



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

“Peter’s Prayer for His Readers”



Study By
Lorin L Cranford

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Greek NT

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

Gute Nachricht Bibel

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

NRSV

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

NLT

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

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Introduction to Study.

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

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

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

Perhaps, more study needs to be done on the *Proema* of the New Testament letters³ in order to gain insights into how to better begin a worship service with an opening prayer. We would certainly be following the pattern of early Christianity, were we to do this. Our study of the *Proem* of First Peter is a good first step in this direction.

I. Context and Background⁴

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

a. Historical

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

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

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

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

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

⁴Serious study of the Bible requires careful analysis of the background and setting of the scripture passage. Failure to do this leads to interpretive garbage and possibly to heresy. Detailed study of the background doesn't always answer all the questions, but it certainly gets us further along toward correct understanding of both the historical and contemporary meanings of a text. This serious examination of both the historical and literary background of every passage will be presented in summary form with each of the studies.

of variations in the wording of verses three through nine surface.⁵ Although a number of variations can be found, only those that have some impact upon translating the text⁶ are listed in the text apparatus of the United Bible Societies fourth revised edition of The Greek New Testament, and also merit consideration for our study purposes.⁷ In light of this, we will only consider two variants of readings in verses three through nine.

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

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

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

⁵The SBL *Greek New Testament* apparatus lists the following:

1.6 δέον WH Treg] + ἐστίν NIV RP

7 πολυτιμότερον WH Treg NIV] πολὺ τιμώτερον RP

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

8 ἰδόντες WH Treg NIV] εἰδότες RP

• ἀγαλλιᾶσθε Treg NIV RP] ἀγαλλιᾶτε WH

9 ὕμῶν Treg NIV RP] – WH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Past conversion. The conversion of the readers is referenced by ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς (“By his great mercy he has given us a new birth”). Out of God’s abundant mercy He ‘birthed’ us. This was a decisive moment at some point in the past. The verbal form ἀναγεννάω is only used by Peter in the New Testament, and only at 1:3 and 1:23.¹¹ In that moment of faith commitment to Christ, a spiritual birth took place. The sinner was changed from a rebel fighting God to a child of God devoted to his Heavenly Father. This took place among both Jews and non-Jews who made up the churches in the provinces listed in the Adscriptio of the letter in 1:1. Out of this foundational religious experience then comes the responsibilities and privileges of both the present and the future.



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

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

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

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

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

procedure.
¹¹“ἀναγεννάω 1 aor. ἀνεγέννησα; pass. ἀνεγεννήθην (Just., Tat.); pf. pass. ptc. ἀναγεγεννημένος (Philod., Ira p. 18 W.; Sir Prol. In. 28 v.l.) beget again, cause to be born again fig. of the spiritual rebirth of Christians.—Of God ὁ ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν who has given us a new birth for a living hope 1 Pt 1:3. ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς born again not of perishable seed vs. 23 (in Herm. Wr. 13, 1 Sc. ἀγνοῶ, ᾧ τρισμέγιστε, ἐξ οἴας μήτρας ἄνθρωπος ἀναγεννηθεῖ ἄν, σπορᾶς δὲ ποίας the rdg. ἀναγ. is not certain, but Sallust. 4 p. 8, 24=FPhGr III, 33, col. 2, 6 uses the word in describing mysteries γάλακτος τροφή, ὡσπερ ἀναγεννωμένων).—Cp. RPerdelwitz, D. Mysterienreligion u. d. Problem des 1 Pt 1911, 37ff; HWindisch, Hdb. Exc. on 1 Pt 2:2 and the entry παλιγγενεσία.—DELG s.v. γίγνομαι 222. M-M. TW. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 59-60.]

upon them, not upon any accomplishments they made religiously.

The key internal history issue here relates to the precise nature and extent of their sufferings. In verse six, Peter only alludes to them happening, but he gives no historical details. What they were experiencing is defined only as ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς (“various trials”)¹² and λυπηθέντες (“to suffer”).¹³ Later in the letter¹⁴ Peter goes into greater detail, but without giving a lot of specifics there either, such as Paul did in some of his letters.¹⁵ Whether the source of this persecution was governmental or came from the synagogue -- or both -- can’t be determined with exactness. Whether this persecution enveloped all of the believing communities in these provinces, or only some of them is not entirely clear. Whether it was spotty with infrequent occurrence or systematically applied over an extended period of time can’t be determined with certainty. Whether some believers lost their lives, or whether they were just targeted for confiscation of possessions and possible prison time is not clear. These are questions that can only be answered with speculation and guess work, not with solid historical facts as a basis. But what is clear from the text is that believers in these provinces were experiencing persecution because of their Christian faith. Peter’s encouraging words do not indulge themselves into the gory details of what was happening to the believers. The recipients already knew these details. Instead, he frames their sufferings from the divine perspective of how they could be used for spiritual benefit and blessing. His words were designed to encourage believers to remain steadfast in the midst of sufferings through sensing God at work in them.

b. Literary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

First Peter 1:3-12 is most likely to be considered as one long sentence in the Greek.¹⁸ For this reason the text is often compared to the lengthy Proem in Ephesian 1:3-14.¹⁹ But this comparison only has limited

quickly lead to highly distorted understanding.

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

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

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

Outline of Contents in First Peter:

Praescriptio: 1:1-2

- **Superscriptio, 1:1a**
- **Adscriptio, 1:1b-2a**
- **Salutatio, 1:2b**

Proem: 1:3-12

- **Core, 1:3a**
- **Expansion, 1:3b-12**

Body: 1:13-5:11

- **Holy living 1:13-2:10**
 - **Ideals 1:13-25**
 - **Privileges 2:1-10**
- **Obligations 2:11-3:12**
 - **Civic 2:11-17**
 - **Haustafeln 2:18-3:7**
 - **Social 3:8-12**
- **Persecution 3:13-5:11**
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Conclusio: 5:12-14

- **Sender Verification, 5:12**
- **Greetings, 5:13-14a**
- **Benedictio, 5:14b**

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

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

Beyond the core expression in the Proem, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" the subsequent expansion elements in vv. 3b-12 develop theme expressions that will provide the basis for the details in the letter body. Added to these are the expansion elements we encountered in the Praescriptio, mainly "who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be comprising vv. 3-7*, 8-9*, 10-12*,⁵ sometimes on the basis of a content that then reflects respectively Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, has also been proposed,⁶ but such a division is weakened by the mention of Jesus three times in the first section (vv. 3* [bis], 7*) and twice in the third (v. 11*), thus indicating that the author did not have such a division of subject matter foremost in his mind as he wrote this material. While such a division based on content thus has less to recommend it, there is little question that the triadic reference to God found in v. 2* is also present here, thus linking the epistolary opening to this first sentence.⁷ [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 90.]

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

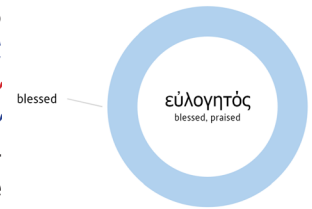
²⁴*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort...*"

²⁵*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ...*"

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

²⁷For a detailed examination of this material, including examples from the OT (e.g., Exod 18:10; 1 Kings 25:32), Apocrypha (e.g., Tob 13:1; 1 Macc 4:30), Pseudepigrapha (e.g., 1 Enoch 22.14; 39.13), Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., 1QS 11.15; 1QM 13.1; 1QH 5.20), and rabbinic traditions, including the Shemoneh-Esreh (esp. the first petition), see Shimada, *Formulary Material*, 141-44; or Furnish, 'Elect Sojourners,' 6; see also Delling, 'Der Bezug,' 95; Selwyn, 122. Somewhat forced are the attempts by Jonsen ('Moral Theology,' 96) to derive it from the Shema, and by Bornemann ('Taufrede,' 147) from Ps 34:2 (part of his equally forced attempt to understand the whole of 1 Peter as a kind of midrash on that psalm)." [fn 15 in Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter : A Commentary on First Peter, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 93.]

²⁸ὁ θεός, *εὐχαριστῶ σοι* ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὡσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἄρπαγες, ἄδικοι, μοιχοί, ἢ καὶ ὡς οὗτος ὁ τελώνης·



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1002.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1066-67.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

³⁴**ἀγαλλιᾶω** (new formation in H. Gk. from ἀγάλλω, found only in Bibl. and eccl. wr.) seldom act. (B-D-F §101; Mlt-H. 225f): ἀγαλλιᾶτε 1 Pt 1:8 v.l. (for ἀγαλλιᾶσθε); Rv 19:7 ἀγαλλιῶμεν (v.l. ἀγαλλιώμεθα); ἀγαλλιώντα GJs 17:2; ἀγαλλιώντες ApcPt Rainer. 1 aor. (as POxy 1592, 4 [IV A.D.]) ἠγαλλίασεν Lk 1:47 (ἐπὶ τ. θεῷ, cp. Hab 3:18 v.l.); usu. dep. ἀγαλλιάομαι (Syntipas p. 75, 28); fut. ἀγαλλιάσομαι (LXX); 1 aor. mid. ἠγαλλιάσασθην or pass. ἠγαλλιάσθην (v.l. ἠγαλλιάσθη; B-D-F §78; Mlt-H. 225) **to be exceedingly joyful, exult, be glad, overjoyed** (LXX; En 104:13; TestSol 19:1 P; TestAbr A 7 p. 84, 2f [Stone p. 16]; TestJob; ParJer 6:20; ApcrEzk P 1 recto 1; Test12Patr; Mel., P. 80, 586) abs. **1 Pt 1:6** (ἀγαλλιάσαντες P72); 1 Cl 18:8 (Ps 50:10); IMg 1:1; Hm 5, 1, 2; 5, 2, 3; Hs 1:6; MPol 19:2; GJs 17:2; ApcPt Rainer; my tongue exults Ac 2:26 (Ps 15:9); as here w. εὐφραίνεσθαι (Ps 30:8; 31:11; Is 25:9) Hm 5, 1, 2; Hs 9, 18, 4; χαίρειν καὶ ἅ. (Tob 13:15 BA; TestJob 43:15) Mt 5:12; Rv 19:7; cp. ἵνα χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι that you might shout for joy 1 Pt 4:13; ἀγαλλιώμενοι προσηύχοντο AcPl Ha 1, 32; ἀγαλλιώμενος ἐσκήρτησεν 3, 17; ἅ. ... καὶ κλαίειν weep for joy 6, 2. W. complementary ptc. (B-D-F §415) ἠγαλλιάσατο πεπιστευκῶς he was overjoyed because he had become a believer Ac 16:34. ἠγαλλιάσαντο μεγάλως μηνύ[οντες] AcPl Ha 8, 5 (ἠγαλλι[ᾶτο] μηνύων BMM recto 3f). W. ἵνα foll. (s. ἵνα 2a): ἅ., ἵνα ἴδῃ he was overjoyed that he was to see J 8:56 (B-D-F §392, 1). The one who causes the joy is given in the dat. ἅ. τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀγίῳ Lk 10:21 v.l.; w. ἐν and dat. ibid.—W. dat. of cause ἅ. χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ exult w. unspeakable joy **1 Pt 1:8**. οἷς ἀγαλλιώμαι I rejoice in this IEph 9:2 (cp. Quint. Smyrn. 9, 118 πασιβ ἀγαλλόμενος=rejoicing aloud over his sons). The object of the joy is indicated by ἐπὶ τινι (Ps 9:15; 20:2; Sir 30:3 al.; B-D-F §196): 1Cl 33:2; Hs 8, 1, 18; 9, 24, 2. Also ἐν τινι (Ps 88:17) J 5:35; ἅ. ἐν τῷ πάθει rejoice in the Passion IPHld ins; the acc. occurs once ἅ. τὴν δικαιοσύνην rejoice in righteousness 1 Cl 18:15 (Ps 50:16).—[ἀγαλ]λ[ι]ῶσιν a prob. restoration AcPl BMM verso 20f.—Goodsp., Probs. 192–94; WNauck, Freude im Leiden, ZNW 46, '55, 68–80.—DELG s.v. ἀγάλλομαι. TW. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 4.]

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

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

This eschatological oriented rejoicing comes while believers are κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν.³⁷ As believers endure persecution they are receiving the end objective of their faith, the very deliverance of their existence from harm. And this deliverance now anticipates the full deliverance on the day of judgment when they will be ushered into the eternal bliss of Heaven by the Lord Himself. Peter's words here have an echo in Paul's words in Romans 6:21-22.³⁸

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

faith, not by sight.”

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

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

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

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

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

