

“Do NOT Be Surprised!”

1 Peter 4:12

November 26, 2023

INTRO:

- Remember the “frog in the pot” illustration?
- What might you be in danger of in the same way?
- What are you proactively expecting today?
- What might surprise you today?

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- ~ 1st Peter: *“No Matter What!”*
- ~ 3 sections: the Holy, Harmonized, Hurting
- ~ Today we begin section 3

BIG IDEA: Christ-like readiness requires biblical faithfulness.

PREVIEW: Today we’re simply going to walk thru the Word together.
(1 verse, 10 steps)

TEXT:

1 Peter 4:12

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

STEP 1: “Beloved”

A. The blessed are the beloved and the beloved are the blessed! - JDP

a. **Remember:** *we need to KNOW who the “us” are*

b. Those who are not God’s beloved will go against God. (Matt. 12:30) - JDP

B. Note: this is a conditional address... Only the beloved receive the promise!

a. **DEFINES** (i.e. The true “elect exiles”)

b. **DESCRIBES** (i.e. Hebrews ch.11)

c. **DEFENDS** (i.e. the missional message of 1st John)

C. Peter used the term “beloved” back in ch.1 to identify “The Church”

STEP 2: *“Beloved, do not”* = black & white: **NOT do!**

STEP 3: *“Beloved, do not **be surprised**”*

A. Define the declaration...

B. **Dissect the imperative declaration...**

a. **Why not?**

b. How are we expected to obey and affirm the command?

c. **What are the guaranteed AND potential consequences of disobedience?**

i. Loss of God’s active favor and blessing.

ii. ALL potential fall out of intentional sin.

iii. Being surprised in a bad way is akin to being ill-prepared.

iv. Being ill-prepared is connected to being:

1. Confused

2. Overwhelmed

3. Sinfully debilitated with fear

4. Plagued by an inability to defend adequately

5. Unable to engage an effective offensive posture

C. The LOST should be shocked/surprised by us

D. We should NOT be shocked/surprised by the LOST.

E. **Judas is the mess in the middle...**

F. **Saul to Paul is miracle in the mud...**

G. Tension, tension, tension...

H. See again why KNOWING God's guardrails is essential!

What were some of the worst surprises of ALL time:

- 9/11
- Flood
- Titanic
- Pearl Harbor
- Jim Jones kool-aide
- October 6-7 in Israel
- Japanese tsunami
- Outburst of tornadoes
- Adam & Eve after one bite...
- Wolves thought to be sheep
- Adultery
- Et tu Brut
- Judas at the table
- Pregnant machine gun disguise
- *** **NOTICE...** We don't get beyond Genesis 3 and the Garden of Eden before the shocking devastation of drifting distractions, doubt filled discontent, divisive deception, and Devil-led destruction are on display.

- **We NEED this warning and COMMAND. Do NOT be surprised or shocked by sin!** - JDP
- Fiery trials are Satan's & sin's trophy case... their brute force weapons... their "hit-men" and intimidators. - JDP
- See C.T. Studd's "Chocolate Soldiers"
- See Eric Ludy's "Irish Elk"
- See our BRIDGE family T-9's & crash of Rhinos

*** Don't be surprised... like a:

- Concert goers who hear loud music
- **Those who hang around the barber shop... get haircuts.**
- **Those who continuously flirt with temptation usually end up having an illicit affair with sin!**
- JDP
- ...Avoid known trouble!

*** **Fool me once, shame on you.
Fool me twice, shame on me.**

*** *We want to live & love with biblical eyes wide open!*

God gave us a system to combat surprise:

Love

Words

Communication
Conversation
Instruction
Purpose
Mission
No Surprise

*** Surprise/Shock is a military strategy and incredibly effective “secret” (literally) weapon! (see the Bible for proof).

*** Think about what happens (or doesn't happen) when we get surprised/shocked:

Here's how to NOT be surprised...

- > Requires knowledge of Truth
- > Requires motivation of Love
- > Requires harmonized H, H, H's
- > Requires biblical discipleship
- > Requires Missional recall
- > Requires personal discipline
- > Requires holistic (2 Tim. 2:1-6)
 - >>> Focus (Disciplined Warrior)
 - >>> Submission (Olympian)
 - >>> Commitment (farmer)
- > Requires God's Power (Acts 1:8)
- > Requires God's Grace (Eph. 2)
- > Requires our abiding (John 15)

- > Requires our obeying (John 15)
- > Requires our glorifying God! (1st Peter)

Even the best of men
need to be warned against the worst of sins.
- Matthew Henry

STEP 4: *“Beloved, do not be surprised **at the fiery trial**”*

A. Define “fiery trial”

- a. Both terms need to be defined and contextualized...
- b. “Fiery” is used twice in Revelation & is translated “burning”
 - i. The context is “active & perpetual”
 - ii. The term can serve as a double metaphor:
 1. As in the Wisdom Literature: smelting metals
 2. As in the Apocalyptic Literature: eternal torment
- c. “Trial” is a form of great challenge...

- i. Context helps to define the “trial” in each passage/text
- ii. Here, the Peter’s own context points to: persecution; slander, suffering...
- iii. Peter’s principled context would include any/all Christian trials: spiritual warfare of any and all sorts, etc.

B. Don’t allow the intensity of the definition to be missed or minimized:

a. See this as an intentional parallel to the fires of hell

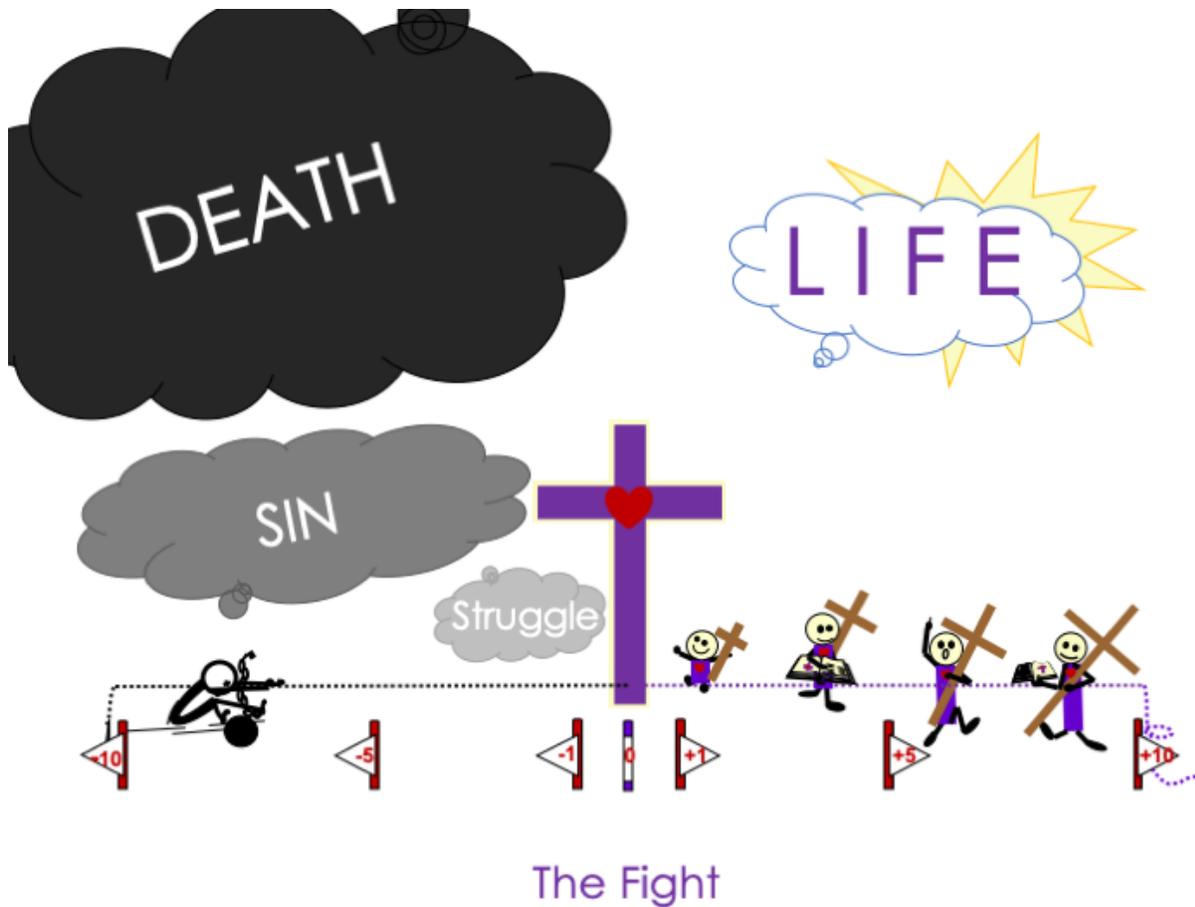
b. Recognize that we are refined here so that we are not refired in hell! -JDP

c. Use the “weeping & gnashing of teeth” reference to illustrate/illuminate

i. Those who worship now won’t have to weep later.

ii. Those who don’t smile now will gnash later!
-JDP

C. Show the perpetual tense (“current burning with ongoing flames”)



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D. See the "FIGHT"

- a. Fight = personal AND corporate
- b. Fight = constant
 - i. Fight to keep people in the negative
 - ii. Fight to hinder/distract/stumble in the positive

"at" means BE (or GET or ACT or EXCUSE or TOLERATE... CELEBRATE... VICTIMIZE...)

“You’re never a victim of your own decisions.”

- JDP

*** Surprise/Shock when combining military attack with trusted betrayal:

- David’s sinful son
- Obadiah 1:7 allies turn to enemies
- See Galatians 4:13-16; +19-20!!!
- Jesus said He did not come to bring peace... sinful family will turn against holy, righteous family (because they tell the truth in love)
- Judas betrays Jesus (“Is it me?”)

FIERY = active present tense

- See also “truthING” in love
- Perpetual putting on armor

Fiery Trials / Attacks: REALITIES

- Defined
- Sources
- Strategies
- Weapons
- Tactics

Fiery Trials / Attacks: RESPONSES

- Prevention
- Preparation
- Recognition
- Addressing
- Post cleanup
- Preparation

Christian faith expects fire!
&
Christ-like faith has its own Fire!
- JDP

STEP 5: *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial **when it comes**”*

God & His Word say they WILL come!

STEP 6: *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes **upon you,**”*

We are NOT fighting FOR victory but FROM victory!

Holding up forgotten truths brings down fiery trials.

- JDP

It is far better to be biblically surprised by truth in love (i.e. Bonhoeffer) now, than to get eternally shocked on judgement day (Matthew 7:21ff) because you trusted in your own lies or the world's wolves in sheep's clothing.

- JDP

***** Unique SURPRISE verses:**

- Exodus 4:6-7 (leprosy in/out)
- Judges 11:34 (Jephthah's daughter)
- Samson's story = many surprises
- Ruth 3:8 (surprises sleeping Boaz)
- * 1 Kings 9:8 (God's punishment)
- Psalms 35:8 (prayed for/wrath)
- Psalms 55:15 (ditto)
- Isaiah 64:3 (God's great deeds)
- Jeremiah 19:8 = 2X
- Jer. 25:18 = linked to fear & curse
- *** Obadiah 1:7 (BETRAYAL!!!) cf. Judas
- David's son Absalom turns on him (2 Samuel 3:3 & ch.13-19)
- Luke 21:34 (ready for judgement)

- Acts 3:10 (by miraculous witness)
- 1 Thess. 5:4 (thieves shocked on the coming of Christ).

*** *See "then sudden destruction"*

2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3

STEP 7: *"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you, **to test you,**"*

A. See the signature of a sovereign God (cf. Job)

B. See the **grace in the garbage**

C. See the **purpose in the pollution**

D. See Genesis 50:20 & Romans 8:28-29

E. Testing = Truthing; Tempering; Tenderizing;
Toughening; Transforming

a. Sour tests

i. Irritation

ii. Persecution

iii. Spiritual warfare

b. Sweet tests

i. **Popularity**

ii. **Success**

iii. **Exaltation**

STEP 8: *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you, to test you, **as though something strange**”*

A. Define “strange”

B. Show “normal”

a. Historical examples

b. Scriptural expectations

c. Missional engagements

d. Personal exemplification

STEP 9: *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you, to test you, as though something strange **were happening**”*

Don't be surprised by the biblical "all,"
nor the realities of the "few." - JDP

STEP 10: *"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you, to test you, as though something strange were happening **to you.**"*

Don't be surprised!

~ The frog and the scorpion

~ **2 frogs and a bucket of milk**

REVIEW:

Cambridge Commentary:

12. *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you]* More literally, **be not amazed** (see, for the word, notes on [1 Peter 4:4](#)) **at the burning fire among you that comes to you as a test.** The "burning fire" (the word is used literally in [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:18](#)) is, of course, the symbol, as in chap. [1 Peter 1:7](#), of afflictions and persecutions. The mind of the Apostle once more goes back to these afflictions, as

before in chap. [1 Peter 1:6-7](#), [1 Peter 2:19-21](#), [1 Peter 3:15-17](#). He meets the terror which they were likely to cause by the thought that all this was to be expected. Men were to enter into the kingdom of God “through much tribulation” ([Acts 14:22](#)). All “they that would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution” ([2 Timothy 3:12](#)). The strange thing would be if it were otherwise. And so, the Apostle repeats his “think it not strange,” **be not amazed**... As before, he dwells on the leading character of suffering. It tries faith, and the faith which endures is stronger and purer for the process.

CLOSE:

Don't be surprised! *Persevere with truth in love!*

[James 1:12](#)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

[Galatians 6:9](#)

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

[Luke 21:19](#) = *Stand firm and you will win life.*

Run your race + 2 Tim. 2

Fight the good fight + Ephesians 6:10ff

NOW think about the progressive best surprises of all time:

- Birthday surprise party...
- Graduation day (airplanes & engagement)
- **Wedding day**
- **Pregnancy awareness day...**
- Gospel hearing day
- Gospel heeding day

For Christians...
the best is yet to come!

PRAYER

WORSHIP: *Though You Slay Me; Defender*

STUDY NOTES:

New American Standard Commentary: Schreiner

4:12

A new section of the letter begins here.

This is evident because the previous section closes with a doxology, and the new section is introduced by “dear friends” (*agapētoi*) and an imperative as was the new section in 2:11.

In addition, Peter again took up the subject of suffering, tackling it from a fresh and final angle, giving another perspective on what has been discussed earlier.

The view that Peter recently heard news of suffering and so penned this section should be rejected.⁴ **There is no evidence that the suffering contemplated here was any more intense than that contemplated in 1:6–8.**

Peter began here by admonishing them not to “be surprised [xenizesthe] at the fiery ordeal” (NRSV) they were enduring.

If they were astonished at the suffering that occurred, they may have been overwhelmed, concluding that God did not love them.

An advance warning of suffering helps the readers to be prepared for suffering, so that their faith is not threatened when difficulties arise.

Some interpret the “fiery ordeal” as designating actual physical persecution, but Peter said nothing different here from what had already been communicated in 1:6–7. **We must beware of overreading the metaphor.**

Johnson demonstrates that the metaphor should be interpreted in light of the Old Testament background, particularly Prov 27:21; Ps 66:10; Zech 13:9; and Mal 3:1–4.

The text in Ps 66:10 (65:10, LXX) is instructive, “For you, O God, tested [edokimasas] us; you refined [epyrōsas] us like silver.” Zechariah used the verbs “refine” (pyroō) and “test” (dokimazō) in describing the Lord’s testing and refining of his people. We know from 1 Pet 1:7 that Peter also spoke of testing (dokimazō) through fire, and in this verse the noun

“fiery trial” (pyrosis), related to the verb pyroō, is used. Malachi 3:1–4 is especially important, for, although the wording does not match 1 Pet 4:12 as closely, the Lord in Malachi comes to his temple to purify his people. The echo is striking since Peter proceeded to say that God uses suffering as the means to purify his house (i.e., the church of God as his temple).

Hence, Johnson rightly remarks that their sufferings are not a sign of God’s absence but his purifying presence.

Their unbelieving contemporaries may be “surprised” (xenizontai, 4:4) that Christians are not participating in their evil, and yet believers should not be astonished (same verb) that suffering strikes them.

They should not consider it as if *“something strange were happening.”*

Such suffering is to be expected because its purpose is *“to test you”* (*pros peirasmon*). The NIV, unfortunately, leaves out the purpose altogether and hence fails to

communicate why the readers should not be astonished.

Peter returned here to the theology of 1:6–7, where suffering is allowed by God to refine the faith of believers.

This notion is standard in New Testament paraenesis, for God uses the trials of life to strengthen the character of believers and to make them fit for his presence (cf. **Rom 5:3–5; Jas 1:2–4**).

The use of the word “test” (peirasmon) links this verse back to the same word translated “trials” (peirasmōis) in 1:6.

4:13

Verse 13 functions as a contrast to v. 12, as is indicated by the word “but” (alla) introducing the verse. Instead of being shocked that they were suffering, they should “rejoice” (chairete) at the privilege, to the degree that they “participate in the sufferings of Christ.”

The *“sufferings of Christ”* refer to sufferings that come because of their allegiance to Christ.¹²

Peter anticipated here what would be explained in the subsequent verses. Suffering for Christ is a cause for joy, but being mistreated because of one’s own sins is nothing to brag about.

The notion that suffering for Christ’s sake is a cause for joy is reflected in **Acts 5:41**, *“The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”*

The first part of the verse emphasizes that the believers should rejoice now if they suffer for Christ’s sake. The purpose clause (introduced by “so that,” *hina*) points readers to a future joy.

Believers should rejoice even now in suffering “so that you may be overjoyed” in the future.

Rejoicing in their present suffering is mandated, precisely so that believers will have joy in God’s presence at the day of judgment. How believers

respond to suffering, in other words, is an indication of whether they truly belong to God at all.

The promise of future joy, in fact, energizes the joy that will be theirs in the future.

The intensity of joy in the future is reflected in the two words that are used for joy, “rejoice and be glad” (RSV, charēte agalliōmenoi). The two terms used reflect the teaching of Jesus himself, for he exhorted his disciples to “rejoice and be glad” (chairete kai agalliasthe) when persecuted (Matt 5:12).

This future joy will belong to believers **“when his glory is revealed”** (lit., “at the revelation of his glory, *en tē apokalypsei tēs doxēs autou*).

The revelation of his glory almost certainly refers to the second coming of Christ.

This is confirmed by 1:7, where, in a context that also discusses suffering and the final reward, reference is made to “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (RSV, *apokalypsei Iēsou Christou*). The same expression is used to describe the coming of Jesus Christ in **1:13**. Indeed, such an expression describes the future coming of Christ in the Pauline letters (**1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thess 1:7**). Peter exhorted readers to rejoice in their present sufferings so that they will be able to rejoice and exult forever when Christ returns. By implication those who do not rejoice in their sufferings do not truly belong to Jesus Christ. If they groan about sufferings now, they will presumably be disappointed on the future day.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

(12-19) EXHORTATION TO COURAGE AND STEADFASTNESS IN PERSECUTION.—All ought to be prepared for persecution. It is a blessed and glorious thing to have to bear it. A criminal's death and a Christian martyrdom are the exact opposites of each other. Vengeance is speedily coming.

(12) **Beloved.**—See Note on [1Peter 2:11](#).

Think it not strange.—The same word as in [1Peter 4:4](#). It means, literally, to feel like people in a strange country, lost and bewildered. It is further explained by the clause “as though some strange thing were (by bad luck) happening unto you.” These Hebrew Christians felt at first it was not what was to be expected, that those who attached themselves to the Messiah should have a life of sorrow and persecution in the world.

The fiery trial which is to try you.—This rendering is not only slovenly, but conveys a false impression, for the fiery trial was not future, but actually present. Literally it runs, *Be not bewildered at the conflagration among you taking place for a trial to you*. Already, then, the Asiatic Christians are enduring a fierce persecution. The word which describes it is only found besides in [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:18](#), “burning.” (Comp. [1Peter 1:7](#).)

Benson Commentary

[1 Peter 4:12-13](#). *Think it not strange*, &c. — Wonder not at *the fiery trial* — The dreadful series of furious and bitter persecutions. The original expression, *εν υμιν πυρωσει*, is literally, *the burning which is among you*; denoting the grievous persecution which the Christians in Pontus, &c., were suffering for their faith; including both martyrdom itself, which frequently was by fire, and all the other sufferings joined with or previous to it. The metaphor is bold, but noble: it expresses in a lively manner the painful and dangerous nature of their trials. *Which is to try you* — Is permitted by the wisdom of God for the trial of your faith in Christ, and in the truths and promises of his gospel; of your hope of eternal life, your love to God, his people, and his ways, of your resignation to his will, your patience and meekness; *as though some strange thing happened unto you* — Different from, or beyond, all which you were taught to expect. *But rejoice* in these trials, *inasmuch as ye are* therein *partakers of Christ's sufferings* — Sufferings endured for his sake, in defence of his truth, and in proof of your faith in him; *that when his glory shall be revealed* — At the great and glorious day of his second appearance; *ye* — In the participation of it; *may be glad with exceeding joy* — *Χαρητε αγαλλιωμενοι*, *may rejoice transported with gladness*.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

4:12-19 By patience and fortitude in suffering, by dependence on the promises of God, and keeping to the word the Holy Spirit hath revealed, the Holy Spirit is glorified; but by the contempt and reproaches cast upon believers, he is evil spoken of, and is blasphemed. One would think such cautions as these were needless to Christians. But their enemies falsely charged them with foul crimes. And even the best of men need to be warned against the worst of sins. There is no comfort in sufferings, when we bring them upon ourselves by our own sin and folly. A time of universal calamity was at hand, as foretold by our Saviour, Mt 24:9,10. And if such things befall in this life, how awful will the day of judgment be! It is true that the righteous are scarcely saved; even those who endeavour to walk uprightly in the ways of God. This does not mean that the purpose and performance of God are uncertain, but only the great difficulties and hard encounters in the way; that they go through so many temptations and tribulations, so many fightings without and fears within. Yet all outward difficulties would be as nothing, were it not for lusts and corruptions within. These are the worst clogs and troubles. And if the way of the righteous be so hard, then how hard shall be the end of the ungodly sinner, who walks in sin with delight, and thinks the righteous is a fool for all his pains! The only way to keep the soul well, is, to commit it to God by prayer, and patient perseverance in well-doing. He will overrule all to the final advantage of the believer.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Beloved, think it not strange - Do not consider it as anything which you had no reason to expect; as anything which may not happen to others also.

Concerning the fiery trial which is to try you - Referring, doubtless, to some severe persecution which was then impending. We have not the means of determining precisely what this was. The word rendered "fiery trial" (πυρώσει purōsei) occurs only here and in [Revelation 18:9](#), [Revelation 18:18](#); in both of which latter places it is rendered burning. It means, properly, a being on fire, burning, conflagration; and then any severe trial. It cannot be demonstrated from this word that they were literally to suffer by fire, but it is clear that some heavy calamity was before them.

As though some strange thing happened unto you - Something unusual; something which did not occur to others.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

12. strange—they might think it strange that God should allow His chosen children to be sore tried.

fiery trial—like the fire by which metals are tested and their dross removed. The Greek adds, "in your case."

which is to try you—Greek, "which is taking place for a trial to you." Instead of its "happening to you" as some strange and untoward chance, it "is taking place" with the gracious design of trying you; God has a wise design in it—a consolatory reflection.

Matthew Poole's Commentary

Think it not strange; be not offended or troubled at persecution, as at a thing unusual or never heard of; it implies that they should reckon upon it beforehand, that they might not be surprised with it when it comes. The same word is used, [1 Peter 4:4](#).

Concerning the fiery trial; the heat or burning, whereby he means great afflictions, especially those that are for righteousness' sake, as appears, [1 Peter 4:14](#), which are often compared to fire, as being alike painful and grievous to them as fire is to men's bodies; and because men are tried by them as metals are by fire, [Psalm 66:10](#) [Isaiah 48:10](#).

Which is to try you: this he adds as the reason why they should not think strange of persecutions, viz. because they were sent by God, not for their destruction, but for the trial and exercise of their graces.

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial,... By which may be meant either the destruction of Jerusalem, which was at hand, and of which the apostle may be thought to give the Jews he writes to notice of before hand; that they might be prepared for it, and not be overwhelmed with consternation and amazement when they should hear of it; who, though in other countries, must be affected with it, and would be a trying dispensation to them: or else the afflictions and persecutions which daily come upon them, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; signified by "fire" or "burning", because grievous to the flesh, and gave great uneasiness, distress, and pain to it; and because of the fury of men, and the violence and fierceness of their rage, expressed thereby; as also because the people of God under them are sometimes ready to conceive that the wrath of God is poured out, like fire, upon them. But the apostle would not have these saints entertain any such thoughts, and therefore he calls them "beloved"; that is, of God, as they were notwithstanding all the fiery trials and afflictions which were brought upon them; or he means, that they were beloved by him, and dear unto him, and other saints, though they were ill treated and reproached by the world: the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "my beloved"; and the Ethiopic version, "our brethren": and the apostle exhorts them not to look upon their afflictions that either did or should attend them as strange and uncommon things; since afflictions, of whatsoever kind, are not things of chance, and do not rise up out of the dust, but are by the appointment, and according to the will of God; and are also the common lot of the people of God in all ages, from the beginning of the world, the same afflictions are accomplished in others; yea, Christ himself endured the same hatred, reproach, and contradiction of sinners, against himself; and they are what he has given his people reason to expect, having told them of

them before hand, that they might not be offended at them; and as they lay in his way to glory, it need not seem strange that the saints also should, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom. Moreover, this fiery dispensation, be it what it will, was not to destroy them, but to try them, and that for their good, profit, and advantage; just as gold and silver are tried in the fire, and lose their dross, and become purer and brighter:

which is to try you; afflictions try the graces of the saints; as their faith in Christ, which becomes thereby much more precious than of gold that perisheth; and their love to him, by which it appears that no tribulation can separate them from it, nor many waters and floods of afflictions drown it; and their hope of eternal life, which grows more lively and strong, and is as an anchor, sure and steadfast, amidst the greatest storms. These try a man's profession of religion, whether it is took up on good principles, and without sinister views; since, if it is not, when persecution, because of the word, comes, he is offended and gone; and likewise what a man's principles are, whether worth suffering for or not; and whether they will bear him up, and he abide by them, when called to suffer for them; and therefore, since such ends are answered by fiery trials, they should not be looked upon as strange and unusual things: as though some strange thing happened unto you; which was never known and heard of before; and as if useless, and of no service, and as foreign to the characters, cases, and circumstances of the saints in this world. The apostle in this verse returns to his former argument, to animate and encourage the saints in suffering afflictions patiently for righteousness sake.

Geneva Study Bible

{11} Beloved, think it not {d} strange {12} concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

(11) Because that cross is joined with the sincere profession of religion, the apostle fitly repeats what he touched on before, warning us not to be troubled at persecutions and afflictions, as at a new and strange thing.

(d) As though some new thing had befallen you, which you never thought of before.

(12) The first reason: because the Lord does not mean to confuse us with his fire (as it were) but to purge us of our impurities and make us perfect.

Meyer's NT Commentary

[1 Peter 4:12](#). Exhortation with reference to the sufferings under persecution. ἀγαπητοί] see chap. [1 Peter 2:11](#).

μὴ ξενίζεσθε] cf. [1 Peter 4:4](#); Nicol. de Lyra translates incorrectly: nolite a fide alienari; Luther correctly: "*let it not astonish you.*"

τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει] The construction cum dat. occurs also in classical Greek; πύρωσις, besides in this passage, to be found only in [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:18](#), where it is equal to, incendium. The LXX. translate פֶּרֶךְ and even פֶּרֶךְ by πυρώω; the substantive, [Proverbs 27:21](#), is an inexact translation of בּוּר in the sense of “refining furnace;” Oec. correctly: πύρωσιν τὰς θλίψεις εἰπὼν, ἐνέφηγεν ὡς διὰ δοκιμασίαν ἐπάγονται αὐτοῖς αὐταί. The word, however, does not in itself contain the reference to purification, this is introduced only in what follows; Gualther: confert crucem igni, nos auro.

ἐν ὑμῖν] “among, with you;” not equal to “affecting some in your midst” (de Wette), but “the readers are regarded as a totality, and the πύρ. as present in the midst of them” (Wiesinger).

The definite purpose of the πύρωσις is brought out in the subsequent words: πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη. πειρασμός here means the trial with intent to purify (elsewhere it has also the secondary signification of designed temptation to sin); cf. chap. [1 Peter 1:7](#).

ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος] ξένου points back to μὴ ξενίζεσθε. Luther: “as though some strange thing happened unto you;” i.e. something strange to your destination, unsuited to it.[252]

[252] Schott here again supposes that in consequence of persecutions the leaders had become perplexed as to the moral truth of their state of salvation. This the context in no way justifies. What causes astonishment is rather the fact that the church belonging to the glorified Christ is exposed to the obloquy of the world.

Expositor's Greek Testament

[1 Peter 4:12](#). ἀγαπητοί marks the beginning of the third division of the Epistle in which Peter having cleared the ground faces at last the pressing problem.—ξενίζεσθε, *be surprised*, as in [1 Peter 4:4](#).—τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει, *the ordeal which is in your midst or rather in your hearts*.—ἐν ὑμῖν, *cf. τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον* ([1 Peter 5:1](#)) but the test is internal—in what frame of mind will they meet it? Will they regard it as a strange thing or as a share in Christ’s sufferings, part of the pattern?—πυρώσει This conception of suffering as a trial not vindictive is stated in [Jdg 8:25](#); [Jdg 8:27](#), ἐκείνους ἐπύρωσεν εἰς ἔτασμον καρδίας αὐτῶν; compare [Zechariah 13:9](#), πυρώσω αὐτοὺς ὡς πυροῦνται ἀργύριον, [Proverbs 27:21](#), χρυσῶ πύρωσις parallels *but a man is tried* ... π. also occurs in the sense of *blasting*, [Amos](#)

[4:9](#); [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:18](#).

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

12. *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you*] More literally, **be not amazed** (see, for the word, notes on [1 Peter 4:4](#)) **at the burning fire among you that comes to you as a test**. The “burning fire” (the word is used literally in [Revelation 18:9](#); [Revelation 18:18](#)) is, of course, the symbol, as in chap. [1 Peter 1:7](#), of afflictions and persecutions. The mind of the Apostle once more goes back to these afflictions, as before in chap. [1 Peter 1:6-7](#), [1 Peter 2:19-21](#), [1 Peter 3:15-17](#). He meets the terror which they were likely to cause by the thought that all this was to be expected. Men were to enter into the kingdom of God “through much tribulation” ([Acts 14:22](#)). All “they that would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution” ([2 Timothy 3:12](#)). The strange thing would be if it were otherwise. And so the Apostle repeats his “think it not strange,” **be not amazed**, as the secret of calm endurance. It was for him and those to whom he wrote what the *Nil admirari* was for the Epicurean poet (Hor. *Epp.* i. 6). As before, he dwells on the leading character of suffering. It tries faith, and the faith which endures is stronger and purer for the process.

Bengel's Gnomon

[1 Peter 4:12](#). Ἀγαπητοὶ, μὴ ξενίζεσθε, *beloved, do not think it strange*) He exhorts them with love. A taste of the Divine power, which the preceding verses relate, forbids us *to be offended as by a strange thing*. For adversities to befall the saints is, in one point of view, something *strange*; for they are sons of God: in another, it is *not strange*; for it is adapted to them, for their purification [lit. *seasoning*].—πύρωσει, *the burning*) ch. [1 Peter 1:7](#).—πρὸς πειρασμὸν) *which is not except for trial*.—ὑμῖν, *to you*) The dativus commodi.—γίνομένη, *when it takes place*) by Divine counsel.—συμβαίνοντος, *happening*) accidentally.

Pulpit Commentary

Verse 12. - *Beloved, thank it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you*; literally, **be not astonished at the burning among you, which is coming to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were happening to you**. St. Peter returns to the sufferings of his readers. The address, “beloved,” as in [1 Peter 2:11](#), shows the depth of his sympathy with them. He resumes the thought of [1 Peter 1:7](#); the persecution is a burning, a fiery furnace, which is being kindled among them for a trial, to try the strength of their faith. The present participles imply that the persecution was already beginning; the word πύρωσις, a burning (see [Revelation 18:9, 18](#)), shows the severity. St. Peter tells them its meaning: it was to

prove them; it would turn to their good. Persecution was not to be regarded as a strange thing. The Lord had foretold its coming. St. Paul, in his first visit to Asia Minor, had warned them that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (On the word ξένιζεσθαι, see note on ver. 4.) The thing was not strange; they were not to count it as strange; they must learn, so to speak, to acclimatize themselves to it; it would brace their energies and strengthen their faith. 1 Peter 4:12

Vincent's Word Studies

Think it not strange (μὴ ξενίζεσθε)

I.e., alien from you and your condition as Christians. Compare [1 Peter 5:4](#).

Fiery trial (πυρώσει)

The word means burning. In [Proverbs 27:21](#) (Sept.), it is rendered furnace. In [Psalm 65](#) (Sept.), 66 (A. V.), we read, "Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast smelted us, as silver is smelted." Compare [Zechariah 13:9](#).

Which is to try you (ὃμῶν γινομένη)

The A. V. thus makes the trial a thing of the future; mistranslating the Greek present participle, which is taking place. This participle, therefore, represents the trial as actually in progress. The Rev. does not give this force by its which cometh upon you.

To try you (πρὸς πειρασμὸν)

Lit., for trial or probation.

Strange thing (ξένον)

Compare think it not strange, above.

Happened (συμβαίνοντος)

Again the present participle. Better, perhaps, were happening; by chance, instead of with the definite purpose indicated by "taking place with a view to probation." See above.

New Testament Commentary: Grudem

12. *Suffering as a Christian is not to be thought of as unusual or strange*: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. The word translated **fiery ordeal means 'fire, burning' (as in Rev. 18:9, 18)**, but Peter probably has in mind the use of the word in Proverbs 27:21 (LXX), 'Fire is the means of testing silver and gold.' Because of this sense, the word could also be translated 'refining fire'. The imagery is similar to that used in 1:7.

The image of a refiner's fire suggests that such suffering purifies and strengthens Christians. This idea is reinforced by the fact that it comes upon you (or: 'among you') to prove you.

Here he uses the same word (*peirasmos*) which he used in 1:6 ('trials') in its positive sense of a trial expected to have a positive outcome.

The readers are encouraged to see God's good purpose behind their difficulties, enabling them to grow stronger in faith and give more glory to God. This he explains in the following verses, showing that such trials are not to be thought unusual or strange, for they are a normal part of the Christian life.

13.

Instead of being thrown off balance by trials, Christians are to *rejoice in so far as* (i.e. to the degree that) they *share Christ's sufferings*.

Both verbs have a suggestion of continuation over time:

'In so far as you are sharing Christ's suffering, keep on rejoicing.'

It is amazing to think that increased sufferings seem only to increase the believer's joy in the Lord,
but

Scripture testifies that this is so
(Acts 5:41; cf. 16:25; Rom. 5:3; Col. 1:24; Heb. 10:34).

Moreover, suffering as a Christian confirms to us the fact that we are indeed Christ's: *'To share, therefore, in Christ's sufferings here, is to be on the sure road to a share in His consequent glory hereafter'* (Stibbs/Walls, p. 159).

This is because union with Christ involves not only union with him in his death and

resurrection (**Rom. 6:5**), but also union with him in the whole pattern of his life, which includes his suffering for righteousness (**1 Pet. 2:20–21; 3:17–18; Rom. 8:17; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 John 2:6**).

Thus, rejoicing in suffering for Christ now will certainly lead to great rejoicing in his presence when he returns: ‘Rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed’ (cf. **Rom. 8:17**).

The phrase *rejoice and be glad* is more expressively rendered, *‘rejoice with great spiritual rejoicing’*,

for Peter adds to this clause the verb *agalliaō*, **‘to exult with spiritual joy, joy in the Lord’** (see note on this term at 1:6).¹

¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 185–186.

