

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY CHARLOTTE

AN EXHORTATION TO φιλαδελφία WHILE SOJOURNING AS EXILES IN THE WORLD:

AN EXEGESIS OF 1 PETER 1:22-25

PRESENTED TO

DR. MIKE KRUGER

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

NT-522 HEBREWS TO REVELATION

BY

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Translation: 1 Peter 1:22-25

22 -- Your souls¹ having been purified² by obedience³ to the truth,⁴ in sincere⁵ brotherly love⁶ from the heart⁷ love⁸ one another earnestly,⁹

23 -- Having been born again¹⁰ not of perishable¹¹ seed¹² but of imperishable,

¹ LSJ, 798, defines ψυχή as “breath, as the sign of life,” signifying a living thing. It is “life, spirit,” or “the soul of a man,” even as “the seat of the will, desires, and passions.” See also Karl-Wolfgang Tröger, “ψυχή,” *TDNT* 9:608-660. Tröger observes that ψυχή is commonly used to translate נֶפֶשׁ in the LXX; it is also used 25 times for נֶפֶשׁ, twice for נֶפֶר (Gen 41:8; Exod 35:21) and once for נֶפֶל (Ps 63[64]:2). In the NT it connotes both natural, physical life and “true life in distinction from purely physical life... the God-given existence which survives death,” i.e., the eternal soul of a human being.

² BAGD, 11. ἤγνικότες is the perfect participle form of ἀγνίζω, “to purify” (largely used within a cultic setting); here, used figuratively of “souls” (cf. Jas 4:8; 1 John 3:3). Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 570, note that the perfect form here emphasizes the completed state or condition of τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν. See also William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 50, who includes connotations of “to purify morally,” “to reform,” and “to live like one under a vow of abstinence, as the Nazarites.”

³ Joseph H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*, trans. and rev. Joseph H. Thayer (London: T & T Clark, 1901; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 637. ὑπακοή denotes “obedience,” “compliance,” “submission,” and, particularly in the context of “obedience rendered to any one’s counsels” or “the obedience of one who conforms his conduct to God’s commands” (cf. 1 Pet 1:2, 14). Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 459, notes the use of ὑπακοή in passages such as Rome 1:5; 5:19; 6:16; 15:18; 16:19, 26; 2 Cor 7:15; 10:5; Phlm 21; Heb 5:8.

⁴ K, P, and a number of minuscules have ἀληθείας διὰ πνεύματος here; but P⁷², Κ, A, B, C, Ψ, and others have only ἀληθείας. Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, 570, point out the objective genitive: “obedient to the truth.” ἀλήθεια is “truth,” especially “of the content of Christianity as the absolute truth”; BAGD also note that “truth has a strongly practical side, which expresses itself in virtues like righteousness and holiness” (BAGD, 35-36). Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 61-62, adds connotations of “love of truth” and “sincerity.” The “frankness” of ἀλήθεια is shown as the “character of one who speaks truth” (LSJ, 757).

⁵ Sakae Kubo, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and a Beginner's Guide for the Translation of New Testament Greek*, Andrews University Monographs 4 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1975; repr., Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 243. This love is ἀνυπόκριτον, “genuine,” “sincere,” and truly “without hypocrisy.”

⁶ Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 471. φιλαδελφία is “brotherly love,” and in the NT this refers to the “love of the Christian brotherhood” (see, e.g., Rome 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 2 Pet 2:17). Outside the NT, the term simply refers to “brotherly or sisterly love,” “brotherly,” “sisterly,” or being “fond of one’s brother or sister” (LSJ, 757).

⁷ ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας appears here in P⁷², Κ, C, K, P, Ψ, and other MSS; Κ^c has ἐκ καρδίας ἀληθινῆς. Both variants seem to re-emphasize what is stated in the remainder of the passage (“purified” souls, obedience to the “truth”). J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC 49 (Waco: Word, 1988), 72, takes the shortening of the text to be accidental.

⁸ Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, 570. ὀγαπήσατε is the aorist active imperative form of ὀγαπάω, “to love.” Rogers and Rogers note that the aorist imperative “calls for a specific action with a note of urgency.”

⁹ BAGD, 245; cf. Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, 570. ἐκτενῶς means “earnestly,” “eagerly,” “fervently,” “constantly,” and is often used of prayer in the LXX (e.g., Jon 3:8).

¹⁰ Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon the Greek New Testament*, 67-68. Mounce notes that the form ἀναγεγεννημένοι (perfect passive participle) is a *hapax legomenon*. The stem ἀναγεννάω means “beget again,” “cause to be born again, figurative of the spiritual rebirth of Christians” (BAGD, 51). Translations might render this clause “you have

Through the living and abiding word¹³ of God;

24 -- For:

All flesh is like¹⁴ grass,¹⁵ and all its glory¹⁶ like the flower of grass;

The grass fades,¹⁷ and the flower falls;¹⁸

25 -- But¹⁹ the word²⁰ of the Lord remains forever.²¹

And this is the word that was proclaimed²² to you.

been regenerated” (Amplified Bible), but most render it “having been born again/begotten again” (ASV, ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, etc.). Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 67-68, includes “to regenerate” as a gloss alongside “to beget or bring forth again.”

¹¹ BAGD, 857. φθαρτός is that which is “perishable, subject to decay or destruction.” See also LSJ, 756, for nuances of “mortal,” “transitory,” coming from the root φθείρω, “to corrupt, spoil, ruin, waste, destroy.” It means “to destroy” in a physical sense; see also Günther Harder, “φθείρω,” *TDNT* 9:93-106, for the ideal sense: corruptible vs. incorruptible, e.g., as corruptible humankind is in antithesis to the ἀφθάρτος θεός (Rom 1:23).

¹² BAGD, 763. BAGD observe that σπόρα means “as an activity sowing, and figuratively procreation, then that which is sown... and it also comes to mean seed which is generally accepted for 1 Peter 1:23.” Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 420-421, notes that σπόρα is here a *hapax legomenon*, and is a synonym of the frequently used σπέρμα (“seed; offspring, posterity”).

¹³ Here the common term λόγος is used. The genitive phrase λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος appears to be an embellishment of the typical phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, which is used regularly in Acts as a periphrasis for the apostolic teaching, cf. Acts 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1, etc. (Moises Silva, “λόγος,” *NIDNTTE* 3:127-170).

¹⁴ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 72, observes that “the omission of ‘like’ (ώς) in καὶ, A, Ψ, and some minuscule MSS, and the substitution of ‘human’ for ‘its’ [glory] in P, Ψ, and the majority of later MSS, probably represent scribal efforts to conform Peter’s quotation of Isa 40:6-8 more closely to the LXX. The quotation follows the predominant LXX text except at these two points, plus the use of *kuriou* instead of *tou theou hemon* in v. 25.”

¹⁵ LSJ, 787. χόρτος is the “feeding place” or “fodder” for animals, especially cattle; thus, “grass” or “hay.” In the MT, יְצַחַם (“green grass, herbage”) represents that which is quickly perishing, has no depth of root, and is soon to be cut down (BDB, 348; cf. Job 8:12; Pss 37:2; 90:5; 129:6; Isa 35:7; 37:27).

¹⁶ Here the LXX renders ιτόνη as δόξα. J. Lust, E. Eynikel, K. Hauspie, and G. Chamberlain, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992-1996), 1:119, note that δόξα has both a subjective sense—“the opinion which others have of one, estimation, repute”—and an objective sense—“richness, honour, glory; magnificence, brightness, splendour.” Gerhard Kittel, “δόξα,” *TDNT* 2:232-255, observes that the LXX dominantly translates יְצַחַם as δόξα (in about half of the occurrences of δόξα). This instance of rendering ιτόνη as δόξα is unique.

¹⁷ The aorist passive indicative ἐξηράνθη from ξηραίνω (“to dry up”; passive “to be withered”) is the LXX rendering of יְצַחַם.

¹⁸ Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, 570. ἐξέπτεσεν is the aorist active indicative of ἐκπίπτω, “to fall off.” Here the aorist “vividly expresses the rapid blooming and fading of herbage.”

¹⁹ δέ is always postpositive; here it takes second position (Wesley J. Perschbacher, *New Testament Greek Syntax: An Illustrated Manual* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1995], 76).

²⁰ ρῆμα, the synonym of λόγος, is used here. ρῆμα is “that which is spoken,” a “declaration,” “saying,” “speech,” “command,” “direction,” “promise,” or even a “prophecy” (Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 407). It functions well as a translation of יְצַחַם in that it also connotes “word, matter, thing” (cf. Gen 15:1; 18:14, 25; 19:21; Lust, et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 2:416).

²¹ The MT has יְהֹוָה יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהֹוָה, “but the word of our God will stand forever/for eternity.” “Will stand” (מָקוֹם) portrays a tangible difference between the standing word and the falling flower. αἰῶνα is “a space or period of time,” “a lifetime,” “an age,” or “an infinitely long space of time,” “eternity” (LSJ, 23).

²² εὐαγγελισθέντες is the aorist passive participial form of εὐαγγελίζω, “to proclaim the good news.” It is specifically “to announce the good tidings of the gospel [of Jesus Christ]” (Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 222).

Introduction: Historical and Literary Context of 1 Peter

The Gospel accounts reveal Peter to be a man of extremes, with passionate devotion and commitment to Christ, yet also receiving some of the sharpest rebukes in the NT.²³ He writes his epistle to the church in Asia Minor with "sweet grace and comfort, the result of deep humiliation and rich experience," and with a spirit "most humble, meek, gentle, tender, loving, and lovely."²⁴ By the point of his writing, Peter was the head apostle and leader of the Jerusalem church.

Peter addresses his epistle to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1), all provinces of the Roman Empire.²⁵ B. van Elderen observes that Peter may have been ministering in this area—between the Taurus Mountains and the Black Sea—during Paul's first or second missionary journey, with reference to the Holy Spirit keeping Paul and Timothy from preaching in Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6-7).²⁶

William Ramsay sees the epistle as being "impregnated with Roman thought to a degree beyond any other book in the Bible," and thus deduced it was written from Rome.²⁷ If the writer is Peter the apostle, he must have written 1 Peter before his martyrdom under Nero.²⁸ Van Elderen states that "Silvanus was Peter's amanuensis when he wrote 1 Peter (1 Pet 5:12)—possibly in the late 50s or early 60s."²⁹ The syntax of 1 Peter "indicates an author whose first

²³ B. van Elderen, "Peter, Simon," *ZPEB* 4:733-739. Van Elderen further states that Peter's "positive traits are inspiring and challenging; his negative traits are a warning. Enthusiasm and devotion must be tempered by a balanced and informed perspective. ...nonetheless he stands as a stellar example of bold allegiance and glowing achievements in the proclamation of the Gospel."

²⁴ Philip Schaff, *Apostolic Christianity: From the Birth of Christ to the Death of St. John: A.D. 1-100*, vol. 1 in *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1858; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 201, 255.

²⁵ Lesley Adkins and Roy A. Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 113-115. Adkins and Adkins provide brief descriptions of the territories and of their acquisitions by Rome: King Attalus III of Pergamum bequeathed Asia to Rome in 133 BC; King Nicomedes IV bequeathed Bithynia in 74 BC and Pontus was added in 65 (forming Bithynia et Pontus); Galatia was formed in 25 BC; and Cappadocia was annexed in AD 17.

²⁶ van Elderen, "Peter, Simon," 4:739.

²⁷ William M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire Before A.D. 170* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893), 286. Ramsay holds that 1 Peter might have been composed about AD 80 because it appears that the writer was familiar with James, Romans, and Ephesians. However, the similarities between 1 Peter and James more likely stem from both writers having been present at Jesus' teaching, e.g., the Sermon on the Mount and other sermons (compare Matt 13:10-17 and 1 Pet 1:10-12; Matt 24:35 and 1 Pet 1:25; John 1:13 and 3:3 and James 1:18 and 1 Pet 1:23; Matt 26:41 and James 5:8 and 1 Pet 4:7; etc.).

²⁸ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 33-34, 63. See also Schaff, *Apostolic Christianity*, 252-260. Schaff dates Peter's death at AD 68, noting that various scholars have placed it every year between 64 and 69. The Neronian persecution took place in AD 64. See Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome*, 15.32-47.

²⁹ van Elderen, "Peter, Simon," 4:738.

language was not Greek³⁰—seemingly a Palestinian (Jewish) tradesman. The interior and exterior evidence of 1 Peter appear to point to Simon Peter the apostle as the author.

Peter writes his epistle using "massive material from the Jewish tradition."³¹ He explicitly cites Scripture nine times and alludes to it twenty times more—"a remarkably large number for an epistle of its length."³² His audience is predominantly Gentile, and they have been exposed to the Old Testament previously because of the Jewish Diaspora.³³ First Peter "looks forward" to a period of persecution "as the condition in which the Christians have to live;"³⁴ the organized persecution under Domitian and Trajan is yet to come at the time of writing (likely AD 62-63).³⁵

Scholars have asserted that the purpose of 1 Peter may be its use as either a baptismal³⁶ or a paschal³⁷ liturgy.³⁸ Between the themes of Christ's passion and resurrection (1 Pet 1:3, 11, 21;

³⁰ Karen H. Jobes, "The Syntax of 1 Peter: Just How Good is the Greek?" *BBR* 13 (2003): 159-173. Jobes' comprehensive study of the syntax of the epistle helpfully begins by acknowledging the context of a bilingual society, which North American scholars have ignored to the detriment of authorial studies of the book (particularly in concluding that Peter the Palestinian fisherman *certainly* couldn't have written well in Greek). Jobes notes that "in these areas, even formally uneducated people can develop a relatively high level of proficiency, especially if exposed to the second language early in life."

³¹ Edgar Krentz, "Creating a Past: 1 Peter and Christian Identity," *BR* 53 (2008): 41-57. Krentz lists the use of διασπορά (1:1), formal citations of the OT (Lev 11:44 in 1 Pet 1:16; Isa 40:6-8 in 1 Pet 1:24-25; Isa 28:16 in 1 Pet 2:6; Ps 34:13-17 in 1 Pet 3:10-12), OT allusions (Ps 33:9 in 1 Pet 2:3; Ps 117:22 [LXX] in 1 Pet 2:7; Isa 8:14 in 1 Pet 2:8; Isa 8:12-13 in 1 Pet 3:14-15; Isa 11:2 in 1 Pet 4:14; Prov 11:31 [LXX] in 1 Pet 4:18; Prov 3:34 [LXX] in 1 Pet 5:5; and Ps 22:14 in 1 Pet 5:5), the interpretation of Isa 53:4-6, 9 in 1 Pet 2:21-25, the use of language of "a kingdom of priests" and "a chosen people" in 1 Peter 2:9-10 (see Exod 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; 10:15), the reference to the names of Hosea's children (Hosea 1:6, 9-10 // 1 Pet 2:10), and the allusion "in midrashic fashion" to the Noah flood story in 3:20-22.

³² Buist M. Fanning, "A Theology of Peter and Jude," in *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck and Darrell L. Bock (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 437-471. See also Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 24-25.

³³ Christoph Stenschke, "Reading First Peter in the Context of Early Christian Mission," *TynBul* 60 (2009): 107-126.

³⁴ Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 281.

³⁵ William B. Barclay, "1 Peter," in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*, ed. Michael J. Kruger (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 453-470.

³⁶ Hans Windisch, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, ed. Herbert Preisker, 3rd ed., HNT 15 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1951); and Martin H. Scharlemann, "Why the Kuriou in 1 Peter 1:25?" *CTM* 30 (1959): 352-356. See also the survey material in Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament, Its Background, Growth, and Content* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1965), 257; and Werner G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. A. J. Mattill, Jr., NTL (London: SCM, 1966), 293-296. For an argument against the baptismal liturgy view, see Frederick W. Danker, "1 Peter 1:24-2:17: A Consolatory Pericope," *ZNW* 58 (1967): 93-102.

³⁷ Frank L. Cross, *1 Peter: A Paschal Liturgy* (London: Mowbray, 1954); A. R. C. Leaney, "1 Peter and the Passover: An Interpretation," *NTS* 10 (1964): 238-251. For an argument against the paschal liturgy view, see T. C. G. Thornton, "1 Peter: A Paschal Liturgy?" *JTS* 12 (1961): 14-26.

³⁸ Against the view of 1 Peter as a liturgical piece are W. C. van Unnik, "Christianity According to 1 Peter," *ExpTim* 68 (1956): 79-83, and Charles F. D. Moule, "The Nature and Purpose of 1 Peter," *NTS* 3 (1956): 1-11, among others. For a unique view, see Norman Hillyer, "First Peter and the Feast of Tabernacles," *TynBul* 21 (1970): 39-70. Hillyer makes a fascinating connection between Christian baptism and the Jewish-Christian Feast of Tabernacles/Sukkoth. He finds the dual themes of *Sukkoth* (remembering Israel's wilderness wandering as "elect

2:19-21; 3:18-22; 4:13; 5:1), one explicit reference to baptism (3:21), and a paschal reference to Christ "the Lamb" (1:19; see also, perhaps, 1:13 // Exod 12:11), it seems that "the subject underlying I Peter is not the Pasha, or Feast of Redemption, but rather the readers' redemption from earthly trials and tribulations."³⁹ Peter's readers certainly faced trials in this time and place. Thus, the primary subjects Peter covers in this epistle are suffering, hope, and obedience.⁴⁰ Peter writes his epistle with a "constant dialectical process between dogmatics and ethics."⁴¹ V. P. Furnish concisely summarizes the theme of 1 Peter as "the worldly sojourn of God's elect people, what their election promises for them and demands of them."⁴² Danker notes the author's "great stress on the fact that the new community is an authentic continuation of OT Israel"⁴³—God's chosen people who sojourn in the wilderness. Believers are called to holy living and right relationships both "*within*, to the Christian community, and *without*, to the hostile world."⁴⁴ Indeed, the major point Peter makes is that of right living while sojourning as foreigners in the world.⁴⁵ Christians sojourn as foreigners while they await the full coming of the kingdom of God. They are not citizens of this world (John 18:26), but are called to live holy lives while in "exile" awaiting the consummation. This paper seeks to examine 1 Peter 1:22-25 and its contribution to the theme of right conduct while sojourning as exiles in the present world.

Exegetical Comments

The ethical exhortations of vv. 13-25 correspond to the preceding unit of theological affirmation (vv. 3-12).⁴⁶ The catechetical triad of faith, hope, and love (cf. 1 Cor 13:13; Col 1:4-5; 1 Thess 1:3; 5:8) may be seen in v. 21's emphasis on faith and hope with the following

exiles"/sojourners and their call to be a royal priesthood; cf. Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:5, 9) and baptism woven together throughout 1 Peter.

³⁹ Robert W. Thurston, "Interpreting First Peter," *JETS* 17 (1974): 171-182.

⁴⁰ Thurston, "Interpreting First Peter," 172-173.

⁴¹ van Unnik, "Christianity According to 1 Peter," 81-82. Van Unnik notes that this balance "may be illustrated with these verses: 'And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear' (1:17); 'love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again' (1:22b-23). This new life, regenerated by the abiding word of God, is still to be lived in this unchanged world, where the 'adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'"

⁴² Victor Paul Furnish, "Elect Sojourners in Christ: An Approach to the Theology of I Peter," *PSTJ* 28 (1975): 1-11. See also Barcley, "1 Peter," 453-470. Indeed, the major theme of 1 Peter is the implications of Christian conversion. Van Unnik, "Christianity According to 1 Peter," 81, states that "this change from darkness into light means a change of life. The Epistle constantly shows this double character: (1) this new faith implies a new attitude; (2) the new life finds its strength in this new relation with God."

⁴³ Danker, "1 Peter 1:24-2:17," 99.

⁴⁴ Mark Boyley, "1 Peter—A Mission Document?" *RTR* 63 (2004): 72-86.

⁴⁵ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 39.

⁴⁶ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 73.

imperative to love in v. 22.⁴⁷ Verses 22-25 serve as a sort of postscript to vv. 13-21. This postscript draws on a "specific testimony out of the past" (i.e., an OT passage) in order to "claim for both the salvation and the message on which it is based an eternally enduring future."⁴⁸ Peter's quotation from Isa 40:6-8 is the "centerpiece" of the section, and he makes a "midrashic application of it celebrating the proclaimed gospel by which the readers of the epistle came to faith."⁴⁹

v. 22 -- *Your souls having been purified by obedience to the truth, in sincere brotherly love from the heart love one another earnestly.*

In the previous section (1:13-21) Peter exhorts his hearers to "hope," to "be holy," to "conduct yourselves with fear"—imperatives that involve believers' relationship "to the God of grace—Father, Judge, Redeemer."⁵⁰ Now Peter moves to an exhortation concerning relationships between Christians. As is usual for him, Peter begins the paragraph with an exhortation.⁵¹ In vv. 22 and 23 he repeats vocabulary used earlier in the chapter (ἀγνίζω, vv. 2, 15; ὑπακοή, vv. 2, 14; ἀναγεννάω, v. 3), presenting the order of conception as "truth, regeneration, obedience, purity, love of the brethren."⁵² In beautiful contrast to certain modern theologies where truth and love are pitted against one another, Peter binds truth and love together "as the great mark of true holiness."⁵³

Some scholars take the "purified souls" of v. 22 to denote baptismal regeneration,⁵⁴ while some take it as a reference to baptism in general.⁵⁵ However, the preposition ἐν/"by" indicates

⁴⁷ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 74, 80. Michaels states rightly that "if the common faith and hope (v 21) is the theological bond of the Christian community, love is its practical bond. If faith and hope are what give the community its identity as God's 'chosen people' (v 1), love is the visible outworking of that identity."

⁴⁸ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 73.

⁴⁹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 73.

⁵⁰ Donald G. Miller, *On This Rock: A Commentary on 1 Peter*, Princeton Theological Monographs 34 (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1993), 175.

⁵¹ Barcley, "1 Peter," 457. Barcley observes that except for 1:3-9 and 2:4-10, every paragraph in the epistle begins with a command.

⁵² Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901; repr., Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978), 122.

⁵³ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 74.

⁵⁴ Francis Wright Beare, "The Teaching of First Peter," *AthR* 27 (1945): 284-296.

⁵⁵ Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 2nd ed., AB 37 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday; repr., Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 86-87; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 78-79; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 76. Davids holds that the "image of purification is that of OT washings that made one ready to participate in the cult (Exod 19:10; Josh 3:5; John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18). This figure was taken over in the NT and stood for both inward purification through repentance from sin (Jas. 4:8; 1 John 3:3) and Christian initiation, which included repentance, commitment to Christ, and baptism, as here (cf. 1 Cor 6:11)."

that "obedience to the truth" has caused this purification. Wayne Grudem notes that "obedience to the truth" may mean either conversion (believing the gospel) or growth in moral purity after conversion ("obedience to God's commands in daily living").⁵⁶ Grudem elaborates, stating that "truth" here "carries a sense of the true way pleasing to God, including not merely the gospel message but the whole of Christian teaching on doctrine and life—cf. 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4; 2 Pet 1:12; 2:2."⁵⁷ Many scholars take this "obedience to the truth" to mean obedience to God's word in the gospel. To "obey the gospel" is "to devote oneself to God through faith (1:21)."⁵⁸ To live "in obedience to Jesus Christ, then, is to live in obedience to the truth" (cf. John 8:12; 14:6; 1 Pet 5:12).⁵⁹ J. R. Michaels makes an interesting connection in that "the phrase 'purified your souls' echoes the language of Jer 6:16 LXX, 'you will find purification for your souls,' a passage quoted differently in Matt 11:29 ['rest for your souls'] (a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew) ...suggests the thought that it was by coming to Jesus that they had received purification."⁶⁰ The believers' souls, then, have been purified in Christ by their receiving the gospel.

The purpose of God's setting apart believers by their obedience to the truth is for them to "relate to others as God intended human beings to relate,"⁶¹ for them to love one another (cf. John 13:24). Christians are to love one another with a sincere (ἀνυπόκριτον, lit., "unhypocritical")⁶² and "guileless" brotherly love.⁶³ This φιλαδελφία is not merely that love between natural siblings, but, for the Christian, is a new sense of "love for those who are brethren by virtue of the ἀναγέννησις."⁶⁴ Peter exhorts his readers to love the brothers "unremittingly," with an affection that is "constant and enduring, unshaken by adversity or shifting circumstances (cf. *ektene* in 4:8)."⁶⁵ The adversity Christians face—in imperial Asia Minor and in every time and place—is a constant, and must not hinder their love for the brethren.

⁵⁶ Wayne Grudem, *I Peter*, TNTC 17 (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 87.

⁵⁷ Grudem, *I Peter*, 88.

⁵⁸ Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 125.

⁵⁹ Miller, *On This Rock*, 176.

⁶⁰ Michaels, *I Peter*, 74.

⁶¹ Jobes, *I Peter*, 123.

⁶² Clowney, *The Message of I Peter*, 74. Clowney observes that the term "unhypocritical" is always used to describe love in the NT. See also Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 79, who lists Rom 12:9; 2 Cor 6:6; 1 Tim 1:5; and Jas 3:7 as examples.

⁶³ Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 82.

⁶⁴ Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 123. Bigg notes also that in 2 Macc 15:14, "Jeremiah is called ὁ φιλάδελφος οὗτος because of his love for all Jews."

⁶⁵ Michaels, *I Peter*, 76.

The adverb "earnestly" (ἐκτενῶς) calls for a love that is deep and intense, even "stretched" or "strained." E. Clowney notes that "the same term describes the earnestness of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane."⁶⁶ Further, the aorist imperative "love" carries a sense of urgency.⁶⁷ When persecution (even martyrdom) is coming, Christians must love one another "here and now," before the opportunity passes. This love comes "from the heart," from the center of the person, "the spring of moral action, the seat of one's very being"—one might even say "from the bottom of the heart."⁶⁸

In addition to the hope of the future inheritance of glory in Christ (1 Pet 1:3-9; 5:4, 10), believers also enjoy the present blessing of "life in a mutually loving community."⁶⁹ Salvation for the believer is not limited to only deliverance *from* the power of sin—it is deliverance *to* "glad and total obedience to the will of God" and *as* a people "bound in covenant relations to their delivering God."⁷⁰ Karen Jobes explains well:

To be chosen by God and set apart by the Spirit for the purpose of participating in the covenant in Christ (1:2) means necessarily coming into relationship with others who are also so chosen. The Christian life cannot be lived authentically in isolation.⁷¹

Salvation is not merely individual; it is corporate. Individual persons are reborn into the new life. "But persons are born into a family and share a common life with all others who have been born into the same family of faith" (cf. Matt 23:8-9; Mark 3:31-35; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 2:17; etc.), thus Peter's epistle is "directed not to a few isolated individuals, but to the whole Christian fellowship as a body."⁷² In this community, "love is the rule of conduct"⁷³ (cf. John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:23).

John Calvin notes that by nature humans are slothful—especially when it comes to loving our neighbors in sincerity—and this must be combatted with a daily stimulation to fervour and

⁶⁶ Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter*, 74.

⁶⁷ Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, 570. B. van Elderen, "Peter, First Epistle," *ZPEB* 4:723-726, notes the frequent occurrence of participles in the letter, and observes as well the striking use of aorist imperatives, which sound "a note of immediacy and urgency." Travis B. Williams, "Reconsidering the Imperatival Participle in 1 Peter," *WTJ* 73 (2011): 59-78. Williams sees no reason to deduce that the participial forms of imperatives within 1 Peter are any less direct or firm than finite imperatival forms (as others have argued).

⁶⁸ Miller, *On This Rock*, 177.

⁶⁹ Boyley, "1 Peter—A Mission Document?" 78.

⁷⁰ Donald G. Miller, "Deliverance and Destiny: Salvation in First Peter," *Int* 9 (1955): 413-425.

⁷¹ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 123.

⁷² Miller, "Deliverance and Destiny," 423.

⁷³ Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 79.

earnestness.⁷⁴ Indeed, this sincere brotherly love is costly; it comes at the cost of our natural self-centeredness, which "must be set aside and the interests of the other moved to center stage."⁷⁵ There is no room for growth and maturation if one strives to be self-centered and individualistic—clear marks of pridefulness. Growth only occurs in the context of Christian fellowship by way of mutual up-building (Rom 14:19; cf. 1 Thess 5:11). This fellowship is a "fellowship which must deepen and remain for all eternity."⁷⁶ Christians must humbly give up love of self for love of the brethren. Happily, Christians themselves are not the source of this love. God is the initial source of love, and he "continues to sustain and renew this love... It is God's love born in us which becomes our love to others"⁷⁷ (1 John 4:7-21).

v. 23 -- Having been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable,

Through the living and abiding word of God.

This unique verb—"to be born again"—is used only here and 1:3 in the whole NT⁷⁸ (although this rich concept of "new birth" is present in John 1:13; 3:1-15; Titus 3:5-7; James 1:18; 1 Pet 2:2).⁷⁹ This second perfect participle within the passage "indicates that the new birth through the word corresponds to this purification through obedience to the truth"—in the one event of conversion, human action is implied in "by obedience," while "having been born again" then "characterizes it as the gift of the Creator."⁸⁰ God's word is living in that it is "life-giving or creative" (cf. Gen 1:3-31; Ps 33:9; Phil 2:16; Heb 4:12).⁸¹

The imperishable *σπορά* (a word focusing more on the sowing than on the *σπέρμα* as such)⁸² appears to mean the word of God (i.e., the gospel) itself (cf. 1 John 3:9).⁸³ Believers are born of imperishable seed, *through* the word of God.

⁷⁴ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, ed. and trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 56.

⁷⁵ Miller, *On This Rock*, 175.

⁷⁶ Grudem, *1 Peter*, 92.

⁷⁷ Miller, *On This Rock*, 178.

⁷⁸ Furnish, "Elect Sojourners in Christ," 7.

⁷⁹ Fanning, "A Theology of Peter and Jude," 446. Fanning notes that though the theme appears in these passages, different terminology is used in each.

⁸⁰ Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 126.

⁸¹ Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 80.

⁸² Michaels, *1 Peter*, 76.

⁸³ Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 80-81. See also Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: Volume II: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1-2 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 109-110. Witherington makes the case that because the purification "comes from the internalization of God's word" and the new birth too "comes about through the word," it is clear that no reference to baptism is present within 1 Pet 1:22-25.

The final clause in v. 23—διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος—is somewhat unclear, but the traditional translation—"through the living and enduring/abiding word of God"—fits the syntax and the literary context (i.e., the participles directly modify λόγου and are indirectly related to θεοῦ).⁸⁴ Further, the "word as received (*spora*) is incorruptible because it reflects the permanence of the word as given (*logos*) by God."⁸⁵ The living and eternal word of God has caused the Christians to be reborn of an incorruptible, imperishable seed. They love one another because they have been "reborn with an eternal nature, and love is the essence of that nature."⁸⁶

v. 24 -- For: *All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass;*

The grass fades and the flower falls.

Peter introduces a quote from Isaiah using διότι, which also validates his preceding statement.⁸⁷ He is enforcing the point that "apart from Christ, whatever glory human beings achieve will inevitably perish. But because the word of the Lord abides forever, as imperishable seed it generates imperishable, or eternal, life."⁸⁸ As grass withers and flowers fall,⁸⁹ so does all flesh—all humankind. Here, Peter "metaphorically pronounces judgment on the world in its self-sufficiency (cf. 1 John 2:17) and on pagan culture in its hostility to the Christian communities both in Rome and Asia Minor."⁹⁰

Peter quotes the Greek Old Testament version of Isaiah 40, which omits v. 7⁹¹ of Isa 40:6-8. Unusual here is the LXX's use of καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου for ḫqđ. Peter's καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῆς retains the third-person possessive ending of the Hebrew. What is meant by "all their

⁸⁴ Eugene A. LaVerdiere, "A Grammatical Ambiguity in 1 Pet 1:23," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 89-94. For the opposite conclusion, see Eric F. F. Bishop, "The Word of a Living and Unchanging God: I Peter 1,23," *MW* 43 (1953): 15-17.

⁸⁵ LaVerdiere, "A Grammatical Ambiguity in 1 Pet 1:23," 92.

⁸⁶ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 123.

⁸⁷ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 77. See also Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 123.

⁸⁸ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 125.

⁸⁹ ἐξηράνθη and ἐξέπεσεν here are gnomic aorists, which "express proverbial truths or events universally observed to happen in human experience" (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 78).

⁹⁰ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 78. Peter will continue the theme of judgment throughout the epistle: 1 Pet 2:8; 3:16-17; 4:17-18; 5:5b).

תָּהַנְּ/all the glory of man/all their glory" here? The Greek—both LXX and Peter's version⁹²—certainly seem sensible in the denotation of δόξα as "fame, renown, honor."⁹³ The fame of man is as nothing compared to the renown, honor, and glory of God and his powerful word. Is this, however, a faithful translation of תָּהַנְּ? This term overwhelmingly refers to Yahweh's steadfast lovingkindness and covenant loyalty.⁹⁴ It could mean here that "humans are not capable of preserving loyalty for long."⁹⁵ L. J. Kuyper makes an interesting argument for "strength."⁹⁶ In the passage, Isaiah "brings to the fore the characteristics of transitoriness and weakness to bring out more sharply the contrast with the permanence and enduring quality of the word of God," and here means "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (cf. Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4)."⁹⁷

This brief quote of Scripture must be understood within the context of Isaiah. Chapters 36 to 39 recount the narrative of the Assyrian invasion of Judah during Hezekiah's reign (cf. 2 Kgs

⁹² Katie Marcar, "The Quotations of Isaiah in 1 Peter: A Text-Critical Analysis," *TC* 21 (2016): 1-21. In her thorough study, Marcar makes a case for Peter having used the Old Greek rather than the LXX here. She notes of the term in v. 24 that "in the more than 250 places where the OG translates תָּהַנְּ, this is the only place in the OG where δόξα is used." Marcar concludes that there are unique, identical readings of Isaiah found in 1 Peter and Romans, and that other quotations of Isaiah were taken from an unrevised Greek OT text. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 77, believes that Peter is indeed using the LXX and follows it closely. The two deviations (ώς before χόρτος, which makes the phrase a simile rather than a metaphor; and substitution of αὐτῆς for ἀνθρώπου) may be explained by Peter's use of a "LXX manuscript tradition different at small points from that reflected in modern critical editions," rather than his own editorial activity.

⁹³ BAGD, 203-204.

⁹⁴ Yahweh's "lovingkindness" is a major theme throughout the whole OT, appearing over 200 times (examples include Gen 19:19; 39:21; Exod 15:13; Ps 21:7 [Hb. 8]; 31:16, 21 [Hb. 17, 22]; 32:10; 33:22; 36:5, 7, 10 [Hb. 6, 8, 11]; 143:8). It is "mercy, kindness, goodness" (BDB, 338-339). It speaks of redemption from one's enemy or from trouble. It is the refrain of Psalm 136: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his **steadfast love** endures forever!" (Ps 136:1). It is unfailing love, mercy, but also denotes a faithfulness or loyalty to a covenant (Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, trans. Alfred Gottschalk, ed. Elias L. Epstein [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1967]). Covenants are based on relationships, and Israel's relationship with Yahweh is based on his eternal תָּהַנְּ. This particular term of love "often takes verbs of action, 'do,' 'keep,' and so refers to acts of love as well as to the attribute. The word 'lovingkindness' of the KJV is archaic, but not far from the fulness of the meaning of the word" (R. Laird Harris, "תָּהַנְּ," *TWOT* 1:305-307).

⁹⁵ John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, WBC 25 (Waco: Word, 1987), 82.

⁹⁶ Lester Jacob Kuyper, "The Meaning of תָּהַנְּ in Isa 40:6," *VT* 13 (1963): 489-492. Kuyper pulls from various Psalms which mention תָּהַנְּ in militant context: Pss 59:10-11, 17-18; 143:12; also "mighty acts" or "good deeds" in the parallel passages of 2 Kgs 20:20 // 2 Chr 32:32 and 2 Chr 35:26 // Neh 13:14; and also the strange clause in Jon 2:9, "[those] revering vanities of emptiness, their faithfulness [תָּהַנְּ] they will forsake." Kuyper states of the Jonah passage that because Glueck "maintains that תָּהַנְּ is Jahweh's relationship of faithfulness which expresses itself in help... Glueck's insistence on this primary meaning prevents him from allowing the derived meaning of strength or might to stand in its own right." Kuyper cites Norman Henry Snaith, "The Meaning of תָּהַנְּ," *ExpTim* 55 (1944): 108-111, as translating it as "firmness" or "reliability." Snaith's definition has more to do with the traditional Glueckian nuances of covenant fidelity or faithfulness. See also C. F. Whitley, "The Semantic Range of *Hesed*," *Bib* 62 (1981): 519-526. Whitley asserts that in addition to "steadfast love" and "loyalty," תָּהַנְּ contains nuances of "fortitude, confidence, pledge, resolution and health." Kuyper's conclusion is that since "strength" could fit the context of Isa 40:6-8, it should be translated thusly (Kuyper, "The Meaning of תָּהַנְּ in Isa 40:6," 492). In agreement with Kuyper is Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 3:33-34.

⁹⁷ Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 3:35.

18:9-20:19 // 2 Chr 32:1-32). Hezekiah, a faithful king of Judah (2 Kgs 18:3-7), called his people to trust in the Lord in the face of this formidable attack: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles” (2 Chr 32:7-8a ESV). Hezekiah prayed against King Sennacherib, not merely for the deliverance of his people but against this enemy who came “to mock the living God” (Isa 37:17 ESV). Hezekiah’s prayer was for this deliverance so that “all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the LORD” (Isa 37:20 ESV). The Hezekiah narrative in Isaiah ends abruptly with Isaiah’s prophecy of the invasion of Babylon (Isa 39:5-8). It is followed immediately with a prophecy juxtaposed to the battle narrative and the prophecy of calamity:

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins (Isa 40:1-2 ESV).

Chapter 40 of Isaiah goes on to proclaim the coming messenger who heralds the Messiah (vv. 3-5), to proclaim that unlike all flesh “the word of our God will stand forever” (vv. 6-8)⁹⁸ and to proclaim the Lord’s coming with might, extolling his attributes of strength and gentleness, justice and wisdom, power and eternality (vv. 9-31). In sum, Isaiah 40 heralds Yahweh’s coming Messiah as a response to the oppression of his people (chs. 36-39).⁹⁹

The use of this passage fits perfectly in the context of 1 Peter. God’s people are oppressed—1:23-24 reminds them of the brevity of life¹⁰⁰—and the greater persecution of Babylon is coming (Isa 39:5-7; cf. 1 Pet 5:13). But the Messiah is coming in judgment to destroy Babylon and stop her from warring against his chosen people (Isa 13:1-22; 14:1-23; 21:1-10; 40:1; 47:1-15; 48:12-22; cf. Rev 14:8; 16:19; 18:2, 10, 21). God’s prophet has spoken: “the foundations of the announcement and the attitudes it calls for do not lie in human capacities but depend solely on

⁹⁸ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66, 78-81*, observes that vv. 1-8 are “a tight unity and their relation to v. 9 mirrors the structure of chaps. 40-55 as a whole.” Watts also sees the solo voice in vv. 6-7 as skeptical of the announcements of vv. 1-2, 3-5, in its pessimistic view of humanity.

⁹⁹ Interestingly, as Isa 40:6, 7, 8 compare “all flesh” to fading “grass” (רַקֵּחַ), the word of the Lord spoken through Isaiah states that the Assyrian invasion—Yahweh’s plan “from days of old”—will include blighting the people “like grass [רַקֵּחַ] on the housetops.” Even Israel is not immune to fading and falling like the grass.

¹⁰⁰ Thurston, “Interpreting First Peter,” 176-177. Thurston also finds the persecution theme in Peter’s mentions of the transitory nature of physical possessions (1:7, 18) and the “fiery trial” (4:12), which he takes as a reference to the Neronian persecution in particular.

the word of God. He has given it and he will sustain it.”¹⁰¹ Here, Peter calls his readers to consider a section of the OT that reflects an “adverse situation and moral crisis” similar to their own; as in the other NT epistles, “OT teaching is normative for the Christian communities since they stand in an organic relationship with the OT people of God.”¹⁰² Peter’s appeal to Scripture shows his readers that “despite circumstances causing their suffering, they are nevertheless participating in the eternal plan of God.”¹⁰³ He reminds them that it is blessed to suffer for righteousness’ sake (3:14; cf. Matt 5:10) and encourages them to “entrust their souls” to God while suffering (4:19).

Peter speaks against the δόξα of the mighty Roman Empire and all empires to come. As impressive and formidable as imperial Rome was, even the greatest “glories of humanity are quickly fading in comparison with the eternal glories achieved by Christ’s suffering (1 Pet 1:11).”¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the fading δόξα of man is nothing compared with the “eschatological ‘glory’ of Jesus Christ made possible by his resurrection (vv. 11, 21) and waiting to be revealed to those who trust in him (v. 7; 4:13; 5:1, 4).”¹⁰⁵ As Hezekiah encouraged his people, so does Peter. As Assyria attacked the people of God, so Rome persecuted the church. However, “with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God” (2 Chr 32:8 ESV), who cannot be overcome. As in the book of Isaiah where the persecution of God’s people is followed with the comfort of the coming Messiah, so too Peter encourages the church with the promise of his coming (cf. 1:4-5, 7; 2:12; 4:17; 5:4, 10).

v. 25 -- *But the word of the Lord remains forever.*

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Peter emends “the word of our God”¹⁰⁶ to “the word of the Lord.”¹⁰⁷ The “Lord” is Christ (1:3, 13; 3:15); indeed, Peter does apply OT statements referring to God the Father to Jesus the Lord.¹⁰⁸ Christ’s word remains forever.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰¹ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 83.

¹⁰² Gene L. Green, “The Use of the Old Testament for Christian Ethics in 1 Peter,” *TynBul* 41 (1990): 276-289. Although Green focuses on Peter’s use of Psalm 33 and Isaiah 53, his conclusion can be seen in Peter’s OT quotations and allusions throughout the epistle.

¹⁰³ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 125.

¹⁰⁴ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 125.

¹⁰⁵ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 78.

¹⁰⁶ Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 3:35. Young points out the first-person plural pronominal suffix “our” (וָנוּ) and its signifying of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and his people.

¹⁰⁷ For a brief but strong argument on the influence of Jesus’ OT hermeneutic on Peter, see Thomas D. Lea, “How Peter Learned the Old Testament,” *SwJT* 22 (1980): 96-102.

Peter recalls “the word that was preached to you.” He refers to the εὐαγγέλιον itself: the good news of the gospel, which comprises the doctrines of the gospel, the preaching of the gospel, and instruction in the gospel.¹¹⁰ It is the good news that Christ has died and arisen to atone for the sins of his people, freeing them from the dominion of sin; and it includes subsequent implications for Christian life. B. Reicke translates v. 25b explicitly, “that is the word which has been preached as a gospel to you.”¹¹¹ Here (v. 25b) Peter uses ρῆμα, following the Greek text of Isa 40:8 (as in v. 25a). No contrast between ρῆμα and the λόγος of v. 23b is intended. ρῆμα is found in the LXX “and then is picked up by Peter in his comment to make it clear that it applies to the word he was speaking of in v. 23.”¹¹²

The verb of v. 25b, εὐγγελίζομαι, is found also following Isa 40:6-8 in 40:9 (LXX). It refers to an “announcement, which is always oral,” and this announcement “takes on a solemn character to proclaim God’s interventions and benefits: ‘Climb up on a high mountain, messenger of Zion, raise your voice forcefully, messenger of Jerusalem... Behold, the Lord God is coming in power’ (Isa 40:9).”¹¹³ Isaiah foretold the proclamation of the coming of the Lord. Those Peter ministers to have seen and heard of his coming—the “word that was preached to you”—and now await his second coming. This “word that was preached” has the power to transform lives. Here Peter “ascribes power and efficacy to God’s word, according to the authority of the Prophet, so that it can confer on us what is real, solid, and eternal. For this was what the Prophet had in view, that there is no permanent life but in God, and that this is communicated to us by the word.”¹¹⁴ Peter’s readers, now living an imperishable life in God, continue to hold fast to his living and abiding word as they await Christ’s return.

¹⁰⁸ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 648.

¹⁰⁹ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 82. Watts asserts that neither the term מִלְיאָה nor the “temporal concepts of that period dealt with eternity or forever.” מִלְיאָה means merely “age,” and can imply continuation for “the God-willed length of time.” See also Simon J. DeVries, *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); and James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, SBT 33 (London: SCM, 1962). Barr believes that οἰών, “age,” is a poor choice for “eternity/forever” in the LXX translation, and prefers the plural as it indicates a succession of “ages,” which “only God is able to survey.” This does fairly well to render מִלְיאָה (from מִלְאָה, “hide”), which indicates “the time which is hidden from human perception or comprehension.” Barr takes οἰῶνα in 1 Pet 1:25 to mean the totality of time. (Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, 64-85).

¹¹⁰ Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, 222.

¹¹¹ Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 83.

¹¹² Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 79.

¹¹³ Ceslas Spicq, “εὐγγελίζομαι,” *TLNT* 2:82-92.

¹¹⁴ Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 59.

Conclusion

As in the remainder of his epistle, Peter encourages his readers with the eschatological hope of Christ's coming. Though they face trials and persecutions, they may cling to Christ in hope. He has caused them to be born again (1:3, 23) by an imperishable seed, by which they are now related as brothers between whom exists a sincere φιλαδελφία. As John says, "we know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers" (1 John 3:14). The brethren are to mutually encourage and to love one another as they await the coming of the Messiah. While facing the persecution of this world, they know that the oppressors will one day be overcome by the truly glorious Messiah, Jesus Christ, when he brings his kingdom in final consummation. In the meanwhile, they are "suffering and rejoicing, doing well towards the brethren and the outside world as a reflection of the excellencies of their God,"¹¹⁵ while they sojourn as exiles in the present world. May Christ's church continue to love the brethren well, and to be encouraged by the wonderful hope presented here by Peter.

¹¹⁵ van Unnik, "Christianity According to 1 Peter," 83.

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