

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 329 – November 25th – 1 Peter 3:8-4:6

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Peter

Best, E	<i>1 Peter (New Century Bible)</i> , Oliphants, 1971
Clowney, Edmund P	<i>The Message of 1 Peter (The Bible Speaks Today)</i> , Leicester, IVP, 1988
Davids, Peter H	<i>The First Epistle of Peter (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)</i> , Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990
Grudem, Wayne	<i>1 Peter (Tyndale Commentary)</i> , Leicester, IVP, 1988
Leighton, Robert	<i>A Practical Commentary upon the First Epistle General of Saint Peter, (Works Vol 1)</i> , London 1835
Michaels, J Ramsey	<i>1 Peter (The Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 49)</i> , Dallas, Word Books, 1988
Selwyn, R G	<i>The First Epistle of St Peter</i> , London, Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1949

Verses 8-12

Verses 8-12 form a carefully constructed unit: the themes of vv 8,9 reappear in reverse order in vv 10,11 in the quotation from Ps 34:12-16. The focus shifts from domestic relationships to relationships generally. Verses 8-9 find a parallel in Romans 12:9-18. Verses 9-12 function both as a conclusion to the section of exhortations beginning in 2:11 and as a transition to the discussion on suffering and vindication in 3:13-4:6.

Verse 8

Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχοί, ταπεινόφρονες,

τέλος, ους n end, conclusion

το δε τέλος 'finally,' 'in summary' cf. 1 Tim 1:5. Michaels comments, "Peter is obviously concluding not the epistle as a whole, but a specific series of exhortations. The five adjectives that follow are imperatival in the same way that participles have functioned as imperatives in 2:18-3:7."

ὁμόφρων, ον of one mind

Cf. Rom. 12:16; 15:5; Phil 2:2. "This is not the unity that comes from a standard imposed from without, such as a doctrinal statement, but that which comes from loving dialogue and especially a common focus on the one Lord. It is his mind and spirit that Christians are to share (1 Cor 2:16; Phil 2:5-11)." Davids.

συμπαθής, ες sharing the same feeling

Cf. Rom. 12:15; Heb 10:34; 1 Cor 12:26. "This term has a practical bent, for because we understand the feelings of another we act appropriately to assist our fellow-Christian." Davids.

φιλάδελφος, ον loving one's fellow-Christian or fellow-man

Cf. 1 Peter 1:22; Rom 12:10; Jn 15:12 also Jn 13:34-35. Peter puts this virtue at the centre of his list. Michaels comments, "1 Thess 4:9 in particular indicates that this ideal (probably based on Jesus' remembered commands to 'love one another') was from the beginning a conspicuous part of Christian ethical instruction to new converts: Paul has 'no need to write' to the Thessalonians about φιλαδελφία because they were already 'taught of God' to practice it."

εὐσπλαγχνος, ον tender-hearted, kind

Cf. Eph 4:32; Col 3:12.

ταπεινοφρων, ον humble-minded, humble

Cf. 5:5; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3ff.

Verse 9

μη ἀποδίδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες, ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε.

Cf. Rom 12:17. The focus widens beyond the Christian community. The instruction here is based on the teaching of Jesus, cf. Matt 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-36.

ἀποδίδωμι render, give back, repay

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

ἀντι prep with gen for, in place of

ἢ or

λοιδορία, ας f cursing or speaking evil (of someone)

"The correspondence in vocabulary between this verse and 2:23 strongly reinforces the imitation of Christ set forth in 2:21–25. The rehearsal of Christ's behavior in 2:22–23 was implicitly an appeal to the readers of the epistle to behave in much the same way. Now the appeal is made explicit. Nonretaliation becomes the crown of the household duty code and the centerpiece of the ethical teaching of the entire epistle." Michaels.

τουναντιον (το ἐναντιον) on the contrary,
rather

εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

More than 'speak well of', rather, invoke God's blessing upon the person.

The majority of later manuscripts (P and others) have 'knowing that' instead of 'for' (i.e., εἰδότες ὅτι instead of ὅτι), but the manuscript support for the simple ὅτι is overwhelming (p⁷² p⁸¹ κ; A B C K Ψ and others), εἰδότες was added probably as a common form used in Christian moral instruction.

εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε Sharing in the calling of Abraham who was called to inherit a blessing and be the source of blessing to others. "Here Christians are reminded that it is a concomitant part of *their* calling, a calling that promises blessing from God, that they likewise should give unmerited blessings to others." Davids.

εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise

Cf. Lk 6:27f.; Matt 5:43f.; 1 Thess 5:15; Rom 12:17-21.

κληρονομήσητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl
κληρονομεω receive, gain possession
of, inherit

By blessing those who curse them, Christians not only act as witnesses to the kingdom, they express the wish that their enemies also may become heirs of the kingdom. In the goodness of God, they may even become the means by which such a blessing is realised. Michaels comments, "'Blessing,' like almost everything believers do, is simply part of their work of 'sounding the praises of him who called you ...' (2:9b)."

Verse 10

ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζοῖν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθὰς παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι δόλον,

The quotation that follows is from LXX of Ps 34:13-17a. Ps 34 has already been alluded to in 2:3,4.

θελω wish, will

ζωη, ης f life

In its original setting this meant living into old age: in 1 Peter the focus is on the coming eternal inheritance. Cf. Peter's phrase 'the grace of life' in v.7.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

ἰδεῖν Verb, aor act infin ὄραω see

ἀγαθος, η, ον good

παυω stop, keep from, cease (from)

γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language, utterance

χεῖλος, ος n lip

λαλεω speak, talk

δολος, ου m deceit, treachery

Verse 11

ἐκκλινάτω δὲ ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν, ζητησάτω εἰρήνην καὶ διωξάτω αὐτήν·

ἐκκλινάτω Verb, aor act imperat, 3 s ἐκκλινω
turn away, turn aside

ζητεω seek, search for

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Michaels comments, "'Peace,' whether with everyone (Rom 12:18), or with fellow believers in particular (1 Thess 5:13b; 2 Cor 13:11) was a major concern in NT ethics (in the Gospel tradition, cf. Matt 5:9; Mark 9:50b), and in early Christian literature generally (cf. e.g., *1 Clem* 19–20...)."

διωκω seek after, pursue, follow

"The words enjoin the same active and persistent effort on behalf of peace as is enjoined in the Beatitude in Matt 5:9." Selwyn. Cf. Heb 12:14; Rom 14:19.

Verse 12

ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὅτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιῶντας κακά.

"The Lord,' who in the psalm is the God of Israel, is probably understood here as Jesus Christ, a reinterpretation characteristic of 1 Peter (cf. 2:3, alluding to v 9 of the very same psalm; also 3:15, based on Isa 8:13)." Michaels.

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea

προσωπον, ου n face, presence

"The face being the divine Presence in manifestation, whether in wrath and disfavour (Ps 21:10; Ex 14:24) or in blessing (Num 6:25,26)." Selwyn.

At the end of v 12, a few late minuscule MSS add the words 'to destroy them from the earth' (τοῦ ἐξολοθερεῦσαι αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς) in an apparent attempt to extend the LXX quotation to the end of Ps 33:17 [34:16].

Dauids adds, "By dropping the last clause of Ps 34:17, 'to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth,' Peter weakens the sense of judgment found in the Psalm and makes it more applicable to suffering Christians, whom he hardly wants to threaten with God's wrath." We might add that because the Lord's face is against those who do evil, we can leave those who do evil with him rather than retaliating ourselves. Who knows, it may please him to transform them.

Verses 13-17

"Verse 12 lays the basis for the dominant note of comfort and reassurance in vv 13–17 (i.e., vv 13–14, 17), while vv 10–11 lay the basis for the subsidiary note of admonition (i.e., vv 15–16). Those who do good have no reason to fear because God will reward their justice and punish any who slander or oppress them – never mind how!" Michaels.

Verse 13

Καὶ τίς ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς ἐὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ
ζηλωταὶ γένησθε;

The stress is now upon the fact that no-one can really do evil to the Christian (cf. Rom 8:28f.). It follows on naturally from the exhortation not to return evil for evil.

καὶ here has the force 'then' – 'who then is going to harm you ...'

κακῶσων Verb, fut act ptc, m nom s κακῶ
treat badly, harm

ἐὰν if

ζηλωτης, ου m one who is zealous

In place of the word ζηλωταί, the majority of the later manuscripts (including K L P) have the weaker term 'followers' (μιμηταί), perhaps because of the bad political connotation of ζηλωταί in the sense of 'Zealots.' But ζηλωταί, favoured by the best and most ancient MSS (P⁷² κ B A and others), is clearly to be preferred. 'enthusiastic for goodness,' implies active pursuit of the good, cf. Tit 2:14; Eph 2:10; Acts 21:20; 22:3; Gal 1:14.

γένησθε Verb, aor midd depo subj, 2 pl
γίνομαι

'you have become', "i.e. by your adherence to Christianity." Selwyn.

Dauids comments on the tension between this verse and what follows. He says that Peter is speaking proverbially: "If one behaves in the fashion Peter describes above, he or she will likely not excite the enmity and anger of others. Who indeed would harm such a person? But the next verse begins a complementary statement: While none, even under their own (pagan) codes of proper conduct, will have grounds for harming Christians, some Christians will suffer. Our verse, then, is a transition from the idea of minimising suffering through virtue to a renewed teaching on how to behave when one suffers anyway."

Verse 14

ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην,
μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε
μηδὲ παραχθῆτε.

In contrast with the comment of Dauids above, Michaels writes concerning ἀλλά "The purpose of this connective is not to set up a contrast to the assurance of 'no harm' in v 13, but actually to reinforce that assurance. The question 'Who then is going to harm you?' implies as its answer 'No one.' Building on this answer, the ἀλλά of v 14a introduces a beatitude: 'What is more (even if you should suffer ...) you are blessed'."

πάσχοιτε Verb, pres act opt, 2 pl πασχω
suffer, experience

A rare N.T. optative. In a conditional clause it implies that there is no certainty of fulfilment of the condition. In the light of 4:14 Michaels says that the use of the optative is a rhetorical device rather than implying suggesting the possibility is unlikely. He adds, "That such things are more than remote possibilities can be seen in this epistle as clearly in what has preceded (1:6–7; 2:18–20) as in what follows (4:12–19; 5:8–10)."

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is
right

μακάριος, α, ον blessed, fortunate, happy

Cf. Matt 5:10. Suffering itself is not a source of blessing, but God has blessing for his children when they suffer as a result of faithfulness to him. Cf. also the final clause of v.9.

φοβος, ου m fear

φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

μηδε negative particle nor, neither

παραχθῆτε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl παρασσω
trouble, disturb, frighten

The words 'and don't be troubled' (μηδὲ παραχθῆτε) are omitted in P⁷² B L. They might conceivably have been inserted in a scribal attempt to complete the LXX quotation by linking the preceding words from Isa 8:12 with the allusion to 8:13 which immediately follows. But more likely they were original and were omitted accidentally because of the similar endings of φοβηθῆτε and παραχθῆτε in the quotation.

"The construction is difficult but the meaning is clear: 'do not be afraid of them'. It is based on Is 8:12,13." Selwyn.

μηδὲ παραχθῆτε may also echo Jn 14:1,27b.

Verse 15

κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἔτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντι τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος,

Continues (with some adaptation) the quotation from Isa 8:13. Michaels refers to Peter's 'midrash' on Isa 8:13.

ἀγιάζω sanctify, set apart as holy

Metzger comments, "In place of Χριστὸν the Textus Receptus substitutes θεον, with the later uncials and most minuscules. The reading Χριστὸν, however, is strongly supported by early and diversified external evidence, as well as by transcriptional probability, the more familiar expression (κύριον τὸν θεον) replacing the less usual expression (κύριον τὸν Χριστὸν)."

Here either, 'acknowledge as holy the Lord who is Christ' or, 'set apart Christ as Lord...' This sense of ἀγιάζω is clearly seen in the Lord's Prayer, 'Hallowed be thy name.' As Hill comments on Matthew, "To 'hallow' the name means, not only to reverence and honour God, but also to glorify him by obeying his commands and thus prepare the coming of the Kingdom." A similar sense is implied here with respect to Christ.

Michaels comments, "Just as God's holiness is made known among the Gentiles through his people, Israel (e.g. Ezek 20:41; Sir 36:4), so Christ's holiness is made known by Christians who confess him as Lord, even in the face of interrogation and threats. The task of a holy people is to make known to the world the Holy One who called them (1:15–16; cf. 2:9b). But in the present context, the declarative aspect becomes explicit in Peter's characterization of the Christian ἀπολογία that immediately follows in vv 15b–16." The inward hallowing of Christ is to be reflected in an outward declaration of his character in word and life.

ἔτοιμος, η, ον ready, prepared

ἀεὶ always, constantly

Cf. the picture in 1:13.

ἀπολογία, ας f verbal defence, defence, answer

May suggest a formal defence in court or merely the answer to private accusation.

"The whole passage recalls Lk 12:1-12 (cf. Lk 21:14,15), with its teaching as to what not to fear in persecution and what to fear, and its promise of the Holy Spirit's guidance when confronted with the question πως ἢ τι ἀπολογησθε. Cf. also Col 4:6. ἀπολογία and its cognates are used both of public self-defence (as in Lk 12 and 21, Acts 19:33; 22:1; 26:1,2,24) and of more private and less formal utterances (as in 2 Cor 7:11)." Selwyn.

αἰτέω ask, request, demand

παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον 'anyone who demands from you an accounting/an explanation'. Michaels comments, "Taken together, ἀπολογία and αἰτεῖν λόγον suggest that Peter sees his readers as being 'on trial' every day as they live for Christ in a pagan society."

ἐλπις, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope

'Hope' is one of Peter's favourite words for the faith possessed by the Christian, cf. 1:3,21. Michaels says it is what distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian, cf. Eph 2:12; 1 Thess 4:13.

Verse 16

ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε καταισχυρθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφῇ.

The connective ἀλλὰ is omitted in the majority of later MSS (including K L P and others), probably because what followed did not seem to stand in sharp contrast to what preceded. The MS evidence for ἀλλὰ in the earliest and best MSS is conclusive.

πραυτης, ητος f gentleness, humility

Meekness is part of imitating Christ, cf. Matt 11:29; 21:5. "It indicates an unwillingness to establish one's own justice, to defend oneself, and to attack one's opponent, but instead a committing of one's cause to God." Davids.

φοβος, ου m see v.14

Towards God. "Christians stand before God, who alone justifies them. Thus there is no need to defend or justify oneself before human opinion." Davids. Michaels says that the use of φοβος is again reminiscent of Isa 8:12-13.

συνείδησις, εως f conscience

"Conscience' in 1 Peter involves a moral or spiritual awareness of God, and of oneself before God, whether explicitly (2:19; 3:21) or (as here) implicitly. The phrase 'good conscience' occurs in Acts 23:1; 1 Tim 1:5, 19; *1 Clem* 41:1 (and, with καλός, Heb 13:18; *2 Clem* 16:4). Along with equivalent expressions such as a 'clean' (1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3; *1 Clem* 45:7; cf. Heb 9:14; Ign. *Trallians* 7:2), or a 'blameless and pure' (*Letter to Polycarp, Letter to the Philadelphians* 5:3) conscience, it denotes personal integrity before God. This is the stance from which Christian believers are urged to make their 'defense'." Michaels.

καταλαλεω speak evil of, say bad things against, slander

Many MSS read καταλαλεισθε ὑμων ὡς κακοποιων (cf. 2:12). Metzger comments, "Although the shorter reading ... is supported chiefly by Egyptian (Alexandrian) witnesses, it is to be preferred on transcriptional grounds." He argues that the longer reading came about through scribal memory of and assimilation to 2:12.

καταισχυνθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
καταισχυνω put to shame, disgrace
ἐπηραζω mistreat, insult, abuse

Often denotes spiteful action rather than spiteful speech. Cf. Luke 6:28. The reference is probably to verbal abuse.

ἀναστροφή, ης f manner of life, conduct

Either '... those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame', or, 'those who revile you may be put to shame by your good behaviour in Christ.' Selwyn prefers the latter. He also remarks, "The beautiful Greek of the participial clause in this verse is noteworthy, and bespeaks a cultured amanuensis."

Davidson thinks that the focus is eschatological: "Peter's stress on the coming judgment of Christ means that his primary focus is surely on their shame when they must give an account of their behaviour before a Judge who knows the full truth. Here is the ultimate security for the Christian." Michaels also favours an eschatological reference: judgment is in store for them. Contrasting the thought with that of 2:12 Michaels writes, "On the 'day of visitation' they will either 'glorify God' if they have repented, or be 'put to shame' if they have not. The grim second alternative is the one that Peter reflects on here because it provides the framework within which he will begin to address the mystery of Christian suffering."

Verse 17

κρεῖττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιῶντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιῶντας.

κρεῖττον and κρεῖσσον adv. better
ἀγαθοποιεω do good; live uprightly
θέλοι Verb, pres act optative, 3 s θελω
wish, will

Again, the optative suggests indefiniteness – or is being used simply rhetorically.

ἐλεημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

A reminder that God is in sovereign control, even in times of unjust suffering.

πάσχω see v.14

ἢ or, than

κακοποιεω do evil, do wrong, harm

Cf. 2:20. Michaels, however, thinks that the force here is eschatological. He writes, "Seen in this light, the distinction of the ἀγαθοποιῶντας and κακοποιῶντας of v 17 is not (as in 2:13–20) between good and bad citizenship in Roman society as two options for the Christian, but is rather a distinction between two groups that comprise the whole human race: 'doers of good,' who *may* have to suffer in this age, and 'doers of evil' who surely *will* suffer in the next... V 17 is thus to be taken not as a word of admonition (ie., make sure, when you suffer, that it is for doing good and not for doing evil), but as a word of assurance (i.e., remember, when you suffer, that you are infinitely better off than the evildoers who oppress you). This is why it follows so naturally on vv 13–14a, and helps to frame the admonitions of vv 14b–16."

Verses 18-24

Davidson comments, "Scholars are agreed that traditional creedal and hymnic elements are used in 3:18-24, but arguments for a hymnic structure in part or all of this passage are not yet convincing."

Verse 18

ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσάγαγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι·

ὅτι introduces a further reason for enduring suffering while doing good. Michaels comments, “The opening words ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς, ‘For Christ too’ (cf. 2:21), signal the fact that vv 18–22 have a function similar to that of 2:21–25. The purpose of both passages is to set forth Jesus Christ, first as the supreme example of the behaviour required of the epistle’s readers, and second as the One who, by his redemptive work, made such behaviour possible... Although there is significant further reflection on Jesus’ death and its redemptive effects (v 18), the weight of emphasis falls on the ‘missing links’ in the previous illustration – i.e., the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, with their accompanying consequences both for the readers of the epistle and for the whole visible and invisible universe. This makes of Jesus an ‘example’ in a broader sense than in 2:21–25 – an example not merely of suffering for doing good, but of suffering followed by vindication, the single dominant theme of the last half of 1 Peter (i.e., everything following the quotation from Ps 34 in 3:10–12).”

ἅπαξ once, once for all time

Cf. Heb 9:26, 28; 10:10, 14. The thought is of complete efficacy: a job completed. Michaels comments, “Christ’s suffering is over, its purpose fully accomplished.”

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν There are a variety of textual variants here, chiefly:

- i) ὑπὲρ in place of περὶ
- ii) the addition of a personal pronoun ἡμῶν or ὑμῶν (sometimes compounded with the above – περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν / ἡμῶν)
- iii) ἀπέθανεν in place of ἔπαθεν

Metzger comments on the UBS text, “While acknowledging the difficulty of ascertaining the original text, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν.” He says that the verb is a favourite of 1 Peter whereas ἀποθνήσκειν occurs nowhere else in the epistle. Furthermore, ἀποθνήσκειν would introduce an entirely new thought rather than a reason for enduring unjust suffering. The readings with ἡμῶν or ὑμῶν are natural scribal expansions.

Cf. Heb 5:3; 10:26; 1 Jn 2:2.

“περὶ (της) ἁμαρτία” is used in Lev 5:6,7; 6:30; Ezek 43:21 of the sin offering which was propitiatory: in Ps 40:7, quoted in Heb 10:6 περὶ ἁμαρτίας is used as a substantive, sin-offering. The plural in 1 Peter makes the phrase less technical, i.e. ‘in respect of sins’.” Selwyn. Cf. Isa 53:10.

ἔπαθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πασχω
δίκαιος, α, ον righteous, just

Christ also suffered unjustly. The use of δίκαιος here may be influenced by Isa 53:11.

ἀδίκος, ον evil, sinful, unjust

Michaels comments, “For a moment, the readers of the epistle are themselves put in the position of the ‘unjust’ who afflict them unjustly (cf. 2:19), i.e., of ‘the ungodly and sinful’ (4:18) or ‘those who do evil’ (3:12), both expressions being used in OT citations in contrast to those who are δίκαιος, or ‘just.’ The reference is to Christian believers before their conversion, alienated from God and needing to be reconciled (cf. 1:14, 18b; 2:10, 25a; 4:3).” There is no place left for feelings of self-righteousness in our trials. Cf. Mark 2:17 // Matt 9:13 // Luke 5:32.

Some MSS have ἡμᾶς in place of ὑμᾶς, but that variant appears to be secondary.

προσάγαγῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s προσάγω
bring to, bring before/ near

Cf. the noun προσάγωγή in Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18-19; 3:12. Suggests that most of Peter’s readers were Gentile converts.

θανατωθεὶς Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
θανάτω kill, put to death
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

Selwyn considers the datives σαρκὶ and πνεύματι to be ‘datives of reference’, Michaels says, ‘datives of respect’ (rather than instrument).

ζωοποιηθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
ζωοποιεω give life, make alive

The verbs θανατοῦν and ζωοποιεῖν are found together in 2 Kings 5:7 LXX of the power of God to kill and make alive. The reference here is clearly to the resurrection of Christ.

The symmetry and 'rhyming' of the contrasting phrases (see also v. 22 *πορευθεῖς εἰς οὐρανὸν*), coupled with verbs found nowhere else in 1 Peter, suggests a traditional credal or hymnic formula, cf. 1 Tim 3:16. "Peter is not saying that Christ's body died but that his spirit continued to live. He is saying that Christ died as to the natural, physical sphere of existence, and that Christ was given life as to the spiritual sphere of existence. If Peter were distinguishing between the death of the body and the continuing life of the soul, he would not have said that Christ was *made* alive. Thus the second phrase does not refer to Christ *disembodied*, but to Christ *risen* to life on a new plane.' [R.T France, 'Exegesis in Practice']" Clowney.

Daivids similarly comments, "Peter contrasts the death of Christ with his resurrection, the one happening with respect to the natural fallen human condition, the flesh, and the other with respect to God and relationship to him, the spirit." Cf. 1 Cor 15:45. It remains an open question as to whether 'spirit' should be capitalised.

Michaels comments, "The statement that Christ was 'made alive in the Spirit,' therefore, means simply that he was raised from the dead, not as a spirit, but bodily (as resurrection always is in the NT), and in a sphere in which the Spirit and power of God are displayed without hindrance or human limitation (cf. 1:21). Death 'in the flesh' is conquered and reversed; Jesus Christ is set free to complete a mission of utmost importance for the readers of the epistle."

Michaels argues that the last of the three phrases *πορευθεῖς εἰς οὐρανὸν* is found in v 22, so that the entire focus of vv 19-22 is upon a journey: he was raised in the Spirit in order that he might make his journey to heaven, "by virtue of which Christ rules over every power in the universe (v 22)." Hence the *ἐν ᾧ* at the beginning of v.19 followed by *πορευθεῖς* anticipating the third of the three credal phrases. "Peter's apparent intent in vv 19-22 is to answer the question. What did this heavenly journey in the Spirit entail, and what did it accomplish for Christian believers?"

Excursus on Verse 19

Clowney underlines the difficulty of this verse writing, "That Peter is describing Christ's triumph is clear. His death was not defeat, but the once-for-all sacrifice that atoned for sin. It was followed by the resurrection and ascension. In that context, Peter writes about Christ's preaching to *spirits in prison*. His words were no doubt clear to those who first heard them, but they have been hard for later generations to understand. Martin Luther writes in his commentary: 'A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the New Testament, so that I do not know for certainty just what Peter means.' Study of the passage may have progressed since Luther's day, but his confession still warns us against over-confidence!" Peter would seem to be drawing on traditional material of which we have only scanty knowledge.

Michaels suggests that "Many of the issues raised over the centuries have resulted from a widespread tendency to read certain NT passages simultaneously instead of one at a time. In particular, vv 18-22 are frequently read in the light of 4:6." He urges that vv 18-22 need to be read and understood within their own context.

Grudem suggests that there are three questions:

1. Who are the spirits in prison?
 - unbelievers who have died?
 - OT believers who have died?
 - fallen angels?
2. What did Christ preach?
 - second chance for repentance?
 - completion of redemptive work?
 - final condemnation?
3. When did he preach?
 - in the days of Noah?
 - between his death and resurrection?
 - after his resurrection?

Clowney sums up the main approaches to this passage saying, "Three major interpretations have been given to Peter's words, each with modifications. According to the first, Jesus descended into hell and preached to the spirits of those who had perished in the flood at the time of Noah. Some who hold this view think that what Jesus proclaimed to the dead was the gospel, offering them a further opportunity to repent. Others would have Christ preaching to the righteous dead, proclaiming their release from prison where they awaited his coming. Still others would understand this preaching to be a heralding of the doom of the wicked dead.

"The second major interpretation was presented by Augustine, who objected to the first view as presented by Origen and others. Augustine held that Christ's preaching was done in the Spirit through Noah. Peter says that it was the Spirit of Christ who preached through the Old Testament prophets (1:11); Christ's preaching through Noah would be a case in point. Those to whom Noah preached were not in prison literally, but they could be described as in prison spiritually. (Or, it might be said that those to whom Noah once preached are *now* spirits in prison.)

"A third interpretation would understand *spirits in prison* to refer to fallen angels rather than to human beings. Jesus proclaims to them his victory and their doom. This is seen by some as taking place after his resurrection. As he ascends into heaven, Jesus confronts the principalities and powers, showing his victory and power over them.

"None of these explanations is free of difficulty."

The first of the interpretations outlined by Clowney has generally fallen out of favour: among modern commentators the opinions seem divided between the second and third. Best thinks Peter is saying that "In the period between his death and resurrection Christ descended into the underworld where supernatural evil powers, the spirits, were held imprisoned; these powers were those who had enticed women to sin before the flood (Gen 6:1-4); to them Christ offered salvation, but we do not learn whether they accepted it or not; it was also at this time that Christ preached to the dead (4:6), i.e., all who had died prior to this time; the dead are, however, a separate group from the spirits." Davids adopts a similar view except that he argues that Jesus proclaimed their condemnation rather than offering them salvation. A similar view is advocated by Selwyn.

Grudem considers the various arguments in a substantial appendix to his commentary (as does Selwyn), and concludes that "Christ was preaching through Noah when the ark was built." He considers that the Greek should be translated, 'He went and preached to those who are now spirits in prison when they disobeyed formerly when God's patience was waiting in the days of Noah.' Grudem sums up the parallel between the situation in Noah's day and that facing Peter's readers in a number of points:

"1. Noah and his family were a minority surrounded by hostile unbelievers; so are Peter's readers (vv. 13-14; 4:4, 12-13).

2. Noah was righteous in the midst of a wicked world. Peter exhorts his readers to be righteous in the midst of wicked unbelievers (vv. 13-14, 16-17; 4:3-4).
3. Noah witnessed boldly to those around him. Peter encourages his readers to be good witnesses to unbelievers around them (vv. 14, 16-17), being willing to suffer, if need be, to bring others to God (just as Christ was willing to suffer and die 'that he might bring us to God', v.18).
4. Noah realised that judgement was soon to come upon the world. Peter reminds his readers that God's judgement is certainly coming, perhaps soon (4:5,7; 2 Peter 3:10).
5. In the unseen 'spiritual' realm Christ preached through Noah to unbelievers around him. By saying this Peter can remind his readers of the reality of Christ's work in the unseen spiritual realm and the fact that Christ is also in them, empowering their witness and making it spiritually effective (cf. 1:8, 11, 12, 25; 2:4). Therefore, they should not fear (v.14) but in their hearts should 'reverence Christ as Lord' and should 'always be prepared' to tell of the hope that is in them (v.15).
6. At the time of Noah, God was patiently awaiting repentance from unbelievers, before he brought judgement. So it is in the situation of Peter's readers: God is patiently awaiting repentance from unbelievers (cf. 2 Pet 3:9) before bringing judgement on the world (cf. 2 Pet 3:10).
7. Noah was finally saved, with 'a few' others. Peter thus encourages his readers that, though perhaps few, they too will be saved, for Christ has triumphed and has all things subject to him (3:22; 4:13, 19; 5:10; 2 Peter 2:9)."

At the end of his appendix Grudem refers to an article by John S Feinberg, '1 Peter 3:18-20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State' *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986) pp. 303-336. He comments, "I am pleased to see that Dr Feinberg and I, working entirely independently and with widely differing methods of approaching this text, have reached very similar conclusions."

Michaels, however, responds negatively to this view. He argues, "The attempt of J. S. Feinberg to assign the proclamation to the pre-existent Christ speaking long ago through Noah (an interpretation at least as old as Augustine) must be judged a failure. There is no sign in the text (as, e.g., in 1:11: 'the spirit of Christ that was in them') of any background shift in time reference from the phrases 'put to death in the flesh' and 'made alive in the spirit' in v. 18 to the phrase 'went and made proclamation' in v 19. Feinberg's view requires that 'from Peter's perspective ... the spirits are disembodied and in prison, though they were not in that state when they heard the message.' In other words, one needs to supply the word 'now' and read v 19 as 'preached to spirits *now* in prison' (330). Even aside from Feinberg's questionable argument that the 'spirits' are the souls of those who died in the flood (319-29), Peter's careful and explicit distinction between 'long ago' and 'now' in vv 20-21 makes it highly implausible that an even more significant 'then/now' distinction in v 19 would have been left to the reader's ingenuity and imagination."

Michaels believes that Peter is reflecting Jewish apocalyptic traditions exemplified in the book of Enoch. He suggests that the 'spirits in prison' (or rather, 'in refuge' – his preferred translation) are spirits who were the offspring of the union of the angelic 'sons of God' with human 'daughters of men.' His argument is not easy to follow, but he seems to suggest that these spirits are the same as (or akin to) those evil spirits who opposed Jesus in his earthly ministry. As a result of his death and resurrection he has triumphed over them (cf. v 22) and has in some sense proclaimed his triumph over them – they are 'tamed'. In the same way as Noah was saved through the flood from a world dominated by these spirits at the beginning of their history, so also Christians, baptised and sharing in the triumph of Christ are saved from this present evil age. Clowney treats this view with the greatest respect and a good measure of sympathy, but in the end adopts the view advocated by Grudem.

Verse 19

ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν,

ἐν ᾧ Those who think the reference is to an act of Christ *after* his death and resurrection argue that this is a reference to his resurrected state. This becomes definitive for the alternatives considered by Davids. Hence Davids concludes, "Thus it seems likely that this passage in 1 Peter refers to a proclamation of judgment by the resurrected Christ to the imprisoned spirits, that is, the fallen angels, sealing their doom as he triumphed over sin and death and hell, redeeming human beings." An ingenious conjecture traceable to the Gr. NT published by J. Bowyer in 1763 substitutes Ἐνωχ for ἐν ᾧ at the beginning of the verse. This would make Enoch (cf. Gen 5:24) the subject of the proclamation to the spirits in prison, in accordance with the pseudepigraphic Enoch literature.

φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment
πορευθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
πορευομαι go, proceed, travel

Michaels is of the view that πορευθεὶς is here pleonastic, a 'helping' verb which lends little to the narrative except anticipating the πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανόν of v. 22.

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

Michaels comments, "This is Peter's way of dramatizing concretely the universality of Christ's lordship, which he will make explicit in v 22: 'with angels and authorities and powers in subjection to him' (cf. the universality of such formulations as Phil 2:10–11; Eph 1:21–22; 4:10)."

Verses 20-21

Michaels writes, "Vv 20–21 are a kind of Christian midrash on the Noah story, based on the principle (attributed to Jesus) that "as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26; cf. Matt 24:37; the saying is probably derived either from Q or from an equally early eschatological discourse known to Matthew and Luke). The analogy is only slightly developed in the synoptic tradition: people ate, drank, and got married until Noah entered the ark and they were taken by surprise by the great flood that destroyed everything (Luke 17:27 // Matt 24:38–39a). When the Son of man comes, the world will be similarly caught unaware by his sudden appearance for judgment (Luke 24:30–31, 34–37; Matt 24:39b–41)."

Verse 20

ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ
μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε
κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι,
τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτῶ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι'
ὑδατος.

ἀπειθήσασιν Verb, aor act ptc, m dat pl
ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever

Michaels makes the point that the verb ἀπειθεῖν is characteristic of Peter's own vocabulary for the enemies of Christ and of Christians in his own day (cf. 2:8; 3:1; 4:17). "His choice of words is not accidental, but suggests a close connection in the author's mind between the 'spirits' and the flesh-and-blood opposition he and his readers faced in the Roman Empire... The 'disobedient spirits' of long ago still exist, and it is not unlikely that Peter sees their influence behind the ridicule and slander of pagans actively opposed to the Christian movement in his day (cf. Eph 2:2, where 'the ruler of the power of the air' is further identified as 'the spirit now at work among the children of disobedience' [ἀπειθεία]). If Christ has visited the spirits, violated their sanctuaries, and brought them under subjection, then Christians have nothing to fear from the interrogation and insults of those who denounce their way of life (cf. vv 14, 16)."

ποτέ enclitic particle once, formerly
ὅτε conj when, at which time
ἀπεκδεχομαι look for, wait for
μακροθυμία, ας f longsuffering, patience

For God's longsuffering patience, the purpose of which is to give time for repentance, cf. Gen 6:3; 2 Peter 3:5-9, also Acts 14:16; 17:30; Rom 3:25. The Mishnah says, "There were ten generations from Adam to Noah, to show how great was his long-suffering, for all the generations provoked him continually until he brought upon them the waters of the flood."

κατασκευαζομένης Verb, pres pass ptc, f gen
s κατασκευαζω prepare, build
κιβωτος, ου f ark, ship, box
ὀλιγος, η, ου little, small; pl. few

A majority of the later MSS (including C P and Ψ) read the feminine ὀλίγαι instead of the masculine ὀλίγοι. The latter, however, supported by the best ancient MSS (P⁷² A B and others), is clearly original. The feminine was substituted on the understanding that 'a few' was an adjective modifying 'souls'; instead it is used here as a noun – 'a few' or 'a few people' (masculine and thus generic), immediately specified as 'eight souls.'

ὀκτω eight

Michaels says that Peter has no interest in any possible symbolism of 'eight'. He says that "'eight' is worthy of mention only because it is 'few,' and he wants to remind his readers that 'few' were saved back then just as 'few' seem responsive to the Christian gospel now (cf. Jesus' sayings in Matt 7:14; 22:14; Matt 9:37; Luke 10:2; Luke 13:23–24; also 1 Cor 1:26; Rev 3:4; in 1 Peter, cf. 2:4, where Christ is said to be 'rejected by people generally')."

ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul', person
διεσωθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
διασωζω bring safely through, rescue
ὑδωρ, ὑδατος n water

Note the deliberate ambiguity – through or by? The water of the flood was a powerful expression of God's judgement, yet by these same waters Noah and his family were saved. There is an analogy here with the symbolism of baptism. In part, baptism symbolises death, destruction and the wrath of God (see Jesus' reference to his death as his 'baptism', Lk 12:50). However, we who have come to trust in Christ, find that this very act of judgement (Christ's death and grave) becomes the means of our salvation. All of this is portrayed in baptism.

Verse 21

ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα, ὃ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ὁ is strongly supported. A few MSS read ὡς and some important witnesses omit the term altogether.

"They have already experienced salvation in the same way Noah did, namely by passing through water to safety." Davids.

Michaels prefers the reading ἡμᾶς to ὑμᾶς.

ἀντιτυπος, ου copy; figure pointing to

Lightfoot comments that to ἀντιτυπον can be used as the 'copy' in two senses, either as the earthly expression or embodiment of heavenly reality (as in the elements of the Eucharist) or as the fulfilment of that which was only adumbrated in earlier times (as here). Michaels comments, "Baptism is not a secondary 'copy' of the flood waters understood as an archetype ... but simply a present reality of Christian experience to which Peter finds a correspondence in the Noah story."

σωζω save, rescue, heal
σαρξ, σαρκος f see v.18
ἀποθεσις, εως f removal
ῥυπος, ου m dirt

συνειδησις, εως f see v.16

Michaels comments, "Peter himself, having used the phrase, 'good conscience' in 3:16 for the attitude with which Christians must face their hostile interrogators, now applies it to the attitude with which they must face God himself."

ἐπερωτημα, τος n promise, answer; appeal

Selwyn considers that the phrase means 'a pledge towards God proceeding from a good conscience' – baptism symbolises the promise of the baptised. Grudem considers it means 'an appeal to God for a clear conscience' and is "another way of saying 'a request for forgiveness of sins and a new heart'."

Dauids comments, "The salvific aspect of baptism arises from the pledge of oneself to God as a response to questions formally asked at baptism. But this answer must be given from a good conscience. A half-hearted or partial commitment will not do, although it might fool people. It is the purity of the heart toward God that is important. This pledge, even in its most sincere form, however, would not be efficacious without the external objective means of salvation to grasp onto, that is, the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up

It is not the outward sign that saves, but Christ's death and resurrection of which it is the symbol (cf. Rom 6:4-11; Col 2:12). Michaels writes, "Because of the immediately preceding parenthesis, this phrase depends on σώζει in v 21a: the water of baptism 'saves you ... through the raising of Jesus Christ' – just as God brings about new birth 'through the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead' in 1:3. In both instances, God, who raised Jesus from the dead, is the implied subject (cf. 1:21), just as God was the implied subject in the deliverance of Noah from the disastrous flood (διεσωθησαν, v 20). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is what makes an appeal or pledge to God 'out of a good conscience' efficacious, and guarantees eternal life to the one baptized."

Verse 22

ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων.

Michaels comments, "The mention of Christ's resurrection brings Peter's thought full circle back to the couplet, 'put to death in the flesh, made alive in the spirit,' in v 18b, and to the notion of Christ's consequent journey. Now at last he will supply the third element of the sequence in its entirety, 'gone into heaven' (πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανόν), but in doing so he frames the participial expression with two traditional statements about Christ's exaltation, which is for Peter the end of the journey."

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξια right hand

Cf. Ps 110:1 also Rom 8:34; Acts 2:34; 5:31; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. He is in the place of power.

πορευθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s πορευομαι

οὐρανός, ου m heaven

Cf. Acts 1:10.

ὑποταγέντων Verb, aor pass ptc, gen pl ὑποτασσω subordinate; pass. be subject, submit to

Cf. Ps 110:1; 8:6; Eph 1:21; Col 2:15; Rom 8:38ff; Phil 2:10; Col 2:10 and also 1 Cor 15:24.

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, right, power

"What was potentially won at the cross began to be exercised in the resurrection and will be consummated in the return of Christ." Dauids. Christ will have the last word.

1 Peter 4:1-6

"Peter's exhortation to his readers in the face of possible persecution, broken off after 3:17, is now taken up once more." Michaels.

Verse 1

Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας,

Cf. 3:18.

παθόντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s πασχω

Many MSS read παθοντος ὑπερ ἡμων (and some ὑπερ ὤμων). Metzger comments, "The reading which best explains the origin of the others is παθοντος, which is strongly supported. In order to express the idea more fully some copyists added ὑπερ ἡμων while others added ὑπερ ὤμων. Had either of the latter readings been original, no adequate reason can account for the absence of the propositional phrase from the best representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western types of text."

έννοια, ας f attitude, thought
ὀπλίσασθε Verb, aor midd imperat, 2 pl
ὀπλιζομαι arm oneself with

"The principle thought and feeling here referred to is that of the dying life voluntarily accepted and put on as an armour, and finding expression in the meek and courageous pursuit of the spiritual life." Selwyn. Cf. Rom 6:13; 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Eph 6:11-17; 1 Thess 5:8 for Christian's armour or weapons. Peter is not urging his readers to seek suffering but to be ready to face it with appropriate defensive armour.

πέπαιται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s παω
stop, cease (from)
ἀμαρτια, ας f sin

Some MSS read the dative ἀμαρτιας rather than the genitive. Metzger says that this is probably an assimilation to the following ἐπιθυμιας.

Cf. 3:17. Grudem suggests that the meaning here is 'whoever has suffered for doing right, and has still gone on obeying God in spite of the suffering it involved, has made a clear break with sin.' Davids similarly comments that the Christian must "realise from the example of Christ in 3:18-22 that he must live for God now (which means a suffering in the flesh and thus a battling against sin), for that will lead to a parallel victory (a state of having ceased from sin)."

Michaels, however, follows Strobel in considering that the phrase may refer to Christ. He acknowledges the difficulty that this may seem to suggest that Christ was at one point a sinner. Michaels concludes that, "Although that phrase is not at all precise as to the relationship between 'sins' and the suffering of Christ, the precedent of 2:24 suggests that what Christ's suffering accomplished was to do away with the sins entirely by carrying them to the cross... He 'is through with sin' in the sense that he has finished dealing with it, once and for all; he has put it behind him, says Peter, and so should we." Verse 1b is therefore, in Michaels' view, parenthetical.

Verse 2

εις τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμιας ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.

This verse explains what is implied by ceasing from sin for the believer. Cf. Gal 2:19-20.

μηκετι no longer

Cf. Eph 4:17.

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, lust, passion

Cf. 1 Jn 2:16 for amplification of what is meant by ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμιας. The meaning is as human sinfulness and self-pleasing.

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

The datives are 'datives of the rule by which', as in Acts 15:1. Michaels suggests that Peter's best summary of what θελήματι θεοῦ amounts to in practice is the fourfold command of 2:17.

ἐπίλοιπος, ον remaining

βιώσαι Verb, aor act infin βιωω live

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

"Thus there is a clear choice between taking the path of least resistance to their natural desires and their committing themselves to following God's will, even if it entails suffering." Davids.

Verse 3

ἀρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι, πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμιας, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις, καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας.

ἀρκετος, η, ον enough; it is enough

Some MSS read γαρ ἡμιν and others γαρ ὤμιν. Metzger says that these are natural expansions of the well supported shorter text. Michaels comments, "... 'enough,' is used ironically, as a piece of understatement. 'Enough' is actually more than enough – too much in fact."

παρεληλυθως Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s

παρερχομαι pass, pass away

'for the time that is past is sufficient ...' The 'time in the past' stands in explicit contrast to the individual's 'remaining time in the flesh.'

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

βουλημα, τος n will, desire, purpose

The majority of later MSS read θέλημα rather than βούλημα.

ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

Indicates that the majority of the recipients were Gentiles. Michaels adds, "The designation of unbelievers as 'Gentiles' in a letter addressed to Christians who are themselves Gentiles is striking (cf. 2:12), and reflects in a way that is natural and not at all self-conscious Peter's strong conviction that his Gentile Christian readers are actually Jews in God's sight."

κατεργάσθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
κατεργάζομαι do, accomplish

"This verse supplies a reason for living not 'by human passions' but 'by the will of God' (v.2). Why should Peter's readers not live by following (sinful) human passions? Because they have done enough living like that in 'the time that is past'." Grudem.

πεπορευμένοι Verb, perf midd/pass dep ptc,
m acc pl πορευομαι go, conduct one's
life

For the ethical use of πορευεσθαι cf. Jude 11, 16, 18; 2 Peter 2:10; 3:3. On the following list cf. Lk 21:34; 1 Thess 5:7; Rom 13:13; Eph 5:18; Gal 5:20.

ἀσελγεια, ας f sensuality, vice
ἐπιθυμια, ας f see v.2
οίνοφλυγια, ας f drunkenness

Means habitual drunkenness.

κώμος, ου m orgy, revelry, carousing

Particularly of festal gatherings, revels –
dissolute feasts connected with pagan worship.

ποτος, ου m drunken orgy

Drinking party.

ἀθεμιτος, ον forbidden, disgusting (of
idolatry)

εἰδωλολατρία, ας f idol worship, idolatry

Michaels comments, "The fact that the list culminates in 'acts of idolatry' strongly suggests that the preceding 'acts of immorality and lust' as well as the 'drunken orgies, feasts, and revelries' are Peter's own generalized characterization of pagan religious practices based more on Jewish and Christian traditions than on first-hand observation (cf. Paul's association of pagan religious meals with idolatry in 1 Cor 10:14–22). 'Idolatry' had a central place in Jewish and Christian vice lists because of the first commandment of the Decalogue."

Verse 4

ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὕμων εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν, βλασφημοῦντες·

ἐν ᾧ may have the sense 'in view of this.' The Gentiles are now surprised at the conduct of these Christians since they once used to go along with the activities listed.

ξενίζω entertain as a guest; surprise,
astonish

The distinctive character and behaviour of the Christian should not fail to be noticed by those around him/her.

συντρεχω run together, join with

Suggests the crowds gathering together for festivals at pagan temples.

ἀσωτια, ας f dissipation, reckless living

Cf. Lk 15:13

ἀναχυσις, εως f excess, flood

The word is used of an outpouring or wide stream. It is used only here in the NT. Michaels comments, "The metaphor defines the 'running' or 'rushing' of which Peter has just spoken as an impetuous plunge into an open sewer. His denunciation of the pagan world, although very general and in some respects vague, is at the same time remarkably graphic."

βλασφημεω speak against, slander, insult

Here 'speak evil of, defame, injure the reputation of', cf. Mt 27:39; Lk 22:65; 23:39; Rom 3:8; 14:16; 1 Cor 10:30; Titus 3:2; 2 Peter 2:2. "Why did this happen? No doubt because silent non-participation in sin often implies condemnation of that sin, and rather than change their ways unbelievers will slander those who have pained their consciences, or justify their own immorality by spreading rumours that the 'righteous' Christians are immoral as well." Grudem. Christians were accused of crimes such as cannibalism. Michaels, however, suggests that this participle should probably be taken with what follows. "Peter's assumption is that those who slander Christians for their changed lifestyle are in effect slandering (i.e., blaspheming) God himself, the One who called these new believers 'out of darkness into his marvelous light' (2:9b)." – and that they will answer to him.

Verse 5

οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς·

ἀποδώσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl
ἀποδίδωμι give, pay, render

λογον here in the sense of 'account', cf. Mt 12:36; Lk 16:2; Acts 19:40; Heb 13:17.

ἑτοιμῶς readily; ἔ. ἔχω be ready or prepared

The unusual expression ἑτοιμῶς ἔχοντι has given rise to a number of variants.

κρῖναι Verb, aor act infin κρινῶ judge
ζῶντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl ζῶ live, be alive
νεκρός, α, ον dead

Their persecutors will be brought to account. Michaels comments, "Peter's language indeed suggests a reversal of the circumstances imagined in 3:15–16. In the present age Christians are – or might be – questioned about their new faith and hope, even formally interrogated about the implications of that hope for their loyalty (or disloyalty) to the laws of the empire. They are accountable to civil authorities and must know how to respond graciously, yet with integrity, even to the most hostile of questions (3:15; cf. 2:13–15). In the future, the tables will be turned. Those who now ask the questions will have to come up with some answers of their own."

Verse 6

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

Michaels writes, "The importance of v 6 within vv 1–6 as a whole should not be exaggerated. In its context, this verse is merely a postscript to the phrase, 'the living and the dead,' with which v 5 concludes. Why 'the dead' as well as the 'living'? Because the dead, no less than the living, heard the gospel, and are therefore accountable for the ways in which they responded to it. The gospel of Jesus Christ belongs to the past as well as the present... This affords Peter an opportunity to make the point that the hostility mentioned in v 4 is no new thing, but part of an age-old conflict, and that the vindication so conspicuous in the career of Jesus (cf. 3:18b) can also be demonstrated on a far wider front... Peter hints at a universal pattern in the history of God's people... Because the one community of faith spans all the ages, the righteous of Israel's past are freely regarded as Christians before the coming of Christ. Peter has no hesitation in making their experience a prototype and illustration of the experience of the Christians in Asia Minor to whom he directs his letter."

εὐηγγελίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

κριθῶσι Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl κρινῶ

'so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit' [NIV] Michaels translates, "so that even though condemned in the flesh among people generally, they might live before God in the Spirit." Michaels argues that Hebrews 11 provides a catalogue of examples of the kinds of people Peter might have had in mind.

Grudem, by way of contrast to Michaels, argues that νεκροῖς refers to Christians who have now died and says, "The fact that they died should not trouble the minds of those left alive, for, short of the second coming of Christ, the gospel was never intended to save people from physical death. All people, both Christians and non-Christians, still have to die physically (and this is the apparent meaning of *judged in the flesh like men*). But even though they are *judged in the flesh like men* (the judgement of death which came with the sin of Adam still affects them as it does all men), the gospel of Christ *was preached* to them so that *they might live in the spirit like God*. It was with respect to the final judgement ('for this reason', referring to v.5) that the gospel was preached, and it will save them from final condemnation."

Dauids similarly comments, "To the casual observer it appears at first that the gospel has no effect: Christians die just like other people... [But] the judgment is also the time of the vindication of Christians... Like Christ, God will have the final say." Michaels says that there is no evidence in 1 Peter of concern over the fate of Christians who have died as there was at Thessalonica.