

“Holy, Hope-filled Fear”

1 Peter 1:17-19

June 4, 2023

VIDEO: *“Take Inventory”*

What might be missing in your personal pursuit of holiness?
What are we, the Church missing sometimes?
What is the lost world missing?
Here’s a hint...

VIDEO: *“The Church Let The World Go To Hell”*

INTRO: What are some of the strangest combinations that are designed to go together... that you’ve ever seen?

- ~ Oxymorons... “pretty ugly,” “sad smile,” “adult kids”
- ~ Paradoxes... truths in apparent contradictions

“This is the beginning of the end.”

“Deep down inside, people can be really shallow.”

“The more we learn, the more ignorant we realize we are.”

“One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.”

“...saved by grace thru faith; not by works... but for works...”

You must die to self to be born again... (Luke 14:23 & John 3:3)

Christian love & Christ-like hate...

John 6:44 / Mark 1:15 & 1 John 2:6 / Romans 8:1

Now REALIZE:

*Isaiah 55:8-9
2 Timothy 3:16-17
1 Timothy 4:16*

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

1. 1st Peter is prompting God's persecuted people.
2. Ch. 1 has focused on: Blessing... Hope... Holiness
3. Today... the oxymoron & paradox of Holy Fear!

BIG IDEA: Faithful Christians live & love
in hope-filled, holy fear.

PREVIEW: 1). **Fear** IS 2). **Fear** SINCE 3). **Fear** FOR

TEXT:

[1 Peter 1:17- 19](#)

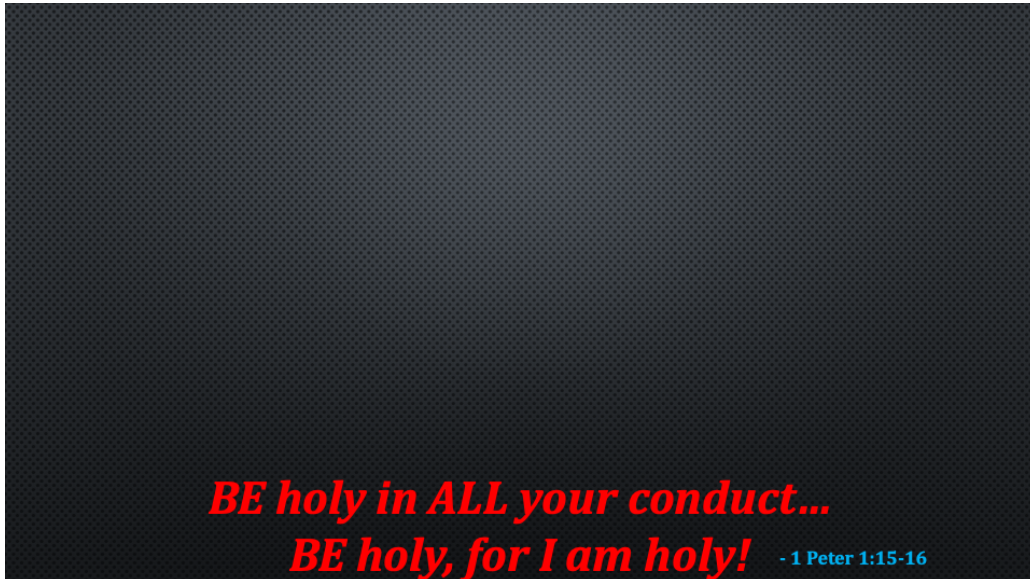
17 Then/if you call on him as Father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves/live with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18for/knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

[CONTEXTUAL Framework:](#)

~ Remember the flow and focus of 1st Peter 1:1-16



~ Today we're going to continue... & build on the holy



~ Our passage adds 1 new commanded exhortation:



For some of you we just we just hit a wall... a **PARADOX**

(This is one of the reasons-for & blessings-from studying God's Word.)

VIDEO: *"Got Questions On FEAR"*

*There is a kind of fear that does not
contradict confidence.*

- Schreiner

God designed fear for a reason!

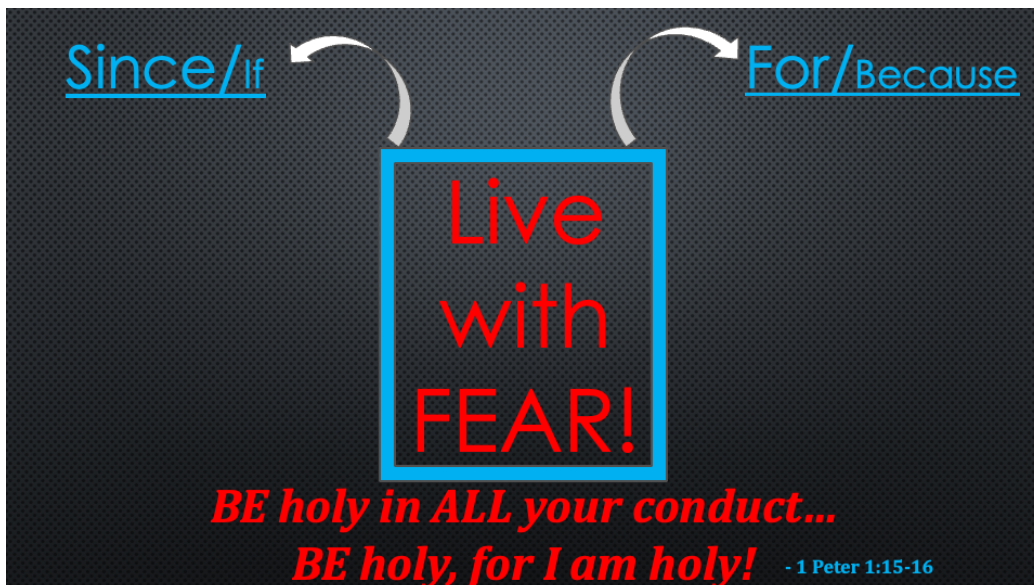
The lost fear with a hellish sweat...

The found fear with a holy sweetness.

- JDP

VIDEO: *“FEAR of the LORD per GQ”*

~ See the central, working message & its 2 wings...



Don't miss the structure of our passage... it's key to the text!

God's command to live with fear has 2 conditional points...

T/S: Let's look at what fear is and then its "since" & "for"

I. Fear **IS** *(either awe or anxiety)*

- A. Fear is biblical and powerful... for good OR bad.
- B. Fear can be an oxymoron and/or a paradox:
 - a. BEing holy displays a joyous, confident fear.
 - b. The Bible commands us to "**fear not**" AND to "**conduct our selves in fear.**"
- C. Fear can be holy and/or fear can be sinful...

HOLY Fear

- Witnessing Worship...
 - > Fears God & only God
- Walking Wise...
 - > Fear begins wisdom
- Working Warfare...
 - > Faithful-obedience
 - > Missionally courageous

SINFUL Fear

- Sin
- Unbelief
- Resistant Rebellion
- Anti-Christ Cowardice

Holy fear is a gift of grace.

To biblically F.E.A.R. God in holiness is to:

F = Faithfully & Forcefully

E = Extinguish or Eliminate

A = Any and All Active,

R = Reprobate Resistance & Rebellion.

II. Fear **SINCE**

And **since**/if you call on him as Father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, **conduct yourselves/live-with fear** throughout the time of your exile,

VIDEO: "Leviticus Festivals 1"

PRE-Conditions & Motivations of HOLY Fear

- A. You are a child of the Father
- B. You actually call on Him as your Father
- C. You understand that your Father is also your Judge
- D. You appreciate that your Father/Judge is impartial
- E. You realize He will judge you/all by your/their deeds
- F. You accept personal responsibility ("live/conduct yourself")
- G. You are faithfully obedient to the Father's commands
- H. You submit to with holy fear vs. cultural "balance"
- I. Holy fear is not a part-time condition (cf. hope, faith, obey...)
- J. Holy fear is a core characteristic of elect exiles.

III. Fear **FOR**

conduct yourselves/live with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18for**/knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19**but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

POST Realities & Motivations for HOLY Fear

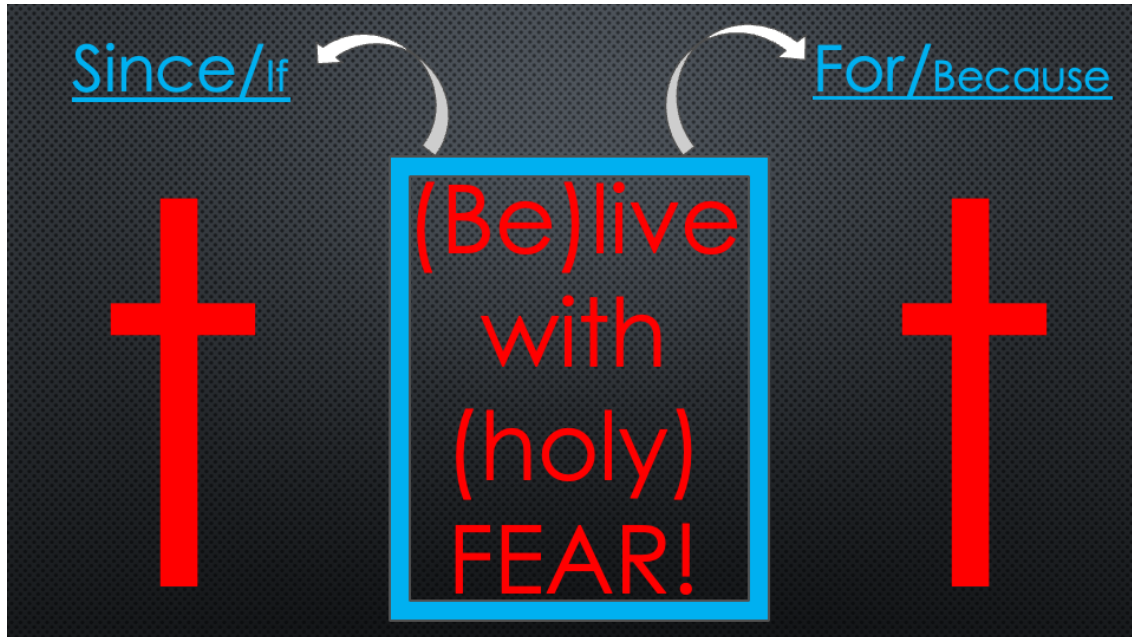
- A. Because YOU were RANSOMED as a loved, elect exile
- B. Because you REALLY know the Truth that set you free
- C. Because you were eternally REDEEMED/rescued
 - a. From an empty way of life that was full of death!
 - b. From the poison of paganism & false religion
 - c. From what was to be your eternal damnation

- D. Because you REALIZE how PRECIOUS your gift/cost is
 - a. NOT (and far exceeding) mere silver & gold
 - b. Here, biblical precious means PRICELESS!

- E. Because you REMEMBER the blood of Christ
 - a. Like that of a lamb without blemish or spot
 - i. See the Lamb's selection
 - ii. See the Lamb's perfection
 - iii. See the Lamb's dedication
 - b. See Christ in the sacrificial atonement system

VIDEO: *"Leviticus Festivals 2"*

CLOSE:



The Bible's teaching here is crystal clear. The world's cultural children of wrath need to live IN eternal fear of the living God... learning here that their earthly death will carry them into an eternal damnation. Whereas... The true children of the Bible's loving God are to live WITH a holy & holistic, reverent fear... freeing them to fear nothing else!

2 Corinthians 7:1

"Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God."

PRAYER

WORSHIP: *Gratitude & Awesome God*

Study Notes:

New American Standard Commentary - Dr. Tom Schreiner

(2) A Call to Fear (1:17–21)

¹⁷ Since/if you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

1:17: The theme of the paragraph appears in the injunction to live their lives *"in reverent fear."*

Because of the inheritance and salvation believers anticipate (vv. 1–12), they should set their hope completely on Christ's coming (v. 13), devote themselves to holiness (v. 15), and live in fear (v. 17). The remaining verses (vv. 18–21) explain why believers should be fearful.

Did Peter mean that believers should live reverently or in terror? Most commentators opt for the former since the confidence believers have in Christ seems to be at odds with the idea of

living in a terrified state.¹⁰⁸ Abject terror certainly does not fit with the joy and boldness of the Christian life. Reverence, however, can be watered down so that it becomes rather insipid.

Peter contemplated the final judgment, where believers will be assessed by their works and heaven and hell will be at stake (see below).

There is a kind of fear that does not contradict confidence.

A confident driver also possesses a healthy fear of an accident that prevents him from doing anything foolish. A genuine fear of judgment hinders believers from giving in to libertinism.

The background to such fear can be traced to Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 4:10; 8:6) and the wisdom tradition (Prov 1:29; 3:7; 9:10; Job 28:28; Eccl 12:13), where the fear of the Lord informs all of life.

Believers are to live in such fear while they are “strangers” (*paroikia*) on earth (cf. 1:1; 2:11).

Some scholars insist that the term “strangers” refers only to the social dislocation of believers in this world. Certainly **believers do not fit into the social order, for their values and behavior contradict the customs of unbelievers.** The Petrine believers cut across the grain of the culture in a way that alienates them from the mainstream (Lev 25:23; 1 Chr 29:15; Ps 39:12). **Their social dislocation is rooted, however, in their eschatological inheritance and their new birth (cf. 1:3–5).**

Their heavenly destiny raises a social barrier in the here and now between them and unbelievers.

Hence, we need not choose between the options of seeing an emphasis on their present status or their future destiny. **Their experience of alienation in the culture can be traced to their shift in values.**

Their horizontal discomfort comes from their vertical commitment

...or, better, the end-time promise that awaits them. **The parallel with Israel's sojourn in Egypt is apt (cf. Ps 105:12; Wis 19:10; Acts 13:17).**

The main admonition is to live in fear during one's earthly sojourn, but now we pick up the conditional clause that introduces the verse.

The NIV translates the word "if" (*ei*) as "since," and this view is supported by others. In one sense this interpretation is correct, for Peter did not wish to introduce any doubt into his readers' minds about whether God is their Father. Nevertheless,

translating "if" as "since" is mistaken.

Peter intentionally wrote the sentence as a hypothesis to provoke the readers to consider whether they call upon God as their Father, desiring, surely, that they would answer in the affirmative.

The word "since" does not have the same effect, and therefore "if" should be retained.

The word "Father" is used of God in the Old Testament (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; Jer 3:19; Mal 1:6; 2:10; cf. Wis 2:16; 3 Mac 5:7). Indeed, the reference in 3 Mac 5:7 uses both the term "Father" and the verb "call" (*epikaleomai*), as does 1 Pet 1:17. **It is likely, however, that Peter derived the term "Father" from the teaching of Jesus, where God's fatherhood is emphasized (cf. Matt 6:1, 4, 8–9; 7:11; 10:32; 11:25–27; 18:35; 23:9; John 5:19–20; 20:17).**

Whether it stems specifically from the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9) is harder to discern.

What is remarkable here is that God's tenderness and love as Father is mingled with his judgment and the fear that should mark Christians in this world.

Apparently **Peter did not think that the two themes negated each other but are complementary.** The relationship we have with God is both tender and awesome. Some have wrongly understood from the word *abba* that God is “daddy,” applying it in astonishingly casual ways. J. Barr has demonstrated in two important articles that such an understanding is flawed.

The motivation for living in fear is explained in the conditional clause.

The one believers invoke as Father in prayer is also the one who will judge them impartially on the last day.

Grudem concludes from the present participle “judges” (*krinonta*) that Peter referred to judgment and discipline in this life. He adds that believers also have no reason to fear condemnation at the last judgment. His interpretation should be rejected for a number of reasons.¹¹⁹ First, the tense of participles is not decisive and is not a clear indication of present time. The context in which the participle occurs is most important for determining its temporal referent. Second, judgment according to works is a pervasive theme in Jewish literature (cf. Pss 28:4; 62:12; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; 25:14; 32:19; 51:24; Ezek 33:20; 1QS 10:16–18; *Pss. Sol.* 2:15–17, 33–35; 9:4–5; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 13:8; 44:4; 54:21). Such a theme is common in the New Testament as well and regularly refers to God’s assessment of people, both believers and unbelievers, at the

final judgment (Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6, 11, 28–29; 14:12; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:14; Rev 2:23; 20:12–13; 22:14). It is doubtful that Peter said anything different here, especially since he referred in this paragraph to many other themes that are common in Christian tradition. Third, no dichotomy exists between judgment according to works and God’s grace. Good works are evidence that God has truly begotten (1 Pet 1:3) a person. Perhaps Peter used the singular “work” to summarize the lives of believers as a whole. **Peter reminded his readers that God is an “impartial” judge who does not reward people as one who plays favorites (cf. Acts 10:34; Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25).**

Fourth,

the fear of judgment still plays a role in the Christian life. Paul himself realized that he would be damned if he did not live the message proclaimed to others (1 Cor 9:24–27). Such a recognition inspires him to live faithfully; it does not paralyze him with fear. Paul himself taught that genuine faith always manifests itself in works (cf. Gal 5:21; 1 Cor 6:9–11).

1:18 Verses 18–19 together form a negative/positive.

Peter contrasted what did not redeem believers with the means by which they were redeemed.

The participle “knowing” (*eidotes*) is rightly interpreted by the NIV as causal, giving the reason believers should “live ... in reverent fear.”¹²²

Verses 18–21 are written “to increase the addressees’ appreciation of their new relationship to God and their new status as Christians.”

Some scholars try to reconstruct confessional statements or hymnic fragments from these verses, but the evidence is insufficient to draw such a conclusion, and it is better to conclude that Peter himself used typical confessional language. Early Christians, presumably, often used their own words to express the fundamental elements of the faith, and no clear hymnic or poetic structure can be discerned here. **Peter emphasized that believers were not “redeemed” with silver and gold.** The term “redeem” (*lutroō*) and the word group recalls Israel’s liberation from Egypt (Deut 7:8; 9:26; 15:15; 24:18). The term also is applied to the liberation of individuals (Pss 25:22; 26:11; 31:5; 32:7), and in Isaiah the return from exile is portrayed as a second exodus (Isa 41:14; 43:1, 14; 44:22–24; 51:11; 52:3; 62:12; 63:9). **In the Greco-Roman world those captured in war could be redeemed, and slaves were often manumitted, meaning that their freedom was purchased. In this context, in which many associations with the Old Testament are evident, we are safe in concluding that Peter derived his conception from the Old Testament.**

The word redemption signifies liberation, and here Peter spoke of redemption “from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.”

The “emptiness” (mataias) of life is a theme mentioned often in Ecclesiastes. In the Old Testament it is often associated with the idolatry of pagans. Similarly, in the New Testament the word group depicts pre-Christian existence (Acts 14:15; Rom 1:21; Eph 4:17).

The life of unbelievers before their conversion is futile, empty, and devoted to false gods.

Such a way of life has been handed down from the forefathers, from generation to generation.

The word “handed down from your forefathers” (patroparadotou) in Greek literature does not convey that which is wearing out or declining. It signifies a vibrant tradition that is conveyed from generation to generation.

Such tradition usually is described in a positive sense and is associated especially with religious traditions that are passed down from generation to generation.

Here we have firm evidence that the readers were Gentiles (cf. 1 Pet 4:1–4), since the Jews were at least taught they should worship the one and only God.

The verse also opens an interesting window on Peter's view of other religions. He did not see them as saving or even as noble, although I am not arguing that he was implying that every element in other religions is ignoble. In the final analysis, however, these religions are vanity and futility. They do not lead to faith and trust in the true God. The reference to silver and gold may be mentioned because of their association with idolatry (Deut 29:17; Dan 5:23; *Wis* 13:10; Rev 9:20). They are "perishable" and do not persist through the ravages of time (cf. 1 Pet 1:4). They are greatly valued by human beings but end up being vain and useless, even to satisfy in this life (Eccl 2:1–11).

1:19 Verse 19 now communicates positively the means by which believers were redeemed.

We learned from v. 18 that money was not the means. Instead, believers were purchased and ransomed by the blood of Christ.

Peter contrasted here the perishability of money with the preciousness of Christ's blood.

The contrast is not an exact one, but neither is it difficult to comprehend.¹²⁹ Money is a thing that perishes, but Christians have been redeemed with the blood of a person.

The shedding of blood signifies death, the giving up of one's life. Blood is precious because without it no one can live (Lev 17:11). L. Morris rightly argues that blood does not involve the release of life, as if life is somehow mystically transmitted by the spilling of blood. Instead, **the shedding of blood indicates that Christ poured out his life to death for sinners.** What Peter teaches is that the blood of Christ is the means by which believers are redeemed. Some scholars have argued that in the Scriptures redemption always involves the notion of the payment of a price.¹³¹ I. H. Marshall has demonstrated, however, that the idea of price is not invariably present, though there is always the idea of the cost or effort involved in redemption. **In some texts the emphasis is on deliverance, and nothing is said specifically about price (Luke 21:28; Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14; 4:30).** On the other hand, some scholars are too eager to strike out any notion of price at all. A number of texts indicate that believers were redeemed with Christ's blood (Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; cf. Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45), **and Peter plainly teaches that here.** Achtemeier denies that believers were ransomed with Christ's blood by saying that the only point is that redemption came "by means of God's own act through Christ." What Achtemeier affirms is true, but he passes over the specific wording of the text, which informs us that God ransomed believers with Christ's blood.

The term "blood" hearkens back to the sacrificial cultus in the Old Testament, where blood was necessary for atonement. **The Old Testament imagery continues when Christ is compared to a lamb "without blemish or defect."** The requirement that sacrifices are to be "without blemish" (*amōmos*) is often stated in the Old Testament (e.g., LXX Exod 29:1, 38; Lev 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6, 9; 4:3, 14, 23, 28, 32; 5:15, 18; 12:6; Num 15:24; Ezek 43:22). The word "without defect" (*aspilos*) is

not found in the Old Testament, but it reinforces the thought that Christ was a perfect sacrifice.

Indeed, as the fulfillment he surpasses the type. Animals were without defect physically, but

Peter's point was that Jesus was sinless (cf. 2:22).

He was a perfect sacrifice because of his perfect life. Some scholars try to restrict the background imagery here to exodus traditions, but the references above indicate that Peter referred to sacrificial language more generally.

When Peter referred to Christ as the lamb, what Old Testament antecedent did he draw on?

Some argue that he referred to the **passover lamb** (Exod 12:21-23), whose blood spared Israel from the wrath of the avenging angel. In Exod 12:5 a “perfect sheep” (*probaton teleion*) is required. Others see the reference to **Isa 53:7**, where the Servant of **the Lord is led like a lamb to slaughter (cf. 2:21-25)**. Still others think the reference is to **the sacrificial cult in general**, where the requirement that animals should be without blemish (**see above**) is often stated.¹⁴⁰

Some doubt that we have a reference to the Passover since Israel was not redeemed by the blood of the lamb at Passover but by God's power. Further, the Passover blood was not redemptive but staved off God's wrath. These objections are not decisive. A false

dichotomy between blood and God's power is introduced since God's power in salvation is bestowed on those who applied blood to their homes. It is quite possible that the Israelites viewed the blood on the door as that which ransomed them. Against a reference to the lamb of Isa 53:7, it is objected that no other terms here indicate a reference to this text. For instance, nothing is said about the blood of the victim in Isaiah 53. Though nothing is said about the blood, Isaiah 53 teaches that the Servant will die and that his death is a guilt offering (Isa 53:12), and we have already noted that blood signifies a life poured out to death. Hence, we could overemphasize the differences between the texts conceptually when it is clear that the same range of ideas is included. If one thinks of the sacrificial cult as described in Leviticus, it is evident that many of the sacrifices did not require a lamb, though in many cases a lamb "without blemish"

is to be offered. To sum up, **the text is too general to restrict ourselves to any one background, whether Passover, the Suffering Servant text, or the sacrificial cult.**

It probably is best to think of Peter as seeing the death of Christ as embracing all three ideas. Early Christians saw Passover, the Suffering Servant, and the sacrificial system as fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ as God's sinless lamb.

1:20 With two participial phrases Peter contrasted Christ being foreknown before history began with his manifestation at the climax of salvation history for the sake of the readers. In the Greek text of v. 19 the word "Christ" appears last, separated from the term "blood" by five words. The text was likely written in this way so that it would be clear that the Christ was the subject of the participle commencing v. 20. The Christ "was chosen before the creation of the world." The Greek word is not "chosen" but "foreknown" (*proegnōsmenou*). This term has already been discussed in 1:2 (see commentary), and it was noted there that "chosen" is a reasonable way to translate it, though the covenantal overtones of the term may be overlooked with such a rendering. To say that something or someone is foreknown does not necessarily imply

preexistence, for God foreknows and foreordains all that will occur in history. Nevertheless, to say that the “Christ” is foreknown probably implies his preexistence. Why did Peter state here that Christ was foreknown? How does it fit into the argument? The main theme of the paragraph is that believers should conduct their lives in fear. They should do so because they have been ransomed with the precious blood of Christ (vv. 18–19). Now the readers are informed that this is no afterthought. God determined before history ever began (“before the foundation of the world,” NRSV; cf. Eph 1:4) that the Christ would appear at this particular juncture of history as redeemer. This interpretation is confirmed by the last part of the verse. Christ “was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.” The “revelation” or “manifestation” of Christ refers to his incarnation. Peter emphasized that believers enjoy the blessing of living at the time when God is fulfilling his saving promises. The “end of the ages” (*ep eschatou tōn chronōn*) signals the last days of salvation history, which commenced with the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Michaels rightly notes that the phrase here is to be distinguished from “in the last time” (*en kairō eschatō*) in v. 5. The latter refers to the eschatological inheritance that awaits believers, but the phrase here indicates that the last times have commenced with the coming of Christ.¹⁴⁷ The stunning privilege of believers is communicated once again because all these things occurred “for your sake” (cf. vv. 10–12). What a tragedy it would be to throw all these privileges away by ceasing to live in the fear of God.

1:21 Verse 21 continues from v. 20, noting that believers who live in the days of the fulfillment of God’s promises are “believers” (HCSB, *pistous*) in God “through” (HCSB, *dia*) Christ. They have put their faith in God because of the work of Jesus Christ, whose work is featured in vv. 18–19. Peter closed this section of the letter by reiterating themes already highlighted. The God in whom they believed raised Christ “from the dead and glorified him.” We probably should understand the clause here to refer to an intended result, in that God purposed that people would put their faith and hope in him as a result of Christ’s work. Christ’s resurrection of the dead is the foundation of the “living hope” of believers in 1:3, so too here the hope of believers is rooted in the resurrection of Christ.

The glorification of Christ after his sufferings is noted in 1:12. The vindication and glorification of Christ after his sufferings is the paradigm for believers as well. As God’s pilgrim people they suffer now, but their future hope is resurrection and glorification. They anticipate the day when sufferings will be no more, and they will experience eschatological salvation. It is likely that “faith and hope” are practically synonyms here. In the first part of the verse Peter emphasized that through Christ they are “believers” in God. “Hope” functions as an *inclusio* in this section, opening the discussion in v. 3 and closing it in v. 21. It also bounds vv. 13–21, for v. 13 begins with the call to set one’s hope completely on future salvation. The close association between “faith and hope” also reaffirms that “faith” (*pistis*) in the earlier verses cannot be restricted to “faithfulness” (1:5, 7, 9). Instead, Peter forged a unity between the two ideas, so that faithfulness flows out of faith.¹⁵³ What Peter said here is important for another reason. Three imperatives have dominated these verses: hope (v. 13), be holy (v. 15), and live in fear (v. 17). Verse 21 reminds the readers again that the holy life to which they are called is a life in which they are trusting in God’s

promises. Peter was not a moralist who trumpeted virtues for their own sake. A life of holiness is one in which God is prized above all things, in which believers trust and hope in his goodness.¹

Warren Wiersbe's BE Commentary:

The Judgment of God (1 Peter 1:17)

As God's children, we need to be serious about sin and about holy living. Our Heavenly Father is a holy (John 17:11) and righteous Father (John 17:25). He will not compromise with sin.

He is merciful and forgiving, but He is also a loving disciplinarian who cannot permit His children to enjoy sin. After all, it was sin that sent His Son to the cross.

If we call God "Father," then we should reflect His nature.

What is this judgment that Peter wrote about?

It is the judgment of a believer's works. It has nothing to do with salvation, except that salvation ought to produce good works (Titus 1:16; 2:7, 12). When we trusted Christ, God forgave our sins and

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 81–89.

declared us righteous in His Son (Rom. 5:1–10; 8:1–4; Col. 2:13). Our sins have already been judged on the cross (1 Peter 2:24), and therefore they cannot be held against us (Heb. 10:10–18).

But when the Lord returns, there will be a time of judgment called “the Judgment Seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:9–10). Each of us will give an account of his works, and each will receive the appropriate reward.

This is a “family judgment,” the Father dealing with His beloved children.

The Greek word translated *judgeth* carries the meaning “to judge in order to find something good.” **God will search into the motives for our ministry; He will examine our hearts.** But He assures us that His purpose is to glorify Himself in our lives and ministries, “and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor. 4:5). What an encouragement!

God will give us many gifts and privileges, as we grow in the Christian life; but He will never give us the privilege to disobey and sin. He never pampers His children or indulges them.

He is no respecter of persons.

- He *“shows no partiality and accepts no bribes”*
- Deut. 10:17, NIV.
- *“For God does not show favoritism”*
- Rom. 2:11, NIV.

Years of obedience cannot purchase an hour of disobedience.

If one of His children disobeys, God must chasten (Heb. 12:1–13). But when His child obeys and serves Him in love, He notes that and prepares the proper reward.

Peter reminded his readers that they were only “sojourners” on earth. Life was too short to waste in disobedience and sin (see 1 Peter 4:1–6). **It was when Lot stopped being a sojourner, and became a resident in Sodom, that he lost his consecration and his testimony.** Everything he lived for went up in smoke! Keep reminding yourself that you are a “stranger and pilgrim” in this world (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11).

In view of the fact that the Father lovingly disciplines His children today, and will judge their works in the future, we ought to cultivate an attitude of godly fear.

This is not the cringing fear of a slave before a master, but the loving reverence of a child before his father.

It is not fear of judgment (1st John 4:18), but a fear of disappointing Him

*or sinning against His love. It is
“godly fear” (2 Cor. 7:1), a sober
reverence for the Father.*

I sometimes feel that there is today an increase in carelessness, even flippancy, in the way we talk about God or talk to God. Nearly a century ago, Bishop B.F. Westcott said, “Every year makes me tremble at the daring with which people speak of spiritual things.” The godly bishop should hear what is said today! A worldly actress calls God “the Man upstairs.” A baseball player

calls Him “the great Yankee in the sky.” An Old Testament Jew so feared God that he would not even pronounce His holy name, yet we today speak of God with carelessness and irreverence.

In our public praying, we sometimes get so familiar that other people wonder whether we are trying to express our requests or impress the listeners with our nearness to God!

The Love of God (1 Peter 1:18–21)

*Love of God is the highest
motive for holy living.*

In this paragraph, Peter reminded his readers of their salvation experience, a reminder that all of us regularly need. This is one reason our Lord established the Lord's Supper, so that regularly His people would remember that He died for them. Note the reminders that Peter gave.

He reminded them of *what they were*. To begin with, they were slaves who needed to be set free. The word *redeemed* is, to us, a theological term; but it carried a special meaning to people in the first-century Roman Empire. There were probably 60 million slaves in the Empire! Many slaves became Christians and fellowshiped in the local assemblies. A slave could purchase his own freedom, if he could collect sufficient funds; or his master could sell him to someone who would pay the price and set him free.

Redemption was a precious thing in that day.

We must never forget the slavery of sin (Titus 3:3). Moses urged Israel to remember that they had been slaves in Egypt (Deut. 5:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). The generation that died in the wilderness forgot the bondage of Egypt and wanted to go back!

Not only did we have a life of slavery, but it was also a life of emptiness.

Peter called it “the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers” (1 Peter 1:18, NIV), and **he described it more specifically in 1 Peter 4:1–4**. At the time, these people thought their lives were “full” and “happy,” when they were really empty and miserable.

Unsaved people today are blindly living on substitutes.

While ministering in Canada, I met a woman who told me she had been converted early in life but had drifted into a “society life” that was exciting and satisfied her ego. One day, she was driving to a card party and happened to tune in a Christian radio broadcast. At that very moment, the speaker said, “Some of you women know more about cards than you do your Bible!” Those words arrested her. God spoke to her heart, she went back home, and from that hour her life was dedicated fully to God. She saw the futility and vanity of a life spent out of the will of God.

Peter not only reminded them of what they were, but he also reminded them of what Christ did. He shed His precious blood to purchase us out of the slavery of sin and set us free forever.

To redeem means “to set free by paying a price.”

A slave could be freed with the payment of money, but no amount of money can set a lost sinner free. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can redeem us.

Peter was a witness of Christ's sufferings (1 Peter 5:1) and mentioned His sacrificial death often in this letter (1 Peter 2:21ff; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1).

In calling Christ "a Lamb," Peter was reminding his readers of an Old Testament teaching that was important in the early church, and that ought to be important to us today. **It is the doctrine of substitution: an innocent victim giving his life for the guilty.**

The doctrine of sacrifice begins in Genesis 3, when God killed animals that He might clothe Adam and Eve. A ram died for Isaac (Gen. 22:13) and the Passover lamb was slain for each Jewish household (Ex. 12). Messiah was presented as an

innocent Lamb in Isaiah 53.
Isaac asked the question,
“Where is the lamb?” (Gen.
22:7) and John the Baptist
answered it when he pointed to
Jesus and said, “Behold the
Lamb of God, which taketh
away the sin of the world”
(John 1:29). In heaven, the
redeemed and the angels sing,
“Worthy is the Lamb!”
(Rev. 5:11–14)

Peter made it clear that

Christ's death was an appointment, not an accident;

for it was ordained by God before the foundation of the world ([Acts 2:23](#)).

From the human perspective, our Lord was cruelly murdered; but from the divine perspective, *He laid down His life for sinners*

[\(John 10:17–18\)](#). But He was raised from the dead! Now, anyone who trusts Him will be saved for eternity.

When you and I meditate on the sacrifice of Christ for us, certainly we should want to obey God and live holy lives for His glory. When only a young lady, [Frances Ridley Havergal](#) saw a picture of the crucified Christ with this caption under it: “I did this for thee. What hast thou done for Me?” Quickly, she wrote a poem, but was dissatisfied with it and threw it into the fireplace. The paper came out unharmed! Later, at her father’s suggestion, she published the poem, and today we sing it.

*I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed;
That thou might ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave, My life for thee,
What hast thou given for Me?*

A good question, indeed! I trust we can give a good answer to the Lord.

[The Reformed Study Bible:](#)

1:17 Father who judges impartially.

Though Christians will not be condemned for their sins (2:24; Is. 53:4, 5), they will be judged for their deeds as Christians and rewarded accordingly (Rom. 14:10–12; 1 Cor. 3:12–15). The reward promised, however, is not based strictly on merit; though it is bestowed according to works, the reward is still gracious.

Augustine called it:

God's crowning His own gifts.

with fear. God is both Father and Judge, and believers must approach Him with humble reverence and awe (Ps. 34:11).

throughout the time of your exile. The Greek word for “*exile*” suggests those who live in a place as unnaturalized aliens, and emphasizes the Christian’s temporary, pilgrim status in the world.

1:18 ransomed. Freed from the bondage of sin by the payment of a price (**Rom. 8:2; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7**).

The price of redemption is the blood of Christ

(v. 19).

futile ways inherited. The emptiness and worthlessness of pagan worship is a frequent theme of scriptural writers (**Jer. 2:5; Acts 14:15**).

Although the New Testament condemns certain Jewish traditions that added to the demands of the Old Testament law (Mark 7:8–13), Peter here seems to have Gentile paganism in view (1:14; 4:3).

1:19 lamb. The lamb is from the Old Testament sacrificial system, especially the Passover (Ex. 12:3; Is. 53:7; John 1:29).

without blemish or spot. In order to be acceptable, a sacrifice had to be free from all defect (Lev. 22:20–25). **Christ's sinless life qualified Him to die for the sins of others (Heb. 4:15; 7:26, 27).**

1:20 before the foundation of the world. Christ was chosen as Redeemer of the elect in eternity past (**John 17:24; Eph. 1:4**).

the last times. Includes the entire period between the first and second comings of Jesus (**Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2**).

1:21 through him are believers in God. As the Mediator between God and humanity, Christ provides the only access to God (**John 14:6**). In Christ the Father is revealed (**John 1:18**), and Christ's redeeming death has opened the path of access to God (**3:18**).²

² R. C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version* (Orlando, FL; Lake Mary, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2005), 1811.

The New Testament Commentary: Dr. Wayne Grudem

Fear the displeasure of a Father who is an impartial Judge (1:17–21)

17. **Peter now adds an additional motivation for a life of holiness: fear of God's fatherly discipline.** *Invoke* is a technically correct but somewhat obscure rendering of *epikaleō* (in the middle voice), which means 'to call on for help, to appeal to' (Acts 25:11–12; Rom. 10:13; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22). 'Address as Father' (NASB) would fit the active voice of the verb, but this is a middle, for which the meaning 'address' is not attested in the New Testament (cf. BAGD, p. 294). **The present tense suggests regular or habitual calling to God for help—the mark of a Christian** (note [1 Cor. 1:2](#); [2 Tim. 2:22](#)).

And if introduces a Greek construction in which Peter assumes that the readers do pray to God regularly and know him as their Father (cf. NIV, 'Since ...'). Now Peter reminds them that their Father is also the Judge of the universe. The sense is, 'If you call on a Father who is also the Judge who shows no favoritism (and will therefore show no favoritism to his friends or children), and who is continually judging and rewarding each person according to what he does, then live your life on earth in fear (that is, fear of his discipline).'

Membership in God's family, great privilege though it is, must not lead to

the presumption that disobedience will pass unnoticed or undisciplined.

Who judges each one impartially according to his deeds could be understood to refer to the future, final judgment in which believers will not be excluded from heaven but will be judged and rewarded according to their deeds in this life (as in [Rom. 14:12](#); [1 Cor. 3:10–15](#); [2 Cor. 5:10](#), etc.).

However,

the phrase is better understood to refer primarily or even exclusively to present judgment and discipline in this life, because: (1) this Greek construction (*ton krinonta*, articular present participle) would naturally carry the sense ‘the one who is judging’; and (2) the exhortation to ‘fear’ would be inappropriate to address to Christians if the subject were final judgment, for Christians need have no fear of final condemnation.

A reference to God’s present discipline in this life is appropriate for Peter elsewhere recognizes God’s present activity of blessing and disciplining Christians (4:14, 17 [with the cognate word *krima*]; cf. [Heb. 12:5–11](#); [Matt. 6:12](#)).

Each one is a reminder that such judgment is not restricted to non-Christians only, or to Christians only, or to some Christians who lived at another time or place. It is individual, personal

judgment of all people (though in this context discipline of believers is specifically in view).

Impartially is a rare word meaning ‘without showing favouritism’ (similar expressions are found in Luke 20:21; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Jas 2:1, 9).

Conduct yourselves with fear refers again to their whole pattern of life—*anastrephō*, ‘conduct’, is the cognate verb to the noun *anastrophē*, ‘conduct’, in verse 15. **Fear** in this context means primarily ‘fear of God’s discipline’. (The translation ‘reverent fear’ [NIV] is too comfortable for modern readers, for it suggests mainly the idea of awe during worship and allows readers to avoid the concept ‘fear of discipline’.)

Although many today dismiss fear of God as an Old Testament concept which has no place in the New Covenant, they do so to the neglect of many New Testament passages and to the impoverishment of their spiritual lives.

Fear (phobos) of God’s discipline is a good and proper attitude, the sign of a New

Testament church growing in maturity and experiencing God's blessing (Acts 5:5, 11; 9:31; 2 Cor. 7:1, 15; Col. 3:22; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Pet. 2:17; and probably also 1 Pet. 2:18; 3:2; 3:15).

Moreover, fear of God is connected with growth in holiness elsewhere in the New Testament (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 2:12; cf. Rom. 3:18).

Fear of God is not inconsistent with loving him or knowing that he loves us. If it were, we would have to say that Old Testament believers who feared God could not also have loved him—which is clearly false—or that God did not love them—which is also clearly false. Rather...

fear of displeasing our Father is the
obverse side of loving him.

**The fear here recommended is ... a
holy self-suspicion and fear of
offending God, which may not only
consist with assured hope of
salvation, and with faith, and love,
and spiritual joy, but is their
inseparable companion ...**

*This fear is not cowardice: it doth not debase, but
elevates the mind; for it drowns all lower fears,
and begets true fortitude and courage to
encounter all dangers, for the sake of a good
conscience and the obeying of God.*

***The time of your exile* refers to this present life, during
which Peter's readers are 'temporary residents' on earth.**

The word translated 'exile', *paroikia*, is used elsewhere in the New Testament only at Acts 13:17 (of the 'sojourn' in Egypt), but it is similar in sense to *parepidēmoi*, 'exile', in 1:1—note the comments there on translation and Peter's purpose in using such terms.

18. *You know that* begins a new sentence in the RSV, but the Greek text actually continues the same sentence with a participial phrase, ‘knowing that ...’, which can be translated in a variety of ways, depending on the sense of the context. Though it is not made explicit by Peter, the sense seems to be, *‘Conduct your lives with fear of God’s discipline (v. 17), because you know that God redeemed you out of a sinful manner of life at great cost—with the precious blood of Christ (vv. 18–19).’*

(Therefore, Peter implies, God will not be pleased if you casually disregard the ethical purposes of his redemption.)

You were ransomed is a helpful English translation of the verb *lutroō*, for this verb has the distinctive sense **‘to purchase someone’s freedom by paying a ransom’**, and was used in secular contexts of purchasing freedom for a slave or a hostage held by an enemy. The word ‘redeemed’ (NIV, NASB) also means this (especially as a technical term in systematic theology), yet it should be noted that the Greek term is much more specific than the vague general sense (roughly equal to ‘saved’) which often attaches to the word ‘redeemed’ today.

The realm from which the readers were ransomed is *from the futile ways inherited from your fathers.*

***From (ek)** is not simply ‘away from’ but ‘out of’, giving the vivid image of people being physically removed from one ‘place’ (the sphere of sinful patterns of life) to another (the sphere of obedience to God).*

Ways** is once again *anastrophē*, ‘pattern of life’ (see notes at v. 15). This pattern of life was **futile**—empty, worthless, having no meaningful or lasting results (compare this word in **1 Cor. 15:17; Titus

3:9; and the cognate noun **thirteen** times in the LXX of Eccl. 1–2).

The remarkable change brought about by conversion to Christ is seen in the fact that these abandoned sinful patterns of life had been *inherited from your fathers*, an influence made weighty by the accumulation of generations of tradition in a society that valued such ancestral wisdom.

The ancient tradition of home and nation is broken ... because of the work of Jesus Christ who had set them free.'

A similar purpose for redemption is affirmed in Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14. The hereditary chain of sin is broken by Christ (cf. Exod. 20:5, 6).

Peter once again shows the surpassing value of spiritual realities by calling the most precious and abiding metals *perishable things such as silver or gold*. 'Perishable', *phthartos*, is always used in the New Testament of things which will decay or wear out (Rom. 1:23; 1 Cor. 9:25; 15:53–54; 1 Pet. 1:23) because they belong to this world or this age (see notes on 'imperishable', *aphthartos*, in v. 4).

19. *But with the precious blood of Christ* affirms Christ's blood to be much more 'precious' or 'valuable' (*timios* is used of precious gems in 1 Cor. 3:12; cf. 'precious fruit' in Jas 5:7) than gold or silver—apparently meaning precious in God's sight and therefore inherently valuable.

The *blood of Christ* is the clear outward evidence that his lifeblood was poured out when he died a sacrificial death as the price of our redemption—'the blood of Christ' means his death in its saving aspects. Although we might think that Christ's blood as evidence that his life had been given would have exclusive reference to the removal of our judicial guilt before God—for this is its primary reference—the New Testament authors also attribute to it several other effects.

By the blood of Christ

1. our consciences are cleansed (Heb. 9:14),
2. we gain bold access to God in worship and prayer (Heb. 10:19),
3. we are progressively cleansed from more and more sin (1 John 1:7; cf. Rev. 1:5b),
4. we are able to conquer the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:11), and
5. we are rescued out of a sinful way of life (1 Pet. 1:19).

We would do well to recover this New Testament emphasis in our preaching today.

Coupled with the idea of the payment of a ransom is the idea of Christ as a substitutionary sacrifice who bore our penalty (cf. 1 Pet. 2:24). This is emphasized in the phrase *like that of a lamb without blemish or spot*. While it could be argued that the primary reference is to the spotless lamb of the Passover in Exodus 12:5 (see Hort, p. 77), it is more likely that the allusion is to the frequent requirement of a 'lamb without blemish' for many Old Testament sacrifices (Num. 6:14; 28:3, 9; etc.), and then to the Christian understanding of Jesus as the perfect 'Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:31; cf. 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 5:6, 12; Isa. 53:7).

So precious in God's sight is this death and the blood which represents it that it should never be lightly esteemed by us. Nor may we underestimate its value:

Christ's blood alone could pay the price of our redemption.

20. *He was destined* as a translation for *proginōskō* follows the RSV's translation of the cognate noun *prognōsis* as 'destined' in verse 2. Although the word in ordinary usage simply means 'known beforehand' (see its use in Acts 26:5 and 2 Pet. 3:17), here in verse 20 most versions translate it with some word implying predestination: 'foreordained' (AV); 'predestined' (NEB); 'chosen' (NIV). This is because of (1) a sense that when God knows something beforehand it is certain that that event will occur, and assuming the event to be therefore ordained by God seems to be the only alternative to the non-Christian idea of a certainty of events brought about by impersonal, mechanistic fate; (2) the fact that the use of the word when applied to God is found in contexts that suggest predestination (Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29; 11:2); (3) a realization that in this context it would make little sense for Peter merely to say that God the Father *knew* Christ before the foundation of the world. Rather, the immediately preceding context with its emphasis on Christ's redeeming death suggests that **it is as a suffering saviour that God 'foreknew'** or thought of the Son before the foundation of the world. **These considerations combine to indicate that the 'foreknowledge' was really an act of God in eternity past whereby he determined that his Son would come as the Saviour of mankind.**

The foundation of the world is a New Testament phrase for 'the creation of the world' (note its use in Matt. 25:34; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 4:3; 9:26; Rev. 13:8; 17:8). **Peter once again emphasizes the central place New Covenant Christians occupy in the history of redemption by noting that this eternal plan of God to send his Son remained unfulfilled until *he was made manifest (or revealed) at the end of the times*, that is, at the end of the ages of history of the unredeemed creation, the 'ages' or 'times' (cf. Acts 17:30; Rom. 16:25) which preceded this present final age of redemption.** This long-awaited appearance of the Messiah *was for your sake*, Peter tells his readers (cf. the note on the readers' position in the history of redemption in v. 12, above).

21. Yet Peter continues beyond the specification of the readers' privilege to add that it is *through him* (i.e. through Christ) that *you have confidence in God*, here referring to God the Father (as is most common with the term *theos*, 'God', in the New Testament). The God who planned their redemption is now the object of their trust.

The word translated *have confidence* (*pistos*) can also mean 'faithful, trustworthy', but it cannot take that sense here, because at the end of the sentence Peter summarizes this confidence as reliance on God: *so that your faith and hope are in God*. When Peter says that it is 'through' Christ that they trust God he rules out any idea that Christians should 'fear God but trust Christ'. Rather,

as Christians trust in Christ they are also through Christ trusting in God.

The phrase *who raised him from the dead and gave him glory*, refers to Christ's resurrection, his ascension into heaven, and reception of honour and glory from the Father (cf. Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:20–23).

So that your faith and hope are in God brings Peter to the conclusion and also the main point of verses 20 to 21.

After telling his readers to live holy lives (vv. 14–16) and to fear God's discipline and displeasure if they disobey (v. 17)—for God

redeemed them from sin at great cost (vv. 18–19)—he concludes by reminding them that the God whom they are to fear as Judge is also the God whom they trust as Saviour: he planned their redemption in the counsels of eternity (v. 20a), he sent forth his Son for their sake (v. 20b), he is the one whom they even now depend on (v. 21a), he raised Christ from the dead and glorified him (v. 21b), and thus he is the one in whom they place all their trust and hope (v. 21c).

The God whom Christians fear is also the God whom they trust forever...

...the God who has planned and done for them only good from all eternity.³

Beware wish-preaching & people pleasing!

- JDP

Question: How do you spell holy & hope with the same 4 letters... OBEY!

Contrast hellish vs holy

- Equity
- Trans
- Tolerance
- Narrow vs Broad

³ Wayne A. Grudem, [*1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 85–92.