the cost of their ransom. Silver and gold are no better than asphalt compared to the precious blood of Christ. Believers in Jesus should not take his sacrifice lightly. As Elliot Clark observes, “We please those we fear.”⁸⁴ If one fears the Lord who is Father, Judge, and Redeemer, then he will seek to please him with obedience.

Conclusion

Those who participate in the new exodus must be hopeful, holy, and fearful. Peter uses the exodus motif to help emphasize these new exodus essentials. As new

⁸² John Piper, “A Sojourn on Earth in Confident Fear,” *Desiring God*, December 12, 1993, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/a-sojourn-on-earth-in-confident-fear>.

⁸³ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 116.

⁸⁴ Elliot Clark, *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in our own Land* (n.p.: Gospel Coalition, 2019), 58.

exodus participants, believers should gird the loins of their minds so that they set their hope on God's imminent grace. Just as the people of Israel were prepared to exit Egypt at a moment's notice, so should believers in Jesus prepare their minds for his revelation. They should be as hopeful as one who believes his deliverance is impending. They should view their current circumstances through the lens of what God has promised for the future. It requires a disciplined mind to be hopeful in suffering. But nevertheless, that is the call of the apostle Peter.

Believers should also be holy. Just as God commanded Israel to be holy, so too does Peter command his audience. Believers in Jesus should expect to stand out as they live among a people who do not believe the same as them. Different perspectives and priorities drive a wedge between Christians and the contemporary culture. Believers will be different from their neighbors, and it may lead to suffering. However, the call to be holy remains consistent.

Finally, believers should fear God. Fear is only appropriate if it is rightly placed. While they do not fear persecution from society, they do fear the one who is both Judge and Redeemer. The one who calls them to be holy is the one who will judge each one's deeds. Every careless word or deed comes under the scrutiny of the one who also paid for the Christian's ransom. Thus, believers should arrange their lives around what pleases God and not what may prevent short-term suffering.

Clark also observes that the temptation to fear society should be combated with proper fear of the Lord. This rightly placed fear might produce credibility before the unbelieving world. Clark writes,

As fears increase in the American church, we'll have the opportunity to resurrect a holy fear of God in our midst. As we suffer under the temporal judgment of God as weary sojourners, we may just find a stronger voice to warn others to flee from the wrath to come. As we sense the nearness of the day of retribution, we may speak once again with unction and holy disquiet.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Clark, *Evangelism as Exiles*, 57.

Believers will certainly suffer, but fear of the Lord should lead them to obey him and in so doing proclaim truth to the unbelieving society.

In these ways, believers are encouraged to keep proper perspective as they suffer. The revelation of Jesus Christ is sure to come. When that glory comes, the Christian's hope, holiness, and fear will be vindicated.

CHAPTER 4

LIVING STONES: THE PURPOSE AND EXPECTATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The identity of a person directs his purpose and expectations. My dad was a successful high school basketball coach, and my family traveled to watch almost every game. We never paid to watch a single game because my dad was the coach. When we approached the entrance to the gym where the game would be played, my mom would tell the gatekeeper, “My husband is the coach, and this is my family.” We would then be granted free entry into the game because of our identity. Because my dad was the coach, we expected free entry. Similarly, my grandfather was the basketball coach at Southwest Texas State University,¹ and he became locally famous in San Marcos, Texas. Anytime I had business in San Marcos, he would remind me to tell others that I was his grandson: “Just tell ‘em who you are.” At that point, I could expect a friendly response. My relationship to both coaches influenced my experiences.

Similarly, a person’s relationship to Christ directs his purpose and destiny. In this chapter, I will examine 1 Peter 2:4-8 where Peter argues that the people of God have a holy purpose and should expect eschatological vindication. First, Peter connects the people of God across epochs. Three stone passages connect Old and New Covenant people through Christ. Second, the people of God have a special function described by Peter as a temple and a priesthood. Third, eschatological vindication will come for the people of God

¹ My grandfather wrote about his experiences as a player and coach at Southwest Texas State University. Vernon McDonald, *Playing for a Winner: Remembering Coach Milton Jowers* (San Marcos, TX: Texas State Alumni Association, 2009).

and dishonor for those who reject Christ. In this way, believers' relationships to Christ influence their purpose and their destiny.

The People of God across Epochs

In chapter 2 of this project, I argued that Peter connects the people of God across epochs with the theme of suffering. In 1 Peter 2:48, Peter argues that believers are the new installment of the people of God by way of rejected stone imagery. In this section, I will first examine three Old Testament stone passages. Next, I will observe how Jesus applies those passages to himself. Then, I will see how Peter echoes Jesus and identifies him as the stone. Finally, I will assess how Peter describes Christians as the people of God by way of stone imagery. In this way, I will observe how Peter connects the people of God across epochs.

The Old Testament Stone

Three passages in the Old Testament use stone imagery (Isa 8:14; 28:16; Ps 118:22). The stone is rejected and yet exalted. All these passages are set in a similar context. The people of God stand against an overwhelming enemy and are faced with the choice of trusting God or trusting someone else. The stone imagery serves to urge the people of God to trust in him with Davidic hope even though their eyes see a potentially insurmountable foe before them. I will now summarize the three Old Testament stone passages in their individual contexts.

Sanctuary and stone of stumbling (Isa 8:14). The Assyrian army will attack Syria and Israel, and their might would, like a river, overflow its banks into Judah (Isa 8:5-8). The people of God must have been frightened by this ferocious enemy.² While the

² Tiglath-pileser III turned Assyria back into a global power and “exerted his control over defeated areas by deporting people from a rebellious land, reducing the territory of that state, and turning the territory into an Assyrian province.” What Tiglath-pileser III did to Judah’s neighbors Hamath, Tyre, Bybols, Damascus, Syria, Philistia, and Israel, he threatened to do to Judah as well. See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15a (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 28-30.

Assyrians would overcome Syria and Israel, they would not defeat Judah. The Lord urges Isaiah and the people to fear him and not the Assyrian army. One demonstrates the fear of the Lord by regarding him as holy (8:13) and keeping his teachings (8:16-22). For the ones who fear the Lord, “He will become a sanctuary” (Isa 8:14a). But to the ones who fear Assyria instead of the Lord, the Lord will become “a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Isa 8:14b). The one who fears the Lord finds him to be a sanctuary in times of trouble. But the ones who fear someone else stumble over the Davidic stone. Messianic overtones in the immediate context of Isaiah 8:14 suggest that the stone in 8:14 is Davidic. The prophet points forward to the messiah throughout Isaiah 7-12. Isaiah 7:14 prophesies the birth of the messiah. This future child will bear titles such as “wonderful counselor” and “mighty God” (Isa 9:6). Indeed, this child is the Davidic king (Isa 11:1). Therefore, in this context, the stone that trips unbelievers must be the messianic Davidic king.

A sure foundation (Isa 28:16). Isaiah prophesies about the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions. By human standards, the people of God do not stand a chance. However, Isaiah has warned his readers throughout the prophecy to place their trust in the Lord and not in foreign powers for safety. The temptation for the people of Israel was to place their faith in a treaty with Egypt rather than to believe that God will keep his covenant with them (Isa 30:2). Isaiah 28 explains that judgment will surely come for Ephraim and for priests and prophets in Jerusalem (28:7) because of their pride and unbelief manifested when they refused to trust God for safety.³ Though the rulers of Jerusalem make “a covenant with death” in an attempt to avoid this fate (28:14-15), the Lord promises judgment for them since they do not believe. He says to them, “Behold, I 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’” (28:16). It was

³ Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 493.

foolish for the leaders in Jerusalem to trust in foreigners for safety because God has built a building with a sure foundation that will stand in the midst of trial.⁴ The cornerstone of this building is “tested,” “precious,” and a “sure foundation.” The foundation is trustworthy. It is also Davidic. The Lord God laid the stone in Zion—a metonym for the house of David.⁵ God will deliver the one who believes God’s promises.

The exemplary king (Ps 118:22). The Davidic King of Psalm 118 exemplifies the people of God who should trust in the Lord for deliverance.⁶ He returns to Jerusalem from war, enters the gates, and celebrates his victory. He first rehearses the Lord’s everlasting covenant love (118:1-4). Then he describes a situation in which the odds seem to be stacked against him (118:5, 10-12). Like Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:7; cf. Isa 7:1-2), the king could have leaned on someone besides the Lord for help (118:9).⁷ Instead of trusting in man, the king calls on the Lord (118:5) and takes refuge in him (118:8-9). Though foreign nations surround him, the Lord gives the king the victory in battle (118:10-12). In this use of the stone metaphor, the Davidic king is the stone which the builders reject. Then, the builders discover that they should have retained this stone as the cornerstone since the whole structure stands upon it. The builders represent the foreign nations (118:10) who

⁴ Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 494.

⁵ James M. Hamilton Jr. argues that the future Davidic king would replace the priesthood. James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible’s Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 63-91. He writes, “The prophecies and the patterns work together to prefigure the one who would fulfill what Joshua the high priest portended (Zech 3:8), one who would indeed ‘build the temple of Yahweh’ and be ‘a priest on his throne’ (6:13)” (91).

⁶ Daniel Estes cautions against assuming that a Davidic king has narrated Ps 118. Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, The New American Commentary, vol. 13b (Nashville: B & H, 2019), 389. However, as Hamilton writes, “The reference to Zion awakens associations with the Davidic kingship, and the contrast with the bad leaders (in Isaiah 28:7, 14-15) points to a future king from David’s line who will be faithful to Yahweh.” James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 2:338.

⁷ Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, 392.

have come against and have been defeated by the Lord's anointed.⁸ Thus, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone" (118:22). The Davidic King trusts in the Lord, and the Lord delivers him from hostile foreign enemies.

Jesus Is the Stone

The New Testament authors identify Jesus as the stone. While some among Second Temple Judaism anticipate the Messiah to fulfill the stone passages, Jesus and his apostles assert that Jesus of Nazareth is this messianic stone.⁹ First, I will survey ancient Judaism's expectation for messianic fulfillment of the stone passages. Then, I will examine Jesus's announcement that he himself is the fulfillment of the stone. Finally, I will consider how Peter interprets these passages in light of Jesus's exegesis of them.

Ancient Judaism identifies the stone. Some segments of ancient Judaism expected a messianic Davidic king to fulfill the stone passages.¹⁰ Ancient translations of Isaiah 28:16 serve as evidence.¹¹ For example, as noted by Carson, *Targum Jonathan* renders Isaiah 28:16 in Aramaic: "Behold, I appoint a *King* in Zion; a *King* mighty, powerful, and terrible: I will make Him powerful, and I will strengthen him."¹² For *Targum Jonathan*, a king, not a stone, is appointed in Zion. The LXX makes a similar assertion about the identity of this stone—it will be fulfilled by a person who can be believed in.

⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 111.

⁹ D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1024.

¹⁰ William Lane writes, "In Rabbinic literature the rejected stone of Ps. 118:22 was understood with reference to Abraham, David, or the Messiah, while the expression 'the builders' was sometimes used of the doctors of the Law." William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 420.

¹¹ See Carson, "1 Peter," 1025-26.

¹² C. W. H. Pauli, trans., *The Chaldee Paraphrase on the Prophet Isaiah* (London: London Society, 1871), 89.

“See, I lay for the foundations of Sion a precious, choice stone, a highly valued cornerstone for its foundations, and the one who believes *in him* will not be put to shame” (Isa 28:16 LXX). Contra the MT, the LXX inserts “in him” (ἐπ’ αὐτῷ) into the text, indicating that the LXX translators perceived that the cornerstone is a person who can be believed in. These ancient translations of Isaiah 28:16 indicate that at least some segments in ancient Judaism expected the stone passages to be fulfilled by a messianic, Davidic king.

Jesus identifies the stone. Jesus identifies himself as this King. Matthew 21:33-44, Mark 12:1-12, and Luke 20:9-19 all record Jesus’s parable of the tenants. Matthew places this parable in a series of three parables that pronounce judgment on the Jewish religious leadership.¹³ Jesus encounters the religious leaders and tells them a parable in which the wicked tenants of a house reject the master’s servants and eventually kill the master’s son in an attempt to acquire his inheritance. Jesus asks the Jewish religious leaders to use their judgment: what should be done to those wicked tenants? They give the obvious answer: the wicked tenants should be killed and replaced with new tenants. At that moment, Jesus applies Psalm 118:22-23. The wicked tenants have rejected the master’s son, which will cause their downfall. In the same way, the religious leaders have rejected God’s Son, just like a foolish builder rejects the cornerstone in a building project.

Jesus’s application of Psalm 118:22 takes an interesting turn, however. In Psalm 118, the Davidic king faces opposition from foreign armies who have rejected the Davidic cornerstone. However, the typological king throughout the canon faces opposition from foreign leaders as well as leaders from within Israel. Joseph’s brothers hated him, threw him in a well, and sold him into slavery (Gen 37). Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses (Num 12:1-2). Saul (e.g., 1 Sam 19) and Absalom (2 Sam 15) opposed David. Thus, in Jesus’s use of Psalm 118, it is not foreigners who cast off God’s anointed king; rather, the

¹³ Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 273-79.

Jewish religious leaders themselves have rejected him.¹⁴ For this reason, Jesus applies Isaiah 8:14 to them. The religious leaders will not accept Jesus as their Messiah. They will then stumble over him and be crushed by him, and the kingdom of God will be taken away from them and given to someone else. In this way, Jesus identifies himself as the stone—the Messianic, Davidic king who trusts in the Lord.

Peter identifies the stone. The New Testament authors also identify the King. They allude to the Old Testament stone passages seven times, and every time Jesus is the stone.¹⁵ The apostles assert that Jesus is the stone because Jesus clearly told them so. Thus, the apostle Peter echoes Jesus’s own interpretation when he stands before Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, and other members of the high priestly family (Acts 4:5-12). Annas and Caiaphas held the trial which led to Jesus’s crucifixion (John 18:13-14). Peter announces to them that the man they crucified just months before has now resurrected from the dead. Then, Peter applies Psalm 118 to Jesus’s death and resurrection. Jesus was the rejected stone when Annas and Caiaphas had him crucified. He is proved to be the cornerstone at his resurrection. Peter announces that Jesus is the messianic Davidic king who is rejected by the Jewish religious leaders and yet is proven to be God’s Messiah in the end.

Peter also applies the Old Testament stone passages to Jesus in 1 Peter 2. In verse 4, Peter previews his Old Testament allusions by calling Jesus “a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious.” Peter asserts that Jesus is the rejected stone of Isaiah and Psalm 118. As in his sermon before the high priest, Peter applies the stone passages from the Old Testament specifically to Jesus’s death and resurrection. Jesus is the stone that was “rejected by men.” J. Ramsey Michaels observes that Peter does not

¹⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 111.

¹⁵ In addition to 1 Pet, the Old Testament stone can be found in Matt 21:42-44; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17-18; Acts 4:11-12; Rom 9:32-33; Eph 2:20-22. Carson explains, “The multiplicity of witnesses, which cannot be explained by literary dependence, testifies that this was common Christian tradition, finally warranted by Jesus’ own teaching.” Carson, “1 Peter,” 1024.

allude to Jesus’s rejection by foreign nations or religious leaders. Instead, Jesus was rejected “by people generally” (ὕπὸ ἀνθρώπων).¹⁶ Though Jesus experienced rejection from many people throughout his ministry, the crucifixion stands as the culmination of this rejection by man.¹⁷ Jesus may have been rejected by men, but he was also chosen and precious in God’s sight. The resurrection of Jesus serves as evidence. Therefore, Jesus is a *living* stone because he has risen from the dead. Just as Jesus’s resurrection provides believers with *living hope* (1:3), Jesus’s resurrection makes him a *living stone*.

Peter makes his sources plain by introducing a string of Old Testament allusions with “For it stands in Scripture.”¹⁸ Since Peter understands that Christians are the new people of God, he does not hesitate to use the Old Testament to explain New Testament reality. Peter’s Old Testament use reveals that he views Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament stone passages. He first alludes to Isaiah 28:16. Peter’s quotation does not match the LXX or the MT exactly.¹⁹ Table 3 shows the texts side by side.

Table 3. Comparison of 1 Peter 2:6 to the MT and LXX sources

1 Peter 2:6	Isaiah 28:16 MT	Isaiah 28:16 LXX
Ἴδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ κατασχυθῆ.	הִנְנִי יֹסֵד בְּצֵיִן אֶבֶן אֶבֶן בְּחֵן פִּנֵּת יִקְרָת מוֹסֵד מוֹסֵד הַמְּמַיִן לֹא שִׁחִי	ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐμβάλω εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιων λίθον πολυτελεῖ ἐκλεκτὸν ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον εἰς τὰ θεμέλια αὐτῆς καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ κατασχυθῆ

¹⁶ J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 99.

¹⁷ Schreiner explains, “Perhaps it is better to say that the rejection of Jesus reached its climax in his execution.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 104.

¹⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 108. “The Old Testament citations appear to provide an explanation or restatement of what precedes”(108).

¹⁹ Paul Himes analyzes the differences among the MT, LXX, and 1 Pet. He concludes that Peter has followed the LXX and then changed the LXX to suit his Christological purposes. Paul A. Himes, “Why Did Peter Change the Septuagint? A Reexamination of the Significance of the Use of Τίθημι in 1 Peter 2:6,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 26, no. 2 (2016): 227-44. While it seems logical to conclude that Peter changed the LXX to emphasize his point, it is not necessary to assume it.

As Craig Keener notes, one might expect the texts to differ slightly since ancient authors probably wrote from memory and “most memory is for meaning rather than verbatim.”²⁰ However, it is also possible that the author intentionally chose his words to emphasize a point.²¹ The similarities and differences among Peter, the LXX, and the MT reveal Peter’s intended emphasis: Jesus is the stone.

All three texts emphasize that a chosen and precious stone was laid in Zion, and there are positive consequences for the ones who believe. Some of the differences among the three texts emphasize that the stone in Isaiah 28:16 is a person, and Peter argues that this person is Jesus.

First, the LXX and Peter highlight the personhood of the stone by inserting “in him” (ἐπ’ αὐτῷ) as the direct object of the participle (ὁ πιστεύων). The LXX anticipates a messianic fulfillment, and Peter announces this fulfillment. The point is not that one might believe in general, but that one might believe *in Jesus*, the stone.²² Second, the LXX and Peter use a different verb to translate the MT. יָסַד (yāsād) means to “to found, to fix firmly,” with a view toward a building’s foundation.²³ The LXX translates Isaiah’s Hebrew into Greek: “Behold I place as a foundation (ἐμβαλῶ εἰς τὰ θεμέλια) in Zion a stone.”

²⁰ Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 133-34.

²¹ Scholars observe the similarities between 1 Pet 2:6 and Rom 9:33. In neither case do the apostles quote the MT or the LXX verbatim. Scholars consider whether Peter borrowed from Paul or whether there is another source from which Peter and Paul both draw their quotation. Achtemeier summarizes the arguments. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 159. Also see Keener, *1 Peter*, 133-34; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 108. Michaels supposes that Peter and Paul have drawn from a common source. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 103.

²² Carson writes, “The LXX apparently preserves a messianic identification of the stone.” Carson, “1 Peter,” 1026.

²³ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:384. Thus, מוֹסָד (mûsād), derived from יָסַד (yāsād), means “foundation.” Himes explains the difficulties of translating יָסַד בְּצִיּוֹן אֶבֶן into Greek. Himes, “Why Did Peter Change the Septuagint?,” 236-37.

While this translation emphasizes the foundation,²⁴ Peter’s rendering emphasizes God’s appointment of Jesus. As Thomas Schreiner observes, *τίθημι* often means “I appoint,” and that is likely Peter’s emphasis here.²⁵ In this way, Peter appears to stress God’s appointment of Jesus who is Isaiah’s implied foundation. Thus, the LXX and Peter declare that the stone in Isaiah 28:16 is a person, and Peter stresses that this person is Jesus.

Peter then quotes Psalm 118:22 to explain Jesus’s suffering, death, and resurrection. He uses this text in the same way Jesus used it. Peter no doubt heard Jesus teach that he himself is the fulfillment of Psalm 118. He now teaches his readers the same truth. Though Jesus was rejected by men in his suffering and death, God has chosen him. The evidence for God’s election of Jesus is his resurrection from the dead. He is the living stone—the fulfillment of Psalm 118.

Peter then links Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22 to Isaiah 8:14. In Isaiah 8, the one who trusts in the Lord is the one who fears him and experiences safety, but the one who does not regard the Lord as holy will instead stumble over the stone and be crushed by him. In Isaiah 8, Yahweh himself is the stone (cf. Isa 7:14; 9:6).²⁶ Strikingly, Peter alludes to Isaiah 8:14 and announces that Jesus stands in the same place as Yahweh. Those who reject him are the ones who will stumble.

Summary. According to Isaiah, the Lord is the stone upon which one may construct hope for the future. One should not fear anyone but God, for he alone is a firm

²⁴ The LXX is explicit where the MT is implicit. The Greek accentuates the foundation (*εἰς τὰ θεμέλια*). For further analysis see Himes, “Why Did Peter Change the Septuagint?,” 236-37.

²⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 109. E.g., Acts 13:47. This is contra BDAG which does not translate *τίθημι* as “I appoint” but rather “I place.” Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 1003. However, “I appoint” is a common translation and seems to best fit the context here. Himes argues similarly that Peter’s Christological interpretation of Isa 28:16 stands behind Peter’s use of *τίθημι*. “If, then, Peter was fully aware of, and drew on, a popular Messianic interpretation of the passage, this provides part of the rationale for Peter’s switch from *ἐμβάλλω* to *τίθημι*.” Himes, “Why Did Peter Change the Septuagint?,” 235-36.

²⁶ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1028.

foundation. Psalm 118 depicts the Davidic King as the stone exemplifying this exhortation, and the Lord delivers him from the foreign nations that have risen against him. Then, Jesus identifies himself as the stone. He is the Davidic King who trusts in the Lord. Peter likewise uses the stone passages to describe Jesus.

Believers Are Stones

Peter applies the stone image not only to the Messiah but also to the ones who come to him by faith. Jesus exemplifies the one who trusts in the Lord, experiences rejection by men, and receives exaltation from God. The ones who come to him by faith are joined together with him and receive similar treatment. Peter writes, “As you come to him, as living stones” (2:4). Those who come to him are living stones just as he is a living stone. Believers come to Jesus by faith. Peter’s allusion to Isaiah 28 makes it plain that the way in which people identify with the stone is by faith since “whoever *believes* in him will not be put to shame” (2:6). Just as Jesus is “a living stone rejected by men” (2:4), so too are believers in Jesus “living stones” (2:5). Schreiner notes, “What is true of Christ is also true of his people.”²⁷ Thus, they should also anticipate rejection “by people generally” (ὕπὸ ἀνθρώπων)²⁸ and vindication.

Summary: From Old Testament to Christ to New Testament

Peter uses the stone passages from the Old Testament to connect the people of God across epochs. Isaiah exhorted the people of God in the Old Testament to trust in the Lord. He is their sure foundation and the only one worthy of their belief. Those who trust in him will receive safety and honor, but the ones who reject him will be destroyed and dishonored. Psalm 118 identifies the Davidic King as the one who puts his trust in the Lord. Additionally, this King is himself the rejected stone who is revealed to be God’s

²⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 110.

²⁸ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 99.

chosen and precious cornerstone. Jesus announces that he fulfills the Davidic King in Psalm 118. Peter agrees that Jesus is the fulfillment of the stone passages, and he brings the imagery full circle. Those who place their faith in Jesus obey Isaiah's exhortation to the people of God in the Old Testament. They realize that Jesus is the sure foundation upon which they can place their trust. Furthermore, those who place their faith in Jesus join to the Old Testament people of God through the Person of Christ. Just as he was rejected by men like a worthless stone, so too have believers been rejected by the world.²⁹ Just as Jesus was vindicated at his resurrection, so too will believers find their vindication at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Old Testament believers should have placed their faith in the stone. The Davidic King, Jesus, is the stone. Believers place their faith in Jesus, and they themselves become stones just like Jesus.

Holy Purpose

The identity of believers as living stones directs their purpose. Peter writes, "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). The resurrection of Jesus makes way for his people to take hold of his resurrection life.³⁰ Believers are *living* stones, and Peter explains the purpose for their resurrection life. God gives holy purpose to those joined to Jesus by faith, and that purpose also links the people of God across epochs.

Temple

The living stones connected to the cornerstone are a "spiritual house." Peter links the people of God in the New Testament to the people of God in the Old Testament by use of temple imagery. The people of Israel experienced the presence of God among

²⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 104. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 148.

³⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

them. God’s presence with Israel distinguishes them from other nations (Exod 33:14-16).³¹ From Mount Sinai, God gave instructions for the construction of a tabernacle whereby God would dwell among them (Exod 26-27). Then, Solomon built a more permanent temple for God’s presence in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 6).³² These structures served as the dwelling place of God among the people of Israel.³³ But the tabernacle and the temple were only temporary. God intended to do something new. Peter writes, “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house” (2:5).

The house is the temple. When Peter explains that believers in Jesus are a “spiritual house,” he means that they are a new temple—God’s dwelling place. Thus, the *people* of God themselves become the *place* of God’s presence. The Stoics, Philo, and the Qumran community perceived that God’s dwelling place could become a people instead of a place.³⁴ The Stoics³⁵ and Philo³⁶ considered the individual as God’s dwelling place, while the Dead Sea Scrolls seem to view the community as the new temple.³⁷ The New Testament authors similarly conclude that the people of God replace a physical structure

³¹ R. J. McKelvey, “Temple,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 807.

³² McKelvey, “Temple,” 806.

³³ Several scholars have demonstrated that the tabernacle and temple are returns to the garden of Eden, the archetypal temple. See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 249-53; J. Daniel Hays, *The Temple and the Tabernacle: A Study of God’s Dwelling Places from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 20-27. T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 20-31. 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, 2004), 29-80.

³⁴ McKelvey, “Temple,” 807-8.

³⁵ McKelvey points to Seneca, *Epistles*, 40.1-2 as an example. McKelvey, “Temple,” 808.

³⁶ McKelvey cites *de Somniis* 1.21-34, 215. McKelvey, “Temple,” 808.

³⁷ McKelvey notes *Damascus Document* 4.1-12; *War Scroll* 2.1-6; 12.12-18; 19.5-8; 1Qs 8.5-9. McKelvey, “Temple,” 808.

as God’s dwelling place (e.g., 1 Cor 6:19). Here in 1 Peter 2:5, Peter contends that as believers come to Jesus, they too are living stones being built into a new temple.

John Elliott objects that οἶκος in 2:5 refers to the temple.³⁸ He contends that the social and political context of 1 Peter indicate that οἶκος refers to a household in 2:5 and not the temple. Thus, for Elliott, οἶκος πνευματικὸς means “household of the Spirit.”³⁹ On the other hand, Schreiner offers several reasons why one should interpret “spiritual house” as a temple.⁴⁰ First, the Old Testament authors often use οἶκος to refer to the temple (e.g., 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 3:2).⁴¹ This seems anticipated because the Old Testament presents the temple as the residence of God: the household furniture in the temple stands as a reminder that God dwells there.⁴² Second, the New Testament refers to the temple as a house (Matt 21:13; 23:38; John 2:16-17; Acts 7:47, 49).⁴³ Thus, it is common for Old and New Testament authors to refer to the temple as a house. Third, Schreiner observes that when Peter’s combination of οἰκοδομεῖσθε and οἶκος appears in the LXX, it often refers to the temple (e.g., 2 Sam 7:5, 13; 1 Kgs 5:3).⁴⁴ Additionally, Keener argues that the stone imagery in the passage is key to determining the focus of Peter’s language. Stones are used

³⁸ Keener, *1 Peter*, 129. For Elliott’s full argument, see John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1990), 165-237. Elliott engages with opposition to his interpretation (241-43). Additionally, Elliott discusses similar concepts in John H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4-10 and the Phrase “Basileion Hierateuma”* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006). However, the evidence against his position seems convincing.

³⁹ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 166.

⁴⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

⁴¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

⁴² Matthew S. Harmon, *Rebels and Exiles: A Biblical Theology of Sin and Restoration*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020), 64. Harmon remarks, “Referring to the temple as the house of the Lord reminds the hearer that what makes the temple special is that God dwells there, not the structure itself” (64).

⁴³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

⁴⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105. See also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 156.

to build a physical structure, not to form a household.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the immediate context contains references to the priesthood and to sacrifices. It seems natural to refer to the temple too.⁴⁶ Keener also observes that Peter's use of Psalm 118 points to temple imagery since the Psalm references it (Ps 118:19-20, 27).⁴⁷ Therefore, it seems probable that Peter intends for believers to understand themselves as a new temple in 2:5.

The house is spiritual. Throughout the canon, the house of God stands as a physical place. The garden of Eden serves as the archetypal temple.⁴⁸ The patriarchs appear to build temples throughout Genesis (e.g., Gen 28:10-22).⁴⁹ Solomon's temple must have been a sight to behold (1 Kgs 8:13), but it served only as an installment in the typological pattern. The Babylonians destroyed Solomon's temple (2 Kgs 25). The people of God returned from exile and rebuilt the temple, but the Romans destroyed it in AD 70. God was finished with the physical temple as his dwelling place. He intended to build for himself a new kind of temple—not one made by human hands, but rather a dwelling place for God in the hearts of his people.

For this reason, Peter describes the people of God as a *spiritual* (πνευματικὸς) house.⁵⁰ "Spiritual" may emphasize the composition of the house or the influence of the

⁴⁵ Keener, *1 Peter*, 129.

⁴⁶ McKelvey writes, "That the edifice is understood to be a temple is shown by the mention of sacrifices and priesthood (v. 5). By reinterpreting the priesthood as well as temple and sacrifice, the author has completed the circle of ideas represented by the temple image." McKelvey, "Temple," 810. See Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010), 48; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 159; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 105; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 100. Contra Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 165-237. Achtemeier and Michaels agree with Elliott who contends that Peter has a household in mind. However, they both conclude that the evidence seems to weigh primarily in favor of temple-imagery.

⁴⁷ Keener, *1 Peter*, 135.

⁴⁸ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 29-80.

⁴⁹ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 93-121.

⁵⁰ The Essenes at Qumran viewed themselves as a spiritual house for God. 1Qs 8.5-9, Keener, *1 Peter*, 129. Peter seems to draw on a similar idea with different grounds and implications. Furthermore,

Holy Spirit on the house.⁵¹ The New Testament authors normally use *πνευματικὸς* to refer to the Holy Spirit's influence.⁵² Peter's use of "spiritual," however, seems to make a distinction between the old and new temples.⁵³ While the Old Covenant dwelling place of God was a physical structure, the new people of God are the new location for God's Spirit.⁵⁴ Believers are a house for God—not a physical place but rather a group of people created, influenced, and "motivated"⁵⁵ by the Holy Spirit. In this way, they serve as the dwelling place for God. Thus, the need for the physical temple has ceased, and the people of God are a spiritual house. They are "animated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit."⁵⁶ The people of God in the Old Testament constructed and guarded the temple and participated in cultic rituals there. The new people of God are the temple itself since they are joined to Jesus, the cornerstone.

Priesthood

Peter links the people of God across epochs by using priesthood imagery. The living stones are being "built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood" (2:5). Believers are stones built into God's temple so that they may function as a holy priesthood. While Schreiner contends that *οἶκος πνευματικὸς* functions appositionally,⁵⁷ others

as Michaels observes, "At Qumran the community itself is the 'precious cornerstone,' while in 1 Peter the cornerstone is Jesus Christ." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 96.

⁵¹ Keener, *1 Peter*, 129-30.

⁵² Keener, *1 Peter*, 130. Keener cites 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:22; cf. John 4:21, 24.

⁵³ Keener is unclear in a parenthetical statement. He seems to make room for both interpretations to be true: "More likely, as typically in NT letters, *spiritual* instead (or additionally) suggests an association with God's Spirit, hence a temple for the Spirit." Keener, *1 Peter*, 129-30.

⁵⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 155-56.

⁵⁵ Keener cites Elliott. Keener, *1 Peter*, 130. John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 422.

⁵⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

⁵⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

convincingly argue for a double nominative subject-complement construction.⁵⁸ For Schreiner, believers are a spiritual house being built into a priesthood, but Peter seems to intend that God is in the process of building both a house and priesthood. It is difficult to argue that οἶκος πνευματικὸς functions appositionally to ὑμεῖς since so many words occur between the two phrases.⁵⁹ Instead, believers are built into a house for the purpose of functioning as a priesthood.

So, as Achtemeier summarizes, “God is constituting you, who are like living stones, a spiritual house, to the end that a holy priesthood offer spiritual sacrifices.”⁶⁰ Believers are a temple and a priesthood. Certainly, Peter mixes metaphors here. Though as Schreiner rightly asserts, “The fulfillment in Christ transcends the types that anticipate it. Hence, we should not be surprised that believers are both priests and the temple.”⁶¹

In 2:5, Peter previews what he will exposit in 2:9.⁶² The New Covenant priesthood represents the typological fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood. James M. Hamilton traces the biblical theology of the priestly role from Adam to Melchizedek to Israel.⁶³ Then the New Testament presents Jesus as typological fulfillment of the priesthood.⁶⁴ What is true of Christ is true of his people. Because Jesus is a priest, those

⁵⁸ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 48; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 154-55. Similarly, Michaels, *1 Peter*, 100.

⁵⁹ Doug Ponder, a fellow DMin student at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, first brought this to my attention.

⁶⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 155.

⁶¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 106. Note that there are other mixed metaphors in the New Testament. For example, Jesus is both high priest and a better sacrifice (e.g., Heb 9:11-12).

⁶² I will examine 2:9-10 in the next chap.

⁶³ Hamilton, *Typology*, 63-72.

⁶⁴ Hamilton argues that the book of Hebrews presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the priesthood: “The author of Hebrews sees a number of points of historical correspondence and escalation between the Levitical priesthood and the Melchizedekian high priesthood of Jesus. These include appointment to the priesthood, what was attainable by the ministry of the priesthood, and the offerings made by the priesthood.” Hamilton, *Typology*, 291. For the full argument, see pp. 291-97.

who come to him by faith are also priests. Significantly, the New Testament never names an individual believer in Jesus as a New Covenant priest. Rather, the collective people of God serve as priests in God’s temple.⁶⁵ For the New Covenant people of God, the people are themselves both temple and priest. In this way, Peter uses the priesthood to connect the people of God across epochs.

Sacrifices

Finally, Peter states the purpose for priesthood and temple: “To offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (2:5). Once again, Peter implies a link between the people of God across epochs. The Old Covenant priests offered sacrifices, so one expects New Covenant priests to follow suit. Sacrifice as a form of worship precedes Levitical Law. The first clear sacrifice in the Bible occurs in Genesis 4 where Abel brings “the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions” (v. 4). Though sacrifice was not unique to Israel, it was central to the religious life of God’s covenant people. The safety of the people in the presence of God depended upon the sacrificial system (Ps 15:1).⁶⁶ The Lord spoke to Moses and provided specific instructions for how the people would offer sacrifices in the tabernacle (e.g. Lev 1-7). Jesus fulfills the Levitical sacrifice (Heb 10:1-18) so that the blood of animals no longer atones for sin—only the blood of Jesus, the better sacrifice. The New Testament authors further argue that because of Jesus’s initial atoning sacrifice, believers in Jesus can offer their own sacrifices as well (Heb 13:15; Rom 12:1).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ P. Ellingworth, “Priests,” in Alexander et al., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 700.

⁶⁶ L. Michael Morales makes this case from the book of Leviticus. The tabernacle is both the dwelling place of God but also the “ordained way of approaching the divine Presence. . . . Combining the two functions of the tabernacle, the dramatic movement of the book of Leviticus is one of deepening intimacy with God, largely answering the question ‘How can Israel *dwell—have fellowship—with YHWH?’” Thus, the only way to safely approach the presence of God was through the sacrificial system outlined in the book of Leviticus. 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, 2015), 109.*

⁶⁷ R. T. Beckwith, “Sacrifice,” in Alexander et al., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 761.

Peter argues in 2:5 that believers are both the location of the sacrifice and the organization that offers it. While the apostle Paul announces that believers should offer themselves as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1), Peter appears to have a more specific sacrifice in mind. Just as the people of God constitute a *spiritual* house, they also offer *spiritual* sacrifices. Schreiner again asserts that “spiritual” emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the offering of sacrifices.⁶⁸ Additionally, Peter likely aims to present discontinuity with the Old Covenant sacrifice. Whereas the Levitical priests offered animals in devotion to God, Jesus’s priests offer something different.

While Peter may conceive of spiritual sacrifice as encompassing all of life,⁶⁹ the immediate context constrains the reader. Believers offer the sacrifice of evangelism. Peter announces the holy purpose of the royal priesthood in 2:9: “That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Thus, the purpose of the priesthood is to proclaim the glory of Jesus.

Summary

The Old Covenant temple was a place; the New Covenant temple is a people. The Levitical priesthood offered sacrifices of animals in order to atone for sin; Jesus’s priesthood offers sacrifices of evangelism that the whole world might believe. Thus, God

⁶⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 107.

⁶⁹ Michaels suggests that the “spiritual sacrifices” of believers include worship and social conduct. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 101-2. He notes that *ἀνεύχαι* hints at devotion, and several phrases throughout the letter express the worship implicit in the offering of a sacrifice. According to Michaels, spiritual sacrifices also include the conduct of believers, since that is the main concern of the central section of Peter’s letter. Additionally, Michaels connects the “holy priesthood” of 2:5 to the call for holiness in 1:15. Jobes agrees with Michaels that spiritual sacrifices include offering the whole of one’s life to God. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 150-51. However, the immediate context of 2:9 seems to overshadow Michaels and Jobes. Michaels’ attempt to situate the “holy priesthood” in the context of Peter’s call for “holy” conduct in 1:15-16 is unpersuasive since the purpose—not the nature—of the priesthood is in view. Furthermore, Michaels himself suggests an evangelistic context in the way he interprets the participle *προσερχόμενοι*: “The participle is therefore best understood as a kind of summary of the Christian mission (particularly in Asia Minor: ‘as more and more of you come to him.’” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 97. Though Peter may agree that a believer should offer the whole of himself as a sacrifice to God, in 2:5 he most likely means that Jesus’s priesthood should proclaim God’s excellencies to the world.

builds his church into a temple of priests who offer acceptable sacrifices through Jesus Christ.⁷⁰ In this way, the living stones who join to the cornerstone by faith have a holy purpose.

Eschatological Vindication

The bond between living stones and the cornerstone does not come without consequence. One's relationship to Christ directs his destiny. Those who come to Jesus by faith can expect to suffer just as he has suffered. However, because Jesus was also vindicated at his resurrection, believers can expect eschatological vindication. Those who join to Jesus should expect vindication, while those who reject him should expect to stumble and perish. In this way, Peter announces a reversal of events. The one who was rejected by men has been proven to be chosen by God. The ones who have rejected Jesus have now discovered that they are rejected by God. Peter highlights this reversal by his use of the Old Testament stone passages.

Christian Suffering

Peter's selection of the stone passages from the Old Testament is particularly appropriate for his audience since they experienced their own brand of rejection. Both verbal and physical persecution permeated every province in the first century Roman Empire, and Christians in Asia Minor suffered their share. Peter often refers to the verbal abuse endured by his audience (1 Pet 2:12; 3:16; 4:4, 14).⁷¹ More than just a few snide remarks toward Christians, persecutors accused them before local authorities, even

⁷⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 107-8. Achtemeier argues that Peter's emphasis is that the offering is *made possible* by Jesus Christ: "Because of the emphatic position of the phrase διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ at the end of the verse, it would appear that it is the entire act of offering acceptable sacrifices to God that depends on the prior enablement of Christ, probably through his resurrection." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 158.

⁷¹ Eckhard J. Schnabel, "The Persecution of Christians in the First Century," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61, no. 3 (2018): 525-47. Schnabel surveys the varying types of persecution throughout the Roman Empire in the first century. See also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 42-44, where she describes similar types of persecution and pressure upon Peter's audience.

threatening their livelihood. Additionally, the Roman community pressured Christians to be loyal to Caesar above all else. How can one profess Jesus as Lord without relegating Caesar to a lesser authority? Local communities threatened, pressured, and abused Christians.⁷² The encouragement from Isaiah, Psalm 118, Jesus, and Peter is to trust in the Lord. The Old Covenant people of God should have trusted in the stone for deliverance. Jesus is the stone that can be trusted, and those who believe in him are the people of God. Peter proclaims here that believers are also stones. Like Old Covenant believers, they must trust in the Lord even though their circumstances are difficult.

The Chosen Rejected

Peter's use of Isaiah 28:16 encourages his readers to trust in Jesus. He wants readers to understand that their faith in Jesus is well-placed. Christ is the cornerstone laid in Zion and proven to be chosen and precious by his resurrection from the dead. Though Jesus was tossed aside by the world and crucified, God vindicated him and raised him from the dead. The outcome for those who believe in Jesus is honor. The LXX and Peter agree that the one who believes in the cornerstone will never be put to shame (*οὐ μὴ καταισχυθῆ*).⁷³ Because Christ was vindicated at his resurrection, Peter's audience should hope toward eschatological vindication whereby they are shown to be chosen and precious as well. Though they suffer in the present, eschatological honor awaits them in the future. Schreiner explains, "Just as Christ is the chosen and honored one of God and was so honored at his resurrection, so too believers will be vindicated on the last day."⁷⁴

It may appear from human perspective that Jesus failed and those who trust in him will similarly experience shame. That may have been the perspective of those in

⁷² Frank Thielman outlines the Roman suspicion of new religions from the second century BC through the time of 1 Pet. Slander certainly characterized the treatment of Christians. Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 570.

⁷³ Peter follows the LXX. Keener, *1 Peter*, 134-35.

⁷⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 110.

Israel who sought to make a treaty with Egypt to gain safety from their enemies (Isa 30:2). However, from God's perspective, Jesus is chosen and precious even though he is rejected in the eyes of men. A similar destiny awaits the ones who believe in Jesus. Though they find themselves rejected by men, they will find eschatological "praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:7). Thus, they should continue to believe in him, even though human perspective might cause them to doubt. Believers should remember that God has chosen what man has rejected.

The Scorned Rejecters

Peter warns his readers that those who reject Christ will find themselves destined for eschatological dishonor. Peter links Isaiah 28:16 to Psalm 118:22 by distinguishing between those who believe and those who do not. While the ones who believe should expect eschatological honor, the ones who do not believe should expect dishonor. The rejecters of the stone have made a grievous error because "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone" (2:7; Ps 118:22). Anyone who rejects Jesus will suffer eschatological dishonor. In Psalm 118, foreign armies have rejected what God has chosen. When Jesus quotes Psalm 118 (Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17), the Jews have rejected God's Christ. Now, in 1 Peter, the communities of Peter's audience are the ones who have rejected Jesus.⁷⁵ It does not matter whether individual or army, Jew or Gentile, those who rejected Jesus have rejected what God has chosen. Those who reject Jesus as the cornerstone are just like the foreign armies who stood against the Lord's anointed in Psalm 118.⁷⁶ The consequence for this rejection is dishonor.

⁷⁵ Carson, "1 Peter," 1028.

⁷⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 111.

The ones who believe receive “their share of Christ’s honor,”⁷⁷ but there is no mention of honor for the ones who do not believe.⁷⁸ Dishonor for the unbeliever is more explicit in Isaiah 8:14.⁷⁹ Peter emphasizes to his readers that the ones who do not believe will experience dishonor on account of the stone. The stone rejected by men demolishes those who have rejected him.⁸⁰ Those who scorn the Messiah will stumble over him. They will not simply lose their balance, but instead they will experience eschatological judgment. Isaiah 8:15 explains that they will “fall and be broken.”

Summary

A person’s relationship to Christ directs his destiny. If he joins to Jesus by faith, then he should expect eschatological honor, even though he suffers in the present. If he rejects Jesus, then he should expect eschatological destruction, even though he prospers in the present. This is the plan of God from the beginning, and Peter underscores God’s sovereignty: “They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do” (2:8).

Conclusion

One’s relationship to Christ determines one’s purpose and destiny. The people of God have holy purpose and expect eschatological vindication. Those who place their faith in the stone become stones themselves. The Holy Spirit uses these stones to build a temple and a priesthood for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel to the unbelieving world. Those who join to Jesus by faith can expect eschatological vindication even though they

⁷⁷ Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 145.

⁷⁸ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1028.

⁷⁹ Scholars observe that Peter loosely recalls Isa 8:14 and note that this is more of an allusion than a quotation. Schreiner observes that Peter’s use of Isa 8:14 matches a literal translation of the MT and not a quotation of the LXX. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 111. See also Carson, “1 Peter,” 1028.

⁸⁰ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1028.

suffer. However, those who reject Jesus should expect judgment. The truth from 1 Peter 2:4-8 should provide believers with a sense of unity, purpose, and expectation. It also demands a response.

Sense of Unity

Though suffering may characterize the experiences of believers in Jesus, they do not suffer alone. Jobes writes,

Even if Peter's readers find themselves alienated from their society and suffering a loss of status, Peter assures them that they have become part of a much grander and everlasting community. It is by the values and convictions of this new community that they must now understand themselves, not as self-centered individuals, but as each taking his or her place in the spiritual house.⁸¹

The people of God throughout history have suffered. Believers who suffer find themselves as a part of a larger community connected by faith in Jesus. Jobes continues, "A Spartan king [was] boasting to a visiting monarch about the walls of Sparta. As the visiting king looked around, he could see no walled city and asked, 'Where are the renowned walls of Sparta?' The Spartan king pointed to his army and replied, 'These are the walls of Sparta, every man a brick.'"⁸² Each living stone plays a role in building the spiritual house. No living stone is alone but instead joins to Jesus with others by faith for the purpose of building a spiritual house. Therefore, Christians may be strengthened as they suffer alongside their brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Pet 5:9) and as they maintain their responsibility to the rest of the spiritual house.

Sense of Purpose

Those who suffer for their faith in Jesus are not only unified, but they also have a sense of purpose. God uses the living stones to build a temple for the purpose of sacrifice. The spiritual sacrifice offered by believers in Jesus is proclamation of the glory of God.

⁸¹ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 149.

⁸² Jobes, *1 Peter*, 149.

Believers in Jesus do not have to wonder what should occupy them. Churches can busy themselves with many things: events, productions, social media presence, and building projects. None of those things are bad; but none of those things are ultimate. Peter intends for his readers to understand that they have been joined to Jesus for the purpose of proclamation.

Evangelism grows increasingly troublesome as culture moves away from Christianity. This is no surprise to Peter, as he writes to Christians suffering in Asia Minor. Elliot Clark explains, “Peter framed his readers’ responsibility to preach the gospel in view of their own rejection. Writing to those who were suffering like Christ, as stones rejected like the chief cornerstone, he encouraged them with their unique status as a spiritual house and holy priesthood, ones chosen by God to offer spiritual sacrifices.”⁸³ Proclamation is their purpose. Believers often engage in passive evangelism, waiting for the lost to take the initiative and ask, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). They think that by their holy behavior they will be able to preach the gospel without using words. Suffering has deceived them into thinking they preserve their witness by maintaining silence. Though suffering seems like an opportunity to shrink back, Peter reminds that there is no better time than the present to proclaim the glory of Jesus. As Clark warns, “If we continue the pattern of waiting for perfect opportunities, they may never come. . . . We’ll never open our mouths to speak, because we’ll be waiting for a better day. But better days don’t seem to be on the horizon.”⁸⁴ Believers cannot afford to wait any longer. The Christian’s purpose is clear. They are joined to Jesus for the purpose of proclaiming the glory of God to the unbelieving world.

⁸³ Elliot Clark, *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in our own Land* (n.p.: Gospel Coalition, 2019), 90.

⁸⁴ Clark, *Evangelism as Exiles*, 91.

Sense of Expectation

Nevertheless, suffering will come. One reads 1 Peter 2:4-8 with suffering in the background since, in the wider context of the letter, Peter makes it clear that his readers are suffering (e.g., 4:12). Though Peter does not emphasize the suffering of believers in 2:4-8 specifically, he does stress their vindication and eschatological glory despite suffering. Though they may feel rejected now, they will experience honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus experienced glory at his resurrection, believers should expect glory on the last day. Though difficulty may come, Peter encourages his readers to adjust their focus. In other words, as Warren Wiersbe writes, “When the outlook looks bleak, try the uplook.”⁸⁵ When suffering arises, believers can shift their gaze to God and the eschatological honor he has promised.

A Call to Respond

The message of 1 Peter 2:4-8 also includes an implicit call to choose wisely. Those who join to Jesus choose future glory despite present trouble. Those who reject Jesus choose present ease only to realize their error in the end. All must choose. Those who read 1 Peter have the benefit of knowing the identity of Jesus for certain. Believers do not have to wait until the last day to find out if he is worthy of their faith. Peter tells them plainly: he is the cornerstone. Choose wisely. Choose Jesus today.

⁸⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Distinct: An Old Testament Study: 2 Kings & 2 Chronicles* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 2002), 141.

CHAPTER 5

A PRIVILEGED PEOPLE: THE NEW EXODUS IN 1 PETER 2:9-10

A declaration of privileged status makes all the difference. I used to live in a city with a major waterpark nearby. This waterpark is known for a famous waterslide so popular that sometimes one has to wait in line for hours for just one ride. I was the youth pastor at a nearby church, and several of my students worked at the waterpark. One day, one of my students who worked at this waterpark named my family “Guests of the Day” and moved us to the front of the line on the popular ride. I did not know at the time that “Guests of the Day” was a status invented by my student, but that declaration changed everything for us. We moved to the front of the line and enjoyed the ride without the long wait. When my student announced our privileged status, it constituted a new reality. In a similar way, Peter announces the privileged status of believers in 1 Peter 2:9-10.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Peter uses exodus imagery in 1 Peter 2:9-10 to describe Christians’ privileged status as the new people of God. I will first show how the exodus influences Peter’s source material. Then, I will examine how Peter uses each phrase to pronounce privileged status over his Christian audience. Finally, I will reflect on how a full-orbed understanding of these phrases encourages Christians.

The Exodus in Peter’s Source Material

In this section I will observe how the exodus motif serves as a backdrop for 1 Peter 2:9-10 because it forms the context for Peter’s source material. Peter often links the people of God in the Old Testament to the people of God in the New Testament. One of the pathways by which he connects the people of God across epochs is the exodus motif. I already observed how Peter employs the exodus motif in this letter, and I demonstrated

that the exodus is a major theme throughout the canon.¹ Moses experienced and wrote about the original exodus. The prophets observed that God intends to save his people through exodus-like events, and so they described God’s deliverance of his people from exile with exodus-like language. They also described the eschatological salvation of the people of God as an exodus-like event. The New Testament authors emulate this language in their descriptions of the salvation of the people of God. Thus, it is not surprising—maybe expected—that Peter employs exodus language in his letter. In 1 Peter 2:9-10, Peter lines up Old Testament references one after another, each of them with overtones of the exodus pattern.

Peter’s Sources

The exodus colors the sources for Peter’s Old Testament allusions in 2:9-10. This section will observe the exodus-influence in Exodus 19:5-6, Isaiah 43 *passim*, and Hosea *passim*.² To understand his use of the exodus motif, I must first observe how Moses and the prophets used it in these related passages.

Exodus 19:5-6. The exodus from Egypt shapes the way the biblical authors explain key parts of the biblical narrative. However, Moses experienced the exodus firsthand and wrote about what he encountered. It influenced Moses so greatly that he tells

¹ See chap. 3.

² There is debate about whether these are the direct sources for Peter’s allusions. Peter stacks each phrase one after the other in a unique order, even combining some of the thoughts between Exod 19 and Isa 43. Leonhard Goppelt assumes that Peter’s use of Exod 19 and Isa 43 must come from a prior Christian tradition. Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 148. He relates 1 Pet 2:9-10 to Rev 1:6; 5:10: “He has made us a kingdom (*βασιλείαν*), priests (*ἱερείς*) to our God” (Rev 1:6). These words match *βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα* in 1 Pet 1:9. He argues that there must have been some other Christian tradition that originally connected these passages since 1 Pet and Rev are “quite remote.” However, it seems more natural to postulate that Peter himself ultimately combined the two passages and crafted this announcement in 2:9-10. Paul Achtemeier contends with Goppelt and observes that Peter’s language matches the LXX and not the exact form of Rev 1:6. “The more likely assumption is that the author is responsible for this combination of OT passages.” Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 163n179. Either way, Peter certainly alludes to Exod 19, Isa 43, and Hos in 1 Pet 2:9-10.

some of the stories of the patriarchs with exodus-like language.³ The exodus from Egypt serves as the archetype from which the rest of exodus typology will spring.⁴ Accordingly, Peter alludes to Exodus 19:5-6 in 1 Peter 2:9-10.

Moses ascends the mountain, and the Lord speaks to him, summarizing what the people have experienced thus far in the exodus account.⁵ The Lord says, “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself” (Exod 19:4). The Lord has executed judgment on the Egyptians through the plagues. He miraculously delivered the people of Israel from Egypt and led them to Sinai where he will meet with them. At Sinai, the Lord establishes the covenant. The people must obey the Lord. If they do, the Lord promises a privileged status for them. He declares, “You shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:5-6). Though God is Creator and Lord over all peoples, the people of Israel would be his treasured possession. They would also be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation who would stand as God’s representatives and mediators between God and the nations.

Isaiah 43. The prophets notice the way Moses tells the story of the exodus and how he uses the exodus motif to tell other stories. They also notice the exodus motif in their own circumstances and employ it to influence their writing as well. Accordingly, the new

³ James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns; How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 254. Hamilton cites examples such as Abraham and Jacob (pp. 256-61).

⁴ Hamilton lists connections between the exodus and events throughout the canon in *Typology*, 262-64.

⁵ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville: B & H, 2006), 359.

exodus stands as a significant theme in Isaiah (e.g., Isa 40:1-1; 41:17-20; 43:1-7, 14-21).⁶ For the immediate context in 1 Peter, I need only to consider Isaiah 43.

Isaiah 42 concludes with the threat of destruction, and Isaiah 43 begins with a message of hope. To encourage the people of God, Isaiah points back to the exodus. The Lord made a way in the sea when he heaped the waters of the Red Sea on either side so his people could walk through it on dry ground (Exod 14). It took his mighty hand and outstretched arm to help the people escape Pharaoh's army. Isaiah announces that the Lord will do this again in order to deliver his people from exile. He promises his presence in the midst of the metaphorical waters and announces a new way through a new sea (Isa 43:2, 16). Similarly, he made a way in the wilderness when he led his people toward the promised land and as they wandered for forty years (Exod 17:6). Isaiah proclaims that the Lord will do this again (Isa 43:20-21) and deliver his people to the promised land. He will not merely repeat the exodus, however. This new exodus will be an escalated⁷ version when God delivers his people from across the globe (Isa 43:5-6).⁸ In this way, Isaiah uses the exodus motif to explain the return from exile. Just as the Lord delivered his people from Egypt, he will also deliver them from Babylon.

Hosea. Like Isaiah, Hosea has learned to use the exodus to proclaim his message. He prophesies against Israel because of their idolatry and compares their sin to that of an unfaithful wife (Hos 1:2). The Lord pronounces judgment on his people because of their sin, promising to “put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel” (Hos 1:4). He refuses to have mercy on Israel (Hos 1:6). He proclaims that Israel is no longer his people, and he is no longer their God (Hos 1:9). But then, as D. A. Carson observes, “almost as if

⁶ Examples from Isa 43 were discussed in chap. 3 of this project. Bryan D. Estelle investigates new exodus themes in Isa 40-55 in *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2018), 149-81.

⁷ Hamilton, *Typology*, 23-25.

⁸ Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 165.

Yahweh cannot bear the thought, he announces that they will one day flourish again.”⁹ He will again have mercy on Israel, and they will again be his people (Hos 2:22-23).

The coming exile to Babylon represents a metaphorical return to Egypt. This time the Lord wields Assyria as the sword of his justice (Hos 11:5).¹⁰ But even amid this judgment on Israel, the Lord’s “compassion grows warm and tender” toward his people (Hos 11:8b). He remembers his covenant with them and promises to restore them to their homes in the promised land. “They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria” (Hos 11:11). Just as Israel was in bondage in Egypt and the Lord delivered them in power, so too will he deliver from Assyria those who remain his people.

Summary. The Lord establishes his covenant with his people at Mount Sinai. If they obey, they will assume privileged status. The prophet Isaiah interprets the circumstances of the people of God through the lens of the exodus. He promises that they will return to the land of promise like their fathers returned from the land of Egypt. Hosea also uses the exodus to explain Israel’s relationship to the Lord. He will not forsake them as his people and will return them to the land of promise. Thus, Moses and the prophets describe the moves of God among his people with exodus-like imagery.

⁹ D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1031.

¹⁰ Steve McKenzie, “Exodus Typology in Hosea,” *Restoration Quarterly* 22, nos. 1-2 (1979): 106. McKenzie notes a textual problem in 11:5 and argues against reading אֵל as a negation but rather as a prepositional phrase combined with a pronominal suffix: “to him” (אֵלָיו). The ESV translates 11:4-5 as “I bent down to them and fed them. . . . They shall *not* return to Egypt.” But McKenzie reads אֵל as אֵלָיו instead of a negation and translates 11:4-5 as “I bent down to him (and) fed *him*. He will return to the land of Egypt.” McKenzie argues that Hosea uses similar language in 8:13 and 9:3, making it plausible that he means the same thing here; namely, that the people will literally go down to Egypt as well as Assyria. Also, McKenzie considers the possibility of mistaking two words which sound the same. However, Duane Garrett argues that the KJV and NASB, and subsequently the ESV, have the translation correct. Hosea is not prophesying that the people will go down to Egypt again, but rather that they will go to another installment of the Egypt pattern—this time in the form of Assyria. Garrett, where dissenting from the NIV translation, also contradicts McKenzie’s suggestion. Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 19 (Nashville: B & H, 1997), 102-3.

The Privileged Status of Christians in 1 Peter 2:9-10

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, Peter announces the privileged status of believers with new exodus language. He begins 1 Peter 2 by exalting Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament stone passages.¹¹ He is the stone that the builders rejected but has now become the cornerstone. He is the messianic, Davidic king who has been vindicated by his resurrection from the dead. Peter dichotomizes people into two categories: those who believe in Jesus and those who reject him. Those who believe may suffer in the present, but Peter promises that they will experience eschatological vindication. Those who reject Jesus will find that they have tragically miss-stepped, resulting in their own doom. Into which category does Peter's audience fall?

Peter recognizes his audience does not align with the builders who reject the stone, but rather with those who believe. He makes this distinction explicit at the beginning of verse 9: "But you."¹² They do not represent those who have rejected Jesus but instead have joined to Jesus as living stones. Peter uses new exodus imagery to describe the privileged status of these living stones. He writes, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Pet 2:9-10). Peter takes his cue from the prophets and interprets his readers' circumstances as a new type of exodus. With each of these individual phrases Peter alludes to the exodus motif and teaches his readers that "a new people of

¹¹ Vv. 9 and 10 are intertwined with 2:4-8. Many commentaries view 2:4-10 as one unit since there is no heavy division between vv. 8 and 9. I have separated these verses to direct proper attention to the various Old Testament allusions. The stone allusions point toward Jesus as the messianic fulfillment and his people as recipients of eschatological vindication. The allusions in vv. 9 and 10 point toward the status of the new people of God. Thus, for the sake of space, I require two chapters to cover different themes in one passage. Goppelt seems to perceive a minor break here, which is what I intend as well. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 147-48.

¹² Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 114; Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 137.

God have been formed through a new exodus.”¹³ His allusions form a chiasm with references to Isaiah 43 bracketing references to Exodus 19 in the center.¹⁴ I will now examine each phrase in light of their Old Testament contexts.

A Chosen Race

The exodus serves as the background for Peter’s announcement that his audience comprises a “chosen race.” This section will consider how Peter views his audience as a chosen people in light of the Old Testament background. The Lord declares in Isaiah 43:20, “For I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people” (τὸ γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν; Isa 43:20; cf. Exod 17:6). Isaiah explains that just as the Lord provided water in the wilderness for Israel during the exodus, so also will he work wonders for his people as they return from exile. Peter alludes to Isaiah 43:20 when he announces to his audience that they too are a chosen race (γένος ἐκλεκτόν).

Race. The term *genos* (people, race) refers to a group of people distinguished by location or common origin.¹⁵ The people of Israel descend from Abraham. Their relationship to their father Abraham secured their future. They could expect future deliverance because of their connection to Abraham to whom the Lord promised countless

¹³ James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 525. Contra J. Ramsey Michaels, who asserts, “Nowhere in 1 Peter are the readers addressed as a *new* Israel or a *new* people of God, as if to displace the Jewish community. The titles of honor are used with no awareness or recognition of an ‘old’ Israel, as if they were applicable to Christians alone and had never had any other reference.” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 107. However, as Achtemeier contends that this is an overstatement. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 167n235. It is the argument of this project that Peter presents Christians as the new people of God.

¹⁴ Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010), 55-56.

¹⁵ Stephen in Acts and Paul in Galatians and Philippians use *genos* to refer to their common ancestry, the people of Israel (Acts 7:19; Gal 1:14; Phil 3:5). Acts also describes Barnabas as being a *genos* of Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 194.

descendants and a land inheritance (Gen 12:1-3; 12:7; 15:5). They could not be completely destroyed since they must outnumber the stars. They could not remain in exile in perpetuity since they must possess the land of promise. They were Abraham's *genos*, and because of this they should expect future deliverance.

Peter announces that believers in Jesus represent a new *genos*, though not established by blood but by faith.¹⁶ Those born to Abraham belonged to the *genos* of Israel. Those born again through the resurrection of Jesus (1 Pet 1:3) belong to this new chosen *genos*.¹⁷ Though Peter writes to a people located in Asia Minor, the mark of commonality for them is not their location. Instead, Peter's point of relation is their common spiritual descent. They are God's people.

Chosen. Peter proclaims that not only are believers a *genos*, but they are also chosen (*ἐκλεκτὸν*). God chose Israel, and on the cusp of entering the land of promise, Moses explains why:

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deut 7:6-8)¹⁸

God chose the people of Israel above every other nation for no reason other than his love for them. The Lord promised descendants and land to Abraham. He loved his descendants and delivered them from bondage in Egypt. As a chosen race, Israel should have expected another installment of the exodus pattern to come.

¹⁶ Carson, "1 Peter," 1030.

¹⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 165n211.

¹⁸ The MT of Deut 7:6 reads that the Lord *bakhar* (chose) Israel. The LXX translation of Deut 7:6 does not include *eklegō*, a verbal equivalent of Peter's *eklekton*, but instead the LXX uses *proeilato*. Often, the LXX renders the Hebrew *bakhar* as *eklegō*. A few times the LXX renders *bakhar* as *proeilato* (eg Deut 7:6, 7; Prov 1:29). There may be some nuance between the two words, but the general concept is the same. The Lord *chose* Israel.

Peter perceives God's election of his people and applies it to Christ (1 Pet 2:4). Jesus was rejected by the Jews when they crucified him. He was also rejected by the unbelieving society of Peter's audience.¹⁹ Nonetheless, just as God chose Israel, he has also chosen Christ and delivered him from his enemies by raising him from the dead.

Peter then applies God's election of his people to his Christian audience. Just as God chose Israel and Christ, he has also chosen the new people of God. God's election of his people seems to be a significant refrain for Peter. He addresses the letter to the "elect exiles of the dispersion" (1:1). Though Peter's audience may feel the rejection of spiritual exile, they are nevertheless God's elect. Now, in 2:9, joined to Jesus by faith, believers are a "chosen race."²⁰ They are a people chosen by God, established by faith, and journeying toward the land of promise in a new exodus.

A Royal Priesthood

Next, Peter alludes to the Lord's proclamation to Israel at Mount Sinai (Exod 19:5-6) and declares to his audience that they are a "royal priesthood." Andrew Malone observes that Peter "continues the biblical-theological trajectory begun in the Old Testament" with this announcement.²¹ Believers represent a new installment in the royal priesthood pattern established in the garden of Eden, assumed by Israel at Sinai, and fulfilled in Christ. In this section I will briefly trace key installments of the priesthood pattern. Then I will consider the royalty of this priesthood in the context of biblical theology.

¹⁹ Achtemeier argues that Peter refers to the rejection of Jesus by the "secular Greco-Roman society." He grounds this assertion in the perfect tense participle ἀποδεδοκίμασμένον. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 154.

²⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 163.

²¹ Andrew S. Malone, *God's Mediators: A Biblical Theology of the Priesthood*, in *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 43 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 153.

Priesthood. Priesthood typology begins in the garden of Eden. Adam served as prototypical priest in the cosmic temple.²² Moses presents the garden of Eden as a sanctuary in a variety of ways.²³ The logic then follows that if the garden is a sanctuary, then its caretaker must also be its priest. Moses explains that Adam and Eve not only care for the garden (Gen 2:15) but also seek to expand it so that it fills the earth (Gen 1:28). Thus, they mediate God’s presence to the cosmos.²⁴

The priestly pattern does not skip straight to Exodus 19, however, but makes several stops along the way.²⁵ It continues through Melchizedek, whom Moses names “priest of God Most High” (Gen 14:18), receives a tithe (Gen 14:20), and appears to mediate between Abram and God (Gen 14:19-20).²⁶ Moses even picks up on priestly behavior among the patriarchs in Genesis (e.g. Gen 8:20-22; 28:10-27; 35:1-15).²⁷ The priest motif marches onward through Genesis toward Exodus where Moses presents both a corporate and individual priesthood.

When Israel arrives at Sinai, the Lord announces to them that they will be a new kind of priesthood if they obey the Lord (Exod 19:5-6). This scene appears to be in

²² See for example Hamilton, *Typology*, 64-68; 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, 2004), 81-87.

²³ For examples see G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 617-22; Malone, *God’s Mediators*, 47-56.

²⁴ Benjamin L. Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church: A Biblical Theology of the People of God*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019), 15. Gladd defines the role of a priest: “Fundamentally, a priest was responsible for taking care of the temple, discerning what was clean and unclean, and mediating God’s presence to others. Priests, simply put, were charged with ensuring that humanity is prepared to worship the one true God” (42).

²⁵ Malone, *God’s Mediators*, 57.

²⁶ Hamilton, *Typology*, 68-70. Hamilton has shown parallels between Melchizedek’s appearance in Gen 14 and the Passover in Exod 12. “We seem to have a pattern, then, of the heroic defeat of enemies whereby captives are liberated, followed by a priestly celebration of victory with bread and wine” (69).

²⁷ Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 93-104. Beale observes that when the Adamic commission to be fruitful and multiply is repeated in Genesis, it is linked with elements of sanctuary building (94-99). For a brief evaluation and expansion on Beale’s work, see Malone, *God’s Mediators*, 57-60.

the forefront of Peter's mind as he quotes from Exodus 19 directly. The Lord would establish the Aaronic priesthood, but in Exodus 19 he appoints national Israel as a corporate priesthood. Just as God charged Adam to mediate his presence to the whole earth, so too does he charge Israel to fulfill the Adamic commission in Genesis 1:28. Benjamin Gladd explains, "The image of God imprinted on the nation of Israel was to be a beacon of light in a land ensconced in darkness."²⁸

The people of Israel mediated God's presence to the world, and the Aaronic priests mediated God's presence to Israel. At Mount Sinai, the Lord provided instructions for who could be priests (Exod 28:1), what they wore (Exod 28), how they were commissioned (Exod 29), and what they did (Exod 30-40).²⁹ Israel's priests mediated between God and his people.³⁰

Regrettably, Israel and her priests failed in their assigned duty. The nation did not radiate the glory of God to the other nations,³¹ and Israel's priesthood was unfaithful. However, the Old Testament authors not only detail the failure of the priesthood, but also anticipate a coming priest who will succeed where the others had failed.³² Jesus Christ fulfills both the corporate and individual priesthood roles outlined in the Old Testament.³³ James Hamilton summarizes, "Adam was the first of the Lord's servants

²⁸ Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church*, 42. See also Malone, *God's Mediators*, 128-36.

²⁹ This summary of Exodus originates in Malone, *God's Mediators*, 16-41.

³⁰ Malone writes, "There are hints that the priests represent the people before God, especially when the high priest 'bears' in his breastpiece the twelve inscribed gemstones 'as a continual reminder before Yahweh' (Exod. 28:29). More frequently, we find the priests representing God to the people, especially in instructing them about God's expectations (esp. Lev. 10:10-11)." Malone, *God's Mediators*, 46.

³¹ Hamilton, *Typology*, 70-71. Hamilton explains that Israel should have fulfilled the Adamic commission, but they instead followed in the sinful pattern of Adam and failed to keep the terms of the covenant at Mount Sinai. For this reason, they experienced exile from the land like Adam experienced exile from the garden.

³² Hamilton demonstrates that the Old Testament anticipated the failure and replacement of the Aaronic priesthood. Hamilton, *Typology*, 72-90

³³ See Malone, *God's Mediators*, 103-19.

given this task, then Israel took it up, and once they failed, Jesus accomplished it” (cf. Isa 49:6; Rom 1:9; 15:16).³⁴ Malone explains that while both Adam and Israel failed to mediate the knowledge of the glory of God so that it covered the earth like the waters cover the seas (Hab 2:14),

[Jesus] gets the ball rolling, and God’s glorious presence begins to burst forth on the earth. The same presence that was limited to the holy of holies is now dwelling in Christ. The veil in the temple has torn, and God’s presence is now filling the earth in that all who trust Christ enjoy God’s glory in a profound and intimate manner (cf. Gen 1:28; Matt 28:16-20).³⁵

Jesus accomplishes what Adam and Israel failed to do.

The biblical theological trajectory continues to the New Testament people of God. The apostle Peter adopts priesthood language for Christians. As living stones, they are joined to Jesus, forming a spiritual house and a holy priesthood (1 Pet 2:5). Peter echoes the Lord’s commission at Sinai: “You are a royal priesthood.” Malone observes, “Peter does not spell out an obviously cultic series of behaviours for his priestly reader,”³⁶ but he does appear to capitalize on the biblical-theological thread woven throughout the canon. In the previous chapter of this project, I investigated the meaning of “spiritual sacrifices” and discovered that Peter’s most likely meaning includes gospel proclamation (cf. 1 Pet 2:5; 2:9). The biblical-theology arc then seems to work like this: Adam should have mediated God’s presence to the whole earth; Israel should have mediated God’s presence to the nations; the Aaronic priesthood should have mediated God’s presence to the people of Israel; Jesus succeeded where Adam and Israel failed and fulfills the priesthood pattern; those who are joined to Jesus are thusly commissioned to mediate the glory of God—as magnified in the gospel—to the ends of the earth.

³⁴ Hamilton, *Typology*, 71. Hamilton continues, “Adam was put in the garden as a royal priest and failed. Israel was put in the land as a royal priest and failed. Christ came as a royal priest and succeeded, then commissioned Paul his apostle to be a light to the nations, that the church might be a royal priesthood making disciples of Jesus, the royal priest” (71-72).

³⁵ Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church*, 99.

³⁶ Malone, *God’s Mediators*, 152.

Royal. Much debate surrounds “royal priesthood” (βασιλειον ιεράτευμα) and whether one should render it as “kingdom of priests” or “royal priesthood.” Some take βασιλειον as a noun (kingdom) and others take it as an adjective (royal) modifying “priesthood.” Peter Gentry explains that the ambiguity of meaning exists in the MT as well.³⁷ The MT renders the phrase in Exodus 19:6 with two nouns in construct (מְלִכְוּתָא כֹהֲנִים), which one can take as “kingdom of priests” or “royal priesthood.” However, as Greg Forbes observes, the rest of 1 Peter 2:9 follows a repeated rhythm of a noun modified by an adjective. Therefore, it seems best to take βασιλειον in 2:9 as an adjective.³⁸

Grammatically, *royal priesthood* appears to be the preferred translation. This seems the case from a biblical-theological standpoint as well. It is difficult and possibly inappropriate to draw a sharp distinction between the biblical roles of king and priest. Adam was not only priest in the garden, but king as well.³⁹ The Adamic commission in Genesis 1:28 included a command to subdue and have dominion over the earth. Melchizedek was not only priest of the Most High God; his name means “king of righteousness,” and he was the king of Salem too (Gen 14:18; Heb 7:2).⁴⁰ Israel also served a kingly purpose. God intended Israel to subdue and have dominion over their

³⁷ Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 357. This is contra Michaels who assumes that the LXX and MT differ in meaning. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 108.

³⁸ Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 68. See also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 108; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 56. For a detailed argument that *basileion* should be a noun, see John Hall Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4-10 and the Phrase “Basileion Hierateuma,”* Supplements to Novum Testamentum 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1966). Forbes and Schreiner argue on the other hand. For example, Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 116. Achtemeier provides a helpful discussion of these issues in *1 Peter*, 164-65.

³⁹ Gladd observes how God’s commission to Adam gives Adam a kingly role. Additionally, Adam’s naming of the animals demonstrates his royal function (Gen 1:28; 2:19-20; cf. Ps 8:3-6). Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church*, 12-13. See also Hamilton, *Typology*, 154-63.

⁴⁰ Hamilton, *Typology*, 68.

enemies and the land of Canaan.⁴¹ During the time of the exodus, there was no official king in Israel, but Moses functioned as one.⁴² Hamilton notes that Aaron (the High Priest) and Moses (the de facto king) “almost form a king-priest tandem.”⁴³ The book of Samuel even depicts David as a king-priest. He is certainly king, but is also anointed like a priest⁴⁴ and wears a linen ephod like a priest.⁴⁵ The New Testament authors present Jesus as the fulfillment of the priest-king. He is the new Adam (Rom 5:12-21), a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb 7:11-17), the new Israel (e.g., Matt 2:13-15; cf. Hos 11:1),⁴⁶ the new Aaron (e.g., Heb 4:14), the new Moses (e.g., Matt 5-7; cf. Exod 19-20),⁴⁷ and the son of David (e.g., Matt 1:1). The story of Israel is the story of Christ and is now the ongoing story of the church.⁴⁸ Thus, Peter can announce to his audience that they are a royal priesthood: a kingdom of priests who serve the purpose of proclamation for the king. Royalty indicates a privileged status. Just as holy priests are set aside for a special purpose to God (cf. 1 Pet 2:5), royal priests are set aside for a special purpose to

⁴¹ Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church*, 40-42.

⁴² Hamilton explains that Moses “functions as later kings will: interacting with the king of Egypt (e.g., Exod 7:1; 9:1, 13; 10:28-29) and judging the people of Israel (18:13; cf. 1 Kgs 3:16-28).” Hamilton, *Typology*, 72.

⁴³ Hamilton, *Typology*, 72.

⁴⁴ Hamilton observes that the law provides instructions for the anointing of priests, never kings. Thus, when the Old Testament authors depict the anointing of kings, one should link priesthood and kingship. Hamilton, *Typology*, 72.

⁴⁵ Additionally, Hamilton notes that 2 Sam 8:18 indicates that David’s sons were priests. Hamilton, *Typology*, 90-91.

⁴⁶ Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 362-67.

⁴⁷ Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 369-70.

⁴⁸ This is a paraphrase from Joel Green, who writes, “This is the story of Israel. This is the story of Jesus. And, we now discover, this is the ongoing story of God’s people.” Joel Green, “Living as Exiles: The Church in the Diaspora in 1 Peter,” in *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament*, ed. Kent E. Brower and Andy Johnson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 317, cited in Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 123.

the king. A royal priesthood has privileged access and the task of serving the God-King.⁴⁹ Perhaps the apostle Peter pictured his Asian readers standing at the base of Mount Sinai as he echoes the words from Exodus 19. As participants in a new exodus, believers in Jesus subdue and have dominion over the earth as they mediate the knowledge of his glory through proclamation of the gospel.

A Holy Nation

Maybe Peter continues imagining his readers at Sinai as he declares that they are also a “holy nation.” Gentry argues that “royal priesthood” and “holy nation” should be taken together in Exodus 19:6, either as a hendiadys or Hebrew parallelism.⁵⁰ But, as Gentry acknowledges, one must still isolate each phrase in order to glean any nuance of meaning. Indeed, each phrase in Exodus 19:6 (and 1 Pet 2:9-10) informs the others. The royal priesthood corresponds to the holy nation. Though the Lord possesses every nation on the earth, he expresses a particular preference for a certain people in Exodus 19.⁵¹

Nation. In continuity with national Israel, Peter presents Christians as another kind of holy nation. Just as the Lord constituted Israel as a nation at Mount Sinai, so too has he established new covenant believers as a new nation at Mount Calvary (Mark 14:24).⁵² Those who place their faith in Jesus and his sacrifice are a new nation, not made up of a specific ethnic population nor limited by geography. Rather, this new nation of people is pan-ethnic and borderless with the only requisite being faith in Jesus.⁵³

⁴⁹ Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 92.

⁵⁰ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 356-57.

⁵¹ Stuart, *Exodus*, 422.

⁵² Jobes, *1 Peter*, 161.

⁵³ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 117.

Holy. This nation of Christians is holy to the Lord. Some disagreement among scholars exists about the meaning of the word “holy.” Some argue that to be holy means to be set apart. So in the context of 1 Peter, believers represent the new people of God who have been *set apart* for obedience to him.⁵⁴ Gentry, on the other hand, asserts that the biblical idea of “holiness” does not mean “set apart,” but rather to be devoted to God.⁵⁵ Michael Morales seems to agree, explaining, “To be holy means to belong to God.”⁵⁶ Peter has already urged his readers to be holy because God is holy (1 Pet 1:16). He reminds them that as his holy nation God expects them to submit to him before any other authority.⁵⁷ Gentry explains that a holy nation consists of people who are “prepared and consecrated for fellowship with God and completely devoted to him.”⁵⁸ Believers demonstrate their holiness in the ways that they devote themselves wholly to God’s values. This has particular implications for Peter’s audience as they experience a new exodus. Their local communities pressured them to commit idolatry and worship Caesar. Peter encourages them to “obey God rather than man,” and in this way remain a holy nation (Acts 5:29).

A People for His Possession

This new race and nation of Christians belong to God just like the people of Israel. When Peter writes, “A people for possession” (λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν), he does not directly quote from any Old Testament text. However, Peter certainly alludes to Exodus

⁵⁴ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 161.

⁵⁵ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 362-63.

⁵⁶ 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, 2015), 155, cited in Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church*, 16.

⁵⁷ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 162.

⁵⁸ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 358.

19:5 and Isaiah 43:21 with this phrase.⁵⁹ Paul Achtemeier observes that both Isaiah and Peter include the same purpose statement for God’s possession, indicating that Peter likely alludes to Isaiah 43:21.⁶⁰

In Exodus, one of the benefits of obeying the voice of the Lord and keeping his covenant is that God would count the people as his “treasured possession” over any of the other people on earth (LXX: *λαὸς περιούσιος*; cf. Mal 3:17).⁶¹ In return for their obedience, God assigns great worth to Israel. “If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession (הֶגְלָהּ) among all peoples” (Exod 19:5). The author of Chronicles uses הֶגְלָהּ (treasured possession) to describe the treasures of King David (1 Chr 29:3).⁶² Thus, God describes his obedient people as his “personal treasure;”⁶³ a possession of exceeding worth.

This status for the people of Israel drives their function as priests devoting themselves to God’s values.⁶⁴ Since they are his treasured possession, they can do nothing else but consecrate themselves for his purposes. Gentry demonstrates that “treasured possession” runs in parallel with “royal priesthood” and “holy nation.” Thus, “‘royal priesthood’ and ‘holy nation’ are another way of saying ‘God’s personal treasure.’”⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Carson, “1 Peter,” 1031; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 165.

⁶⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 166.

⁶¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 115. Also note that the MT does not include the Hebrew equivalent for “people” in this phrase, but it is certainly implied in context that the people of Israel are a treasured possession. The main verb of the sentence is a second person plural addressing the people of Israel who are treasured above “all the peoples.” It is not significant that “people” is in the LXX but not the MT.

⁶² Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 354.

⁶³ The phrase “personal treasure” is Gentry’s. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 354.

⁶⁴ Christopher Wright notes, “They have a role that matches their status. The *status* is to be a special treasured possession. The *role* is to be a priestly and holy community in the midst of the nations.” Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 256, cited in Malone, *God’s Mediators*, 152.

⁶⁵ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 354.

One cannot have one without the other. God’s treasured people are the holy nation he established and the royal priesthood which serves him.

Isaiah picks up this idea from Exodus and applies it to Israel in exile. The Lord will restore his people from exile and bring them back through the desert. He will give water in the wilderness so that his chosen people can drink (Isa 43:20-21). These chosen people are “the people I formed for myself” (περιεποιησάμην). The LXX’s use of these related terms⁶⁶ suggests that what was announced at Sinai is still true in exile. The Lord considers Israel to be his treasured possession in the exodus, and he also regards them as his treasured possession in exile.

Peter continues this theme and identifies his Christian readers as another treasured possession belonging to the Lord. He echoes the exodus and the exile and announces that they are also God’s own treasured possession even though they suffer.⁶⁷ As such, believers must understand that this status dictates their function. Since God values them so highly, they must fully devote themselves to his purposes.

Purpose for God’s People

Peter concludes verse 9 by explaining the purpose to which this royal priesthood and holy nation should devote themselves: “That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Peter lifts this phrase from Isaiah 43 where the Lord promises a return from exile so that his chosen people might declare his praise (v. 21). The Lord would restore the returned exiles to the promised land, and afterward they would proclaim all that God has done among the nations (Ps 126:1-3).

⁶⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 115. Schreiner identifies the relationship between περιεποιησάμην (Isa 43:21 LXX) and περιποίησιν (1 Pet 2:9).

⁶⁷ Estelle’s phrase “Echoes of Exodus” is not unique (Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*), and I have adopted this phrase from him as well as Roberts and Wilson. Alastair J. Roberts and Andrew Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing Themes of Redemption through Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

The excellencies that Peter’s audience should proclaim are the Lord’s mighty saving acts. Peter immediately qualifies these excellencies: the Lord has called them “out of darkness and into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). Thomas Schreiner notes that the Bible often describes salvation as a movement from darkness to light (Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:4, 5, 8), and Peter uses this same imagery.⁶⁸ The exodus event inspired Israel to glorify God. The return from exile provided a new basis for declaring his praise. The salvation of Christians supplies another new reason to proclaim his excellencies. Just like Israel, God has delivered Christians through another new exodus, and he possesses them as his chosen race, royal priesthood, and holy nation with the result that they will say among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for us” (Ps 126:3).

A People Who Have Received Mercy

Peter concludes his barrage of exodus-flavored Old Testament references by alluding to Hosea: “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Pet 2:10). Scholars debate whether Peter wrote this letter to a Jewish or Gentile audience.⁶⁹ Either way, Peter would have gripped his audience with this quotation from Hosea.

If Peter is writing to a Gentile majority, then the weight in his argument lies in their former identity as outsiders to the promises of God (cf. Eph 2:11-22). Gentile Christians were formerly cut off from the promises of God, but now they have been brought near by the blood of Christ (cf. Eph 2:12-13). Schreiner explains, “They did not deserve inclusion into God’s people, but they have now received his mercy and rejoice at

⁶⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 116.

⁶⁹ Most scholars suppose a primarily Gentile audience. For varying views, see Jobes, *1 Peter*, 19-41; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 6; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 38-39; Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlv-xlvi; John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1990), 65-67; Keener, *1 Peter*, 31; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50-51.

their inclusion.”⁷⁰ By faith in Jesus they now are God’s people and recipients of his great mercy.

This quotation can apply to a Jewish audience as well. Israel ceased to be God’s people when they broke their covenant with him. They became his people through the exodus (Exod 6:6b-7). In Hosea, because of the people’s disobedience, the Lord announces a reversal of the exodus and promises exile (cf. Deut 29:18-28; Jer 9:25-26).⁷¹ The Lord uses Hosea’s family as an image for what has happened to the covenant between God and his people. The Lord instructs Hosea to name one of his children “No Mercy” because he “will no more have mercy on the house of Israel” (Hos 1:6-7). God names another one of Hosea’s children “Not My People” because “You are not my people, and I am not your God” (Hos 1:8-9). Israel forfeited their status as God’s people, and they will return to “Egypt.”

However, even though Israel has been faithless, the Lord remains faithful to his covenant. He overflows with compassion for Israel. “How can I give you up O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel . . . my heart recoils within me” (Hos 11:8). Though Israel has disobeyed, the Lord will “allure her,” “speak tenderly to her,” and “give her her vineyards” (Hos 2:14-15). Then he will “have mercy on No Mercy, and [he] will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’” (Hos 2:23). The Lord will have mercy on his people and return them from exile.

The Jewish or Gentile identity of Peter’s audience might make a difference in the intricacies of Peter’s argument, but the upshot is essentially the same for both. Anyone outside of God’s covenant is a Gentile; they are not God’s people, and they do not have access to God’s mercy. Peter declares that God has constituted a new family through the resurrection of Jesus: “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again”

⁷⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 116.

⁷¹ McKenzie, “Exodus Typology in Hosea,” 101-3. The reversal of the exodus even implies that the people of Israel have now become like Gentiles. See Carson, “1 Peter,” 1032.

(1 Pet 1:3). Peter alludes to Hosea and proclaims this new reality for his audience: they were once not a people, but now they are God's chosen people; they were once outside the realm of those who receive mercy, but now by faith in Jesus they have received mercy.

Hope and Confidence

The exodus event sets the pattern for how God intends to save his people. The prophets read Moses this way, and they interpret their own circumstances in light of this pattern. To make this connection clear, they use exodus-like language in their writings. The apostles follow the example of the prophets and interpret their own circumstances from the perspective of a new, escalated exodus. When Peter alludes to Exodus, Isaiah, and Hosea, he identifies the exodus pattern blossoming in the lives of his audience. As they suffer through their own exile, he encourages them by pointing to their new status as the people of God.

Believers are chosen, royal, holy, and special. They are chosen and set aside for access and service to the God-King. They were outside the covenant people of God, but now they are God's own people. They also formerly had the status of not receiving mercy, but now they have received it. Believers are also a race, a priesthood, a nation, and a people. Though they are a diverse group of people, the Lord has made them into one body and has called them his own. They are both temple and priesthood: living stones in the temple that form a spiritual house and the priests who serve in that house by offering spiritual sacrifices. They are the new people of God chosen by him for service to him. The escalation of Peter's announcement is noteworthy. The Lord's announcement in Exodus 19 is conditional. If they obey (*protasis*), then the Lord will confer privileged status (*apodosis*).⁷² Peter escalates the promise and removes the conditionality: believers *are* a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for his possession

⁷² Gentry studies the nature of the conditional sentence (Exod 19:5-6) in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 350-52. He concludes, "The conditional sentence is proclaiming the privileged status of Israel inherent in the covenant relationship" (351-52).

because they are joined to Jesus by faith.⁷³ They have been constituted by a new covenant, and as such they possess the privileges and responsibilities of being his.

Believers should gain hope from 1 Peter 2:9-10. These descriptors demonstrate to Peter's readers that they stand in continuity with the people of God across epochs. Thus, they should expect their difficult circumstances. The overarching story of the Bible teaches that God's people suffer, and so everyone who belongs to God will suffer under the hand of some kind of Pharaoh. The Pharaohs in Round Rock, Texas may look very different from those in the days of Moses or Peter, but Christians in Round Rock still suffer nonetheless. Whether physical illness, relationship difficulties, tragedy, temptation, or soft persecution, believers still face the burden of life under the curse. Even today, the people of God suffer.

However, the unfolding of redemptive history has also demonstrated that God delivers his people from all Pharaohs. Though they suffer, they know salvation will come in the form of a new exodus. Peter emboldens Christians to view themselves as God's people and to place themselves in the story of the Bible. Salvation will certainly come, though God reserves the prerogative to define that deliverance. Just as the Lord delivered Israel in the exodus from Egypt and the new exodus from exile, he will also save Christians from their current circumstances. They may find themselves suffering in what seems like bondage, but they can know that God will deliver his people. They may feel like this world is not their home, but they can know that God is leading them to a land of promise. Believers should not be surprised when the world turns on them. They should instead understand their circumstances as another installment of the exodus pattern and embrace the privilege of being the people of God. Once Christians understand their newfound identity, they may sustain the courage to not only walk through their fiery trial but to have hope in the midst of it.

⁷³ Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church*, 138-39.

The status expressed in 1 Peter 2:9-10 also inflates Christians with confidence to stand during suffering. When Christians understand that they are chosen by God, they are ready to receive rejection from the world. If the Lord has chosen someone, does the opinion of anyone else matter? The royalty of Christians, moreover, emboldens them to stand in persecution. Jesus set the example when he stood before Pilate. Pilate interrogated Jesus, trying to get to the bottom of the city's upheaval. He asked Jesus, "Your own nation and the chief priest have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus responded, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:35-36). Jesus understood his royalty, and it gave him confidence in his authority to stand before a Roman governor who had the power to kill him. Christians enjoy a similar privilege. No matter what may come, they are citizens of a kingdom that is not of this world.

CHAPTER 6

EXILE, SUFFERING, AND HOLINESS: THE USE OF PSALM 34 IN 1 PETER 3:10-12

Peter writes his first letter to a marginalized Christian community in Asia Minor. His letter is both theological and parenetic, explaining why Christians suffer and exhorting them how to live while suffering. Peter's counsel stands upon the foundation of the theological truth which he weaves throughout the letter. This chapter aims to demonstrate that Peter uses Psalm 34 to call his readers to holiness while they suffer in exile. First, I will establish the exile, suffering, and holiness motifs in 1 Peter, showing how they influence Peter's overall message. I will specifically note how these themes saturate the immediate context of 1 Peter 3:10-12. Second, I will investigate how holiness while suffering in exile also sets the context of Psalm 34. Third, I will examine the use of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter 3:10-12 and show that the Psalm provides source material for Peter who seeks to give wisdom to those suffering in the context of exile. Like David, Peter's readers experience exile and suffering. Therefore, like David, Peter's audience should respond to their suffering with holiness. While one cannot specifically know why Peter chose to include Psalm 34 in his letter, I intend to show the likely reason is because he wants to offer wisdom from a fellow sufferer in exile.

Exile, Suffering, and Holiness in 1 Peter

Exile, suffering, and holiness work together to shape the context of 1 Peter 3:10-12. Exile serves as a strong metaphor throughout the letter. It appears throughout the letter, in several sections, indicating that Peter intends for the exile to run as an undercurrent to his exhortation. Peter also calls his audience to be holy while they suffer in exile. This section will first examine the explicit references to the exile to demonstrate its force in

the letter. Second, I will observe how the theme of suffering also permeates the letter. Third, I will consider the theme of holiness in 1 Peter, paying special attention to its influence on the context of 1 Peter 3:10-12.

Exile in 1 Peter

Peter makes at least four explicit references to exile.¹ These allusions occur throughout the letter, demonstrating that the exile serves as a controlling metaphor. I will also note how Peter connects exile and holy living.

Elect exiles of the dispersion. Peter begins his letter by addressing his audience: “To the elect exiles of the dispersion.” While this language may suggest a physical description of Peter’s audience,² Peter uses these terms to address their spiritual ontology. Scholars disagree over the racial identity of the letter’s recipients. Some argue that the language of 1 Peter suggests a primarily Jewish audience, while others argue for a primarily Gentile audience.³ Ultimately, whether Jew or Gentile, Peter’s audience consisted of believers who suffered for their faith in Jesus. They suffer because they are in spiritual

¹ Matthew Harmon traces a biblical theology of the exile and notes the theme’s prominence in 1 Pet. See Matthew S. Harmon, *Rebels and Exiles: A Biblical Theology of Sin and Restoration*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020), 110-17.

² Karen Jobes presents a theory suggesting that Jewish Christians who had been deported from Rome comprise Peter’s audience. For the full argument, see Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 28-41. D. A. Carson finds Jobes’s argument convincing. D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1016. I find Jobes’s argument intriguing yet speculative.

³ For relevant discussion, see Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 50-51; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 37-41; J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 6; Scot McKnight, *1 Peter*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 25.

exile. Peter's use of "elect exiles of the dispersion" prepares the reader for more extensive use of the theme of exile in the letter.⁴

Throughout the time of your exile. After the opening of the letter, the first explicit mention of the exile comes in 1:17. Though believers in Jesus may identify God as their Father, they must also recognize his role as Judge (1:17a). For this reason, believers in Jesus should "conduct themselves with fear throughout the time of your exile" (1:17b). Peter wants believers to recognize that their circumstances represent a kind of exile where they do not live at home. The world is not a community conducive to Christian behavior. Rather, Christians must view themselves as exiles.⁵ They are called to be holy like the people of Israel who also lived amongst a conglomeration of other nations who did not worship the true God (1 Pet 1:15; c.f. Lev 19:2). As Paul Achtemeier rightly explains, "Their 'holiness' . . . renders them aliens in the eyes of that culture."⁶ In this way, Peter uses the theme of exile to exhort his readers to be holy.

As sojourners and exiles. Peter uses the exile to call his readers to holiness again. By living holy lives while suffering in exile, believers demonstrate their faith to the unbelievers. First Peter 2:11-12 opens a new section of Peter's letter (2:11-4:11)⁷ where Peter calls his readers to this mission.⁸ He writes, "Beloved, I urge you as

⁴ Achtemeier argues that these three words "elect," "exile," and "dispersion," all "announce important themes in the letter." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 81.

⁵ Achtemeier argues that Peter's view of exile does not include the notion that heaven is true home, but rather that the culture does not share the Christian's values. "In the present context, as well as the letter as a whole, it is more likely to refer to the Christ's present status in relation to a culture that regards any who do not conform to customs as a potential threat to social stability." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 125. Schreiner, on the other hand, argues that one does not have to choose between eschatological and "social dislocation," since "social dislocation is rooted . . . in their eschatological inheritance and their new birth." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 82.

⁶ Achtemeier *1 Peter*, 125.

⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 48.

⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 119.

sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh” (2:11). “Sojourners and exiles” alludes to Abraham in Genesis 23:4 where Abraham is an isolated foreigner in a community where he owns no property to bury his wife.⁹ Peter seems to connect his audience to Abraham in the sense that they too “have no permanent home in this world.”¹⁰ This call to holiness links to the first call in 1:13-17. The “passions of your former ignorance” (1:14) correspond to the “passions of the flesh” (2:11). Here in chapter 2, Peter argues that a Christian’s status as sojourner and exile serves as the foundational reason why they should remain holy. Peter Davids explains, “The knowledge that they do not belong does not lead to withdrawal, but to their taking their standards of behavior, not from the culture in which they live, but from their ‘home.’”¹¹ Believers do not belong to the surrounding culture but instead to a heavenly kingdom from which they derive their values.

The holiness of believers should have an evangelistic outcome. In 2:9-11, Peter connects Christian believers to the people of Israel. Just as the people of Israel enjoyed the titles of “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession” (2:9), so also believers in Jesus may claim these titles for themselves. God has given believers this status so that “you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (2:9). Peter argues, then, that as the people of God, believers in Jesus proclaim his excellencies by abstaining from the passions of the flesh. Even though they may mistreat you, the “Gentiles” will “see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (2:12). Believers should understand that as exiles they have a unique platform, and, as Achtemeier observes, “they are not to adapt their conduct to that of their surrounding culture.”¹² By being holy, they stand out from among the culture.

⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 119.

¹⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 119.

¹¹ Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 95.

¹² Achtemeier *1 Peter*, 176.

Even though they live as spiritual exiles, they have the opportunity to proclaim the excellencies of God through their holiness.

She who is in Babylon. In Peter's final allusion to exile, he writes, "She who is in Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings" (5:13). Babylon appears to be a biblical way to refer to Rome.¹³ Believers in the first century lived as subjects of the Roman Empire. For Christians, Rome represented an empire that stood opposed to the rule of God and thus enemies of Jesus. Babylon signified a similar position for the people of Israel. Babylon invaded Judah and took many people into exile as captives. At the end of his letter, Peter seems to suggest that the people of Jesus should view themselves in a measure of continuity with the people of Israel. Just as the people of Israel suffered in exile by the hand of the Babylonians, Christians suffer spiritual exile by the hand of the Romans. Though the kinds of exile differ in nature, exile still represents a major theme for both Israel and Christians.

Suffering in 1 Peter

The theme of suffering joins the exile motif to shape the message of 1 Peter. I already observed in chapter 2 of this project that suffering stands as a significant theme in 1 Peter (e.g. 1:6; 2:19; 4:12-13). I also noted that the apostle uses suffering to connect the people of God across epochs. The people of God suffered in the Old Testament (e.g., Joseph). Jesus suffered (e.g., Heb 2:18). Therefore, Christians should expect to suffer (1 Pet 4:12). Peter recognizes this pattern and applies it to his audience with an exile theme.

Suffering emerges as a theme in the context of 1 Peter 3:10-12. Peter explains that the Gentiles will speak evil of them (2:12). Christian servants may experience unjust suffering (2:19-20). Peter's audience might be treated maliciously or reviled (3:9). They

¹³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 251. Schreiner points to Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 354. For a discussion on the alternative views on the identity of Babylon, see Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 201-3. Davids ultimately concludes that Babylon is a reference to Rome.

might “suffer for righteousness’ sake” (3:14), and because this is the case, Peter’s audience should be prepared to face it (4:1-2).

Holiness in 1 Peter

Joining the themes of exile and suffering, Peter exhorts his audience throughout the letter to be holy in their conduct before unbelievers. As D. G. Peterson observes, “Christians should seek holiness as a practical expression of their sanctification in Christ.”¹⁴ Their moral character should be righteous before God and honorable before their community.¹⁵ Honorable living might cause suffering in the lives of believers, but Peter still urges them to be holy in their conduct since doing good is God’s will for them (2:15).¹⁶ Since Peter’s audience has been born again to a living hope (1:3), he calls them to be holy since God himself is holy (1:13-16). G. L. Green observes, “The indicative of God’s character contains within itself the imperative of their conduct.”¹⁷ They should purify their souls by their obedience to the truth (1:22). They should “put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander” (2:1).

In the middle section of his letter (2:11-4:11), Peter describes practical implications of his call to be holy while suffering in exile. Believers should be holy while suffering so that the Gentiles will see their conduct and “glorify God on the day of visitation” (2:12). Peter addresses several groups of Christians and specifies how they should remain holy among the Gentiles. First, he commands all believers to submit to the government (2:13-14). By “doing good,” believers will be able to “silence the ignorance

¹⁴ D. G. Peterson, “Holiness,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 549.

¹⁵ Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 135-46; 176-79. Davids observes that Peter’s command to be holy in conduct applies to their behavior before outsiders as well as their treatment of other believers.

¹⁶ G. L. Green, “1 Peter,” in Alexander et al., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 349.

¹⁷ Green, “1 Peter,” 349.

of foolish people” (2:15). These “foolish people” likely include the Gentiles who revile Peter’s audience as evildoers (2:12; 3:9, 16). Thus, Peter calls for Christian holiness with respect to the government even in the midst of suffering.

Next, Peter exhorts Christian servants to be holy before their masters. Christian servants should submit to their masters—whether just or unjust (2:13-25). While Christian servants may endure unjust suffering, Peter calls them to “do good” to their masters with “all respect” (2:13). When Christian servants live in this way, they portray the image of Christ as he too suffered unjustly but did not commit sin or speak deceit. (2:21-23). Instead, Christ “entrust[ed] himself to him who judges justly” (2:24). Though Christian servants exist in potentially dishonorable circumstances, they possess the honorable opportunity to “follow in his steps” (2:21) and display holy character before their masters.

After that, Peter turns his attention toward Christian marriages. He commands Christian wives to imitate the “holy women who hoped in God” by “submitting to their husbands” (3:5). Once again, Peter expresses concern that these Christian exiles display their holy living so that unbelievers may see it and reevaluate their unbelief. Peter writes, “Wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives—when they see your respectful and pure conduct” (3:1-2). Unbelieving husbands may observe the holy behavior of their believing wives and place their faith in Jesus. Peter also addresses the conduct of the Christian husband, explaining that they should honor their wives (3:7). In these ways Peter addresses the conduct of Christian wives and husbands toward one another. They should be holy to the end that their conduct witnesses to unbelievers.

Finally, Peter again addresses all believers (3:8-12). This command concludes this section of his letter (3:8; Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες).¹⁸ Thomas Schreiner suggests that 3:8

¹⁸ Achtemeier observes that the structure of 3:8-12 matches the previous passages in the section. Therefore, 3:8-12 must conclude a series of commands introduced by the command to live honorably among the Gentiles. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 220-21.

refers to relationships among believers. Therefore, according to Schreiner, believers should have “unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind” toward one another (3:8).¹⁹ “Reviling” in verse 9 most likely refers to an interaction between a Christian and an unbeliever because those outside the church are responsible for speech directed against believers (2:12, 15, 23; 3:16). However, as Achtemeier rightly contends, the context of Peter’s citation (3:10-12) from Psalm 34 allows for an application of 3:8-9 for both believers and unbelievers.²⁰ Perhaps Peter intends for believers to conduct themselves with the characteristics of 3:8-9 toward one another as well as unbelievers. Achtemeier summarizes, “What is asked of Christians in relation to their hostile, non-Christian culture grows out of the ethic that prescribes how they are to live with one another.”²¹ The way believers treat one another should overflow into the way they treat Gentiles.

Peter chooses unique adjectives²² to describe the holy living he requires of his audience.²³ They should be single-minded (ὁμόφρονες). Achtemeier emphasizes that unity

¹⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 162-63. Schreiner qualifies his suggestion: “Certainty on this matter is impossible” (163).

²⁰ Achtemeier writes, “There is no clear indication in the text of such a shift of focus, and the citation from LXX Ps 33:13-17 is equally applicable to both situations.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 221. However, one might question how a believer should be likeminded (ὁμόφρονες) with an unbeliever. The recipients of the attitudes in 3:8-9 remains unclear.

²¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 223.

²² Scholars observe how these words are unique to the New Testament. Achtemeier notes that while these characteristics enumerated by Peter in 3:9 may be familiar elsewhere in the New Testament, the forms of the words are unique. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222. He observes that ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, and ταπεινόφρονες are all unique forms in the New Testament, while εὐσπλαγχνοί is rare (cf. Eph 4:32). Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222-23. Davids likewise observes that like-mindedness and sympathetic are “both terms unique in the biblical literature, but common in Greek ethical discussion.” Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 145. Achtemeier also demonstrates how these words became part of early “Christian tradition.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 223n41.

²³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222-23. Though, as Achtemeier suggests (223-24), many of the ideas in vv. 8-9 mirror the teachings of Jesus (e.g., Matt 5:38-42). Michaels shows how these verses more closely match Rom 12:9-10, 14-16. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 174-75. That Jesus, Peter, and Paul teach similar conduct demonstrates a unity of early Christian thought.

of mind refers to having a common goal.²⁴ Christians may have diversity of thought as long as they have unity of Lordship.²⁵ This means that, as J. Ramsey Michaels writes, they must be “agreeable and sensitive to each other’s concerns (cf. Acts 4:32), and so united in a common spiritual bond.”²⁶ Believers who are single-minded reject the priority and tradition of society and submit to the teaching of Jesus and his apostles.²⁷

Believers should also be sympathetic (*συμπαθεῖς*). Michaels observes that while 1 Peter 3:8 is the only place *συμπαθεῖς* appears in the New Testament, one can find a cognate (*συμπάσχει*) in 1 Corinthians 12:26 where believers should “suffer together” with those who experience suffering (cf. Rom 12:15). Thus, Peter describes the righteous as those who view the circumstances of others as if they experience them too and are then able to sympathize with those who suffer.

Likewise, believers should have brotherly love for one another (*φιλάδελφοι*).²⁸ Originally describing love between siblings, Christians began to use *φιλάδελφοι* to refer to their love for one another.²⁹ In other words, believers are to love one another like family.

²⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222.

²⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222. Achtemeier cites Leonhard Goppelt, who writes, “The Church members’ thinking and striving are to have the same content and be directed toward the same goal, not by coordination according to one program, but by dialogical orientation toward the commission of the one Lord.” Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 233.

²⁶ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 176.

²⁷ Jobs, *1 Peter*, 215.

²⁸ Schreiner suggests a chiasmic structure to v. 8. See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 163-64. Goppelt similarly perceives brotherly love to be the center of the adjectives. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 232. Some view a chiasmic structure to all of 3:8-11. Schreiner cites R. J. Bauckham, “James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, Jude,” in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), 312. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 163n196. Achtemeier, however, remains unconvinced of a chiasmic structure encompassing all of 3:8-11. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 221.

²⁹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 176.

This love for one another trumps a love for the world in general³⁰ and echoes the teachings of Jesus³¹ (cf. John 13:34-35) and the apostles (cf. Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1).³² Love for one another was integral in Jesus's instruction to his disciples, and Peter also places love in a central location in verse 8. Schreiner proposes that Peter employs a chiasm to emphasize brotherly love. Unity of mind (ὁμόφρονες) corresponds to humility of mind (ταπεινόφρονες) in the chiasm because pride—the opposite of humility—disrupts harmony. Sympathy (συμπαθείς) links to a tender heart (εὐσπλαγχνοί) because of the close relationship of these two words, making it difficult to distinguish between them. Brotherly love (φιλάδελφοί) stands alone. Thus, the other adjectives in verse 8 flow from the fount of brotherly love.³³

Believers should have a tender heart (εὐσπλαγχνοί). A tender-hearted person is someone who forgives (cf. Eph 4:32). Instead of stonewalling an offender, the righteous offer forgiveness to those who have sinned against them. The sympathy commanded by Peter aids in the task of forgiveness. Moreover, believers' personal experiences with forgiveness should cause tenderness of heart. Believers return the mercy they have experienced to those around them and show compassion and tenderness to those in need.³⁴

³⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222.

³¹ I recognize Peter's use of φιλάδελφοί does not match John's use of ἀγαπάω; however, John himself seems to use these words interchangeably. See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1991), 676; Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25b (Nashville: B & H, 2002), 309. The apostles echo Jesus's teaching to love one another. Jobes clarifies, "Peter applies Jesus' general teaching to the specific situation where Christians face hostility for no reason other than that they are Christians." Jobes, *1 Peter*, 217. See also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 176.

³² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 222n35.

³³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 163-64.

³⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 223.

Last, believers should be humble (ταπεινόφρονες). Michaels notes that humility is usually a negative trait in Greek literature.³⁵ After all, no one wants to be thought of as less than others. However, the people of God have adopted humility as the way of righteousness.³⁶ Peter’s call for humility echoes the same call throughout the Bible. Humility stands as a desirable trait among the saints of God in the Law (e.g., Num 12:3), Prophets (e.g., Mic 6:8), Writings (e.g., Prov 11:2; Ps 147:6), Gospels (e.g., Luke 14:11), and Letters (e.g., Col 3:12). Everyone will be humbled. Those who humble themselves will be exalted. The humble have experienced the forgiveness of God and do not withhold sympathy and forgiveness from those who may have wronged them. On the other hand, those who exalt themselves and refuse to forgive others will be forcibly humbled by God. Peter emphasizes that the way of holiness demands humility.

Peter insists that believers should possess this kind of holiness even though—especially when—they suffer. In the event that someone harms them, Peter encourages his audience: “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing” (3:9). This refusal to retaliate serves as an evangelistic tool for believers. Karen Jobes writes,

The Christian response of nonretaliation would be startling within that culture. Peter instructs Christians to forgo the usual verbal retaliation that would be necessary to successfully defend one’s honor and the reputation of one’s community. Given the tendency of human nature to retaliate, coupled with the social expectation to do so, the Christian who refrains from verbal retaliation and instead offers blessing would give unbelievers pause.³⁷

³⁵ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 177. BDAG explains that the verbal cognate of ταπεινόφρονες not only means to humble. It also means to “cause to be at a lower point” and “to cause someone to lose prestige or status.” Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 990.

³⁶ Michaels cites Prov 29:23 LXX, Ignatius Eph 10.2; Barn 19.3; Herm. Man. 11.8. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 177.

³⁷ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 217.

In this way, Peter demonstrates that suffering exiles should maintain a holy way of life. They should live in such a way that the Gentiles will take notice and affirm their behavior.³⁸ Thus, exile, suffering, and holiness describe the literary context of 1 Peter 3:10-12.³⁹

Exile, Suffering, and Holiness in Psalm 34

Exile and suffering also describe the context of Psalm 34. In the Psalm, David reflects on his exilic experience among the Philistines and exhorts his reader to be holy.

Exile and Suffering in Psalm 34

Exile and suffering comprise the context of Psalm 34. The superscription of Psalm 34 indicates its author and occasion for writing.⁴⁰ David wrote this Psalm “when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.” The people of Israel request a king just like the other nations around them (1 Sam 8:1-18). The Lord gives them Saul, who succeeds militarily (e.g., 1 Sam 11:1-11) but in many

³⁸ Achtemeier observes, “The call to conduct that is recognizably good in the eyes of nonbelievers is not unique to our author, and by this time is part of Christian tradition. Underlying this call is the conviction that both Christians and pagans recognize good behavior, yet without the idea that the ‘good’ is identical for both.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 176.

³⁹ I recognize that the language in 1 Pet 3:12 includes the word “righteous” and not “holy.” Though not interchangeable, it is inconsequential for the argument of this chapter to make a sharp distinction between the two.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Sargent argues, “There appears to be little evidence to suggest that Peter believed that Psalm 34 was originally written or uttered within the context of [David’s] sojourn among the Philistines. Indeed, even the [original Greek] superscription does not necessarily present this connect to the Philistines.” Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, The Library of New Testament Studies 547 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 82. Schreiner, on the other hand, notes that the superscription would have been available to Peter’s audience and that “it is irrelevant for our purposes whether one thinks the superscription is accurate, for that is how the psalm was transmitted to the readers.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 102. James Hamilton argues that not only were the superscriptions available to the biblical authors, but the biblical authors also viewed them as authoritative. James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 1:42. For a helpful discussion about the organization, authorship, and authenticity of the superscriptions in Psalms, see Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:25-52.

negative ways represents a king like all the other nations (e.g., 1 Sam 15:7-9).⁴¹ So the Lord provides for them David as a king after his own heart (1 Sam 13:14; 16:7). While Saul is still king, David is anointed king in Bethlehem (1 Sam 16:1-13). As anointed king-in-waiting, David lives in the already/not-yet of his reign. Eventually, Saul begins to feel jealousy and hatred toward David, such that David fears for his life (e.g., 1 Sam 19). He flees Saul into the cities of foreigners (1 Sam 21:10-15; 27:1-3) and into the Judean wilderness, hiding in the rocks and caves of the hill country (e.g., 1 Sam 22:1-5; 23:24).

While many kings experience this kind of exile upon being deposed, David experiences exile before he becomes king. David complains to Saul, “They have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the LORD” (1 Sam 26:19). He pleads, “Let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the Lord” (1 Sam 26:20). Because of Saul’s wrath, David remains in exile for quite some time, away from the promised land (1 Sam 21-2 Sam 1).

The occasion for Psalm 34 takes place while David is in exile (1 Sam 21:10-15). David escapes Saul and attempts to hide among the Philistines. Achish,⁴² the King of Gath, welcomes David at first. Upon hearing that David lives among them, the servants of Achish express their concern. David is the one who killed Goliath, the famous resident of Gath, and led the rout of the Philistine army (1 Sam 17). So great was David’s victory that the people of Israel sang, “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands” (1 Sam 21:11). In this moment, David began to fear for his life and planned to project a harmless image of himself to the Philistines. He changes his behavior in the sense that he

⁴¹ See Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 7 (Nashville: B & H, 1996), 111-62. Bergen builds the case that Saul is the fulfillment of the elders’ demand for a king like the nations in 1 Sam 8:5. David is the true king since he is a king after God’s heart.

⁴² Ps 34 claims the king’s name is “Abimelech.” Abimelech may be a title for the king of Gath—“my father is king.” Thus, no discrepancy necessarily exists between Ps 34 and 1 Sam 21. Hamilton argues that the name “Abimelech” is used to connect David’s trouble to that of Abraham and Isaac, thus linking the king to the patriarchs. Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:377-78.

pretends to be insane. Achish takes the bait, assumes David is a madman, and expels him from Gath.

While 1 Samuel 21:10-15 provides the narrative glimpse into David's life as an exile, Psalm 34 records David's interpretation of those events. Peter uses both the context and parenetic nature of Psalm 34. Essentially, in Psalm 34, David provides advice for someone who suffers as an exile.⁴³ While reflecting on his own exile among the Philistines, what does David exhort others to do?

Holiness in Psalm 34

David begins the Psalm with what he intends to do. He proclaims that he will “bless the Lord at all times,” suggesting that he will worship God no matter the circumstance (v. 1).⁴⁴ He invites his reader to join him in his worship (v. 3). David then gives reason for his worship. He cried out to the Lord, and he answered him and delivered him from all his fears (vv. 4-7).⁴⁵ David has experienced the salvation of the Lord, and he has enjoyed his goodness. So, he exhorts his reader to “taste and see” for themselves that the Lord is good (v. 8). Even though David suffered while exiled, the Lord delivered him, and he experienced the goodness of God for himself.⁴⁶

⁴³ Hamilton notes the repetition in 34:4 and 34:10, and again in 34:6 and 34:17. “It is almost as though those who are aligned with David are to do as he has done, following his example.” Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:379.

⁴⁴ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 139.

⁴⁵ The MT and the LXX differ in 34:4. The MT says that the Lord “delivered me from all my fears,” while the LXX reads, “sojournings.” Though Peter does not quote this part of Ps 34, he does use sojourning elsewhere in his letter (1:17; 2:11). This could suggest the entirety of Ps 34 serves as background to this part of Peter's letter. However, as Sean Christensen notes, Peter's uses of *sojourning* seem to point to different Old Testament passages (cf. Gen 23:24; Ps 39:12). Sean M. Christensen, “Solidarity in Suffering and Glory: The Unifying Role of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter 3:10-12,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 58, no. 2 (June 2015): 335-52.

⁴⁶ Hamilton notes that David “Summons his audience to indulge their senses on the discernible delight of knowing God. We neither taste nor see him literally, but we figuratively savor and behold goodness. Someone who has tasted honey or seen a sunrise knows that words can only do so much to capture the experience. The best thing is to taste, to see, for oneself.” Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:380.

David then begins to “teach” his reader. Derek Kidner notes that verse 11 matches other biblical wisdom literature such as Proverbs.⁴⁷ In this way, in Psalm 34 David not only reflects on his time among the Philistines but also provides instructions for those suffering in similar circumstances. The Psalm transitions to a new section in verse 11: “Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” The Psalmist uses imperatives to instruct the reader. God’s people who suffer should taste and see that the Lord is good (v. 8), keep their tongue from evil (v. 13), turn away from evil, do good, seek peace, and pursue it (v. 14).

Thus, those who would “desire life” and “love many days, that he may see good” should heed David’s exhortation (v.12). “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (vv. 13-14). In other words, David announces a standard of behavior for the people of God. Hamilton observes, “He wants people to learn to fear God by living as though they do—by seeking the blessing and working to obey the commandments.”⁴⁸ In these particular ways, David’s reader should be holy. He gives a good reason: “The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry” (v. 15). David knows this from experience since he “sought the Lord and he answered” and he cried as a “poor man,” and the Lord heard him. For this reason, David can confidently tell his reader, “When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them” (v. 17) and “the Lord is near to the brokenhearted.” On the other hand, the Lord is “against those who do evil” (v. 16). David promises that while affliction distresses both the righteous (v. 19) and the wicked (v. 21), the righteous will be delivered from it and the wicked will be slain by it (v. 21). The Lord favors the righteous but condemns the wicked. Thus, David’s readers should be morally righteous, no matter their circumstances. God’s people should be holy.

⁴⁷ Kidner *Psalms 1-72*, 140-41.

⁴⁸ Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:381.

Peter's Use of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter 3:10-12

Peter uses Psalm 34 to encourage his readers to be holy while they suffer in exile. Just as David suffered in exile and exhorted his readers to be holy, so also Peter encourages his readers to be holy in a similar context. In this section, I will observe Peter's direct quotation of Psalm 34 in 3:10-12, which is the longest allusion to the psalm in the letter (cf. 1 Pet 2:3; Ps 34:8).⁴⁹ Psalm 34 establishes the ground for Peter's exhortations.⁵⁰ The weight of Peter's exhortation comes from the Old Testament as an authoritative source.⁵¹ Peter seems to argue that because David gave these instructions in Psalm 34, believers who suffer in similar circumstances should follow in like manner.

Exile, suffering, and holiness emerge in Peter's quotation of Psalm 34. Exile and suffering establish the context for the quotation. Suffering and exile comprise the larger literary context of 1 Peter 3:10-12. First Peter 2:11 begins a new section where believers are encouraged to live holy lives even though they suffer in exile. Peter's choice of Psalm 34 aptly concludes this section of the letter.⁵²

Peter writes, "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (1

⁴⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 101-2. Scholars debate how much 1 Pet alludes to Ps 34. Jobes suggests a wide influence. Karen H. Jobes, "Got Milk: Septuagint Psalm 33 and the Interpretation of 1 Peter 2:1-3," *Westminster Theological Journal* 63 (2002): 9-13. Sue Woan proposes as many as eleven references to Ps 34, and that Ps 34 influences the whole structure of 1 Pet. Sue Woan, "The Psalms in 1 Peter," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 223-26. See also Christensen, "Solidarity in Suffering and Glory," 335-52. Sargent, on the other hand, questions the importance of Ps 34 to the letter's composition: "Is it more likely that he simply borrowed language from the psalm? Perhaps the psalm was chosen simply because it reflects the language of 'doing good.'" Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 84-85.

⁵⁰ Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010), 100. Dubis argues that the quotation of Ps 34 provides motivational grounds for 3:8-9.

⁵¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 165.

⁵² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 226.

Pet 3:10-12). Peter quotes the LXX translation of Psalm 34⁵³ practically verbatim. The changes Peter makes simply smooth the language to fit his purpose.⁵⁴ By using Psalm 34, Peter intends to exhort and encourage his audience to be holy while suffering as exiles.

Persecution of Exiles

First, Peter describes the persecution Christians might encounter as exiles. He has already argued at the beginning of this section of the letter that the actions and attitudes of Christians should reflect their identity (2:11-12). By their holiness they will proclaim the excellencies of God to the unbelieving world. However, not every Gentile will be pleased with Christian holiness, and persecution will surely come.⁵⁵ Christians should expect suffering (1:6; 4:12), and this is a result of their identity as exiles.

Holy Living

Second, Peter uses Psalm 34 to outline specific ways believers should be holy while suffering. The entire section (2:13-3:12) enumerates specific ways believers should engage in holy living. In 1 Peter 3:10-12, believers should be holy with their words, actions, and relationships.

Words. Believers should be holy with the words they speak. David understood that his words should be holy as he suffered in exile (Ps 34:13). Peter applies this principle to his audience. A believer should “keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit” (3:10). Hebrew parallelism demonstrates that deceit is the specific evil Peter has in mind. The first line explains that the righteous refrain from speaking evil. The second

⁵³ I recognize that the Psalm numbering system in the LXX differs from the MT. For the sake of simplicity, I will uniformly refer to Ps 34 even though Peter quotes the LXX Ps 33.

⁵⁴ Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 236. Achtemeier suggests that the changes to the text possibly represent Peter’s memory and not necessarily a conscious decision to change it. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 226.

⁵⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 126.

line further explains what kind of evil they should avoid. Believers should not speak deceit (δόλον). BDAG explains that deceit involves “taking advantage through craft and underhanded methods.”⁵⁶ Thus, believers should not use their words in ways that God condemns (e.g., Deut 27:24 LXX; Isa 9:4 LXX; Acts 13:10).

Deceit is not the only evil speech the righteous should avoid. Peter also condemns reviling in 3:9. Believers should bless those who insult, defame, and verbally abuse⁵⁷ them instead of responding with evil speech (3:9). Though they find it difficult, believers must not retaliate. Instead, they should bless (εὐλογοῦντες) their enemy. Believers should, as BDAG defines εὐλογέω, “ask for bestowal of special favor, esp[ecially] of calling down God’s gracious power.”⁵⁸ Peter urges believers to ask God to show favor to those who have spoken evil of them. Peter also reminds them of their eschatological reward, promising their own blessing: “That you may obtain a blessing” (3:9). Keener notes how “inheriting a blessing” (cf. “heirs” in 1 Pet 3:7)⁵⁹ evokes God’s promises to the patriarchs in Genesis (e.g., Gen 12:2-3; 22:17; 28:4).⁶⁰ Thus, as the people of God who inherit the Abrahamic promises, believers should refrain from speaking as those who stand outside the patriarchal blessing.

Actions. Believers should also be holy with the actions they take. Just as David called for holy speech in Psalm 34, he also called for holy behavior (Ps 34:14). Peter likewise commands holy conduct from his audience. Like David, he connects evil speech

⁵⁶ BDAG, 256.

⁵⁷ Jobes explains that to revile includes “the expressions of hostility as insult, defamation of character, and verbal abuse.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 216.

⁵⁸ BDAG, 408.

⁵⁹ Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 254.

⁶⁰ Keener, *1 Peter*, 254.

and evil deeds multiple times in his letter (2:1; 2:22; 3:15-16).⁶¹ In 3:10, a believer should not only be holy in speech, but he should also “turn away from evil and do good.” Believers should intentionally choose to reject evil conduct in their lives and, as Schreiner explains, “make a conscious effort” to do good.⁶² Suffering shades the context of Peter’s call for holiness in 3:10. In 3:9, believers who suffer should not repay evil for the evil perpetrated against them. Rather, they should do good. David’s call for holy conduct originated from a context of suffering at the hands of evildoers. David taught that the righteous should do good. Jesus (e.g., Matt 5:39; Luke 6:28, 29) and Paul (e.g., Rom 12:17; 1 Thess 5:15) taught a similar concept as well.⁶³ Peter similarly concludes that holy action should characterize the righteous one who suffers in exile.

Relationships. A believer should likewise be holy in his relationships. He should “seek peace and pursue it.” Leonhard Goppelt views this as the foundation statement of Peter’s parenesis. He writes, “In the midst of manifold conflicts the proper course is to seek peace.”⁶⁴ In a believer’s interaction with outsiders, he should pursue peace and not conflict by avoiding evil speech and evil deeds. Peter’s command to “have unity of mind” is a specific outworking of the Psalm’s command to “seek peace and pursue it.” Moreover, seeking peace seems to represent the cornerstone of the parenesis in 3:8-12 upon which all the other exhortations may be built. Schreiner notes, “Such peace will only persevere if believers do not insult and revile others, if they extend forgiveness to those who injure them.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, seeking peace requires humility, tenderness, and

⁶¹ Achtemeier *1 Peter*, 226n87.

⁶² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 167.

⁶³ Keener, *1 Peter*, 254-55. Keener observes how some of the holy conduct in 3:9-12 is commanded elsewhere in the NT.

⁶⁴ Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 237.

⁶⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 167.

brotherly love. In these ways, the Psalm 34 quotation in 10-12 validates Peter's exhortation in 8-9.

Motivation for Holiness

Third, Peter uses Psalm 34 to provide motivation for believers to be holy while suffering in exile. Believers should not revile those who revile them because they “desire to love life and see good days.” The reward for the believer is an inheritance of good things. Scholars debate whether “love life and see good days” refers to a present day or eschatological experience. In the context of the original Psalm, the promise is certainly for a present day experience of loving life and seeing good days. Schreiner, on the other hand, highlights the letter's emphasis on an eschatological inheritance.⁶⁶ The life and good days of Psalm 34 typifies the life and good days promised in the eschaton. Achtemeier and Goppelt both conclude that the life and good days to be enjoyed by believers is both/and.⁶⁷ They will certainly enjoy them in the future, but the eschaton has already begun. Eternal life can be experienced now.⁶⁸ While the eschaton has been inaugurated, this cannot be Peter's point here; however, since persecution is promised for these elect exiles of the dispersion. Schreiner contends that instead of promising good days, Peter “was providing a motivation for believers to bless those who persecute them and to live in a way that pursues peace.”⁶⁹ While this is a good promise for those suffering in exile, it is not a

⁶⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 166.

⁶⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 226; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 236.

⁶⁸ Greg Forbes concludes that “life and good days” includes the present and the eschaton. The effects of the new birth are experienced in the present. Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 110. While this is the context of the Psalm, Peter seems to have the eschaton in view.

⁶⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 167. Davids also assumes that Peter's use of Ps 34 looks forward to an eschatological reward. “Peter, however, understands the Psalm differently than the OT does. . . . ‘Life’ and ‘days’ take on an eschatological tone. The virtues needed to obtain this life, however, are the same.” Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 128.

promise that difficulty will cease to be “terrestrial” and “present.”⁷⁰

David, Christ, Believers

Fourth, Peter connects his audience to David through the example of Christ. If one directly links the character of David to the behavior of Peter’s audience, then one is in danger of missing Peter’s argument. The line from David to believers runs directly through Christ.⁷¹ As G. K. Beale and Benjamin Gladd write, “King David’s experiences ultimately anticipate Christ’s unjust suffering on the cross.”⁷² Key words in the letter link David to Christ and to the church. Believers are urged to “follow in his steps” (2:21) since he also is one who “committed no sin, neither was deceit [cf. 2:1; 3:10] found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return [cf. 3:9, 16]; when he suffered [cf. 3:17], he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to the one who judges justly” (2:22-23). In this way Jesus sets the example for believers who suffer. They can follow the example typified by David and fulfilled in Christ. Even though they suffer in exile, believers should be holy in character.

Conclusion

Peter observed Psalm 34 as instruction from a fellow suffering exile. Thus, he applies this teaching to his audience in Asia Minor. Peter expects Christians to be holy while they suffer in exile. Unbelievers have the opportunity to see these good works and glorify God in heaven. Christians also can be assured of God’s blessing. The one who remains holy in the midst of suffering will see life and good days in the eschaton. They can

⁷⁰ Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 236.

⁷¹ This is the thesis for Christensen’s article. He writes, “The use of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter should best be viewed through a Christological lens, as an important source text for accomplishing Peter’s paraenetic intent for his beleaguered audience by drawing their experience into solidarity with the experiences of Israel and, most prominently, Jesus himself.” Christensen, “Solidarity in Suffering and Glory,” 336.

⁷² G. K. Beale and Benjamin Gladd, *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2020), 422.

know that they have the favor of God even though their circumstances may seem otherwise. They are motivated to holiness while suffering because of the promised eschatological glory.

CHAPTER 7

FIRE IN THE TEMPLE: THE NORMATIVE AND FORMATIVE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

Peter's audience suffers because of their faith in Jesus. He writes to them and encourages them to endure. He presents believers as the people of God and suffering as part of their story. Peter uses a variety of tools to emphasize continuity among the people of God across epochs. I have observed in this project how he uses themes such as exile, suffering, temple, and priesthood to demonstrate that believers in Jesus represent the new people of God. In this chapter I propose that, in 1 Peter 4:12-19, Peter demonstrates the normative and formative nature of suffering to his audience by converging fire and temple themes. First, I will observe the continuity among Old Testament authors' use of fire imagery. Second, I will assert that Peter stands in continuity with the Old Testament authors in their use of fire imagery. Third, I will suggest that Peter intends for his audience to view themselves as the new temple of God in this passage. Fourth, I will explain how the convergence of fire and temple contribute to Peter's main message in 1 Peter 4:12-19. Finally, I will explore how Peter uses biblical-theological images of fire and temple to demonstrate that suffering is normative and formative for the people of God.

Old Testament Fire

The authors of the Old Testament use the fire motif in a variety of ways.¹ Fire often signifies the presence of God (e.g., Gen 15:17; Exod 3:2-6; 19:18; 40:34-38). Frequently, fire represents God's wrath and judgment on the wicked (Isa 66:15; Ezek

¹ Eugene H. Merrill, "Fire," in *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Bible Study Tools, accessed August 26, 2022, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/fire>.

21:31; Ps 119:119). Other times, fire represents suffering that reveals and shapes the character of God's people. Bruce Waltke observes that, repeatedly in the book of Proverbs, "A true-to-fact reality functions as a simile for a social truth."² This proves true as poets and prophets use the refining fire metaphor in the Old Testament.³ A smelter uses fire to burn away imperfections in metal. The splendor of the metal is revealed only when the refining process is complete. Like fire and metal, the Lord uses suffering to remove imperfections from his people, revealing their character and producing in them the qualities he desires. In this section I will observe examples of the refining fire motif in the Old Testament and attempt to identify some similarities in the way the Old Testament authors employ the metaphor. Sometimes the biblical authors explicitly mention fire, and other times they draw from the metaphor by using related terms.

Fire Reveals Truth

Proverbs 17:3. Fire burns away imperfections and reveals what lies beneath. The author of Proverbs 17:3 compares the testing of precious metals with the testing of the hearts of people. The LXX reads, "As silver and gold are tried (*δοκιμάζεται*) in a furnace (*καμίνω*), so are choice hearts with the Lord."⁴ Waltke comments, "This emblematic parallelism teaches that God strips bare all pretensions and tests all human hearts to determine their genuineness and purity. In connection with the Lord's knowing the human heart (15:3, 11; 16:2; 21:2), he separates appearances and professions from

² Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 193.

³ Other ancient writings use the fire metaphor in similar ways. Achtemeier cites *Didache* 16.5, Qumran 1QM 17.8-9 1 QH 5.16, and New Testament passages such as Matt 3:3, 1 Cor 3:13, and Rev 3:18. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 306n25. I contend that the Old Testament is Peter's teacher for how to use the fire metaphor. These other references suggest that other ancient writers may have learned the same lesson.

⁴ All LXX English translations are from Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York: Oxford University, 2007).

reality.”⁵ The author of Proverbs 17:3 relates fire with the unnamed ways the Lord tests the hearts of men. In this way, fire reveals truth.

Psalm 26:2. David claims that he has walked in integrity and has trusted in the Lord without wavering (26:1). He requests, “Prove [δοκίμασόν] me, O Lord, and try [πείρασόν] me; test [πύρωσον] my kidneys and my heart” Ps 26:2[25:2 LXX]). The Lord’s test will reveal the truth: David does not engage in wicked behavior (26:4-10). Though fire does not explicitly appear in Psalm 26, David’s use of related terms (prove, try, test) connects Psalm 26:2 to the refining fire metaphor (cf. Prov 17:3; 27:21).

Proverbs 27:21. Proverbs uses the fire metaphor to illustrate more than just the testing of the Lord. Though imperfect, men can evaluate one another based on observable indicators. Proverbs 27:21 LXX reads, “Burning is a test (δοκίμιον) for silver and gold, but a man is tested (δοκιμάζεται) by the mouth of them who praise him.” In this verse, the author emphasizes fire’s revealing nature. By observing a man’s praise, one can determine his true character. Just as fire reveals the true metal without imperfections, a man’s reputation reveals his true character.⁶ Thus, the author illustrates the revealing nature of fire.

Fire Represents Suffering

Psalm 66:10. Psalm 66 directly relates fire and suffering. The Psalmist begins by exhorting the reader to worship God for his glory and power (Ps 66:1-2). He then urges the reader to worship with an invitation to observe what God has done (Ps 66:5). Of the numerous deeds of the Lord, the Psalmist highlights Israel’s crossing of the Red Sea

⁵ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, 39.

⁶ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 224. Waltke suggests that the author intends a play on words such that one can determine the true character of a man by who praises him and by what he praises. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, 193.

(66:6). Then the Psalmist observes how the Lord uses suffering to refine his people. He writes, “For you, O God, have tested [ἐδοκίμασας] us; you have tried [ἐπύρωσας] us as silver is tried. You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs; you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance” (66:10-12).⁷ The Lord has delivered his people, and so the Psalmist vows to offer burnt offerings of fattened animals (66:13-15). Finally, the Psalm closes with another invitation to “come and hear” what God has done for the Psalmist (66:16-20).⁸

In Psalm 66, the Psalmist seems to emphasize how God refines his people through suffering. James Hamilton has shown that a chiasmic structure places verses 8-10 at the center of the Psalm.⁹ Whereas the author of Proverbs does not specifically name suffering as the fire by which testing comes (cf. Prov 17:3; 27:21), the Psalmist makes the metaphor explicit in verses 10-12. He acknowledges that the Lord has tested and tried his people, just as silver is tried (66:10). Then he recounts the events by which the Lord has tested them. The phrases in verses 11-12 seem to represent foundational parts of Israel’s story such as their Egyptian bondage and military defeat.¹⁰ Even though God’s people suffered the testing of the Lord, verse 12 concludes with a declaration that there is

⁷ The LXX (65:10-12) reads, “Because you, O God, tested us, you tried us as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; you laid afflictions on our back; you mounted persons on our heads; we went through fire and water, and you brought us out to revival.”

⁸ For a similar arrangement of Ps 66, see James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 2:584-90.

⁹ Hamilton, *Psalms*, 2:585. Hamilton’s suggested chiasm:

66:1-4 Commands to Praise
66:5-7 Call to See God’s Work
66:8-12 Rehearsal of Purifying Suffering
66:13-15 Commitment to Sacrifice
66:16-20 Testimony

¹⁰ Hamilton, *Psalms*, 2:588. Hamilton observes, “The people were taken captive, afflicted, and defeated in battle, suffering through flame and flood. These statements seem to point back to various difficulties in Israel’s history: slavery in Egypt, experience of the curses of the covenant, defeat in battle” (588).

a purpose for their suffering, a likely reference to the promised land: “You have brought us out to a place of abundance.”¹¹ Though Israel has suffered throughout their history, they have emerged as silver from the fire.

Psalm 105:16-19. The Psalmist does not use fire in Psalm 105 to illustrate the sufferings of Joseph, but does employ the refining metaphor. Joseph suffered at the hands of his brothers and his Egyptian rulers. The Psalmist uses the language of the refining fire metaphor: “The saying of the Lord purified [ἐπύρωσεν] him” (Ps LXX 106:19b). Therefore, a refining fire symbolizes the sufferings of Joseph.

Fire Shapes Character

Isaiah 42:25; 43:2. The prophets also understand that the Lord afflicts his people for the purpose of formation. In Isaiah 42:25 and 43:2, Isaiah describes the suffering of God’s people as fire. He recounts Israel’s failed opportunity to return to the Lord. The people would not walk in his ways or obey his law (Isa 42:24). Because of this, the Lord sent the Babylonian army against them (42:25). Isaiah describes the onslaught of the Babylonians by using a fire metaphor: “So he poured on him the heat of his anger and the might of battle; it set him on fire all around, but he did not understand; it burned him up, but he did not take it to heart” (42:25). Isaiah seems to echo the Psalmist’s comparison of military defeat with suffering in fire (cf. Ps 66:12). Just as a smelter places metal into a fire to produce pure material, the Lord sent a foreign army against his people to bring them to repentance. The people did not change but instead suffered at the hands of the Babylonians. However, the Lord was not finished with his people. He declares in 43:1, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you.” The Lord intends to lead his people through a new exodus whereby he will deliver them just as he saved them from the hand of Pharaoh (cf. 43:2, 3, 16-17, 19, 20, 21). He promises to be with them as they pass through the waters. Then, he assures

¹¹ Hamilton, *Psalms*, 2:588.

them that “when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you” (Isa 43:2b). Gary Smith explains that the fire in 43:2 likely refers to cities burned due to war and violence.¹² This matches the use of fire in 42:25 and Psalm 66:12. Smith further contends that the war (42:25), waters (43:2a), and fire (43:2b) refer to non-specific events. John Oswalt agrees with Smith that the sufferings of 43:2 are non-specific. Oswalt further suggests that non-specificity of the events presents the reader with hope in God’s presence in any circumstance.¹³ That is, whenever one encounters the fire of affliction in any circumstance, he can know that the Lord promises to be with him.

Therefore, the principle found in Isaiah 42:25-43:2 remains similar to the principle in Psalm 66:10: the Lord tests his people through difficulty. Whether the fire is literal or figurative is irrelevant.¹⁴ The Lord sent difficulty upon his people to urge them to repent. Isaiah 42:25 implies that the purpose of the Lord’s fire was to purify his people. Sadly, they did not emerge as pure metal; they failed to understand and take it to heart (cf. Amos 4:6-13). In Isaiah 43:2, the Lord promises that they he will be with them, and they will not be burned in the fire. Though they walk through difficulty, their hardship will not overwhelm them, and it will accomplish the Lord’s purposes. In this way, Isaiah uses fire to describe the difficulties endured by the people of God.

Isaiah 48:10. I observe another use of the fire metaphor in Isaiah. He makes direct reference to fire and the refining of metal in Isaiah 48:10. He writes, “Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction” (Isa 48:10).¹⁵

¹² Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15b (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 424.

¹³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 89.

¹⁴ Though sometimes, the fire is literal. See my interaction with Dan 3 in this chapter.

¹⁵ Isa 48:10 LXX diverges from the MT but still aligns with the refiner’s fire metaphor. It reads, “See, I have sold you, not for silver, but I delivered you from the furnace (καμίνου) of poverty.”

The point is not that literal fire has burned their cities but rather that the Lord has purposefully afflicted Israel so that they would become the people he desires them to be. For Isaiah, the furnace of affliction serves the purpose of purifying the people of God so that they keep his commandments.

Jeremiah 9:7. Jeremiah also uses the refining process to explain the suffering of God’s people: the Lord afflicts in order to refine his people. Jeremiah laments the sins of his people such as idolatry (8:19), falsehood (9:3a, 4-5), and evil behavior (9:3b, 5b, 6). Because of their wickedness, God intends to send an invading army to destroy Judah (9:11; 12-16). The Lord describes the judgment he intends to inflict on his people as punishment (9:9). At the same time, the Lord does not intend to utterly destroy his people because he describes this judgment with the language of the fire motif: “Behold, I will refine (*πυρώσω*) them and test (*δοκιμῶ*) them, for what else can I do, because of my people?” (Jer 9:7). The affliction of an invading army is the fire. God’s people are the precious metal. The coming defeat and exile of Judah is the process of refining. The Lord intends to use the furnace of affliction to develop in his people the character he desires (Jer 9:23-24).

Zechariah 13:9. Isaiah and Jeremiah demonstrate that the Lord afflicts his people because of their sin. He intends for this judgment to be formative. Zechariah demonstrates this principle as well. Zechariah writes during the time of exile. He calls for the rebuilding of the temple and announces that the Lord will inhabit it (Zech 1:13-17).¹⁶ In Zechariah 13, the prophet proclaims that the Lord will purify the land, condemning idolatry and the wicked prophets (13:2-6). The Lord will strike the shepherd, and the people will be judged (13:7). Two thirds of the people will perish (Zech 13:8). The third of the people who live will be refined like fire. The Lord declares, “And I will put this third in the fire, and refine [*πυρώσω*] them as one refines silver, and test [*δοκιμῶ*] them as

¹⁶ James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 257-58.

gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God’” (Zech 13:9). Hamilton explains, “A purifying judgment of fire causes those refined like gold and silver to call on Yahweh’s name and confess Yahweh as their God.”¹⁷ George Klein agrees, “These spiritually renewed members of the Lord’s flock will emerge from the fire as a regenerated people.”¹⁸ Thus, the fire experienced by the people of God in Zechariah’s prophecy brings about their spiritual formation.

Malachi 3:1-4. While Zechariah 13 condemns wicked prophets, Malachi directs his prophecy toward wicked priests. They have offered insufficient offerings (1:6-14). Judah likewise has incurred national guilt because of idolatry in the temple (2:11) and committed adultery (2:13-16). For this reason, the Lord intends to execute judgment on his people. Malachi 3:1-4 explains that the Lord’s messenger is coming and will precede the coming of the Lord to his temple. Malachi likens the Lord’s appearance in his temple as a refiner’s fire: “He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord” (3:3). Thus, the Levites are purified by the Lord’s refining judgment when he appears in the temple. The Lord corrects their conduct through this refining fire.

The Fiery Furnace

The fiery furnace of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego can summarize the use of Old Testament fire imagery. While fire sometimes metaphorically describes the suffering of the people of God, these three men literally faced the threat of fire. During the exile, King Nebuchadnezzar made a massive image of gold and commanded that everyone bow before it. If anyone refused, he would be thrown into a burning fiery furnace (Dan

¹⁷ Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 262.

¹⁸ George L. Klein, *Zechariah*, The New American Commentary, vol. 21b. (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 106.

3:1-7). Three faithful exiles, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refused to bow down and worship before this image. In fury, the king commanded the fire to be heated seven times hotter, and he had the three men thrown into the fire (Dan 3:19-23). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could have compromised and syncretized their religion. Nevertheless, they chose to remain faithful to the Lord, even if it cost them their lives. The king cast the men into the fire, and yet the Lord delivered them from the flames (Dan 3:24-26). In a sense, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tried by fire, and they passed the test. Their faithfulness resulted in the worship of the Lord from King Nebuchadnezzar, a Babylonian (Dan 3:28-4:3). The story of the three faithful exiles stands as a living depiction of the fire metaphor. Just like fire reveals the true metal beneath the imperfections, so too does difficulty reveal character. Also, fire often represents suffering for believers. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego suffered the threat of real fire. While it does not appear that the fiery furnace shaped the character of these three men, it certainly left an impression on those who observed it.

Peter's Use of Fire

Peter has observed how the Old Testament authors use the fire metaphor and mirrors their style in his letter. His vocabulary matches several of the Old Testament fire passages. While I do not contend that Peter specifically alludes to each of these passages, I am proposing that he uses the metaphor in a similar way. I simply aim to demonstrate how Peter uses the fire metaphor and how his use matches the Old Testament.

Peter's Use of Fire in 1 Peter 4:12

Peter addresses the suffering of his audience with the fire metaphor in 1 Peter 4:12. He writes, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you" (1 Pet 4:12). I propose that Peter stands in continuity with the Old Testament authors and describes the suffering of the people of God as a fiery trial (*πυρώσει*). Peter may allude to a specific Old Testament

passage, but more likely he simply employs the established biblical imagery of fire. In this section, I will demonstrate how Peter's use of fire imagery stands in continuity with the Old Testament. First, I will establish continuity between 1 Peter 1:6-7 and 1 Peter 4:12-19, showing that 1:6-7 informs a proper interpretation of 4:12. Then, I will consider how Peter's use of fire matches several Old Testament passages.

The most immediate connection to Peter's fire reference in 1 Peter 4:12 is his own use of the fire metaphor in 1:6-7. There, he encourages his audience by explaining the short duration and intended outcome of their suffering. Peter observes that his audience has been "grieved by various trials" "for a little while" (1 Pet 1:6). These trials have a purpose: to reveal genuine faith (1:7). To illustrate his point, Peter employs the fire metaphor: "So that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:7). Thus, Peter declares that a faith proven through suffering will result in eschatological glory.

In 1 Peter 4:12, Peter returns to the fire metaphor, arguing that instead of being surprised, believers should rejoice at their fiery trial. His use of fire in 4:12 corresponds to his use of fire in 1:6-7. Many related terms link both passages. First, Peter uses related terms in 1:7 (*πυρός*) and 4:12 (*πυρώσει*). Second, Peter identifies the circumstances of his audiences' "trials" (*πειρασμός*) in 1:6 and 4:12. Third, in 1:6 he observes that his audience rejoices (*ἀγαλλιᾶσθε*) in their salvation (1:3-5) even though they suffer. In 4:13, Peter commands his audience to rejoice (*χαίρετε*) in their trials instead of being surprised by them. As a believer shares in Christ's sufferings, "He will also rejoice (*χαρῆτε*) and be glad (*ἀγαλλιώμενοι*) when his glory is revealed" (4:13). Fourth, both passages mention the revelation of eschatological glory. In 1:6-7, the genuineness of their faith will be tested through trials and will be "found to result in praise and glory [*δόξαν*] and honor at the revelation [*ἀποκαλύψει*] of Jesus Christ." In 4:13, the believer rejoices when he shares in the sufferings of Christ because he will also rejoice when Christ's glory is revealed

(ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ). Thus, Peter intends for his readers to connect the refining fire of 1:6-7 with the fiery trial in 4:12. The fiery trial is intended to refine the people of God so that their faith is proved to be genuine. They shall rejoice in trials and at the promised eschatological glory.

Peter and Old Testament Fire

Peter uses fire imagery in ways similar to the Old Testament. The concept that suffering reveals and shapes character appears in the Old Testament as well as in 1 Peter. Additionally, some key terms appear in both the Old Testament and 1 Peter. One may wonder whether Peter knowingly and directly alluded to these Old Testament passages. In this section, I do not contend that direct allusion exists, but that the observed Old Testament passages serve as schema for Peter's use of fire in his letter.

Peter and the fiery furnace. Perhaps Daniel's prophecy shapes Peter's language.¹⁹ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego endured a literal fiery trial. Peter might be using Daniel 3 to encourage his audience with his reference to "fiery trials." His readers stood in opposition to the secular society just as Daniel's friends stood and refused to bow to an idol. Their commitment to the Lord caused difficulty for them. Even still, they were willing to suffer unto death rather than compromise. Their suffering resulted in their own exaltation and the worship of the Lord by a pagan king. Peter could have encouraged his readers to follow the example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their literal fiery furnace matches the figurative fiery trial of Peter's audience.

It is possible that Daniel's prophecy serves as background for Peter's letter. First, Daniel's friends are exiles living in Babylon. Peter addresses his letter to the "elect

¹⁹ I observed the following connections between Daniel and 1 Peter on my own. While researching I also discovered a document attempting to link Daniel and 1 Peter. Though many of the links between Daniel and 1 Peter purported by the author are intriguing, most lack significant support. Biblical Chiasm Exchange, "1 Peter and Daniel," May 14, 2021, <https://www.chiasmusxchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/1-Peter-and-Daniel.pdf>.

exiles” (1:1) and sends greetings from “she who is in Babylon (1 Pet 5:13),” likely referring to Rome. Daniel’s friends are literal exiles truly living in Babylon. Peter’s audience is metaphorical²⁰ exiles living in a type of Babylon. Second, the order of some of the events in Daniel appear in the same order in 1 Peter. The fiery furnace precedes Daniel in the lion’s den just as the fiery trial of Peter’s audience precedes Peter’s warning to be watchful because the devil prowls like a lion (1 Pet 5:8). Third, Daniel and 1 Peter include similar doxologies following the fire and lions. When God delivers Daniel’s friends from the fire, Nebuchadnezzar praises God and announces, “His dominion endures from generation to generation” (Dan 4:3b). When God protects Daniel from the lions, Darius similarly extols the Lord, “His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end” (Dan 6:26). After Peter encourages his audience in their fiery trial and warns them about the devil who prowls like a lion, he worships God with language similar to Nebuchadnezzar and Darius: “To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet 5:11).²¹ Because of these reasons, it is possible that Daniel serves as a backdrop for Peter’s letter even though Peter never makes this connection explicit.

Peter and Proverbs 27:21. Other Old Testament passages possess even stronger links to 1 Peter. Dennis Johnson highlights some corresponding terms in Proverbs 27:21 and 1 Peter 1:7.²² Proverbs 27:21 (LXX) reads, “A means of testing (*δοκίμιον*) for silver, for gold a firing (*πύρωσις*), but a man is tested (*δοκιμάζεται*) through the mouth of those who praise him.” These match terms in 1 Peter. In 1 Peter 1:7, the trials which grieve

²⁰ Karen Jobes submits the possibility that Peter’s audience included Jewish believers expelled from Rome to fulfill Claudius’ colonization program. If this is true, then Peter’s audience contained literal exiles also. See Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 28-41.

²¹ I recognize that the LXX of Dan 3 and 6 do not include the same term for dominion as 1 Pet 5. However, the concept is the same. It is possible that the different vocabulary is owed to the differences in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

²² 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): 288.

Peter's audience are for the purpose of revealing "the tested genuineness (*δοκίμιον*) of your faith." The firing (*πύρωσις*) for gold in Proverbs 27:21 is similar to fire in 1:7 (*πυρὸς*). The testing (*δοκιμάζεται*) of man (Prov 27:21) matches the gold tested (*δοκιμαζομένου*) by fire (1 Pet 1:7). Though the subject differs, Peter uses the fire metaphor in the same way as Proverbs. Fire reveals genuineness.

Peter and Psalm 26:2. David invited the Lord to prove (*δοκιμασόν*), try (*πείρασόν*), and test (*πύρωσον*) him in Psalm 26:2. He expected that after his testing the Lord would vindicate him. Similarly, Peter acknowledges that his audience has been grieved by many trials (*πειρασμοῖς*; cf. 4:12) so that the tested genuineness (*δοκίμιον*) of their faith might result in eschatological glory (1:7).

Peter and Psalm 66:10. Johnson also demonstrates that Peter's language in 1:7 matches Psalm 66:10,²³ which also matches Proverbs 27:21. Psalm 66:10 (LXX) reads, "You proved (*ἐδοκίμασας*) us, God, you heated (*ἐπύρωσας*) us, as silver is heated (*πυροῦται*)." Man is tested (*δοκιμάζεται*) in Proverbs 27:21, the people of God are tested (*ἐδοκίμασας*) in Psalm 66:10, and faith is tested (*δοκίμιον, δοκιμαζομένου*) by fire in 1 Peter 1:7. The author of Proverbs, the Psalmist, and Peter use the same terms to describe a similar process.

Peter and Zechariah 13:9. Zechariah uses the same language to describe the impending judgment on God's people. Zechariah writes, "And I will lead the third through fire (*πυρὸς*), and I will heat (*πυρώσω*) them as silver is heated (*πυροῦται*), and I will prove (*δοκιμῶ*) them as gold is proved (*δοκιμάζεται*)" (Zech 13:9 LXX).²⁴ Zechariah adopts the use of the fire metaphor in a similar way to the Proverbs and Psalms.

²³ Johnson, "Fire in God's House," 288.

²⁴ Johnson, "Fire in God's House," 288.

Peter and Malachi 3:1-4. The refining metaphor seems to be consistent throughout the canon. Though Malachi 3:1-4 differs in language from the other passages, the prophet uses the fire metaphor the same way. Johnson again shows how even though key terms differ, the concept remains the same.²⁵ Even though Malachi 3:1-4 includes key terms such as fire, gold, and silver, it lacks any direct term for testing (e.g., δοκίμιον). However, Malachi argues in similar fashion to the other Old Testament authors. The Lord intends to use suffering to purify his people. This refining will come in the form of eschatological fire.²⁶

Related Terms Summary. With his use of the fire motif, Peter stands in continuity with the Old Testament authors (see table 4). First Peter 1:7 collects the relevant terms from Proverbs 27:21, Psalm 66:10, and Zechariah 13:9 and presents the same use of the fire metaphor. Additionally, Malachi 3:1-4 harnesses the fire metaphor in the same way only using different terms. In 1 Peter 4:12, Peter continues his discussion of refining fire (πυρώσει) from 1:6-7. Thus, the Old Testament fire metaphor serves as the backdrop of 1 Peter 4:12-19.

Table 4. Refining fire in the Old Testament and 1 Peter 1:7

	Prov 27:21	Ps 66:10	Zech 13:9	Mal 3:1-4	1 Pet 1:7
δοκίμιον	δοκίμιον				δοκίμιον
δοκιμάζω	δοκιμάζεται	ἐδοκίμασας	δοκιμῶ; δοκιμάζεται		δοκιμαζομένου
πῦρ			πυρὸς	πῦρ (3:2)	πυρὸς
πυρώω		ἐπύρωσας; πυροῦται	πυρώσω; πυροῦται;		
πύρωσις	πύρωσις				πύρωσις (cf. 4:12)
ἄργυρος	ἄργύρω	ἄργύριον	ἄργύριον	ἄργύριον (3:3)	
χρυσίον; χρυσοῦς	χρυσῶ			χρυσίον (3:3)	χρυσίου

²⁵ Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 288.

²⁶ Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 289.

Peter aims to encourage his audience to not only endure suffering but to rejoice in it. Peter presents his audience as the people of God who should not be surprised when they encounter fiery trials. Rather, the people of God have suffered before, and the biblical authors have consistently described their suffering as a process by which God refines his people. Thus, Peter has observed how many Old Testament authors use the fire metaphor and has included the same language in his letter. Just as fire reveals true metal, suffering reveals genuine faith and shapes the character of the people of God.

Temple in 1 Peter 4:12-19

The temple is a major theme in the entire book of 1 Peter and unsurprisingly appears in 4:12-19. As Andrew Mbuvi writes, “Temple imagery reverberates throughout 1 Peter and . . . the idea and imagery of the temple is more pervasive and intentional than is usually acknowledged.”²⁷ In this section I will demonstrate how the temple serves as the background for 1 Peter 4:12-19.²⁸ First I will provide examples of the temple motif elsewhere in 1 Peter, then I will show how the temple theme appears in 4:12-19.

Temple Motif in 1 Peter

Mbuvi asserts that temple imagery pervades 1 Peter and provides several examples.²⁹ The “sprinkling of blood” included in Peter’s opening greeting (1:2) seems to point to tabernacle sacrifice.³⁰ Further temple references include Peter’s call to be holy

²⁷ Andrew Mutua Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*, T & T Clark Library of Biblical Studies 345 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 70.

²⁸ This is the subject of Johnson, “Fire in God’s House.”

²⁹ Space limits my ability include all of Mbuvi’s examples and his complete defense for his assertions. For Mbuvi’s full arguments, see Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*, 70-126. I provide enough of his examples here to demonstrate that the temple motif permeates the entire letter.

³⁰ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 72. Mbuvi argues the likelihood that the sprinkling of blood points to the tabernacle and temple heightens with the numerous references to the Exodus in the letter. For example, Mbuvi observes an inclusio bookended with references to blood in 1:2 and 1:19. In 1:19, Peter links the Passover lamb to Christ. If 1:2 and 1:19 bookend the opening section of the letter, then 1:2 is part of the temple motif.

(1:15-16),³¹ the announcement of ransom (1:18-19),³² the living stones built into a spiritual house (2:4-5),³³ the holy and royal priesthood³⁴ who offer spiritual sacrifices (2:4-10),³⁵ and Noah's Ark as a type of temple (3:20).³⁶ Mbuvi therefore demonstrates that Peter weaves the temple motif throughout his letter.

Spiritual House in 2:5

One particular use of the temple motif requires more attention because it links to the temple motif in 4:12-19. In 2:5, Peter describes the people of God with temple language: "You yourselves like living stones are built up as a spiritual house (οἶκος), to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Mbuvi demonstrates the progression of the temple theme throughout the letter.³⁷ He investigates 2:4-5 and concludes (contra Elliott³⁸) that "spiritual house" in 2:5 refers to the

³¹ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 74-82.

³² Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 86-89.

³³ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 90-104.

³⁴ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 104-9.

³⁵ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 108-9. Mbuvi writes, "In effect, πνευματικὰς θυσίας (2.5) designates the priesthood's primary function as serve to the Lord, in his house. . . . The priesthood, then, for 1 Peter is something of an 'offshoot of the idea of God's people as a temple or spiritual house'" (108-9).

³⁶ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 112-18.

³⁷ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 70-126. He summarizes, "The historical development of the sanctuary structure plays a significant role in paralleling the literary structure of the epistle of 1 Peter, moving from the concept of the tabernacle to that of the temple and its different phases of construction, judgment and restoration" (125). Mbuvi argues that the letter begins with the sprinkling of the blood in the tabernacle (1:2), establishes a temple built of living stones (2:4), introduces a holy and royal priesthood who offers spiritual sacrifices (2:4-10), warns of judgment by fire (4:12-19), and promises restoration (5:10).

³⁸ See John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1990), 165-237.

temple.³⁹ I similarly concluded that temple imagery is in view.⁴⁰ I demonstrated how Peter's use of οἶκος in 2:5 refers to the temple. Old Testament (e.g., 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 3:2; Pss 66:13; 122:1)⁴¹ and New Testament authors (e.g., Matt 21:13; 23:38; John 2:16-17; Acts 7:47, 49)⁴² frequently refer to the temple as a house. The use of "priest" and "sacrifice" in 2:5 also suggests that the temple is in view. Thus, οἶκος in 2:5 refers to temple imagery.

House of God in 4:17

Peter uses "house" to refer to the temple again in 4:17 where Peter announces, "It is time for judgment to begin at the household [οἴκου] of God." Scholars debate Peter's intended meaning of οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ. On the one hand, several of the most popular English translations suggest that the phrase refers to the "occupants of a house" (i.e., "household").⁴³ Similarly, Elliott, who contends that a "household" theme governs 1 Peter, identifies the same imagery in 4:12-19. He writes, "The controlling collective image is that of the 'household of God' (4:17). The behavior that is commended (vv. 12-14, 16) or condemned (v. 15) is conduct which is compatible or incompatible with membership in this particular household."⁴⁴ He asserts that the *people* of God as the *household* of God is the controlling metaphor of the letter. Thus, it appears one should interpret οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ as "household of God."

³⁹ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 90-95.

⁴⁰ See chap. 3 of this project

⁴¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 105.

⁴² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 105.

⁴³ Johnson, "Fire in God's House," 291. Johnson observes this about the NIV and so does Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226. The NIV, NASB, and ESV all interpret οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ with "household" language. Alternatively, the NKJV and NET render οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ literally: "house of God."

⁴⁴ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 140-41.

Elliott is correct to emphasize that the temple motif in 1 Peter represents the *people* of God and not a physical structure.⁴⁵ However, it seems best to interpret οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ not as a reference to a household but the temple for a few reasons.⁴⁶ First, as I have noted here and explained in more detail in chapter 3 of this project, Peter already used οἶκος to refer to the temple in 2:5. He likely continues that same use in 4:17.⁴⁷ Second, the authors of the Old Testament always use οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ to refer to the temple, as scholars observe.⁴⁸ Notably, Psalm 66:13, which follows a section with language similar to 1 Peter, refers to the temple as a house: “I will come into your house [τὸν οἶκόν] with burnt offerings.” If Peter’s fire metaphor (1:6-7; 4:12) matches the fire metaphor of Psalm 66:10-12, then it seems likely that his use of “house” also matches Psalm 66:13. For these reasons, I contend that “house [οἴκου] of God” in 4:17 must refer to the temple.

The Spirit of God Rests upon You in 4:14

Peter’s reference to the Spirit of God resting on believers (4:14) may also support my assertion that the temple motif colors 4:12-19. Peter writes, “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests [ἀναπαύεται] upon you” (4:14). The Old Testament authors often refer to the temple as

⁴⁵ Achtemeier has acknowledged that the temple imagery of 1 Pet refers to a people and not a building. This may lend credence to Elliott’s assertion that a family is in view. Nevertheless, as Achtemeier and Johnson affirm, temple—not family—is the relevant background in 1 Pet. Achtemeier writes, “Yet temple imagery is so thoroughly tied in this epistle to the concept of God’s people (see 2:9) that such an idea must also be present here. Perhaps it would be most accurate to see here the metaphor of God’s house pointing to the Christian community where, as in the sanctuary, God is present to human beings” Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 316. Johnson also emphasizes that in the New Testament, οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ refers to the spiritual temple and not family of God. Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 292. The difference in imagery influences Peter’s intended emphasis.

⁴⁶ Several scholars disagree with Elliott’s contention. E.g., J. Ramsey Michaels, *I Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 271; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 315-16; Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 291-93; Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 119; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226-28.

⁴⁷ Michaels makes this same observation. Michaels, *I Peter*, 271.

⁴⁸ Johnson writes, “In the LXX ‘house of God’ refers exclusively to a sanctuary in which God meets his people.” Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 291. Also see Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 316.

God's resting place (*καταπαύσει*, cf. 1 Chr 6:31; 28:2; 2 Chr 6:41; Ps 132:7-8, 14; Isa 66:1-2).⁴⁹ Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be the resting place for the Spirit of God: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him" (Isa 11:2; LXX: *ἀναπαύσεται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ*). Carson notes that while Peter's wording in 4:14 may differ, Isaiah 11:2 is the only verse in the LXX that connects the words "Spirit," "God," and "rest" like Peter.⁵⁰ Peter appears to announce that even though believers suffer, the same Spirit that rested in the temple and rested upon the Messiah also rests upon them. Thus, the temple stands in view in 4:14.

Judgment

The theme of judgment beginning at the house of God also contributes to the temple theme in 4:12-19. Peter announces to his readers, "It is time for judgment to begin at the house of God" (4:17). He has already considered eschatological judgment in 1 Peter 4 (vv. 5-7),⁵¹ previewing the declaration in 4:17.

Judgment beginning with the people of God in the house of God is another Old Testament pattern.⁵² In particular, two passages provide insight for Peter's insistence that judgment begins at the house of God. First, Malachi 3:1-5 prophesies the same order of events as Peter. The Lord first judges the unfaithful Levites. Then he judges the wicked (Mal 3:5). This judgment begins when the Lord enters the *temple* (Mal 3:1).⁵³ For Malachi,

⁴⁹ Johnson, "Fire in God's House," 289.

⁵⁰ D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1041.

⁵¹ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*, 118.

⁵² Mbuvi cites Isa 3:13-14; 10:11-12; Jer 46:28; Hab 1:12; Zech 13:7-9. He observes, "Acknowledging the pervasiveness of the general theme of judgment *beginning* in the 'house of God - both in the OT and in Second Temple Jewish literature- it is likely that the author of 1 Peter did not have a specific passage in mind but rather a recurrent theme." Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 121.

⁵³ Mbuvi views Malachi's lack of use of "house of God" as a reason to reject Mal 3:1-4 as the primary passage for 1 Pet 4:12-19. Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 120n266. However,

judgment begins with the Levites in the temple. Second, the language of Ezekiel 9:1-6 matches 1 Peter more explicitly.⁵⁴ The Lord pronounces judgment on the wicked. He calls to his executioners to come forth (9:1-2). He commands one of them to mark the foreheads of the righteous (9:3-4). He commands the other executioners to kill any who do not have this mark (9:5-6). These events take place in the *temple*. The executioners “came from the direction of the upper gate” (9:2). The glory of the God of Israel was at the threshold of the house (τοῦ οἴκου) (9:3). The slaughter should “begin at my sanctuary” (9:6). The dead bodies of the wicked would “defile the house” (τὸν οἶκον) and the courts would be filled with the slain (9:7). For Ezekiel, judgment of the wicked begins at the sanctuary of the Lord’s house.

Malachi 3:1-4 and Ezekiel 9:1-6 both indicate that judgment begins in the house of the Lord. Peter alludes to these passages in 4:17, contributing to the temple theme in 4:12-19.

The Temple and Fire in Malachi 3:1-4

I have shown how Peter may be drawing on Malachi’s use of the fire metaphor. In Malachi 3:1-4, the Lord promises he will refine and purify the sons of Levi because of their wickedness. Malachi also refers to the temple in this passage: “The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple” (Mal 3:1). Though Malachi does not refer to the “house of God,” he does refer to the temple itself. When the Lord comes to his temple, he will refine the sons of Levi. Thus, fire and temple appear in Malachi 3:1-4. Peter seems to be following Malachi’s lead by including fire and temple motifs in this one passage.

though Malachi does not refer to the “house of God,” he does refer to the temple. Though the terms differ, they refer to the same concept.

⁵⁴ Johnson, “Fire in God’s House,” 292. Johnson observes the connection between Ezek 9 and 1 Pet 4:17, as does Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 227, and Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314-15.

Temple and Fire Converge

Having established the temple and fire themes in 1 Peter 4:12-19, I will now investigate how they converge. As in Malachi 3:1-4, the Lord judges the priests in the temple as a refining fire. The convergence of fire and judgment in 4:12-19 seems to conclude a logical trail in 1 Peter.

First, believers are priests. Peter connects Israel and the new people of God with priesthood imagery.⁵⁵ The Lord proclaims to Israel that they would be his kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6). Peter applies this description to the new people of God and announces that they also represent a holy and royal priesthood who offer spiritual sacrifices (2:5, 9-10).

Second, believers are also the temple (2:3-5). They are living stones being built up into a spiritual house. I have established in this chapter that Peter's use of "house" must refer to a temple. Believers are a collective body of people who constitute the new temple where God dwells.

Third, fire represents suffering. Peter has continued the Old Testament use of the refining fire metaphor. He describes the suffering of his people as a fire that reveals genuine faith (1:6-7).

Fourth, suffering comes in judgment on the people of God for the purpose of revealing genuine faith. Peter recalls Malachi 3:1-4 and applies it to the suffering of the new people of God. In Malachi, the Lord will judge the unfaithful priests with fire when he comes to the temple, and then they will offer acceptable offerings. In 1 Peter, the Lord judges the new priests and temple with suffering. The fiery trial that engulfs Peter's audience reveals the genuineness of their faith. In Malachi, after the Lord judges the priests, he will judge the wicked. In 1 Peter, after the Lord judges the "house of God," he will judge "those who do not obey the gospel of God" (4:17).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ See chaps. 3 and 4 of this project.

⁵⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 228.

Thus, Peter seems to follow Malachi by converging fire and temple motifs to demonstrate that the Lord will judge his priests in order to purify a house suitable for himself. Peter escalates from Malachi. The temple is no longer a physical structure nor the priesthood a subset of one nation. Rather, all the people of God comprise both temple and priesthood (cf. 1 Pet 2:4-5, 9-10). Peter diverges from Malachi in his use of judgment. Mbuvi writes, “The perception of their cause of suffering is reconfigured with 1 Peter making it clear that their suffering is not necessarily the result of sin or shortcoming on their part but - as with the temple of old - it is a reflection of the eschatological judgment of God that must begin with the purging of God’s house.”⁵⁷ In this way, fire and temple themes converge in Malachi and in 1 Peter. The new people of God should view their suffering through the lens of God’s refining purpose. They are priests and the temple whose faith is proved to be genuine through the vehicle of suffering.

The Normative and Formative Nature of Suffering

Peter employs the biblical imagery of fire and temple to demonstrate that suffering is normative and formative for the people of God. He begins a new section of his letter with the vocative “Beloved.” Peter began the middle section of the letter in the same way (2:11). Now he commences the final portion with a term of affection for those who endure difficult circumstances.⁵⁸ In this section, I will first describe why Peter assumes the people of God will suffer. Then I will consider how this passage demonstrates that suffering reveals and shapes the character of the believer.

Suffering Is Normative

Peter intends his audience to view their suffering as normative because of their identity as believers. The unbelieving society may be surprised (*ξεπιζονται*) at the behavior

⁵⁷ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, 125.

⁵⁸ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 305.

of Christians (4:4), but Christians should not be surprised (ἐνίξασθε) when their behavior and allegiance to Jesus leads to suffering (4:12). Achtemeier explains that the Christian “reaction to the non-Christian’s behavior must not be the same as non-Christians’ reaction to their behavior.”⁵⁹ Rather, believers should anticipate that suffering will come. Peter also signals the normative nature of Christian suffering with his first class conditional⁶⁰ sentence in 4:16. Achtemeier comments again, “It is not a question of whether but of when the action will occur.”⁶¹ Believers should assume suffering in their lives.

Christian suffering is expected because it is linked to their identity as the people of God who have exemplified righteous suffering throughout the biblical story. The Old Testament people of God suffered. Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery (Gen 37:12-36) where he was mistreated (Gen 39; 40:23; cf. Ps 105:16-19). David suffered (e.g., 1 Sam 21:10-15; cf. Ps 34).⁶² The Old Testament prophets used the refining fire to explain the suffering of the people of God. Christ suffered (1 Pet 3:18). Believers should suppose that they will experience what the people of God have experienced across epochs.

Additionally, Christians should expect to suffer because Peter identifies them as the temple. Since Peter calls believers a new kind of temple, then believers should understand their suffering as the refining fire which purifies the house of God.

Therefore, throughout the letter, Peter presents suffering as a normal part of the Christian experience. In 1:6, Peter explains that the necessary suffering of his audience results in glory (1:6-7). He assumes in 2:12 that the Gentiles will speak of his Christian

⁵⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 305.

⁶⁰ Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 159.

⁶¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 313.

⁶² Hamilton traces the pattern of the righteous sufferer from Joseph through Moses, David, and the Suffering Servant to Jesus. James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 177-220.

audience as evildoers. He teaches his readers how to react when they are reviled (3:9) and when they suffer for righteousness' sake (3:15-17). Christian servants follow in the steps of Christ (2:18-25) and should seek to imitate him while suffering (4:1-3). Peter's audience does not suffer alone, but rather the "brotherhood throughout the world" experiences "the same kinds of suffering (5:9). The people of God have suffered throughout the ages. Thus, the Christian life includes suffering, and believers should not be surprised when they experience it.

Suffering Is Formative

The use of the fire metaphor in the Bible is multifaceted. Fire both purifies and consumes. These two uses of fire appear in Malachi.⁶³ The Lord announces that he will come into his temple and act as a refiner's fire (Mal 3:1-4). This kind of fire differs from a consuming fire. A refiner's fire purifies while a consuming fire destroys. In Malachi 3:1-4, the Lord intends to refine the sons of Levi. But in Malachi 4:1, he warns that the wicked shall be consumed. Malachi writes, "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal 4:1). Therefore, there seems to be nuance to the fire of judgment. One kind of judgment fire consumes the wicked, and one kind refines the people of God. Thus, suffering reveals and shapes the character of the people of God. Peter exhorts his readers with a series of imperatives in 4:12-19. He commands and prohibits different behavior and attitudes for believers who suffer.

Rejoice. A believer should rejoice while suffering. Peter distinguishes between the possible reactions a believer might have in response to his suffering. The conjunction

⁶³ John Piper, "He Is Like a Refiner's Fire," *Desiring God*, November 29, 1987, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/he-is-like-a-refiners-fire>.

ἀλλὰ in 4:13 announces this contrast,⁶⁴ and the imperative in 4:12 (μὴ ξενίζεσθε) parallels the imperative in 4:13 (χαίρετε).⁶⁵ Believers rejoice in their new birth and eternal life in the midst of suffering (1:3-6). In 4:12-13 they should not be surprised, but instead they should rejoice when they suffer.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explains how believers should respond when persecuted.⁶⁶ Disciples who suffer evil on Jesus's account are blessed. They should "rejoice and be glad" (χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε) because their reward in heaven is great (Matt 5:12).⁶⁷ These two imperatives also appear in 1 Peter 4:13. Those who share in Christ's sufferings should also rejoice and be glad (χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιῶμενοι) when Christ's glory is revealed (4:13). Jesus and Peter expect the same response from suffering believers.

The reasons Peter expects believers to rejoice and be glad seems to match the reasons Jesus gives his disciples to rejoice and be glad when they suffer. First, they can rejoice and be glad when they are mistreated for the sake of Christ because of the future glory promised to them. Jesus promised those who suffer that their reward in heaven is great (Matt 5:12). Likewise, Peter explains that the believer who suffers can rejoice because if someone shares in the sufferings of Christ, he will also share in his future glory. Peter introduces a purpose clause (ἵνα) to connect present suffering to future joy.⁶⁸ As Schreiner explains, "Believers should rejoice even now in suffering 'so that you may be overjoyed' in the future. Rejoicing in their present suffering is mandated, precisely so

⁶⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 220.

⁶⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 306.

⁶⁶ References to the Sermon on the Mount pepper 1 Pet (e.g., 1 Pet 2:12; 3:9; 3:14; 4:13).

⁶⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 221.

⁶⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 220; Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010), 148.

that believers will have joy in God’s presence at the day of judgment.”⁶⁹ Peter commands an installment of joy because of the prospect of more joy at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Peter’s command to rejoice does not minimize the pain experienced when the fire comes. Rather, the suffering believer turns his priority from his present circumstances toward the future revelation of Christ (cf. 1:3-7). Indeed, present suffering is the prerequisite for future joy in Christ’s glory.⁷⁰ Peter argues that the degree to which believers rejoice corresponds to the degree to which they “share in Christ’s sufferings” (1 Pet 4:13).⁷¹ For if they share in Christ’s sufferings, they will also share in his glory (cf. Rom 8:17). Joy during suffering is possible for the believer because his attention remains fixed on future glory.

Second, believers can rejoice because suffering puts them in good company. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explains that his disciples should rejoice and be glad when they are insulted because insults put them in good company, “For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt 5:12). Similarly, Peter writes, “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (4:13). Peter seems to echo the words of Jesus again. Jesus taught his disciples that they are blessed (*Μακάριοι*) when others revile (*ὀνειδίσωσιν*) them on account of him (Matt 5:11). Peter likewise encourages his readers that they are also blessed (*μακάριοι*) if they suffer insults (*ὀνειδίξεσθε*) on account of Christ (4:14). Peter not only cites the words of Jesus—he escalates them. Jesus emphasized that disciples who suffer insults join the

⁶⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 220.

⁷⁰ Achtemeier comments, “Their participation in future joy depends on their present suffering.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 306.

⁷¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 220n11. Schreiner agrees with Grudem that *καθὸ* is an adverb of degree. Schreiner cites Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 178. See also Dubis, *1 Peter*, 148. Schreiner, Grudem, and Dubis disagree with Goppelt who argues that *καθὸ* functions as causally. Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 315. For Schreiner, Grudem, and Dubis, one should rejoice *to the extent that* he shares in Christ’s sufferings. For Goppelt, one should rejoice *because* he shares in them. Forbes is ambivalent, seeing merit in both options. Forbes, *1 Peter*, 155.

prophets (Matt 5:12). Peter proclaims that one who suffers insults is blessed because he is linked to Christ himself. When someone suffers insults on account of their allegiance to Jesus, he can know that “the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon [him]” (4:13). Just as the Spirit of God rested in the temple and rests upon the Messiah (Isa 11:2), so too does the Spirit rest on those who suffer insults for the sake of Christ. Though Peter quotes Isaiah, he diverges from the prophet by using a present tense verb (*ἀναπαύεται*) instead of a future tense (*ἀναπαύσεται*) which indicates fulfillment.⁷² Schreiner exults, “Believers who suffer are blessed because they are now enjoying God’s favor, tasting even now the wonder of the glory to come and experiencing the promised Holy Spirit.”⁷³ Suffering believers are in good company not just with the prophets but with *the* Prophet (Deut 18:15)—Jesus Christ. Peter presents this blessing as a reason for joy.

Thus, Peter encourages his audience. Though suffering burns like a fire, they should rejoice. Jesus’s future glory guarantees future joy, and the same Spirit that rested in the temple and rests on the Messiah also rests on those who share in Christ’s sufferings.

Do not suffer as an evildoer. The formative nature of suffering for believers includes prohibition of sinful conduct. Fire purifies the priests in the temple (Mal 3:1-4). Believers—the new priesthood—should avoid behavior that does not reflect godly values so that their suffering comes only as a result of their commitment to Jesus. Peter promises future joy for those who share in the sufferings of Christ and not for those who suffer as evildoers. Peter states, “But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler” (4:15). The word *γάρ* (rendered “but” by the ESV) connects 4:15 to

⁷² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 223.

⁷³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 223.

4:13-14 by limiting the blessings to those who refrain from evil.⁷⁴

While Peter lists specific sins as disqualifications from future glory, it seems he intends the list to serve as a broad restriction. He begins the list with two obviously wicked behaviors.⁷⁵ Of course those who suffer the consequences for murdering and stealing should not expect to rejoice at the prospect of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Just because Peter included murderers and thieves in this list does not mean that members of these churches are guilty of these offenses.⁷⁶ Instead, Peter retrieves examples from a “stock catalogue”⁷⁷ to demonstrate “with a rhetorical flourish”⁷⁸ the obvious difference between a righteous sufferer and an evildoer.⁷⁹

One may find it difficult to interpret the second two sins on Peter’s list: *κακοποιὸς* (evildoers) and *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος* (meddlers). First, Peter excludes “evildoers” (*κακοποιὸς*) from joy and blessing. Scholars differ on the specificity of *κακοποιὸς*. Some view the term as a general reference to evil behavior,⁸⁰ whereas others argue that the term specifies criminal conduct.⁸¹ Nevertheless, Peter’s other uses of the term (1 Pet 2:12, 14)

⁷⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 223-24. Dubis notes that one of the uses of *γάρ* creates the possibility of rendering 4:15 as “By no means let any of you suffer.” Dubis, *1 Peter*, 151. Dubis’s emphasis seems to match the direction of Peter’s logic.

⁷⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224.

⁷⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224. See also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 266.

⁷⁷ J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, Harper New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 189, cited in Michaels, *1 Peter*, 266.

⁷⁸ Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 189, cited in Michaels, *1 Peter*, 266.

⁷⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224.

⁸⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 310; Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 340. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224.

⁸¹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 151. Dubis cites the NRSV, NET, NIV, and TEV renderings. BDAG offers both “evil-doer” and “criminal” as acceptable translations. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 501.

indicates that *κακοποιὸς* is a more general term (evildoer) rather than specific (criminal).⁸²

Second, those who suffer as meddlers (*ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος*) should not expect joy and blessing. Translators differ in their rendering of *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος* into English since it does not appear elsewhere in the New Testament, LXX, or any Greek literature that predates 1 Peter.⁸³ However, several English Bible translations⁸⁴ and BDAG⁸⁵ understand this term to refer to meddling. The parts of the compound word suggest that the term means “watching over another’s affairs.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, later Christian use of *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος* refers to meddling.⁸⁷ Some scholars find “meddling” too trivial since, as Craig Keener observes, “meddling” does not match the seriousness of the rest of the sins on Peter’s list.⁸⁸ This seems to suggest a more grievous sin. For example, Achtemeier builds a case mostly from a Latin translation that Peter refers to “defrauders.”⁸⁹ However, even though the weight of defrauding would match the seriousness of murder and theft better than meddling,⁹⁰ it seems unlikely that this is Peter’s intent. The parts of the

⁸² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 310.

⁸³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224. Achtemeier explains that though later Christian authors use *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος*, one cannot consider those uses when determining Peter’s meaning. He argues that those texts do not link to 1 Peter, and they postdate 1 Peter by a few hundred years. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 311.

⁸⁴ E.g., KJV, NKJV, HCSB, ESV, NASB, NET.

⁸⁵ BDAG defines it as “one who meddles in things that do not concern the pers., a busy body.” BDAG, 47.

⁸⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 224-25. Keener further explains, “Normally in Greek, the prefix, here *alotrio-*, describes the object of what follows, so here the overseer of something foreign, rather than the overseer acting strangely.” Keener, *1 Peter*, 340n44.

⁸⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 312.

⁸⁸ Keener, *1 Peter*, 341.

⁸⁹ For Achtemeier’s full argument, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 311-13.

⁹⁰ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 152.

compound word as well as later Greek usage⁹¹ suggest that “meddling” stands as the most likely translation.

At the heart of the matter, Peter seems to indicate that anyone who suffers because he has engaged in sinful behavior should not expect to rejoice at the revelation of Jesus. Keener summarizes, “The point is believers behaving in such a manner that no one will have legitimate reason to speak ill of them.”⁹² By refraining from this type of conduct, believers who suffer can know that they share in the sufferings of Christ and rejoice because future joy and blessing belong to them.

In this way, the suffering of Peter’s audience reveals their character. When the fire of judgment comes to the new temple, only the righteous can rejoice and be glad.

Do not be ashamed. Peter forbids another attitude among believers who suffer: they should not be ashamed. Peter writes, “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed” (4:16). Peter contrasts his thought from 4:15. Believers should not suffer as (ὡς) a murderer or thief or evildoer or as (ὡς) a meddler. Instead, they should suffer as (ὡς) a Christian.⁹³ The first class conditional⁹⁴ indicates that the reader should engage in the mental exercise of assuming that someone suffers not as an evildoer but rather as a Christian. Supposing that someone is a suffering Christian, he should not respond with shame.

The origins of the term “Christian” (Χριστιανός) are unknown.⁹⁵ It appears in the

⁹¹ Achtemeier examines later Greek uses but dismisses its helpfulness in determining Peter’s meaning. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 311.

⁹² Keener, *1 Peter*, 343.

⁹³ Forbes, *1 Peter*, 159.

⁹⁴ Forbes, *1 Peter*, 159.

⁹⁵ Keener provides a helpful discussion on the origin of the term. Keener, *1 Peter*, 343-46. He concludes that the label probably began as a derogatory term in Antioch and was already in use in Rome by the time Peter arrives. Mattingly links the name “Christiani” to those who were referred to as “Augustiani,” identifying Christians as worshippers of Christ just as the “Augustiani” worshipped Nero. Mattingly agrees

New Testament three times. The book of Acts contains the two occurrences besides 1 Peter 4:16. Believers were first called “Christians” in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Agrippa confirms the collective term for followers of Jesus in Acts 26:28: “In this short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” Schreiner observes that in each of these occurrences in Acts, outsiders to the faith label followers of Jesus as “Christians.”⁹⁶ Perhaps Peter uses the term in the same sense: believers in Jesus suffer at the hands of those who call them “Christians.”

Several commentators insist that this Christian identity did not incur official government persecution for Peter’s audience.⁹⁷ Rather, local communities turned against believers and persecuted them in informal ways. Verbal abuse and ostracism seem to comprise much of what Peter’s audience experienced. As Christianity emerged and distinguished itself from Judaism, Christians forfeited the Roman legal protection offered to Jews.⁹⁸ Still, Rome did not outlaw Christianity until almost two hundred years after

that the term was originally derisive toward Christians. Harold B. Mattingly, “The Origin of the Name Christiani,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 9, no. 1 (1958): 26-37.

⁹⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226.

⁹⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 268-69; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 313-14; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 159. On the other hand, Horrell presents a case that the suffering of Peter’s audience may have included formal government persecution. He centers his argument on the similarities between 1 Peter and Pliny’s letter to Trajan. He acknowledges and then dismisses most scholars who agree that since 1 Peter’s composition predates Pliny’s letter one should not assume Pliny’s letter demonstrates official persecution in Peter’s day (e.g., Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 73-74). Horrell intends to show that Pliny’s attitude toward Christianity reflects a broader perspective in the Roman government. He summarizes,

Imperial precedent had effectively criminalized Christianity, but this stance was enacted only when and where popular hostility and prejudice—which could of course take many forms—escalated to the point where accusations were brought and where governors were disposed to hear such cases. The occasional and local nature of Christian persecution does not mean that there was no official stance towards Christianity, but is in fact reflective precisely of that stance. (David G. Horrell, *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity*, The Library of New Testament Studies 394 [New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013], 197)

For the full argument see Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 183-97. Horrell’s arguments are strong enough to cast some doubt on the apparent consensus that all Peter’s audience’s suffering was informal and infrequent. Schreiner rejects attempts to connect 1 Pet to Pliny’s letter, citing J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37b (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2000), 782-93; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226n36.

⁹⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226.

Peter wrote this letter.⁹⁹ When Peter’s audience receives this letter, they probably are not suffering at the hand of the government officially.

Nevertheless, Peter calls his audience to resist shame in the event that they suffer as a Christian. An ashamed person denies his relationship with Jesus. Perhaps Peter recalls his own fiery trial on the night of Jesus’s arrest when—while warming himself by a fire—Peter himself was faced with the temptation to deny his allegiance to Jesus to save his own life (Matt 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27). Though the Lord Jesus gently restored Peter (John 21:15-19), Peter knew the deep shame of denying Jesus. In 4:16, Peter warns his readers against making the same mistake. Certainly shame carries emotion with it, but as Achtemeier emphasizes, emotion is not Peter’s focus.¹⁰⁰ Other uses of *αἰσχύνομαι* in the New Testament confirm that Peter warns his audience primarily against apostasy.¹⁰¹ Those who are ashamed of Jesus are those who abandon him when suffering comes. Thus, when someone suffers because of his allegiance to Jesus, he should not demonstrate shame by dissociating from Jesus and his church.

Peter also recalls 2:6: those who are joined to Jesus will not be put to shame.¹⁰² Jesus experienced rejection by men and yet experienced glory at his resurrection from the dead. The hope of those who believe in him echo this pattern. Though believers experience suffering now, eschatological honor awaits them (2:7). However, dishonor looms for those who do not believe (2:7-8). Because of this, Peter explains that severing ties with the faithful invites severe consequences. Apostatizing from Christianity shifts a person’s identity into the category of those who “do not obey the gospel of God” (4:17). Those who exist outside of the Christian community will experience something far more dreadful than

⁹⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314.

¹⁰⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314.

¹⁰¹ Achtemeier points to Mark 8:38, 2 Tim 1:8, 12, 16; 2:15; cf. Rom 1:16. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314. See also Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226.

¹⁰² Forbes, *1 Peter*, 159.

the fiery trials experienced by believers.

Peter refers to the suffering of his Christian audience as “judgment,” which “begins at the house of God.” The judgment pronounced on believers by God hearkens back to the fiery trials in 4:12, insults in 4:14, and suffering as a Christian in 4:16. The time has come for the Lord to not only judge the wicked but the righteous (cf. 1:17, 2:23, 4:5).¹⁰³ In what way are believers judged? Karen Jobes explains,

This may seem to be a strange concept to Christians today who feel that because of Christ they are not subject to the judgment of God, much less due any suffering or penalty. And certainly there is unanimous teaching among the NT writers that there is no condemnation for those who believe in Christ and that they will be delivered from the destiny that is coming to those who disobey God by rejecting the redemption he provides in Jesus Christ. But there is ample teaching that Christians will nevertheless be judged and that it is their standing with Christ that will bring this judgment to a good end (e.g. Rom. 14:10).¹⁰⁴

In other words, judgment does not equate to punishment.¹⁰⁵ Schreiner contends that “judgment” in 4:17 refers to eschatological judgment now manifested in the present lives of believers.¹⁰⁶ Even though the revelation of Jesus has not yet come, the time (*καιρὸς*) has arrived for the final judgment to begin.¹⁰⁷ Schreiner seems to allude to the fiery trial of 4:12 when he writes, “In the present age believers experience suffering, and this is the *purifying* judgment that begins with believers.”¹⁰⁸ The judgment experienced by Peter’s audience is like a refiner’s fire that purifies the character of believers. Thus, God judges his temple (the people of God) with fire (their present suffering) in order to refine it (to reveal their faith and shape their character and not to punish them).

¹⁰³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 315n141.

¹⁰⁴ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 290-91.

¹⁰⁵ Paul A. Himes, *1 Peter*, Lexham Research Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017), 1 Pet 4:17-18.

¹⁰⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 228.

¹⁰⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 315.

¹⁰⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 228, emphasis added.

Since God judges his own people through suffering, those outside the people of God should expect much worse. Peter argues from lesser to greater.¹⁰⁹ He warns, “If it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And ‘If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?’” (1 Pet 4:17-18). Peter has already joined the Proverbs in his use of the refiner’s fire motif. Now he directly quotes Proverbs 11:31 (LXX) to support his argument. Waltke summarizes the proverb: “Crime does not pay.”¹¹⁰ Though the wicked may sometimes seem to escape consequences for their actions, they may be assured that God’s judgment will come. Peter describes God’s judgment for the wicked as their outcome (τέλος)—“the end to which they are moving.”¹¹¹ For, as Carson comments, “If God’s justice is not relaxed even for his own people but metes out assorted temporal judgments . . . how can the wicked imagine that they will escape the severity of the justice of God?”¹¹² Peter observes the logic of Proverbs 11:31 and warns the wicked with it. God will judge those who disobey (cf. 1 Pet 2:8; 3:1, 20)¹¹³ with a severity that eclipses the sufferings of the people of God.

Glorify God. Instead of experiencing shame because of suffering, Peter instructs his audience to “glorify God in that name” (4:16). Those who are ashamed deny their allegiance to Jesus while those who glorify God confess it. To glorify God can sometimes mean to confess one’s faith in Jesus (cf. 2 Cor 9:13; Rom 15:6).¹¹⁴ When one suffers

¹⁰⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 228.

¹¹⁰ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, 513. Cited by Carson, “1 Peter,” 1042.

¹¹¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 315.

¹¹² Carson, “1 Peter,” 1042.

¹¹³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 228. Schreiner observes how Peter emphasizes obedience to the gospel and not on belief. Though obedience springs from and demonstrates belief, Peter’s attention remains on conduct. The flipside is also true. Those who believe are those who obey.

¹¹⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314.

because of faith in Jesus, the proper response is not shame and abandonment of Jesus. Instead, when suffering comes, one should boldly confess allegiance to Jesus. The label “Christian” may have had derogatory connotations¹¹⁵; but Peter commands his audience to wear it joyfully without shame.¹¹⁶

Entrust your soul. Finally, Peter urges his audience to trust in God. Believers must not be surprised at their suffering. The people of God have suffered across epochs. As they suffer, believers should not repay evil for evil but instead follow in the steps of Christ (2:21). The people of God can follow Jesus’s example in suffering because they trust in God like he did. Peter writes in 2:23, “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” Jesus knew he could not entrust himself to man (John 2:24-25).¹¹⁷ Therefore, he entrusted himself to his Father (Luke 23:46) the Judge (1 Pet 2:23). Schreiner observes

¹¹⁵ Believers should glorify God “in that name.” Schreiner contends that the dative prepositional phrase should be understood as a “dative of sphere.” Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 226. Believers suffer for their Christian label.

¹¹⁶ Horrell observes how 1 Pet 4:16 provides a snapshot in the development of the term “Christian.” Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 197-209. He contends,

Where 1 Peter 4 is especially important is in uniquely providing a corroborating picture from the inside of the process, setting the term Χριστιανός in the context of a consolatory address to those suffering hostility, derision, and punishment for bearing this name. Moreover, 1 Peter marks a crucial point in the process whereby this hostile label came to be borne with pride by insiders, later becoming their stand self-designation. (210)

Though outsiders used the term “Christian” with negative connotations, believers began to use this term toward, as Horrell explains, “building a positive sense of group identity for those who belong” (210). Perhaps Peter’s audience began to think in these terms as they embraced the label Χριστιανός, rejoicing in their suffering as they hoped for future glory. Elliott concludes similarly, though he disagrees with those who, like Horrell, argue for an official Roman persecution. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 73-78.

¹¹⁷ The ESV translates both John 2:24 (ἐπίστευεν) and 1 Pet 4:19 (παρατιθέσθωσαν) with “entrust” even though the original Greek words differ. John’s use of ἐπίστευεν in 2:24 matches ἐπίστευσαν in 2:23. Gerald Borchert summarizes the meaning of John 2:24: “Jesus did not believe their believing.” Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, New American Commentary, vol. 25a (Nashville: B & H, 1996),157. Jesus did not trust (believe) men even though they appeared to believe in him. For further explanation of John’s use of ἐπίστευεν, see Borchert, *John 1-11*, 157-58.

that *παρατίθεμαι* in Luke 23:46 matches *παρατιθέσθωσαν* in 1 Peter 4:19.¹¹⁸ When Jesus died, he repeated and fulfilled the words of David, who also trusted in the Lord as his refuge (Ps 31:1-5).¹¹⁹ Thus, Peter exhorts his audience to have the same trust in God that Jesus had when he died. So, he commands his audience, “Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (4:19). The conjunction “Therefore” (*Ὡστε*) signals the reader to expect a conclusion to the pericope (4:12-19).¹²⁰ Having established that suffering is normative for the people of God and that God uses suffering to reveal the faith and shape the character of believers, the people of God should trust him.

Three truths characterize their trust. First, the people of God suffer “according to the will of God (*κατὰ τὸ θέλημα*).” They suffer because God has willed it.¹²¹ He is not thoughtless or taken by surprise. Rather, he has desired and intentionally planned for the suffering of his people. The fiery trials are the result of the plan of God.

Second, the people of God should trust God while suffering because he is “Creator.” Peter has already emphasized that God is both Father and Judge (1:17). Now he stresses the sovereignty of God.¹²² Not only does God plan the suffering of his people, but he also has the ability to execute the plan.

Third, the people of God should entrust themselves to God because he is a faithful Creator. Not only does God plan the sufferings of his people and have the ability to execute this plan, but he is also faithful. Peter continually demonstrates for his audience

¹¹⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 229.

¹¹⁹ Rightly Hamilton, *Typology*, 195.

¹²⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 229. Michaels comments on the phrase “Ὡστε καὶ. He explains that καὶ modifies “Ὡστε and provides the rendering “So then.” Michaels, *1 Peter*, 272-73. So also Schreiner 229; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 157; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 317.

¹²¹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 157.

¹²² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 229.

that they are the new people of God. Throughout the ages God has been faithful to his people. Since he has been faithful to his people in the past, he can be trusted to be faithful in the present and the future. He has proven himself to be a promise-keeper.

For these reasons, believers should entrust themselves to God while they suffer. They do not suffer by chance nor at the hands of their oppressors; they suffer because their faithful Creator has deemed it necessary for their formation.¹²³ The final phrase of 4:19 (*ἐν ἀγαθοποιΐᾳ*) also concludes the section, bringing emphasis¹²⁴ and imperatival force.¹²⁵ Believers demonstrate their trust in God by continuing to do good in all situations—even while suffering at the hands of evildoers.¹²⁶

Fire, Temple, Christ, and the People of God

Peter relates to Old Testament authors who use fire to describe suffering that reveals faith and shapes character. He also perceives that God has judged the temple with refining fire in the past, and he is doing it again in the new age. The people of God suffer because God has willed it for their formation. Everything changes when fire ignites in the temple.

The refining of the people of God through suffering also shows how Christians link to the Old Testament people of God through Christ. The people of God suffer unjustly.¹²⁷ Faithful believers suffered in the Old Testament (e.g., Joseph, Moses, and

¹²³ Achtemeier *1 Peter*, 318.

¹²⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 318.

¹²⁵ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 274.

¹²⁶ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 318. Achtemeier views the dative as instrumental. Similarly, Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 230; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 274.

¹²⁷ Hamilton, *Typology*, 174-220. Hamilton summarizes, “Betrayed rejected, preserving in faith, the Lord’s servant Jesus was exalted to reign like Joseph, refined in character like Moses and David, and then raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of power” (220).

David). Christ himself fulfills the pattern of the righteous sufferer.¹²⁸ Believers who suffer as Christians and not as evildoers link to Christ as an extension of the pattern of the righteous sufferer. The Spirit of God rested on the temple (e.g., Isa 66:1-2). The Spirit of God rests on the Messiah (Isa 11:2) who himself fulfills the temple (e.g., John 2:19).¹²⁹ The Spirit of God also rests on believers who are the temple and share in the sufferings of Christ. David entrusted himself to the Lord (Ps 31:5). Jesus fulfilled these words when he gave up his life (Luke 23:46). Believers should follow in the steps of Jesus and entrust themselves to the faithful Creator.

Therefore, believers in Jesus should not be surprised when suffering arises. Rather, they should rejoice. They should refrain from evil and shame, and they should glorify and trust God.

¹²⁸ He fulfills several Psalms and the Suffering Servant figure in Isaiah. See Hamilton, *Typology*, 182-220.

¹²⁹ Hamilton presents examples from John's Gospel, which indicate that Christ fulfills the temple. See Hamilton, *Typology*, 239-47.

CHAPTER 8

SUFFERING THEN GLORY: THE CHARACTER OF RIGHTEOUS SUFFERERS

A young couple in my church enrolled their only child in preschool for the first time. Afternoons in the first two weeks of school became almost unbearable as the child learned to navigate a new experience and had the exhaustion that accompanies it. These parents worried and stressed over their child's newfound misbehavior. Those who have had similar experiences with their own children recognized the pattern. We encouraged these young parents by assuring them that this is a normal experience for the first days of school and that the situation will improve as the whole family learns to navigate this new adventure. We provided a few best practices as well as reminders to maintain a positive attitude. One day both parent and child would enjoy the school experience.

Just as parents can be discouraged by a difficult time with their children, suffering can discourage a believer from continuing to follow Jesus. The biblical authors are like the friends who understand the situation and help sufferers through their difficult time. They remind sufferers that their difficulty is normal for the people of God. Since righteous sufferers emerge throughout the biblical narrative, those who suffer now can learn from those who have suffered in the past.

In this chapter, I will attempt to show how 1 Peter 5:6-11 includes Peter's audience in the pattern of the righteous sufferer and how he commands them to endure with humility, vigilance, resistance, and expectation for future glory. First, I will outline the biblical-theological theme of the righteous sufferer. I will show how Peter engages that motif throughout his letter, paying special attention to 1 Peter 5:6-11. Then, I will

examine each imperative and the indicative in 1 Peter 5:6-11, demonstrating how Peter links his audience to the righteous sufferer motif.

A Biblical Theology of the Righteous Sufferer

Believers in Jesus should not be surprised when they suffer for his sake. When believers recognize their membership among the people of God, they should expect to suffer unjustly. They should also anticipate future glory. This is the biblical-theological pattern of the righteous sufferer. Jim Hamilton has explored this pattern¹ and defines it thusly: “Those through whom God means to establish salvation first suffer rejection and persecution before being unexpectedly exalted to reign.”² Hamilton traces the theme as it appears in the lives of Joseph, Moses, David, Isaiah’s Suffering Servant, and Jesus. He also briefly illustrates Peter’s use of the pattern. This section will extend Hamilton’s investigation of Peter’s contribution to the righteous sufferer theme. First, I will briefly describe the pattern and how it emerges and proceeds in the Old Testament. Next, I will observe how Peter applies the righteous sufferer pattern to his audience. Finally, I will investigate how the righteous sufferer theme particularly undergirds 1 Peter 5:6-11.

The Biblical-Theological Pathway

Though the people of God suffer unjustly in the present, God will exalt them in the end. The biblical storyline is full of righteous sufferers. The pattern begins with Abel (Gen 4:1-16; cf. Matt 23:34-36; Heb 11:4; 1 John 3:12)³ and proceeds throughout the Old Testament.

¹ James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 174-220.

² Hamilton, *Typology*, 175.

³ Hamilton, *Typology*, 175.

Joseph, the righteous sufferer. Joseph represents an installment of the pattern. He suffers at the hands of his brothers when they throw him into a well and sell him into slavery (Gen 37:12-36). He suffers at the hands of the Egyptians when Potiphar's wife lies about him, leading to his unjust imprisonment (Gen 39). Then he is forgotten in prison (Gen 40:23). Joseph is not guilty of wrongdoing, yet he suffers unjustly. The story turns as the Lord gives Joseph unique insight (Gen 40-41) and he is exalted to reign at the right hand of Pharaoh (Gen 41:37-56). He even reigns over his brothers who had persecuted him (Gen 42-48).

Moses, the righteous sufferer. It seems that Moses observes how his own sufferings relate to Joseph's. Both men suffer at the hands of the Egyptians. Egyptians falsely accuse and imprison Joseph (Gen 39-40). Egyptians threaten Moses's life as a child (Exod 1:8-22) and as a man (Exod 2:11-15). Both men also suffer at the hands of their own people. Joseph's own brothers persecute him (e.g., Gen 37). Moses suffers at the hands of his own people while living in Egypt (Exod 2:11-15)⁴ and while sojourning in the wilderness (e.g., Num 16-17).

Moses observes how his life parallels Joseph, and he highlights these correspondences in the Torah. For example, just as Reuben saves Joseph's life by casting him into a pit with no water (Gen 37:18-24), Moses's mother saves his life by placing him into a basket near the water (Exod 2:1-10). Just as the Ishmaelites draw Joseph up out of the pit and take him to Egypt (Gen 37:28), so too does Pharaoh's daughter draw Moses out of the water and make him an Egyptian (Exod 2:10; cf. Heb 11:24-27).⁵ These

⁴ Exod 2:13-14 presents Moses as choosing to identify with Israel rather than Egypt. Nevertheless, the Hebrews resent and reject Moses's attempt to deliver them from their Egyptian oppressors. Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville: B & H, 2006), 94-96. Hamilton notes how the righteous often suffer at the hands of their own brothers. Hamilton, *Typology*, 178-79.

⁵ Stuart argues that the princess made Moses an Egyptian when she gave him an Egyptian name. Stuart, *Exodus*, 92.

correspondences suggest that Moses perceives that his suffering matches the suffering of the righteous people of God before him.

David, the righteous sufferer. David exhibits the characteristics of the righteous sufferer as well. His sufferings appear in both narrative and poetic form. In the narrative, David's father overlooks him when Samuel comes to anoint the next king of Israel (1 Sam 16:1-13).⁶ His eldest brother scorns him when he inquires about Israel's tactic against Goliath (1 Sam 17:28-30).⁷ Saul persecuted David (e.g., 1 Sam 19), forcing him to hide among enemies (1 Sam 21:10-15). Doeg the Edomite betrays him and his allies to Saul (1 Sam 22:6-19). The Amalekites attack the families of David and his men and carried them away. David agonizes because his own people want to stone him (1 Sam 30:1-6). Absalom attempts to usurp the kingdom and forces David to flee Jerusalem (2 Sam 15).

While the narrative of 1 and 2 Samuel describes the events of David's life, the Psalms reveal that David interprets these events according to the pattern of the righteous sufferer.⁸ Though no occasion accompanies the text, David presents himself as a righteous sufferer in Psalm 22. One can divide the Psalm into three parts that reflect the pattern of the righteous sufferer: anguish (22:1-11), attack (22:12-21), and hope (22:22-31).⁹ Psalm 22:1-11 describes the anguish of David, summarized by David's cry: "My God, my God,

⁶ Hamilton, *Typology*, 179.

⁷ Hamilton, *Typology*, 179.

⁸ Hamilton, *Typology*, 179-80.

⁹ This matches Hamilton's breakdown in James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 1:277-92. Kidner divides the Psalm into two major sections, but his first section combines Hamilton's first two sections into one idea. Kidner chooses to link the two sections (Ps 22:1-21) because of an alternating pattern of first and second person declarations which changes after 22:21. Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 105-8. Patterson agrees with Kidner's two-part structure. See his helpful and detailed discussion in Richard D. Patterson, "Psalm 22: From Trial to Triumph," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 2 (2004): 216-19.

why have you forsaken me?” (v. 1a).¹⁰ Trouble has come (22:1b; 6-8; 12-21). David knows that the Lord is trustworthy (22:4-5) and able to deliver (22:3). Therefore, he turns in faith to the one who can help. Psalm 22:12-21 describes the attack absorbed by David. He portrays his enemies as bulls who surround him (22:12), lions ready to devour him (22:13), and dogs encircling him (22:16). They have wounded David grievously (22:14-18).¹¹ So David turns to the Lord for help.

The Psalm seems to turn on verse 21, where David uses a perfect tense to emphasize his faith: “You have rescued me [עֲיִתָּנִי].” David knows he can trust the Lord because the people of God throughout history have trusted in him, and he has delivered them (Ps 22:4).¹² In 22:21, no longer forsaken, the Lord has answered David. In this way, David demonstrates his faith. The one who has forsaken him will nevertheless answer and deliver him just as he did with the saints of old. Hamilton observes that Psalm 22:19 and 22:21 “show David’s building confidence as he prays in faith to the God who raises the dead.”¹³ David knows that salvation will come.

Finally, David concludes the Psalm with a final section: hope (Ps 22:22-31). He celebrates his deliverance, promising proclamation (22:22, 25, 30, 31) and fulfilled vows (22:25). He rejoices in his future exaltation, exclaiming, “The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied. . . . May your hearts live forever!” (22:26). David portrays the righteous sufferer as delighting in a feast, faithfully serving God, and extending this eternal joy to the next generation (22:30-31).¹⁴ In this way, David envisions himself as a righteous

¹⁰ Hamilton asserts, “David knows the answer to his rhetorical question in 22:1 (MT 22:2). He knows that sin separates him from God’s presence and for that reason he speaks of himself as a worm in 22:6.” Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:283.

¹¹ Hamilton notes that while the language of Ps 22 seems to suggest a savage beating, it does not require death. Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:286-87.

¹² The Qal perfect with God as the subject matches a similar construction in Ps 22:21.

¹³ Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:289.

¹⁴ Kidner, *Psalm 1-72*, 108-9.

sufferer. Though he suffers unjustly at the hands of men, he expects deliverance, exaltation, and joy in the future.

Psalm 22 is only one example of the righteous sufferer theme in the Psalms.¹⁵ David presents himself as a righteous sufferer in Psalm 34 where David describes his suffering and deliverance. He writes from within the context of his sojourn among the Philistines (Ps 34 superscription). He feared for his life, so he sought the Lord (v. 4) and cried out to him (v. 6). As a sufferer, David speaks from experience to the brokenhearted (v. 18), crushed in spirit (v. 18), and the righteous who suffer afflictions (v. 19). David also knows that, according to the pattern of the righteous sufferer, the righteous will be exalted. The Lord will deliver (vv. 4, 17) and be near to them (v. 18), and that they will never be ashamed (v. 5) or condemned (v. 22). In this way, Psalm 34 demonstrates that David views his own life as part of the pattern of the righteous sufferer.

The Suffering Servant, the righteous sufferer. The Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 serves as a key link in the biblical-theological righteous sufferer pattern.¹⁶ Isaiah describes a man whose outward appearance did not impress others (v. 2). He portrays the Servant as one who suffers but not for his own wrongdoing. He suffers rejection and sorrow (vv. 3-4). He endures physical and emotional punishment¹⁷ for the

¹⁵ Hamilton investigates several Psalms. Hamilton, *Typology*, 182-200.

¹⁶ Scholars debate the identity of the Servant. Gentry has shown that the Servant represents both Israel and a future king. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 494-95. Additionally, Hamilton argues that Isaiah presents the Servant as the one who will receive the Lord's judgment on himself and return the people of God from exile. Hamilton, *Typology*, 200-201.

¹⁷ Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15b (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 447. Smith notes that the passive participle in 53:3 indicates that the Servant has a reputation as one who suffers. He writes, "When people mentioned this Servant, people would automatically connect him to this time of suffering" (447).

sins of others (vv. 4-6; cf. vv. 52:14).¹⁸ His suffering ends in death (vv. 8-9).¹⁹ After suffering, the Servant will experience exaltation. Thus, “Kings shall shut their mouths because of him” (v. 15). Even in death, the Servant “shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand” (v. 10). He will be “satisfied” (v. 11)²⁰ and the Lord will “divide him a portion with the many” (v. 12). In this way, the Suffering Servant will experience exaltation when his suffering ends.

The Old Testament informs Isaiah’s description of the Servant.²¹ Hamilton observes how the prophet Isaiah underscores connections between David and the Servant.²² For example, Isaiah connects the Servant to David through the phrase, “My servant shall act wisely” (Isa 52:13a).²³ Only Moses, David, and the Servant bear the titles “Servant of the Lord” and “my servant” in the Old Testament.²⁴ Likewise, the Servant will “act wisely” (שָׁכַל) just like Joshua (Josh 1:7-8), David (e.g., 1 Sam 18:5; 1 Kgs 2:3), and Hezekiah (1

¹⁸ Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 450-51, 455.

¹⁹ Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 454.

²⁰ Isa 53:11 says that the Servant “will see and be satisfied.” Smith explains that this likely means that the Servant will know that his “suffering was not wasted; he satisfactorily accomplished what he was sent to do for the sake of others.” Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 461.

²¹ Hamilton, *Typology*, 200-212.

²² Hamilton builds his case with detailed insight. He concludes, Isaiah has identified the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 with the future king from David of Isaiah 11. He has presented him suffering in terms used by David in Psalms 22, 69, and 109 (all Psalms quoted in the NT). And I submit that he understood that the future king from David’s line would be a new-Adam son of God who would be righteous where Adam was sinful, whose suffering unto death would pay the penalty for the sins of the people. (Hamilton, *Typology*, 207)

²³ Hamilton, *Typology*, 202.

²⁴ Hamilton observes, “Moses is called the ‘Servant of Yahweh’ eighteen times. Joshua and David are so designated twice each. Moses, David, and Joshua are the only people referred to with this phrase in the Old Testament. When we consider the phrase ‘my servant,’ David is the servant twenty-three times, Jacob thirteen, Moses eight, Job six, and Israel three.” Hamilton, *Typology*, 202.

Kgs 18:7).²⁵ By way of these terms, Isaiah presents a link between Moses, David, and the Suffering Servant.

Isaiah also connects the Servant to David through allusion to Psalm 22. For example, Isaiah uses David's words from Psalm 22 to describe the experience of the Suffering Servant. The servant was despised (Isa 53:3) just like David (Ps 22:24; cf. 1 Sam 17:42; 2 Sam 6:16).²⁶ After suffering, the Servant will "see and be satisfied" (Isa 53:11), just as David anticipates that the afflicted will "eat and be satisfied" (Ps 22:26).²⁷ Thus, by linking the Suffering Servant to Moses and David, Isaiah portrays him in continuity with the righteous sufferer theme.

Jesus, the righteous sufferer. The authors of the New Testament notice the pattern of the righteous sufferer in David and the Suffering Servant, and they present Jesus as the pattern's fulfillment. Matthew shows how the suffering and death of Jesus fulfills David's Psalm 22. He observes that the soldiers divided Jesus's garments among themselves by casting lots (Matt 27:35; cf. Ps 22:18). He records that when they crucified Jesus, "Those who passed by derided him, wagging [κινούντες] their heads" (Matt 27:39). This matches the mockery directed at David: "They make mouths at me; they wag (ἐκλίνησαν) their heads" (Ps 22:7).²⁸ The content of their mockery also matches the content of those who ridiculed Jesus on the cross: "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" (Ps 22:8; cf. Matt 27:43).²⁹ On the cross, Jesus

²⁵ Hamilton, *Typology*, 202.

²⁶ The Hebrew term בזה links these passages together.

²⁷ The Hebrew term שבט appears in both texts.

²⁸ Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 98.

²⁹ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 98. Blomberg points out that the words for rescue and delight appear in both texts. He suggests, "Here, Jesus' taunters do seem to be quoting the psalm that many would have known well: 'he had confidence in God; let him now rescue him if he delights in him.'" Blomberg, *Matthew*, 98.

echoes David: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46; cf. Ps 22:1a). The suffering and death of Jesus repeats and escalates the events of David’s life. Just as David presents himself as the righteous sufferer in Psalm 22, Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the righteous sufferer.

The New Testament authors also observe how Jesus fulfills the Suffering Servant from Isaiah’s prophecy. For Matthew, Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53:4 when he took the illnesses and bore the diseases of the people (Matt 8:14-17). Craig Blomberg suggests that Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53:7 when he is silent before the Jewish leadership (Matt 27:12) and Pilate (Matt 27:14).³⁰ Luke observes that Jesus’s fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12 is the reason why the disciples should prepare themselves for the difficulty to come (Luke 22:35-38). Philip uses Isaiah 53:7-8 to tell the Ethiopian eunuch the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:26-35). Peter presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah 53 and as an example to follow (1 Pet 2:19-25). In these ways, the New Testament authors demonstrate that Jesus fulfills the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

Righteous sufferers do not suffer as those who are guilty of wrongdoing, but as those who are upright and blameless (cf. 1 Pet 4:15-16; Job 1:1). Even though the righteous suffer, the Lord will exalt them in due time. The pattern of the righteous sufferer begins in Genesis and proceeds through the Old Testament into the New Testament where Christ fulfills it.

The Righteous Sufferer in 1 Peter

Peter takes the pattern one step further and shows how believers in Jesus are also righteous sufferers. He submits David, the Suffering Servant, and Jesus as examples for Peter’s audience to follow. While Hamilton addresses the righteous sufferer theme in 1 Peter, I intend to extend his study, showing how the righteous sufferer theme plays a significant role in 1 Peter. It appears Peter understands the biblical-theological pathway

³⁰ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 97.

of the righteous sufferer because he alludes to the sufferings of David, the Suffering Servant, and Jesus throughout his letter.

Hamilton observes how 1 Peter 1:10-11 and 2:22-25 present Jesus as the righteous sufferer.³¹ Peter explains that the prophets knew about Christ's fulfillment of the pattern since they spoke of his sufferings and subsequent glories (1 Pet 1:11). Hamilton summarizes, "First suffering then glory."³² Peter not only portrays Jesus as the righteous sufferer, but he also intends to present his audience as an extension of the pattern by connecting them to David, the Suffering Servant, and Jesus.

David in 1 Peter. Peter alludes to the sufferings of David. Though Peter does not seem to refer to Psalm 22 directly, he does include the sufferings of David by way of Psalm 34. Aside from the relatively long quotation in 3:10-12 and clear allusion in 2:3, scholars have noted the influence of Psalm 34 to varying degrees.³³ The number of allusions to Psalm 34 in 1 Peter may be debatable, but the influence of the Psalm in Peter's writing is not. Karen Jobes argues,

Peter directly applies the hopes and promises of [Psalm 34] to his contemporary readers. His logic appears to be that just as God delivered David from his sojourn among the Philistines, God will deliver the Asian Christians from the afflictions caused by their faith in Christ, because they are no less God's covenant people than was David.³⁴

Peter's audience should look to Psalm 34 as a primer on how to behave while they suffer. They should bless and not revile, refusing to speak evil (3:9-10; cf. Ps 34:13), and refrain from doing evil and instead do good and pursue peace (3:11; cf. Ps 34:14). As righteous sufferers, believers should seek to follow the example of David.

³¹ Hamilton, *Typology*, 219-20.

³² Hamilton, *Typology*, 219.

³³ I noted this in chap. 6 of this project.

³⁴ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 223.

The Suffering Servant in 1 Peter. Peter also alludes to the Suffering Servant. Without much comment, Hamilton submits 1 Peter 2:22-25 as an example of the righteous sufferer pattern.³⁵ I extend his assertion. Peter not only perceives Jesus as the fulfillment of the righteous sufferer pattern but he applies it to his audience.

In 1 Peter 2:22-25, Peter invites Christian servants to join the biblical-theological pathway of the righteous sufferer by linking them to Jesus, the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. In this section of the letter, Peter writes to Christian servants and commands them to be subject to their masters (1 Pet 2:18). He clarifies that though they may find it appealing to only obey the “good and gentle” masters, they should also be subject to the unjust (1 Pet 2:18). He explains that God views it graciously when someone “endures sorrows while suffering unjustly” (1 Pet 2:19-20). He reminds them of their calling by presenting Jesus as an example of a righteous sufferer. However, Jesus not only serves as an example to follow. Peter’s quotation and allusion to Isaiah 53 multiple times in 1 Peter 2:22-25 demonstrate that Jesus is the Suffering Servant.³⁶ Thus, by connecting Jesus to the Suffering Servant, Peter includes Jesus in the pattern of the righteous sufferer. Those who follow in his steps can interpret their circumstances as a part of the pattern as well.

The pattern in 1 Peter. The pattern of the righteous sufferer appears elsewhere in 1 Peter. Peter acknowledges the suffering of his audience and also points toward their eschatological reward. He recognizes that they “have been grieved by various trials” (1:6). He encourages them toward honorable conduct so that even though their communities reject them and speak of them as evildoers presently, they will glorify God on the day of visitation (2:11-12). Christian servants suffer unjustly, and they should follow in the steps

³⁵ Hamilton, *Typology*, 219.

³⁶ While Peter’s direct quotations of Isa 53 stand out the most, Carson observes several instances when Peter alludes to the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1035.

of Jesus who also suffered unjustly (2:18-21). The wicked will speak against them, but they should return blessing for reviling (3:9; cf. 3:16). They suffer for doing what is good, but they should know that they will be blessed (3:14). Believers should be prepared to suffer in the flesh in the same way Christ did (4:1-2). Suffering is no surprise (4:12), so they should know that even though they share in Christ's sufferings (4:13) and suffer as Christians (4:16), they do so according to God's will (4:19). They also do not suffer alone, but believers all over the world have the same kinds of experiences (5:9).

Believers should also anticipate eschatological exaltation. They know the sufferings of Jesus blossomed into his subsequent glories (1 Pet 1:10-11). They know Christ was rejected by men but was chosen and precious according to God (2:4). Believers can likewise expect that their present sufferings will result in future glory (1:6-7). Though they suffer for righteousness' sake now, they know they will be blessed in the future (3:14). For this reason, they can rejoice and be glad even though they suffer (4:13). They can glorify God in their fiery trial (4:16) because they entrust themselves to their faithful Creator who judges justly (4:19; cf. 2:23). Eschatological glory also awaits faithful elders (5:4) and the humble (5:5-6). In these ways, the pattern of the righteous sufferer emerges in 1 Peter.

The Righteous Sufferer in 1 Peter 5:6-11

Having established a biblical-theological pathway from the Old Testament through Christ to 1 Peter, I will now observe how the theme of the righteous sufferer specifically influences 1 Peter 5:6-11. First, Peter connects his audience to righteous sufferers in the Old Testament. Then, Peter connects his audience to other righteous sufferers in the present. Finally, Peter explains how God will complete the pattern in his audience.

Righteous Sufferers in the Past

In 1 Peter 5:6-11, Peter connects his audience to righteous sufferers in the past. First, Peter's allusion to Proverbs 3:34 links his audience to the people of God from the past. Peter's call for humility in 5:6 hearkens back to 5:5.³⁷ Humility should govern all interaction in the church. Peter grounds his command in Proverbs 3:34. Quoting the LXX of Proverbs 3:34, he writes, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (5:5).³⁸

Shadows of the righteous sufferer theme emerge in the context of Proverbs 3:34. Proverbs 3:27-31 urges the people of God to conduct themselves with righteousness. Proverbs 3:32-35 provides the reason.³⁹ The way of the wicked leads to eschatological destruction while the way of the righteous leads to eschatological reward.⁴⁰ However, before the righteous receive their reward, they may endure suffering perpetrated by the wicked.⁴¹ Even though they may experience some of the very things denounced by Proverbs 3:27-31, they must remain righteous, humble, and wise. Only then can they receive an eschatological reward. By alluding to Proverbs 3, Peter encourages his audience to join believers from across epochs and follow the ancient counsel of the wise.

³⁷ Schreiner notes, "The paragraph division is somewhat artificial since the admonition in v. 6 is an inference from v. 5. Since God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (v. 5), believers should humble themselves" Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 238).

³⁸ Schreiner observes that Peter follows the LXX closely. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 238. The MT and LXX differ slightly in Prov 3:34. The ESV follows the MT: "Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor." Peter follows the LXX: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet 5:5). The ESV has rendered $\mu\eta$ as "favor," which corresponds to "grace" ($\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$) in the LXX. The real difference between the MT and the LXX lies in the first part of the couplet. The MT centers on scorn ($\gamma\iota\beta$) while the LXX focuses on pride ($\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\eta}\phi\alpha\nu\omicron\varsigma$). However, the concept seems similar since mockery springs from a heart of pride.

³⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-14*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 175.

⁴⁰ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-14*, 175.

⁴¹ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-14*, 177.

Second, Peter links to the people of the exodus in 5:6. Believers should humble themselves “under the mighty hand of God.” The phrase “mighty hand” recalls the exodus.⁴² God sends Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, but not by his own might. The Lord knows that “the King of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go” (Exod 3:19-20). Later, Moses reminds Israel that they escaped Egypt because of the “mighty hand” of God (Deut 4:34; 5:15; 6:21; 7:8, 19; 9:26; 11:2; 26:8). The people of Israel experienced the pattern of the righteous sufferer. Their affliction preceded their exaltation. I contend that the phrase “mighty hand” in 1 Peter 5:6 signals the exodus so that Peter’s audience views themselves as participants of a new exodus.⁴³ Peter links to the righteous sufferers in the past to encourage his audience to humble themselves and expect future exaltation.

Third, Peter may allude to Old Testament righteous sufferers when he refers to the devil as a roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8). In the Old Testament, a lion often represents the enemies of the people of God (e.g., Jer 50:17; 51:34-38; Ezek 22:25).⁴⁴ Lions oppose David and Daniel, two righteous sufferers who both stand in the background of 1 Peter. King David portrays his enemies as roaring lions in Psalm 22 (vv. 13, 21). Perhaps Peter alludes to Daniel as well.⁴⁵ The Lord thwarts the scheme of the wicked and Daniel escapes the lions’ den, resulting in honor for Daniel and glory to God (Dan 6). Peter’s use of the enemy-lion motif may suggest the pattern of the righteous sufferer.

⁴² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 239.

⁴³ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 311-12.

⁴⁴ Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 341. See also Ps 91:13, which Satan leaves out when he quotes Ps 91:11-12 in Matt 4:6. My classmate Nathan Cobb first pointed this out to me.

⁴⁵ I have suggested that Peter alludes to the book of Daniel in chap. 7 of this project.

By alluding to Proverbs 3, evoking the exodus, and employing the lion metaphor, Peter seems to frame his commands in the context of righteous sufferers in the past. The righteous may suffer at the hands of the wicked even though they follow the way of wisdom, but they should remain humble because God will reward them. Though their oppressor looms as too powerful for them, they should cry out to the Lord who will exalt his suffering people.

Righteous Sufferers in the Present

Peter also connects his audience to the righteous sufferer theme by reminding them of other contemporary righteous sufferers. Peter encourages believers to continue to resist the devil's temptation. He provides the motivation for endurance: "Knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood all over the world" (5:9). Peter's audience should know that their experience is not unique as if they have somehow earned suffering.⁴⁶ Rather, suffering is normative for the people of God.

The Future of the Righteous Sufferers

Peter announces the future of the righteous sufferers. Peter writes, "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself, restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (5:10-11). Those who suffer presently will experience future exaltation.

The biblical-theological pathway of the righteous sufferer begins in the Old Testament. New Testament authors observe the pattern and demonstrate how Jesus fulfills it. Peter extends the pattern to the new people of God. The theme of the righteous sufferer permeates 1 Peter and undergirds 1 Peter 5:6-11. In the next sections I will show that Peter

⁴⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 243.

commands his readers—the righteous sufferers—to endure suffering with humility, vigilance, resistance, and an expectation for glory.

The Humility of the Righteous Sufferer

The righteous should endure suffering with humility. Peter writes, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you” (5:6). The humble cast their anxiety upon the Lord because they know his mighty hand is able to deliver and will exalt them at the proper time.

Humble Yourselves

Peter commands righteous sufferers: “Humble yourselves” (5:6). Achtemeier argues that one should take the verb *ταπεινώθητε* as a passive imperative: “Be humbled.” He demonstrates that as a passive the verb means to accept that these circumstances remain outside of one’s control. Therefore, for Achtemeier, “The point is not that Christians have a choice of whether they humble themselves; that happens to them simply because they are Christians. The point is rather that the Christians are to acknowledge that such a status conforms to God’s will.”⁴⁷ On the other hand, Dubis asserts that one should take *ταπεινώθητε* as a middle verb: “Humble yourselves.”⁴⁸ Though Dubis disagrees with Achtemeier on the precise voice of the verb, the upshot for Dubis seems to match Achtemeier: “The recipients of 1 Peter are to submit to the authority God, especially as expressed in God’s sovereign control of the circumstances of suffering in which they find themselves.”⁴⁹ Both Dubis and Achtemeier emphasize that humility involves submission

⁴⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 338. See also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 312.

⁴⁸ Mark Dubis, *1 Peter*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2010), 166. Dubis asserts, “Though traditionally taken as passive or passive deponent, this is another example of a *θη* verb form that is better taken as middle.” In the series introduction of Dubis’s commentary, Martin Culy builds a case for abandoning the deponent category, especially with verbs which lack passive meaning (xi-xiii). Culy concludes, “The *θη* morpheme should be treated as a middle/passive rather than a passive morpheme.” Dubis, *1 Peter*, xii.

⁴⁹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 166.

to God's will. Jobes summarizes, "The point is how Christians respond when, because of their faith, their social status has suffered and their situation has become difficult."⁵⁰ To humble oneself is to accept life's circumstances as the will of God.

Believers humble themselves "under the mighty hand of God" (5:6). I already demonstrated how Peter relates his audience to the people of the exodus with the phrase "mighty hand." Because God delivered the people of Israel from Egypt with his mighty hand, the new people of God can expect their own deliverance from suffering. For this reason, righteous sufferers can humbly trust in God. They do not have to fight their enemies or struggle to undo their circumstances. They can entrust themselves to their faithful Creator (4:19).

The Exaltation of the Humble

A righteous sufferer humbles himself because he knows how the righteous sufferer pattern functions: first suffering, then glory. Peter writes that believers should humble themselves "so that at the proper time he may exalt you" (5:6). "So that" introduces a purpose clause.⁵¹ A believer should humble himself because God will exalt the humble. As already observed in this chapter, Peter grounds this promise in the Old Testament: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (5:5).

Exaltation comes "at the proper time" (5:6). Sufferers may contend that the present is the "proper time." However, Peter urges his audience to maintain an eschatological perspective, insisting that vindication comes on the last day (1:5, 7, 13). The "proper time" arrives when the Lord Jesus returns to judge the wicked and reward the righteous. On that day, believers can expect God to exalt them. Future exaltation is the object of the hope of those who have been born again (1:3, 13). It enables believers to

⁵⁰ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 312.

⁵¹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 166.

rejoice in suffering because they know eschatological glory is the result of their genuine faith forged in the fire of affliction (1:6-7).

The Evidence of Humility

Righteous sufferers do not passively wait for future exaltation, however.⁵² Believers must humble themselves by “casting all [their] anxieties on him” (5:7). The participle ἐπιρίψαντες should be taken as instrumental, explaining how believers can humble themselves.⁵³ It functions not as an imperative, but rather as evidence that, as Michaels explains, “They have certainty that God cares for them and will not let them down.”⁵⁴

Peter reinforces his call for humility by appealing to David’s Psalm 55 where the righteous sufferer pattern surfaces again. David cries out to God because of his oppression. In verses 4-8, he expresses his mental state: anguish, terror, fear, and horror.⁵⁵ This emotion is the result of a friend’s betrayal (Ps 55:12-14). Though circumstances brought David low, he knows that one day he will be exalted. He cries out to the Lord because he knows he has the power to save (Ps 55:1, 9, 16-19, 23). So David, the righteous sufferer, encourages others who suffer similarly: “Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you” (Ps 55:22). The LXX (55:23) matches 1 Peter more closely than the MT, but both versions of the Psalm express similar ideas.⁵⁶ The righteous sufferer should cast his burdensome anxiety upon the Lord.

⁵² Jobes, *1 Peter*, 313.

⁵³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 240; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 339; J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 296. Contra Jobes, *1 Peter*, 313; and Dubis, *1 Peter*, 167, who argue for a participle of attendant circumstance.

⁵⁴ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 296.

⁵⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 241.

⁵⁶ Ps 55:23 (LXX): ἐπίρριψον ἐπὶ κύριον τὴν μέριμνά σου καὶ αὐτός σε διαθήσει..

The anxiety experienced by Peter’s audience matches David’s in Psalm 55. Christians in Asia Minor suffered persecution, not so much from the Roman government but from their nonbelieving neighbors. They must have felt betrayal, just as David did in Psalm 55. They probably felt threatened because their faith in Jesus set them at odds with society. So, their emotions likely mirrored David’s anguish, terror, fear, and horror.

Perhaps Peter also recalls Jesus’s words in Luke 12.⁵⁷ Jesus warns that persecution will come upon the people of God. When it does, they should “not be anxious [μεριμνήσητε] about how you should defend yourself or what you should say” (Luke 12:11).⁵⁸ When difficulty comes, believers should “not be anxious [μεριμνᾶτε] about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on” (Luke 12:22). They should not worry about their lives ending prematurely (Luke 12:25). Instead, they should trust that their Father will provide everything that they need (Luke 12:28-31). David’s anxiety matches the anxiety faced by Jesus’s disciples in Luke 12.⁵⁹ When Peter’s audience casts these kinds of anxieties upon the Lord, they demonstrate their humility.

Worry demonstrates an attitude that stands in stark contrast to humility.

Schreiner writes,

If believers continue to worry, then they are caving in to pride. . . . Worry is a form of pride because when believers are filled with anxiety, they are convinced they must solve all the problems in their lives in their own strength. The only god they trust in is themselves. When believers throw their worries upon God, they express their trust in his mighty hand.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Other connections to Luke 12 include Jesus’s commands for believers to not fear their oppressors (Luke 12:4-7; cf. 1 Pet 3:6,14), to stay dressed for action (Luke 12:35; 1 Pet 1:13), and stay awake for the coming of the Son of Man (Luke 12:37; 1 Pet 5:8).

⁵⁸ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 296.

⁵⁹ David not only experienced anxiety but fear too (Ps 55:5; cf. Luke 12:4, 7).

⁶⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 240-41.

Those who meditate on the things that cause anxiety do not trust in the Lord. In pride, they seem to think they can “add a single hour to [their] span of life” (Luke 12:25). Instead, the humble will cast all their anxiety upon the Lord.

Peter announces what David implies in Psalm 55 and what Jesus explains in Luke 12: believers should cast their anxiety upon the Lord because of the Lord’s care for his people. Psalm 55 does not express the Lord’s care explicitly. However, David knows he can cry out to God, and he will hear (55:19) and act on his behalf (55:22). Jesus also explains in Luke 12 why believers should resist the temptation to worry: God cares for his people (Luke 12:28, 30).⁶¹ Peter expresses the same idea. Righteous sufferers can cast their anxiety on the Lord “because he cares for you” (1 Pet 5:7). Those who suffer at the hands of secular society may begin to wonder if they matter to God. Peter directly addresses that confusion. Michaels renders 1 Peter 5:7 woodenly: “It matters to him about you.”⁶² Believers should marvel at the truth that they occupy the concern of the Creator of the universe. David expresses it well: “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! . . . When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:1, 3-4). As a demonstration of humility, believers must cast their anxieties upon their mighty and caring God.

The Vigilance of the Righteous Sufferer

Righteous sufferers should remain vigilant.⁶³ Peter commands, “Be sober-minded and watchful” (5:8). These successive commands in close proximity express one idea. The present circumstances of righteous sufferers place them in particular danger. An

⁶¹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 297. Achtemeier argues that since Peter’s language matches Ps 55:22 so closely, readers must assume that this is Peter’s primary source. Though, he admits, that does not rule out the teachings of Jesus as an influence on Peter. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 339-40.

⁶² Michaels, *1 Peter*, 296.

⁶³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 241.

enemy lurks, ready to pounce. Believers do not allow anxiety to overwhelm them because they have humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God. Instead of worry, they should, as Michaels translates, “pay attention and wake up.”⁶⁴ Vigilance while suffering comes from gaining an eschatological perspective through prayer.

Be Sober-Minded

Peter previously commanded his audience to be sober-minded. Believers should prepare their minds for action and be sober-minded so they can set their hope in what will come to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:13). They should be self-controlled and sober-minded so they can pray appropriately (4:7). The end of all things is at hand, and they need to gain proper perspective. Now in 5:8, believers must be sober-minded and alert because an enemy lurks nearby.

By commanding for sober-mindedness, Peter calls for an eschatological perspective acquired by prayer. Peter’s call for sober-mindedness accompanies references to the “revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:13) and “the end of all things” (4:7). In 5:8, sober-mindedness assists the believer through suffering so he can endure until the time of exaltation (5:10). The apostle Paul uses sober-mindedness in a similar way (1 Thess 5:6, 8; 2 Tim 4:5).⁶⁵ Believers must wake from their stupor and recognize the imminence of the end. They must not allow trivial things to cloud their judgment but instead set their perspective on what really matters.

Prayer is the means by which believers can gain eschatological perspective. Michaels observes that since sober-mindedness relates to prayer in 4:7, then perhaps Peter intends to urge believers to pray in 5:8. After all, prayer is how someone casts their

⁶⁴ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 297.

⁶⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 241. Achtemeier observes that both *νήφω* and *γρηγορέω* appear in reference to eschatology in the New Testament. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 340.

anxieties on the Lord (5:7).⁶⁶ If so, Peter commands his audience to keep vigilance by persevering in prayer.

Be Watchful

Watchfulness parallels to sober-mindedness. Righteous sufferers maintain eschatological perspective by watchful prayer. Like sober-mindedness, watchfulness often corresponds to the end of all things (Matt 24:42-43; 25:13; Mark 13:34-35, 37; Luke 12:37; 1 Thess 5:6; Rev 3:2-3; 16:15).⁶⁷ Believers must adjust their perspective so they view their circumstances through the lens of eschatology. One gains this perspective through prayerful watchfulness.

Watchfulness suggests perseverance in prayer. Before Jesus's crucifixion, he prayed earnestly. Jesus included Peter as one of three invited to this moment (Matt 26:37). He told them, "Remain here, and watch [γρηγορεῖτε] with me" (Matt 26:38). When Jesus returned and found the disciples sleeping, he rebuked Peter and the disciples, "So, you could not watch [γρηγορήσαι] with me one hour?" (Matt 26:40) Then Jesus associates watchfulness and prayer: "Watch [γρηγορεῖτε] and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt 26:41). Jesus urged the disciples to "watch and pray" so that they could endure the imminent trial and temptation. Peter seems to have learned his lesson and prods his audience toward prayerful watchfulness. Like Jesus and his disciples, Peter's audience faced suffering. Peter knows that "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matt 26:41). So, he urges his audience to gain eschatological perspective with watchful prayer.

⁶⁶ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 297.

⁶⁷ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 241.

Preparing for the Lion's Roar

Temptation accompanies the suffering of the people of God. Believers should remain vigilant because their “adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (5:8).⁶⁸ The biblical authors identify this enemy with different names and descriptions.⁶⁹

Peter refers to this enemy in two ways. First, he calls him “your adversary the devil [ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος].” This spiritual being opposes God and his people throughout the biblical narrative. For example, he oppresses Job (Job 2:1), accuses Joshua the High Priest (Zech 3:1), and tempts Jesus (Matt 4:1).⁷⁰ Peter identifies the slanderer as his audience’s adversary (ἀντίδικος). The New Testament authors use ἀντίδικος in reference to “one who brings a charge in a lawsuit” against another (cf. Luke 12:58).⁷¹ However, the ESV rendering (adversary) matches the LXX’s more general use of ἀντίδικος. This seems to be Peter’s intention here. The devil opposes the people of God just as an opponent stands against an enemy in court. The unbelieving neighbors who slander, revile, and insult Peter’s audience are not actually their enemy. Peter implies what Paul makes explicit in Ephesians 6:12: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the

⁶⁸ Schreiner points out that many manuscripts add “because” into the text to emphasize the causal interpretation of 5:8. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 242.

⁶⁹ For a summary of early Jewish thought on the devil, see Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 383-84.

⁷⁰ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 226. Note that the LXX renders ἰϣ as διάβολος.

⁷¹ BDAG, 88; Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 176; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 340.

spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”⁷² In this way, the devil stands against the people of God.

Second, Peter uses the image of a roaring lion to describe the devil’s activity.⁷³ He “prowls around” the people of God, looking for an opportunity to “devour.” Shepherds protected defenseless sheep from the attacks of predators like lions (e.g., 1 Sam 17:34-35). Perhaps this is why Peter urges the elders to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you” (1 Pet 5:2).⁷⁴ The devil tempts believers to reject Jesus in the midst of their suffering. When such a believer falls away, the devil has devoured him. Schreiner explains the image: “The devil roars like a lion to induce fear in the people of God. In other words, persecution is the roar by which he tries to intimidate believers in the hope that they will capitulate at the prospect of suffering”⁷⁵ Though believers may wish to avoid suffering, Peter emphasizes that suffering is normative for the people of God. There is no escape from it. Achtemeier observes, “Only by completely abandoning the gospel and the community shaped by it, only by submitting to the satanic forces that stand in total opposition to God can they escape the persecutions they otherwise face.”⁷⁶ The devil uses this suffering to deceive believers into thinking that the pain of current circumstances outweighs the consequences of disassociating from Jesus. Then, if they fall, he accuses them.⁷⁷

Peter likely understood this strategy of the devil since he had already heard the “lion’s roar” in his own fiery trial. Jesus knew that the devil was prowling around Peter.

⁷² Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude: Living in Light of the Coming King*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 163. See also Forbes, *I Peter*, 176-77.

⁷³ For a detailed discussion on the ancient metaphorical use of lions, see Keener, *I Peter*, 386-88.

⁷⁴ Keener, *I Peter*, 385.

⁷⁵ Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 242.

⁷⁶ Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 341.

⁷⁷ Keener, *I Peter*, 384.

Before they went to Gethsemane to pray, Jesus warned Peter: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail” (Luke 22:31-32). Apparently, the devil had Peter in his sights, and Jesus chose prayer in response to Satan’s request for Peter. In the garden, Jesus urged Peter to pray so he would not fall into temptation (Luke 22:40). Instead, Peter slept (Luke 22:45). Then at Jesus’s trial, Peter denied that he knew the Lord (Luke 22:52-62).

In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter urges his audience to refrain from making the same mistake. He wants his audience to be sober-minded and watchful. Jesus knew that Peter would misstep, but he also knew that Peter would repent. Therefore, Jesus also tells Peter, “When you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:32). After Peter repents, he must encourage others to remain faithful. Presumably, in response to Jesus’s command, he strengthens his brothers by writing to these Asian believers and urging them toward sober-minded, watchful prayer.

The Resistance of the Righteous Sufferer

Righteous sufferers must prepare for the onslaught of the devil. They must also actively defy his advance when it comes. Peter writes, “Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (1 Pet 5:9). Believers resist the devil by remaining firm in faith and because they know that they do not suffer alone.

Resist the Roaring Lion

Peter commands righteous sufferers a third time in this passage: “Resist him.” Believers resist the devil⁷⁸ by refusing to surrender to his schemes. He intends to use persecution to deceive the people of God so that they apostatize. By remaining vigilant, believers prepare to resist him. Peter uses ἀντίστημι in a similar manner to Paul in

⁷⁸ “Him” (ὁ) refers to the devil in 5:8. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 342.

Ephesians 6:13. Paul urges believers to prepare themselves so they can stand against the schemes of the devil (Eph 6:11). He parallels 1 Peter 5:9 in Ephesians 6:13: “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand [ἀντιστῆναι] in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” Paul commands believers to prepare and then resist the devil. Similarly, Peter follows his own command to prepare (5:8) with a call to resist (5:9). Believers must withstand these attacks and refuse to abandon their faith in Jesus. For if they resist, the devil will flee (cf. Jas 4:7).⁷⁹

Firm Faith

Believers resist by means of firm faith (στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει). Scholars debate on the function of this phrase because στερεοὶ is an adjective; Peter supplies no verb.⁸⁰ στερεοὶ may serve as the subject of the sentence: “You who are firm in faith, resist.” Otherwise, it could carry imperatival weight: “Resist him. Be firm in the faith.”⁸¹ More likely, however, στερεοὶ serves the main verb instrumentally: “Resist him by means of firm faith.”⁸² I assert the latter is the best way to interpret this phrase. Believers must remain steadfast as they resist the devil.⁸³ Just as a soft foundation cannot hold a structure, a believer must be firm to resist the devil.⁸⁴ His firmness is with respect to his faith. He

⁷⁹ Peter’s command in 5:9 matches Jas 4:7 exactly. The imperative in both passages follows calls for humility (cf. 1 Pet 5:5-6). Some scholars assume an older source stands behind the two references. For brief discussion, see Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 362n20; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 342.

⁸⁰ Achtemeier discusses the options for interpretation. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 342. See also Forbes, *1 Peter*, 177-78 for more discussion.

⁸¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 243; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 300.

⁸² Forbes, *1 Peter*, 177. See also Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 191; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 314.

⁸³ BDAG, 943.

⁸⁴ BDAG, 943. Cf. 2 Tim 2:19

refuses to allow his faith to conform to the pressure the world applies.⁸⁵ The believer experiences trials so that his faith can be tested and revealed to be genuine (1:6-7). If a believer does not resist the temptation of the devil, then his faith is illegitimate. But those with firm, genuine faith will resist the devil and obtain salvation (1:9).

Shared Suffering

Global Christian suffering serves as motivation for Peter's audience.⁸⁶ So, Peter reminds believers that they do not suffer alone.⁸⁷ The brotherhood all over the world endures "the same kinds of suffering."⁸⁸ Peter's audience should not wonder if they stand alone in their suffering.⁸⁹ Instead, Peter reminds them that believers all over the world (ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ) suffer in like manner. In 5:9, Peter does not use "the world" the same way John does. For John, "the world" represents those who oppose God and his people (e.g., John 8:23; 13:1; cf. 1 Cor 3:19; Gal 6:14).⁹⁰ In 5:9, "the world" simply refers to geographic location. In this way, Peter reminds his audience that suffering is normative for the people of God. Solidarity with the brotherhood should encourage righteous sufferers to resist the devil.

The Glory of the Righteous Sufferer

The pattern of the righteous sufferer includes two parts: suffering, then glory. Believers must humble themselves and accept suffering as from the hand of God (5:6).

⁸⁵ Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 362-63.

⁸⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 243; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 169.

⁸⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 342. Achtemeier explains that εἰδότες has a causative function in 5:9. Peter reminds believers of what they already know.

⁸⁸ On the difficult construction τὰ ἀντὰ τῶν παθημάτων, I agree with Forbes and the ESV rendering. Forbes, *1 Peter*, 178. For more discussion see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 342.

⁸⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 243.

⁹⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 243; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 343.

They prepare and resist the devil who intends to use suffering to deceive them (5:8-9). In 1 Peter 5:10-11, Peter concludes the body of his letter by drawing upon several key words and themes that have already appeared in his letter.⁹¹ He also promises believers that after they endure, they can expect eschatological glory.

Suffering for a Little While

Suffering for the people of God is normative, necessary, and temporary. First, believers possess a shared experience in suffering. Peter's audience suffered at the hands of society because of their faith in Jesus. For this reason, Peter weaves the theme of suffering throughout his letter. Achtemeier writes, "The reality of their life between God's call to them and their participation in eschatological glory is suffering."⁹² Believers should expect to suffer.

Second, for the believer, suffering is not only normative—it is necessary. Peter writes in 1:6: "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials." I observed in chapter 2 of this project how "if necessary" (εἰ δέον) serves to advance Peter's argument.⁹³ That is, *since* sufferings are necessary, believers are grieved by various trials. For genuine faith to be revealed, believers must endure fiery trials (1:6-7).

Third, suffering for the believer is temporary. In 1:6, Peter assures his audience that their trials exist only "for a little while" (ὀλίγον ἄρτι). In 5:10, he reinforces this thought: their sufferings are for "a little while" (ὀλίγον). In comparison to the future inheritance of eternal life promised to believers (1:3-4), the present sufferings of believers are "light and momentary" (2 Cor 4:17).⁹⁴ The syntax of 5:10 also suggests the transience

⁹¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 244.

⁹² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 345.

⁹³ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 11; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 67.

⁹⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 245.

of Christian suffering. The Greek text places *ὀλίγον παθόντας* in the middle of the sentence, seemingly to emphasize God and his promise to believers at the beginning of the sentence. Thus, the suffering of the righteous plays a subordinate role to the gracious God who calls believers to glory.

Glory Forever

Peter concludes the body of his letter with an assurance and a doxology: “The God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever” (1 Pet 5:10-11). Peter encourages righteous sufferers to endure by revealing three truths about God and one promise from him.

The God of all grace. Peter weaves grace (*χάρις*) throughout his letter.

Achtemeier observes how Peter seems to use the word “grace” with a variety of meaning.⁹⁵ God provides grace for people in their present circumstances (1:2; 4:10; 5:12). He favors those who suffer unjustly and those who humble themselves (2:19, 20; 5:5). Grace also refers to eschatological salvation (1:10, 13; 3:7). Achtemeier suggests that perhaps Peter refers to all these meanings in 5:10, since he is the God of *all* grace.⁹⁶ Though believers suffer present difficulty, God supplies the present grace they need to endure. Even though fiery trials might suggest otherwise, God favors the righteous sufferer. Though difficult circumstances may seem overwhelming, God reserves future grace for them at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The one who calls believers to eternal glory. Peter continues to recall key themes as he concludes his letter. Like “grace,” “calling” has a range of meaning for

⁹⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 344.

⁹⁶ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 344.

Peter.⁹⁷ He grounds his call for Christian holiness in the character of God “who called you” (1:15). God’s calling for believers also refers to salvation since he has “called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (2:9). God has also called believers to unjust suffering (2:21) and to bless those who curse them (3:9).

Once again recalling an earlier theme, God calls believers to eternal glory. Genuine faith, tested by fire, results in glory at the revelation of Jesus. (1:7). The righteous behavior of believers results in future glory to God (2:12). Likewise, God will reward faithful elders with glory in the future (5:1, 4). Christ’s sufferings resulted in “subsequent glories” (1:11, 21). On the last day, the glory of Jesus will be revealed (4:13). Since God himself has called believers to this glory, they can be confident that even though they suffer, future reward belongs to them.⁹⁸

The one to whom dominion belongs. Peter finishes the body of his letter with a doxology: “To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” In this way, he reminds his audience of the sovereignty of God. The dative of possession and implied *ἐἶμι* suggests a slight change to the ESV’s rendering: “To him *belong* the dominion forever and ever.”⁹⁹ Though the devil prowls like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (5:8), dominion ultimately belongs to God. Righteous sufferers know that they “suffer according to God’s will” and that he is a “faithful Creator” (4:19). They “humble [themselves] under the mighty hand of God” (5:6) because they know he controls all things. Righteous sufferers can know that both present sufferings and future glory are the will of God.

⁹⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 345.

⁹⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 244.

⁹⁹ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 172-73. Dubis observes how the doxology in 5:11 matches the doxology in 4:11. A form of *ἐἶμι* is implicit in 5:11 where it is explicit in 4:11. See also Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 246; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 346-47; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 304.

The promise from God. The sovereign God of grace who calls believers to eternal glory promises strength in 5:10: “He himself will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” These verbs all point to the same reality: God will strengthen his people in their present suffering and ensure that they will endure to the end.¹⁰⁰

In 5:10, Peter moves from imperatives to indicatives. Several scholars note that in 1 Peter the indicatives precede the imperatives.¹⁰¹ Peter describes his audience as those who have been born again to a living hope for an inheritance of eternal life (1:3-5). Only then does he begin to command holy living from them (e.g., 1:15). In other words, he describes who they are before he explains what they must do. However, at the end of the letter, Peter explains what believers must do (e.g., 5:6-9) and then proclaims what *God will do* (5:10).¹⁰² These future indicatives imply a promise from God.¹⁰³ Though the people of God grieve through various trials, they should never doubt their future. God will see them through until the end when they receive eschatological glory.

Because he is the God of all grace, righteous sufferers know that God wants to strengthen them and deliver them to glory. Because he is the one who calls them, righteous sufferers can know that God has chosen them for this glory. Because he is the one to whom dominion belongs, righteous sufferers can know that God is able to strengthen them and deliver them to glory.

¹⁰⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 245. Schreiner observes that it is unnecessary to distinguish these verbs since they possess significant overlap. Likewise, Dubis, *1 Peter*, 172. Achtemeier concludes similarly, though he does analyze the slight differences in meaning. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 345-46.

¹⁰¹ E.g., Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 77.

¹⁰² Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 363. Goppelt observes, “The letter’s parenthesis for the persecuted concludes not with this imperative [5:9], but with the promise in v. 10.”

¹⁰³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 345-46.

Fire and Glory

First suffering, then glory. Peter has identified Christ as the fulfillment of the righteous sufferer pattern and has extended this pattern to characterize the new people of God. The theme of the righteous sufferer appears in 1 Peter and particularly shapes the message of 1 Peter 5:6-11. Righteous sufferers can endure suffering with humility, vigilance, resistance, and expectation for future glory. They can humble themselves under the mighty hand of God because they know that God exalts righteous sufferers in the end. They remain prayerfully alert because they know an enemy stands against them and intends to use trials to cause them to fall away from Jesus. They resist this temptation with a firm faith and solidarity with other righteous sufferers. They cling to God's promise of strength and deliverance because they know he desires to save and is able to do it. Righteous sufferers endure because they know that after fire comes glory.

CHAPTER 9
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY, 1 PETER,
AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD

What Is Biblical Theology?

Biblical theology is the attempt to read the biblical authors on their own terms.¹ Readers of the Bible who wish to discover authorial intent must consider biblical theology in their exegesis. Through biblical theology, preachers of the Bible communicate the full meaning of the text by connecting the world of the Bible to their contemporary world.

Biblical theology assumes dual authorship. On the one hand, men sat down and wrote the words of the Bible. They chose their words, structures, and literary devices according to their God-given genius. They could read earlier Scripture and interpret their own circumstances in light of those passages. On the other hand, as Peter himself writes, “No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21). While written by man, the Bible truly is the Word of God. God gave the biblical authors the ability to proclaim realities about which they knew in part (1 Pet 1:10-12). Thus, dual authorship means that the words of the biblical authors can be pregnant with meaning, which is only revealed later, even though the original human author does not completely understand every implication of the words they write.²

Dual authorship also allows for a canonical reading of individual passages. Certainly, one must interpret passages in their near contexts. However, to understand the

¹ See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 45.

² See Aubrey Sequeria and Samuel C. Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis and the Nature of Typology,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 15.

meaning of the divine author, one must also consider where that passage falls on the canonical horizon.³ For example, when a later author alludes to the priesthood, one should consider the priesthood across the canon to grasp the dual authors' intended meaning.

In addition to canonical reading, biblical theology involves symbols, images, types, and patterns which stem from the literary perspective and theological worldview of the authors.⁴ These images and ideas run like threads in the tapestry of the biblical narrative. Later biblical authors can call on themes from earlier biblical authors to confirm or extend the meaning of those themes. For this reason, readers of the Bible must steep themselves⁵ in the symbolic universe⁶ of the biblical authors. They must familiarize themselves with key terms and ideas which the authors use to link to other parts of the biblical narrative.⁷

Peter's Biblical Theology

In this project, I have demonstrated Peter's use of biblical theology. Peter's use of the Old Testament shows his knowledge and mastery over it. Benjamin Sargent marvels,

As is often noted, 1 Peter, for its size, has the highest density of explicit references to the Scriptures of Israel out of all the books of the New Testament. Not only that, but study after study suggests intriguing possibilities for how Scripture functions in the epistle: texts which exercise a silent influence over large swathes of 1 Peter, leitmotifs

³ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 119-37.

⁴ See James M. Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 61-91.

⁵ Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 19. Dempster cites C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958).

⁶ Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 61-65.

⁷ Hamilton explains the features of typology in a similar way. James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 19-26.

that reveal the complex relationships between scriptural references and intriguing possibilities for sources behind scriptural references.⁸

Indeed, Peter is immersed in the symbolic world of the Old Testament and includes its images and motifs in his own writing. Peter uses the Old Testament for more than just clever allusions, however. The Old Testament quotations and allusions in 1 Peter do not float free from Peter's objective. Instead, Peter's use of the Old Testament demonstrates his biblical theology, and his biblical theology runs like a steel cable connecting the people of God across epochs.

Peter takes a few different biblical-theological approaches as he communicates to his audience. I have explored these throughout this project and will only summarize them here.

The People of God across Epochs

First, he connects the people of God across epochs by way of Christ. God begins to reveal patterns in the Old Testament. Christ fulfills those patterns which then extend to those who place their faith in him. I demonstrated in chapter 6 of this project how Peter explains the suffering of the people of God by beginning with the sufferings of David. He then moves to the sufferings of Christ. Since the people of God suffered in the Old Testament, and since Jesus suffered, the new people of God should also expect to suffer.

Likewise, as I showed in chapter 4 of this project, Peter proclaims that believers are a new installment in the people of God by way of Old Testament stone passages (1 Pet 2:4-8). Isaiah (Isa 8:14; 28:16) and the Psalmist (Ps 118:22) use stone imagery to urge believers to place their faith in the Davidic King despite their seemingly impossible circumstances. Those who place their faith in this stone will experience honor, but those who reject this stone will be destroyed. Jesus applies these passages to himself (Mark 12:10-11). Peter echoes Jesus's interpretation and then extends this meaning to believers.

⁸ Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, The Library of New Testament Studies 547 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 1-2.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament stone passages who experienced rejection by men but honor from God. Believers in Jesus are also stones who may experience rejection by men but will certainly receive honor from God. Thus, Peter connects the people of God across epochs through Christ.

The Exodus

Second, Peter explains the circumstances of the people of God through the lens of the exodus.⁹ The people of God throughout the ages have experienced exodus. Stories of the patriarchs create an exodus category for the canonical reader, which helps to highlight the exodus from Egypt.¹⁰ The Lord promised a return from exile that would eclipse the first exodus (Jer 16:14-15). While the people did return from Babylon, their homecoming failed to displace Moses's exodus as the most important work of God. The prophets also pointed forward to another return from exile that would inaugurate with the coming of the Messiah. When Christ comes, he delivers his people from the bondage of sin and sets them on their way through the wilderness toward the promised land. For this reason, Peter employs exodus language to help his audience understand their role and circumstance in the world. So, Peter announces to his audience that they have been sprinkled with the blood of a spotless lamb (1 Pet 1:2; 1:19; cf. Exod 12:3-7; 24:8). He commands them to gird up the loins of their mind (1 Pet 1:13; cf. Exod 12:11) and be holy because God is holy (1 Pet 1:15-16; cf. Lev 19:2). He echoes the Lord's pronouncement from Sinai that they are a royal priesthood and a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9; cf. Exod 19:6). They are a part of the new exodus too. They are a chosen race and a people for his possession (1 Pet 2:9; cf. Isa 43:20-21). In these ways, Peter explains to his audience they too are a people of the exodus.

⁹ I engage the exodus in 1 Pet in chaps. 3 and 5 of this project.

¹⁰ Hamilton, *Typology*, 256-64.

Exile

Third, similar to the exodus theme, Peter explains the circumstances of his audience by way of the exile motif. Just as the people of God experienced exile in Babylon, so too do the new people of God live in a world that is not their home. Peter addresses his letter to the “elect exiles of the dispersion” (1 Pet 1:1). He leans heavily on Psalm 34 (1 Pet 3:10-12),¹¹ which David has set in the context of his own exile among the Philistines (1 Sam 21:10-15). Thus, the theme of exile shapes the message of 1 Peter.

Temple

Fourth, Peter employs the biblical-theological theme of the temple. Adam and Eve inhabited the first temple in the Garden of Eden where they communed in the presence of God. The tabernacle and the temple reflect the Garden of Eden as the locus of God’s manifest presence among his people.¹² However, those structures were only temporary. Solomon’s temple is destroyed by the Babylonians. Jesus proclaims that he himself is the temple (John 2:18-22), and Peter extends that theological thought to apply to believers. Those who believe in Jesus become like stones used to build a new temple where they also serve as the priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet 2:4-5).¹³

Fire

Fifth, Peter employs a fire motif. In chapter 7, I demonstrated how the Old Testament authors use fire as a metaphor. Peter mimics their tactics and also wields the fire motif in his letter. In both the Old Testament and 1 Peter, fire represents suffering. Peter acknowledges that his audience’s faith is tested by fire (1:7), but they should not be

¹¹ See chap. 6 of this project.

¹² See G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 617-22.

¹³ See chap. 4 of this project.

surprised by fiery trials (4:12). The fire that comes will have a formative effect on the people of God who represent the new temple (4:12-19).¹⁴

Righteous Sufferer

Sixth, Peter extends the biblical-theological theme of the righteous sufferer to include believers in Jesus. Suffering appears throughout 1 Peter and influences its message. Believers “have been grieved by various trials” (1 Pet 1:6). They have experienced rejection and slander (e.g., 1 Pet 2:12). They suffer, not because of their own evil behavior, but rather, in spite of their righteousness (1 Pet 2:19-23; 3:8-9, 13-17; 4:4; 4:13, 16). They should not be surprised at their suffering (1 Pet 4:12) and should take heart that they do not suffer alone (1 Pet 5:9). Peter’s audience suffers unjustly just like David and Jesus. Peter alludes to David’s unjust suffering by his use of Psalm 34 (3:8-12). He also alludes to Jesus’s unjust suffering as an example for Christian righteous sufferers to follow (2:20-24). Thus, believers should respond to suffering just as David and Jesus did. Believers should also know that righteous sufferers experience glory in the end. One may observe this pattern in the lives of Joseph, Moses, David, and the Suffering Servant. Peter observes this pattern in the life of Jesus (1 Pet 1:10-11). I presented in chapter 8 of this project how Peter applies this pattern to believers. First suffering; then glory.

In these ways, Peter applies biblical theology to his message for believers suffering in Asia Minor. Because their faith is in Jesus, they are the new people of God. They can learn from the experiences of the people of God in the Old Testament. They can find instruction, encouragement, and hope from 1 Peter. In so doing, they can resist the temptation of the evil one and endure to the end.

¹⁴ See chap. 7 of this project.

Benefits of This Project

The message of 1 Peter can encourage believers at Central Baptist Church to persevere through suffering. They can view themselves as the new people of God who experience exodus and exile just like the people of God throughout the ages. They can learn from Peter how to respond to suffering and how to live as the people of God in a world that is not their home.

This project serves as a teaching manual for 1 Peter. At the time of the writing of this chapter, I have had the opportunity to preach chapters 2 and 3 of this project. I have discovered how useful this work is in preparing to proclaim the truth of God's Word to his people. The chapters of this project also serve as a template for the study of the other passages in 1 Peter that do not appear in these pages.

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ABSTRACT

FIRE AND GLORY: PREACHING FIRST PETER TO PREPARE CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN ROUND ROCK, TEXAS, TO ENDURE SUFFERING

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. James M. Hamilton Jr.

This project contains seven sermons which investigate the biblical theology of 1 Peter. Chapter 1 attempts to define biblical theology and explain its value for preaching. The remaining chapters exposit seven passages in 1 Peter with a view toward biblical theology. Key biblical-theological themes include the people of God, the Exodus, exile, temple, fire, and the righteous sufferer. The project seeks to encourage believers to view themselves as the new people of God as they suffer and attempt to live the Christian faith in an unbelieving society.

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