

SHEDDING THE LIGHT OF SALVATION UPON THE SHADOWLANDS:  
AN EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF 1 PETER 1:3-12

Laura Welker

Student Box #2066

Martin Culy, Ph.D.

BT746 Greek Exegesis II

A paper presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Theological Studies: New Testament

Briercrest Seminary

November 30, 2007

The epistle of 1 Peter is a beautiful presentation of the glorious inheritance God has made available to his faithful followers and how this new calling is to be lived out amidst the opposing and discouraging pressures of external persecutions and internal unholy attitudes. The introductory section of the epistle, 1:1-12, establishes this theme and sets the theological ground for the rest of the letter that follows. Though 1:3-12 begins as a blessing to God, it functions rhetorically as a profound instruction on the salvation God has made available and the sort of response it should invoke within the context of a dark, suffering-filled present. In a classic example of the threefold nature of Biblical salvation, the author sets forth in one extended sentence the incomparable glory of future eschatological salvation, prophetically anticipated in the past and made available to these readers whom God has “birthed anew,” for the purpose of enabling that hope to infiltrate and joyously transform their present suffering.

Because 1:3-12 is one sentence in the Greek, it should not be broken up; yet the length of it demands both time and space that this paper will not be able to adequately accommodate. For this reason, 1:3-9 will be given the detailed exegetical examination that its intensely rich theology deserves, while the more tangential 1:10-12 will be summarized and the parts that speak to the message of the whole section will be highlighted.

### The Historical Context of 1 Peter

In order to adequately appreciate the impact the rhetoric of 1 Peter 1:3-12 would have had upon its readers, their known and assumed historical context will be briefly noted. Peter describes his readers in the prescript of 1:1 as ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς (“elect strangers of the Diaspora”), a title that defines their paradoxical status as both intentionally chosen by the predestination (πρόγνωσιν, 1:2) of God and alienated by the culture they presently reside

in. While many commentators view παρεπιδήμοις as a metaphor of their spiritual alienation from pagan society,<sup>1</sup> it is possible that they were also literal foreigners, uprooted from their homes and dispersed (διασποράς) among the provinces of Asia Minor, either through state-enforced colonization or expulsion from Rome.<sup>2</sup> Not only would their foreign status limit their social and political freedoms, but their professed faith in an illegal religion and identification with (even reverence for!) a crucified criminal would open them up to greater verbal abuse and alienation from both Gentiles and Jews. Thus the metaphorical and literal application of the term “aliens” to the readers of 1 Peter are not mutually exclusive, but both are in fact compatible and even likely. At any rate, the readers of 1 Peter face unjust suffering and insult for the sake of Christ, and their great discouragement has prompted the composition of this epistle to remind them of the “true grace of God” and exhort them to “stand fast in it” (5:12).<sup>3</sup>

#### The Literary Context, Unit Structure, and Exegetical Issues of 1 Peter 1:3-12

Scholars tend to divide the epistle of 1 Peter into three sections, each separated by ἀγαπητοί: the introductory section of 1:3 (some include the prescript 1:1-2) to 2:10 that establishes the readers’ identity as the chosen people of God, describes their glorious salvation, and introduces themes and vocabulary to follow; the body of the letter in 2:11 to 4:11 that sets forth how the readers are to live as the chosen people of God amidst an often hostile society, with special attention given to the traditional Jewish-Stoic *Haustafel* (2:18-3:7); and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 80-82; Leonard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, trans. J. E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 66-70.

<sup>2</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 28-41; John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 312-313.

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the NIV or are the author’s own translations from the Greek.

concluding section of 4:12 to 5:11 (some include the postscript of 5:12-14) that directly addresses the issue of the readers' suffering for the sake of Christ from an eternal perspective.<sup>4</sup>

First Peter 1:3-12 is situated after the greeting of 1:1-2 and within the first section of 1:3-2:10.<sup>5</sup> It is actually one long sentence in the Greek and forms a single unit. The standard Christian greeting of *χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη* in 1:2 marks the end of the greeting section, while the *διὸ* of 1:13 clearly introduces a new unit that sets forth an appeal for a response to the theological ground established in 1:3-12. The unit of 1:3-12 is then divided into three subunits: vv. 3-5, which praises God for his salvation and proclaims its eternal nature; vv. 6-9, which describes the hope of this salvation as inspiring inexpressible joy, a persevering faith, and a love for Christ despite present trials; and vv. 10-12, which reminds the readers of their incredible privilege to possess a salvation prophesied and anticipated from ages past. Elliott describes this unit as an “announcement of themes” for the rest of the letter and supports this with an impressive list of thematic and word links with other sections, units, and even within this unit.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 56-57; Ramsey J. Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988), xxxiv; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 20-21; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 28; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 81-82, however, does not make such a clean division but tends to break up the body of the letter (1:3-5:11) into smaller subunits. David W. Kendall, “The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3-12,” in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. by Charles H. Talbert, NABPR Special Studies Series 9 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 103, points out that ultimately there is “no agreement on the literary structure of 1 Peter.”

<sup>5</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, xxxiv, observes a few interesting inclusions within 1:3-2:10: “The theme of the first part is the identity of the people of God established on the basis of the great salvation Christ has accomplished (and is accomplishing) on their behalf. Their identity as “chosen” people is affirmed programmatically in the address (1:1-2) and confirmed in the concluding pronouncements of 2:9-10 so as to form an inclusio. More broadly, there is an inclusion between the emphasis on the identity of Christians in the first section (1:1-12) and the last section (2:1-10) of part one. In the first section, they are “chosen” as heirs of divine salvation, while in the last their election is confirmed by the metaphor of priesthood. This identity as God’s people rests on the experience of “salvation” (1:5, 9-10; 2:3b), or rebirth (1:3, 22-23; 2:2-3). The body of the letter begins with an unfolding of this salvation (1:3-12) as hope in the present (vv 3-5) and joy in the future (vv 6-9), with prophets on earth and angels in heaven as its inquisitive witnesses (vv 10-12).”

<sup>6</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 70-71: it is “an introductory section announcing the themes to be developed in 1:13-5:11 more fully (mercy, rebirth, living hope, resurrection of Jesus Christ, permanent inheritance, divine protection, salvation, joy in suffering, suffering as test, revelation of Jesus Christ, salvation as grace, bearing witness, sufferings and glories of Christ, good news for you.” He notes the following inclusions between larger units: 1:3-5:11: “suffering a little while (1:6/5:10); glory (1:7/5:10); unfading (*amaranton*, 1:4 / *amarantinon*, 5:4); grace

Yet for all its literary and rhetorical style, 1:3-12 is not without its share of exegetical difficulties. It includes five words not used elsewhere in the New Testament: ἀναγεννήσας (1:3 and 1:23), ἀμάραντον (1:4; cf. ἀμαράντινον in 5:4), ἀνεκκλήτω (1:8), ἐξηραύνησαν (1:10), and προμαρτυρόμενον (1:11). The form of a few of the verbs are ambiguous, as are the referents of a couple relative pronouns and their clauses, and there are at least four minor textual variants. Most important, however, are exegetical and theological tensions that exist on several levels. There is the tension of time, as this unit is filled with references to the past, present and future, especially in regards to salvation. There is the tension between God’s role and the believer’s role in salvation. Finally, there is the tension between the believer’s present, suffering-filled reality and the unseen but glorious realities of Christ and the eschatological inheritance he has provided. These tensions will be explored and addressed in the following commentary on 1 Peter 1:3-12.

### Commentary on 1 Peter 1:3-12

#### 1 Peter 1:3

This unit opens in the form of a blessing to the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peter, following standard apostolic language, uses a traditional Jewish blessing and “Christianizes” it by specifying this God as the father of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> It is a declarative confession in the first person plural that gradually shifts to the exhortative second person plural

---

(1:10/5:10)”; within the first section of 1:3-2:10: “mercy of God (*eleos*, 1:3 / *ouk eleēmenoi, eleēthentes*, 2:10); praise of God (*eulogētos*, 1:3; *aretai*, 2:9)”; and even within its own unit: “(Jesus) Christ (1:3/11); heavens (*ouranois*, 1:4 / *ouranou*, 1:12).” Further link-words are given on page 77 that join verses and thereby integrate and extend the line of thought: 1:1-2/1:3-12: “God, father (1:2/3); Jesus Christ (1:1, 2 / 1:3, 7, 11); Spirit (1:2/12); grace (1:2/10); you (1:2/4, 7, 10, 12).” And 1:3-12/13-21: “God (1:3/21); father (1:3/17); hope (1:3/13, 21); grace (1:10/13); reveal/revelation (1:5, 7, 12/13); *timē/timios* (1:7/19; cf. 20b); last (1:5/20); *pistis/pistos* (1:9/21). Cf. 1:1-2/13-21 foreknowledge (1:2/19); obedience (1:2/14); blood (of Christ) (1:2/19).”

<sup>7</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 51; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 47; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 16; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 81; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 78, fn. 2. Cf. identical Pauline blessings in 2 Cor. 1:3 and Eph 1:3.

of the body of the letter by verse 6.<sup>8</sup> The verb implied after εὐλογητὸς can either be optative or indicative in form; the optative is preferable here because the author is actively praising God and not simply declaring the blessed status of God, though neither ultimately affect the meaning.<sup>9</sup>

This God is rich in mercy, and in line with his identity as “father” he has “birthed anew” (ἀναγεννήσας) the author and readers.<sup>10</sup> Ἀναγεννήσας is an especially rare word, appearing only here and in 1:23 in the New Testament (cf. the related ἀρτιγέννητα in 2:2) and not at all in the LXX or contemporary Hellenistic writings, though it is referenced in later Jewish midrash. This has led scholars to muse that its origins might be in pagan mystery religions, the Qumran community, or more possibly oral traditions from Jesus himself (cf. John 3:3, 7).<sup>11</sup> As our first reference to salvation, it likely indicates a past event.<sup>12</sup> At any rate, the readers are reminded of

---

<sup>8</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 16. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 80, fn. 10, describes it as a “wish” but declarative/confessional is a better description, as the author is actively blessing God rather than wishing blessing to him and proceeds to use it as a springboard for further theological declaration about the work of God.

<sup>9</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 81, and Michaels, *1 Peter*, 16, fn. a, both prefer the optative while Elliott, *1 Peter*, 330, chooses the indicative.

<sup>10</sup> BDAG translates it “to beget again, cause to be born again.” I translate it here as “birthed anew” to maintain the aorist active sense of this particular verb form. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94, argues that the proper translation of this word is “rebegetting” or “begetting anew” rather than being “born anew”: in fn. 17 he defines this as “accurately convey[ing] the totally changed and hence new situation in which the rebegotten persons find themselves.” On a side note, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 331, observes that ἔλεος occurs again in 2:10 and so forms an inclusio at the beginning and end of this unit.

<sup>11</sup> Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 83, suggests the Qumran community; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 82, and Michaels, *1 Peter*, 17, suggest the mystery religions while choosing oral gospel tradition, and Elliott, *1 Peter*, 331, Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 82, and Jobes, *1 Peter*, 82, all mention the post-biblical midrash usage. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94, fn. 19, uses the distinction between “begetting anew” and “born anew” as evidence that this word was not influenced by pagan mystery religions, as they utilized the latter concept, and he prefers the origin of Jewish proselyte conversion terminology (fn. 22).

<sup>12</sup> The aorist form usually indicates past tense for participles (see Wallace, 555); here, the main verb it is antecedent in time to is probably ἀγαλλιάσθε. Cf. the other use of the word in 1:23 as a perfect passive participle, and the aorist passive ἐλυτρώθητε in 1:18. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 47, views its use here as a reference to baptism, in accordance with his strong adherence to the theory that 1 Peter was written as a baptismal liturgy. While this theory is now largely discarded, the reference to baptism here is possible, as both uses, and especially the latter, of the word point to an event completed in the past. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94, definitely sees this term as referring to a past event, possibly at the origin of the Christian community or at the resurrection of Christ (fn. 20).

the merciful nature of their new Father, their familial kinship with Christ, and their new identity that calls them to a radically different existence from their former lives or present culture.

Their status as “born anew” opens them up to unimaginable benefits, each introduced by εἰς prepositional phrases. The question is whether they are given new birth into two things (a living hope and an inheritance) or three things (hope, an inheritance, and salvation), as ἐλπίδα (1:3), κληρονομίαν (1:4), and σωτηρίαν (1:5) are each introduced by εἰς. Elliott supports the inclusion of σωτηρίαν, noting that this threefold use of εἰς is one of many triads found in 1:1-12.<sup>13</sup> Jobes, however, argues more convincingly that σωτηρίαν modifies φρουρουμένους, and that the εἰς preceding it is simply normal idiomatic usage.<sup>14</sup> If this is so, then ἐλπίδα and κληρονομίαν possibly form a complementary hendiadys.<sup>15</sup>

The first benefit of their new birth is a “living hope” (ἐλπίδα ζώσαν), the hope of a glorious future with God. The clause δι’ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν is both the ground and guarantee for ἐλπίδα ζώσαν: this hope is “living” as Jesus Christ now lives—in vitality and immortality—and only through him is it made available to believers.<sup>16</sup> It is in stark contrast to the dead hopes of the pagans, who know only of a futile present and a bleak afterlife.<sup>17</sup> David Kendall, in “I Peter 1:3-9: On Christian Hope,” expounds beautifully the paradoxical nature of this hope:

Christian hope involves the better future intruding upon, and decisively shaping the present. . . . just as the resurrection of Christ signaled the intrusion of the future into

---

<sup>13</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 333; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94-99.

<sup>14</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 84.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 48; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 334; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 52; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 19, sees a contrast between “living” and “from the dead.”

<sup>17</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 84-85; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 95.

human history, so the living hope generated by Christ's resurrection shapes Christian life in the present and draws it to its consummation. . . . [It] distinguishes Christian life rather sharply from non-Christian life and the values of a non-Christian world [causing alienation and conflict, and] at the same time and paradoxically, generates the joy, confidence, and resources Christians need to remain faithful as they live in the world.<sup>18</sup>

#### 1 Peter 1:4

The second εἰς clause introduces the next benefit of new birth: an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance. Used fourteen times in the New Testament and 200x in the LXX, κληρονομίαν bears the rich connotations of the Old Testament inheritance promised by God to the patriarchs and longed for by Israel. This inheritance is described using three adjectives: ἄφθαρτον, ἀμίαντον, and ἀμάραντον. Their alliteration in Greek shows off the author's stylistic skill and represent a "classic negative way of characterizing persons or things that strain one's descriptive powers."<sup>19</sup> Davids believes these words were chosen for the rhetorical force of their alliterative negation, not necessarily because of a difference in their meanings.<sup>20</sup> While this is likely, they still present this inheritance in terms that would have spoken strongly to 1 Peter's readers: it is eternal, permanent, unable to be corrupted by sin or time or confiscated by their persecutors. While its original reference, the land of Canaan, was often defiled and lost, this inheritance is holy and everlasting.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> David W. Kendall, "1 Peter 1:3-9: On Christian Hope," in *Interpretation* 41:1 (1987): 67.

<sup>19</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 20. These terms are not very common: ἄφθαρτον occurs 9x in the NT, including 3x in 1 Peter (1:4, 1:23 and 3:4); ἀμίαντον occurs 3 other times in the NT; and ἀμάραντον is only found here in the NT or LXX, though the related term ἀμαράντινον appears in 5:4.

<sup>20</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 52.

<sup>21</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 335: as this inheritance is non-territorial, it is universally available to all Christians everywhere. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 96, sees an explicit contrast with the normal reference of "inheritance" to the land of Israel, in accordance with 1 Peter's frequent application of terminology to describe Israel to the Christian community.

This promise of such an inheritance is especially comforting to the (literal or metaphorical) “aliens of the Diaspora”: like the great patriarch Abraham they are foreigners in pagan lands no longer their own, but they can look forward to a permanent home, “an eschatological gift from God [that] stands beyond all the uncertainties of the present age.”<sup>22</sup> The certainty of this inheritance is heightened by the fact that it is being “kept” (τετηρημένην) for them by God himself: the passive voice of this participle points to God as agent, the perfect tense highlights his having prepared it for them since “eternity past” (in line with the predestination theology of 1 Peter), and ἐν οὐρανοῖς, used possibly as a circumlocution for God, emphasizes its location in an incorruptible dimension.<sup>23</sup> Quite obviously, this inheritance lies in a future realm, as is the full realization of hope, but hope provides the bridge by which this future inheritance can shape the readers’ present.

#### 1 Peter 1:5

In verse five, the focus shifts from the readers’ hope and inheritance to the readers themselves, as τοῦς signals a subordinating clause modifying ὑμᾶς. Not only is their inheritance kept by God, but they themselves are being guarded (φρουρουμένους) by the very power (δυνάμει) of God. Φρουρέω, a military term for the defense of a fortification against outer assault, is a synonym for τηρέω, and is used both as a literary parallel and to add rhetorical punch to the

---

<sup>22</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 20. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 85, fn. 24, sees it as “guaranteed by a legally binding promise that reflects the Father-son relationship.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 335, also observes that as literal aliens they would be ineligible to inherit land. This would especially have been the situation of the slaves referenced in 2:18-25, for they would have been unable to pass on or receive any sort of inheritance.

<sup>23</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 21; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 336. A minor textual variant here, ὑμῶν instead of ὑμᾶς, is mentioned by Michaels, 15, fn. b: It would “maintain the first person confessional style of v 3. This would make for a less abrupt shift to the second person at v 6, with the beginning of a new thought,” but the overwhelming majority of texts and all the important ones support ὑμᾶς. The weakness of this variant is such that the UBS does not even mention it.

fact that both the believers *and* their inheritance are protected by God:<sup>24</sup> he is guarding their future and protecting them in the present.<sup>25</sup> This is performed with the same awesome power that raised Jesus from the dead—a powerful encouragement for a powerless people.

The phrase διὰ πίστεως adds some tension to the thought of this verse. Most commentators believe it should be interpreted as the faith (or faithfulness) of the believers. If so, here in one verse is demonstrated the tension and mystery between the divine role and human role in salvation. The believers are being guarded by God “through the divine preservation of their faith” (cf. 5:10).<sup>26</sup> Yet, as is shown in the immediately following verses, this faith is a persevering faithfulness, one that requires the “blood, sweat, toil, and tears” of persistent allegiance amidst fiery trials, and one that the readers obviously need encouragement to choose to “stand fast” in (cf. 1:13; 4:1, 19; 5:8-9, 12). That both roles exist and are necessary is testified to throughout scripture, but how the two interplay is ultimately a mystery.<sup>27</sup>

The readers are being guarded “for salvation” (εἰς σωτηρίαν). Some commentators, such as Elliott, view this as completing the triad fleshing out ἀναγεννήσας.<sup>28</sup> But the context rather

---

<sup>24</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 337; Davids, *Peter*, 53; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 52; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 22.

<sup>25</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 53.

<sup>26</sup> Goppelt *1 Peter*, 86.

<sup>27</sup> An interesting alternative interpretation is posed by David Horrell, “Whose Faith(fullness) Is It in 1 Peter 1:5?” in *Journal of Theological Studies* 48:1 (April 1997): 110-115, who wonders if πίστεως is instead a subjective genitive referring to the faithfulness of God, just as God is described as their “faithful Creator” (πιστῷ κτίστη) in 4:19. The passive voice points Φρουρουμένους and τετηρημένην to divine agency, and the ὑμῶν included with all other references to human faith (1:7, 9, 21b) is missing here. In this interpretation, the readers are being guarded by both the power and faithfulness of God. But a different adjective, πιστός, is used of God in 4:19, and the πίστεως that is at the heart of vv 7-9 is obviously the believers’. Horrell himself acknowledges the unlikelihood of this theory, but his assertion that a deliberate ambiguity is intended by the absence of ὑμῶν deserves some consideration, for both the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of believers are necessary for salvation—a message important for the readers of 1 Peter to remember.

<sup>28</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 333; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97. If their argument is accurate, there should then be a comment after πίστεως in the UBS that divides εἰς σωτηρίαν from the preceding clause modifying εἰς κληρονομίαν,

points to it being what they are being guarded for: it is the “object of living hope and the content of inheritance.”<sup>29</sup> This salvation is qualified as “ready to be revealed in the last time” (ἐτοιμίην ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ). As such, σωτηρίαν is cast in a future light. Though it exists in the present, it will only be fully revealed when Jesus Christ is also revealed (1:7). The use of ἀποκαλύψει again in 1:7 shows this salvation will be accompanied by “praise, glory, and honor” for the faithful believer. It will be the ultimate vindication from accusers, deliverance from present afflictions, and the reception of a glorious inheritance. Though it is a “present possession of Christ,”<sup>30</sup> the following verses acknowledge that this salvation is unseen, even contradictory to present circumstances, and must ultimately be clung to by hope through faith. But for the one who hopes and believes, “the eschatological future [becomes] a present reality.”<sup>31</sup>

#### Peter 1:6

Verse six is a direct continuation of the previous verse, but the content and focus of vv. 6-9 sets them apart from vv. 3-5 as a distinct subunit. There is a shift from praise for the coming inheritance and salvation to an acknowledgement of the readers’ present state of suffering and darkness. But even here, the future glories infiltrate and transform these trials through the lens of eternal perspective. Just as this subunit speaks of difficulties in the lives of Peter’s readers, these verses, especially verse six, are also full of grammatical difficulties.

---

so that it more obviously modifies ἀναγεννήσας along with the other two terms. While this triadic modification of ἀναγεννήσας is very possible, I remain more convinced by Jobes’ rebuttal.

<sup>29</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 87.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

The exact antecedent of the relative pronoun ἐν ᾧ is uncertain, and the choice significantly impacts the way vv. 6-9, in particular the verbs ἀγαλλιᾶσθε in 1:6 and 1:8, are interpreted. ᾧ is either masculine or neuter singular, and as such cannot refer back to the feminine nouns ἐλπίδα, κληρονομίαν, or σωτηρίαν. If it is masculine, its referent could be ὁ θεὸς or Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 1:3, but the grammatical distance from ἐν ᾧ makes this unlikely.<sup>32</sup>

More favorable is the immediately preceding phrase ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ. However, this would mean that the present tense verbs ἀγαλλιᾶσθε would then have to have a future force: they will rejoice in the last time when their salvation is revealed. A number of interpreters throughout the centuries have understood ἀγαλλιᾶσθε as future, leading to some textual variants, which demonstrates the tendency to read ἐν ᾧ temporally.<sup>33</sup> The second occurrence of ἀγαλλιᾶσθε in 1:8 must also then be viewed as future rejoicing, as it is based on the reception of salvation, which is clearly presented in futuristic terms in v. 5. Offered as further support is the related word ἀγαλλιῶμενοι in 4:13, which is also present tense, that refers to future exultation. Martin believes that ἄρτι in 1:6 creates an antithesis between the present tense-and-sense participles of 6b-8a and the future events indicated by ἀγαλλιᾶσθε,<sup>34</sup> and Michaels sees δέ as contrasting the present hiddenness of Christ with the future joy of the eschatological salvation of their souls.<sup>35</sup> If these two ἀγαλλιᾶσθε verbs are truly future in sense, then the theme of the subunit is

---

<sup>32</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 92; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 53.

<sup>33</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 25, fn. a, and 27-28 mentions commentators and translators from Irenaeus to Tyndale, but he acknowledges that the MSS evidence overwhelmingly supports the present tense. Gerhard Kittel, ed., “ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 20: “That there may be hesitation whether the ἀγαλλιᾶσθε of 1 Pt 1:6, 8 is meant to be present or future is grounded in the character of faith; both are possible.”

<sup>34</sup> Troy Martin, “The Present Indicative in the Eschatological Statements of 1 Peter 1:6, 8,” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 309.

<sup>35</sup> Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 89.

eschatological joy, and “everything between them (vv 6-8a) is a digression.”<sup>36</sup> But the present tense κομιζόμενοι in 1:9 would then also have to be cast as future, creating an awkward mix of present tense (6x) and present-tense-but-future-sense (3x) words in the same sentence.<sup>37</sup>

Another option is that ἐν ᾧ is a neuter pronoun, and as such refers back to the entire thought of vv 3-5: they rejoice now in the hope that their inheritance and salvation will soon be made manifest. It then would have a conjunctive force in which its antecedent is conceptual, not grammatical, which is the way ἐν ᾧ is used elsewhere in 1 Peter.<sup>38</sup> Achtemeier, for example, points to the same use of ἐν ᾧ in 4:4 and translates it “for that reason.”<sup>39</sup> In this interpretation, every present tense verb remains present in sense, which is the most natural reading. The ἄρτι in 1:6 and δέ in 1:8 thus do not contrast between present and future states but rather evidence the paradox of rejoicing in what is unseen and not yet received while still living within the darkness and hardships of the present. The theme of “rejoicing amidst suffering” which fills the New Testament is a tradition going back to Jesus himself;<sup>40</sup> a departure from this would appear odd, and add a theological hurdle to the grammatical hurdles a completely futurist interpretation must overcome. As such, while both interpretations have merit, this is the preferred stance of a majority of commentators as well as this paper.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 26.

<sup>37</sup> Martin, “The Present Indicative,” 311, does base his argument on a rather shaky futurist understanding of κομιζόμενοι in 1:9.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 342-343, notes that this adverbial/conjunctive use of ἐν ᾧ is distinctly Petrine, and BDAG lists 1:6, 2:12, 3:16, 19, and 4:4 as the only cases of conjunctive ἐν ᾧ in the NT. See also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 339.

<sup>39</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 100.

<sup>40</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 55.

<sup>41</sup> Jobs, *1 Peter*, 92.

As an indicative,<sup>42</sup> ἀγαλλιᾶσθε is the first main verb to appear 1:3-12, and its appearance here and in 1:8 both grammatically and rhetorically surrounds the present trials addressed in this subunit with paradoxical, eschatologically-inspired joy. Exultation is the instinctive response to the theology of salvation gloriously expressed in vv. 3-5. Inspired by hope, it is a foretaste of the perfect joy that characterizes the coming eschatological era.<sup>43</sup> As Kendall beautifully summarizes, “In the resurrection of Christ God has projected the light of the future upon the present and transformed the present. . . . the future becomes the basis for their lives in the present. Consequently, in the present, despite its unpleasant character, they joyfully anticipate the consummation of their hope at the revelation of Christ.”<sup>44</sup> Yet this exultation is presently tempered by grief, as Peter acknowledges in the rest of the subunit.

Ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον [ἐστὶν] λυπηθέντες is an idiom that is difficult to translate literally, but the sense is, “though now for a little while it is necessary for you to be grieved.”<sup>45</sup> Though this is a first-class conditional clause, their suffering is not hypothetical: the aorist λυπηθέντες acknowledges its present reality.<sup>46</sup> Suffering in “various trials” (ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς) for the sake of Christ is not only to be expected, but being under the control of God, it is even his intentional will for them, as the following purpose clause and the rest of the letter explains (cf.

---

<sup>42</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 92-93: The form of ἀγαλλιᾶσθε is the same as an imperative, but imperatives are not typically used in a letter’s opening section, so it is understood as indicative here as well. Jobes presents the possibility that the ambiguity could be intentional, in order to affirm those who are rejoicing and exhort those who are not to rejoice.

<sup>43</sup> Kittel, “ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι”; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 339: “As with many concepts presented in this letter (grace, salvation, glory . . .), so in the case of rejoicing, present and future realities tend to intersect and overlap.”

<sup>44</sup> Kendall, “On Christian Hope,” 69.

<sup>45</sup> ἐστὶν is a textual variant, included only in brackets in the UBS. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 25, fn. b: “The manuscript tradition is divided as to whether ἐστὶν is to be read after εἰ δέον. . . . [there is] no difference at all in meaning. The breadth of evidence slightly favors omission but no clear-cut decision is possible.”

<sup>46</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 25, fn. b; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 53; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 95.

4:1, 17, 19; 5:6, 10).<sup>47</sup> Yet, despite the severity of pain and grief now, Peter reminds his readers that it lasts only a short time (ὀλίγον) in comparison to an eternity of exultation, and that exultation can even now enter into their grief.<sup>48</sup>

### 1 Peter 1:7

In verse seven Peter seeks to help his readers view their negative experiences from an eternal perspective. Their suffering has a divine purpose (as introduced by ἵνα), which is the necessary perfecting of their faith for eschatological glory. Τῆς πίστεως functions as an attributed genitive to τὸ δοκίμιον:<sup>49</sup> though πίστεως is actually the topical subject of this clause, grammatically it modifies the head noun δοκίμιον and lends it a special emphasis.<sup>50</sup> In this regard, Peter is highlighting τὸ δοκίμιον as a synonym of πειρασμοῖς in 1:6, and he further illustrates the nature of this testing with the analogy of the fiery process by which gold is purified

---

<sup>47</sup> δεῖ is used in the NT to indicate the divine necessity of the sufferings of Jesus and his followers (see Michaels, *1 Peter*, 29; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 339; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 89). 1 Peter makes it quite clear that suffering for the sake of Christ is the will of God, not simply a “potentiality of Christian experience,” contra Elliott, *1 Peter*, 339, and Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 56.

<sup>48</sup> Contra Michaels, *1 Peter*, 29: “The passage delineates two time periods: the present, characterized by grief in this sense, and the future, characterized by joy. Peter is not speaking paradoxically of joy *in* suffering (as he is, e.g., in 4:13) but eschatologically of joy *after* suffering.”

<sup>49</sup> According to the UBS, δοκίμιον has a textual variant of δόκιμον (δοκίμιον is given an A rating). Michaels, *1 Peter*, 25, fn. e: “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).” 26: “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.” 30: It is duplicated exactly in James 1:3, but whereas in James it refers to a process, in 1 Peter it “is virtually equivalent to the faith itself (‘the genuineness of your faith’ or ‘your faith insofar as it is genuine’).”

<sup>50</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 89-90, uses 1 Pet 1:7 (τῆς πίστεως) as an example of an attributed genitive: “the head noun, rather than the genitive, is functioning (in sense) as an attributive adjective. . . . the head noun is more emphatic than an adjective would have been,” therefore, “testing of faith” has stronger force than “tested faith”. “The *specific* relation of the two substantives, though usually intuitively obvious, needs to be brought to the conscious level. For example, once the head noun is converted into an adjective, it will sometimes have an active or passive force.”

and proven (using the related participle δοκιμαζομένου).<sup>51</sup> Though gold is the most precious and lasting element in this world, it will also one day be destroyed (ἀπολλυμένου). In the eyes of God, however, a purified and proven faith is far more precious, and it alone will live on to receive from God “praise, glory, and honor” at the parousia.<sup>52</sup> The choice of these words is fitting, for the opposite of these words—insult, shame, and dishonor—are what these believers are presently receiving for their faith (cf. 2:6-7; 3:9; 4:14-15). Until that vindication arrives, Peter is vigorously urging for an enduring faith as an integral part of salvation (1:5, 9) and the means by which a vibrant relationship with an invisible Lord is possible (1:8).

#### 1 Peter 1:8

Peter then leaps into a series of relative pronoun phrases that grammatically modify Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ but rhetorically further flesh out what this precious, persevering, and proven faith looks like. Until Jesus is revealed (ἀποκαλύψει, 1:7) they must follow an unseen leader. Unlike Peter, they never had the opportunity to see him walk the plains of Palestine a generation earlier (aorist ὀράω), yet still they love him.<sup>53</sup> Neither can they see him now (ἄρτι and present tense ὀράω) in any sensory way, yet still they trust in him. A minor textual variant exists for ἰδόντες—εἰδότες (“knowing”)—but textual criticism supports the former, and neither affects the

---

<sup>51</sup> This metaphor applied to faith has a long-standing tradition in Jewish (Psa 66:10; Prov 17:21; Isa 43:2; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:2-3; Wis 3:4-6; Sir 2:1-9) and Christian writings (Jas 1:3, 12; 1 Pet 4:12). See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 101, Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 57, Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 54, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 341, and Jobes, *1 Peter*, 94-95.

<sup>52</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 55; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 92; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 102. The passive subjunctive εἰρεθῆ points to God as subject.

<sup>53</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 634, uses 1 Pet 1:8 (οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπάτε) as an example of a concessive verbal participle: “although you have not seen him, you love him.” Michaels, 33, notes that two different negations are used because οὐκ only negates indicatives and μή normally negates participles.

sense of the verse.<sup>54</sup> Though ἀγαπάτε is an indicative verb<sup>55</sup> and πιστεύοντες a participle, they are parallel in sense, and both are critical components of a committed, living faith in Jesus. And both, as modifiers of the main verb ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, are the basis for an otherworldly joy.<sup>56</sup>

There is some difficulty in understanding how δὲ functions grammatically. Though it follows ὁρῶντες and πιστεύοντες, it could contrast them as δὲ does in v 12. Εἰς ὃν would then go with ἀγαλλιᾶσθε: “in whom, although you do not now see but believe, you rejoice.”<sup>57</sup> But this would break up the parallel form between 8a and 8b of ὁράω followed by a contrasting verb. It is more likely a connective conjunction, making πιστεύοντες an attendant circumstance participle to ἀγαλλιᾶσθε: “although you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice.”<sup>58</sup> Apart from the tenses of these verbs, this fits the both rules for attendant circumstance and theology, as faith both precedes and inspires joy. Perhaps Peter uses δὲ instead of καὶ to heighten the contrast between the grief, trials, testing, and invisibility of Christ mentioned vv. 6b-8b and ἀγαλλιᾶσθε: it sets it apart in all its shocking, paradoxical nature. Despite having no empirical foundation for the faith that is the cause of grievous alienation and persecution from society, their love and faith

---

<sup>54</sup> The UBS is certain enough to give ἰδόντες an A rating. The issues are explained in Michaels, *1 Peter*, 26, fn. f: “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 ἰδότες hardly makes sense with ἀγαπάτε (cf. Gal 4:8!). 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.”

<sup>55</sup> Again, like ἀγαλλιᾶσθε in 1:6 and 1:8c, ἀγαπάτε can be either indicative or imperative. Though imperative is very unlikely due to its location in the introductory section of the letter, the ambiguous nature might still rhetorically apply an imperatival prick here as well.

<sup>56</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 342-343.

<sup>57</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 103.

<sup>58</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 642, 670; most commentators and translations.

for Jesus (1:8) and certainty in their coming, glorious vindication (1:6) have inspired exultation “inexpressible and glorious” (cf. 4:13). This exultation is ἀνεκκλήτῳ and δεδοξασμένη not because it is the ecstasy of the parousia, but because it so radically defies their outward circumstances and anticipates the joy of eschatological salvation.<sup>59</sup>

## 1 Peter 1:9

Their exultation has one further source: the present realization of their eschatological salvation.<sup>60</sup> Κομιζόμενοι is a verb used in the New Testament for obtaining a prize or punishment one has earned, and mostly refers to eschatological recompense (cf. 5:4).<sup>61</sup> What is received is qualified here as the goal (τέλος) of their faith (or better, “faithfulness”)—the salvation of their persons.<sup>62</sup> For this reason, Martin views this verb as a clear reference to future time, and uses it as the basis for his argument for a future understanding of the ἀγαλλιᾶσθε verbs.<sup>63</sup> But in line with the above arguments for a present sense for these present tense verbs, this verb instead displays the middle value of the trifold reception of Biblical salvation: the present reception of

---

<sup>59</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 59.

<sup>60</sup> This is taking this verse in a causal sense: “you exult because you are receiving . . .”

<sup>61</sup> Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 58; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 344.

<sup>62</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 104, fn. 69. BDAG 7310:3 prefers to translate τέλος here as “goal.” There is also a textual variant in the inclusion or omission of ὑμῶν or ἡμῶν. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 26, fn. g, explains: “The pronoun ὑμῶν is omitted by B, a very few minuscules, the Coptic Sahidic version, and certain patristic citations. A few other minuscules and versions read ἡμῶν (which is clearly out of place in the context). ὑμῶν, however, has strong and widespread support (aleph A C P Ψ 048, the great majority of later minuscules, and the Latin and Syriac versions), and is probably to be accepted. It is implied in any event because the definite article with πίστις points back to ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως in v 7 as well as πιστεύοντες in v 8. There is a possibility (although not a strong one) that ὑμῶν could be taken with σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν rather than τῆς πίστεως.” The UBS, however, gives the inclusion of ὑμῶν a C rating.

<sup>63</sup> Martin, “The Present Indicative,” 311, as does Michaels, *1 Peter*, 35: “Its purpose here is to fix the time of the believers’ rejoicing: they will rejoice ‘on receiving the outcome’ of their faithfulness—i.e., when their faithfulness is” rewarded when Jesus is revealed.” This verb is used again for the very clear reception of an eschatological reward in 5:4 (“the unfading crown of glory”), but there it is a future middle indicative, whereas here it is a present participle that gains its sense from the principle verbs ἀγαπᾶτε and ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, both of which are present in tense and, as argued, sense.

salvation. As Achtemeier states, “The sense is that Christians now obtain by faith what they will only fully enter into at the end; the power of the new age is already at work and allows Christians in their present plight nevertheless to experience something of the eschatological joy awaiting them.”<sup>64</sup> This present salvation is evident in the fact that, unlike their previous identity as “not a people,” walking in darkness without mercy, they are now a “chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God . . . [called] into his wonderful light” (2:9, 10). It is this present salvation they are to “grow up in” through the transformation of their character (2:1-3). And this present salvation is not only cause for inexpressible, paradoxical exultation, but such exultation itself is the very evidence of its presence.

#### 1 Peter 1:10-12

Salvation has been presented in future terms in 1:3-5 as a glorious inheritance and coming vindication, and in present terms in 1:6-9 as a persevering trust in and love for Christ despite present grief and testing, leading to an otherworldly, glorious exultation. Peter now turns in 1:10-12 to the past, to highlight the historical continuity of this salvation with the prophets of old and to inspire his readers with the incredible privilege they have in possessing this long-desired salvation. The significance of this passage in comparison with the previous subunits is the basis for some disagreement among scholars. Achtemeier views it as the “conclusion and climax to this portion of the letter,” as it focuses specifically on the salvation (σωτηρία) that concluded and climaxed each of the two previous subunits (vv. 5b and 9).<sup>65</sup> Michaels, however,

---

<sup>64</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 104.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

describes it as an “appendix” to 1:3-9, an “explanatory postscript in a more didactic style.”<sup>66</sup> The tone definitely differs from 1:3-9 (and, also, from 1:13ff), as the primary subjects switch from Peter’s readers to the prophets of old and the verses are not as packed with theological content.

“This salvation” is described in a parenthetical aside as “the grace destined for you” (τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος), as foretold by the Old Testament prophets (cf. 1:13).<sup>67</sup> Using a series of alliterative verbs (ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν . . . ἐραυνῶντες),<sup>68</sup> Peter writes that these prophets “diligently searched and carefully inquired . . ., inquiring” into the time and circumstances of the sufferings and glories of Christ. Verse 11 provides a number of exegetical options for scholars. There is a minor debate over whether these are OT prophets prophesying the passion of Christ or Christian prophets (inspired by the “spirit of Christ,” πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ) prophesying the sufferings of Asian Christians. The unusual τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν (instead of the expected genitive Χριστοῦ) and the plural forms of παθήματα and δόξας lead some to read this verse as indicating the corporate sufferings and glories of believers “on behalf of” (or “because of”) Christ.<sup>69</sup> But this is mostly refuted, as προμαρτυρόμενον indicates that these prophets preceded Christ as well as the gospel message preached to Peter’s readers (cf. 1:12).<sup>70</sup> Likewise, εἰς is better translated here as “destined for,” as it is in vv. 5 and 10, and the plural nouns could indicate the extent of

---

<sup>66</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 38, 49.

<sup>67</sup> This link is strengthened as both are introduced by περί. This phrase is an aside since οἱ . . . προφητεύσαντες modifies and describes προφήται, whereas the participle ἐραυνῶντες in 1:11 resumes the action of the indicative verbs ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν.

<sup>68</sup> ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν form a hendiadys similar in form and meaning: they are “used for their rhetorical effect and are not clearly distinguishable in meaning [as] shown by the fact that the single verb ἐραυνῶντες in v 11 serves to recapitulate them both” (Michaels, 39-40). The verb ἐξηραύνησαν is found only here in the NT.

<sup>69</sup> See the discussions outlined in Jobes, *1 Peter*, 98-103.

<sup>70</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 108. Προμαρτυρόμενον, interestingly, is not attested to in any other biblical or classical Greek writings until the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It is defined by BDAG as speaking “with solemn assurance about something that is to happen, bear witness to beforehand, predict.”

Christ's manifold sufferings and glorious rewards (cf. v. 6). Other difficulties involve determining the object of the verb ἐδήλου (εἰς τίνα . . . καιρὸν or τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν . . . ταῦτα δόξας), whether τίνα is an interrogative adjective (along with ποῖον) or a substantival pronoun, and whether πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ refers to the preexistent Christ or to the Holy Spirit who reveals things about Christ.<sup>71</sup> Space does not permit discussion of these issues here, but none of them greatly affect the meaning of this passage.

What is clear is that Peter is emphasizing that this salvation has continuity with the past, in that it was predestined by God (cf. 1:2, 4-5, 20), foretold by (or on behalf of) the same Christ who has now made it possible, longed for by the revered prophets of old, and made known to the readers by the Holy Spirit himself. This would have spoken volumes to believers ostracized by (fellow?) Jews for following an illegitimate offshoot of Judaism. Not only is their commitment to Christ legitimized, but they are reminded that they possess a privilege far greater than that of the prophets, who though great served *them*, of the Jews and pagans who now scorn them, and even of angels, who marvel at salvation but are unable to experience it (v. 12).

Of special significance to is the phrase τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας. It was destined for Christ to suffer many things, but his faithful perseverance has brought him manifold, unimaginable glories (f. 3:22). This theme of suffering leading to glory forms the backbone of 1 Peter,<sup>72</sup> for where the master walked the disciples must follow: "To this you were

---

<sup>71</sup> See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109-110; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 345-346; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 41-44; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 98-103. Most choose the first of the options given here.

<sup>72</sup> Christ, chosen as they were, was also insulted and finally killed by men but was raised by God and glorified (1:19-21; 2:22-24); he too suffered in his body and is now at God's right hand wielding absolute authority (3:18, 22-4:1); Peter was a witness of his sufferings and will share in his glory to be revealed (5:1). Like Christ, the readers must mentally prepare themselves to bear up under unjust suffering and insult (1:13; 2:20ff; 3:9ff; 4:1ff), and even see it as a blessing (3:9, 14; 4:14), for which they can "rejoice that [they] participate in the sufferings of Christ." The ones who do this will be "overjoyed when [Christ's] glory is revealed" (4:13), for they will "receive the crown of glory that will never fade away" (5:4). The main portion of the letter even ends on this: "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you

called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (2:21). What was destined for Christ, both the grief and the glory, is also destined for all who follow him, for this is the very path of salvation.

### Concluding Observations

The past, present, and future realities of salvation is the theme of the introductory unit of 1:3-12. Salvation was made known in ages past by Christ (1:10-12), it was made possible through his resurrection (1:3), and it will be made manifest at his return (1:5, 7). It is a new identity they are birthed into (1:3), it presently bears them up amidst the grief of many trials (1:6), it even inspires inexpressible exultation (1:6, 8), and it is waiting in all its glory to be awarded to the faithful, persevering believer (1:5, 7). Now they walk in shadowlands, but the light of the coming dawn is so great that its rays can reach out and pierce even the deepest darkness. It is in the light of this salvation that their bleak outlooks, negative perceptions, and unholy attitudes can be illuminated and transformed, and, now that this beam is unveiled in the introductory section, that is what Peter seeks to accomplish with the rest of his epistle. Whether or not his encouragement and exhortation to the believers in Asia was successful is unknown, but his epistle has remained to inspire believers in every age with the glorious and redemptive nature of salvation in Christ.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achtemeier, Paul J. *1 Peter*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Bauer, Walter, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000.
- Dauids, Peter H. *The First Epistle of Peter*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Elliott, John H. *1 Peter: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 37B. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- Goppelt, Leonard. *A Commentary on 1 Peter*. Trans. J. E. Alsup. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Horrell, David. "Whose Faith(fullness) Is It in 1 Peter 1:5?" In *Journal of Theological Studies* 48:1 (April 1997): 110-115.
- Jobes, Karen H. *1 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*. Black's New Testament Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1969.
- Kendall, David W. "The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3-12." Pages 103-120 in *Perspectives on First Peter*. Edited by Charles H. Talbert. NABPR Special Studies Series 9. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "1 Peter 1:3-9: On Christian Hope." In *Interpretation* 41:1 (1987): 66-71.
- Kittel, Gerhard, ed. "ἀγαλλιάομαι." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 1. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.
- Martin, Troy. "The Present Indicative in the Eschatological Statements of 1 Peter 1:6, 8." In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 307-312.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, 1988.
- Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.