

“Suffer, Rejoice, Trust, & Obey”

1 Peter 4:12-19

December 3, 2023

INTRO: What are some of the hardest things to hear and accept in the Bible?

- *Love your enemy? - Pray without ceasing?*
- *Be HOLY, for I the LORD your God am holy?*
- *Do not be surprised when fiery trials come upon you?*
- Wait till you hear where we're going in the Bible today...

PRAAYER

CONTEXT:

- ~ 1st Peter “No Matter What!”
- ~ God’s persecuted people being exhorted
- ~ The blessed/loved people of God submit & suffer
- ~ Eternal happiness is found in holy harmony
- ~ See & hear the recent sermon text’s “Big Ideas”
 - *Holy families are harmony families*
 - *When He & we > me, you’ll have harmony*
 - *God fixes & fights for HIS harmony family*
 - *Hard times are tests & opportunities to forge harmony*
 - *Holy harmony fights miraculously, Messianically, and missionally... No matter what!*
 - *Enough is enough! It’s time for shock & awe!*
 - *It is impossible to over emphasize biblical koinonia!*
Heads UP. Hearts BE. Hands ON.
 - *Christ-like readiness requires biblical faithfulness!*

If it's **not** God-glorifying, it's **not** God harmonizing.
(and/or)

If it IS God harmonizing, it WILL be God glorifying!

BIG IDEA:

Christians live & love in the eternal tension
found between short-term suffering
and long, LONG-term glory.

PREVIEW:

1. We know the T/truth and are made ready by Him/it!
2. We rejoice in what we do not enjoy... for good reason.
3. We are blessed & empowered NOW... & forevermore.
4. We call out the shameful, while BE-ing unashamed!
5. We long for sanctification and the Lord's refining fire.
6. We set the standard for excellence; with truth in love!
7. We will BE Christ's faithful family... *No matter what!*

TEXT:

- I. **We know the Truth/truth and we're
made ready by Him/it!**

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.*

- **Beloved** = a love letter... a loving EXHORTATION!
- Key PHRASES / TERMS:
 - *“not surprised”*
 - *“fiery trials”*
 - *“test you”*
 - *“strange”*
 - *“you”* (3X)
- Suffering sifts souls. - JDP
- For some, suffering strengthens their faith.
- **Suffering softens some hearts and hardens others**
- JDP
- Suffering in the Parable of the Soils = some walk away
- **Suffering opens the windows of the heart.**
- JDP

II. We rejoice in what we do not enjoy ...for good reason.

13 *But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*

Think about the miraculous and life-giving process of delivering a baby. Really... think about it... Amazing right? Mind-blowing... RIGHT? (If you don't think so, you haven't thought about it enough yet – or your just clueless.)

So, with that picture in your mind's eye... that AWE inspiring moment... vividly before you, so real you can almost touch and relive each second... when your little miracle (Talia, Ezra, Hannah...) took their first breath and made themselves known to this world... Right there! In that moment, could you rejoice? (Yes, of course!)

Ok... so I have one more set of questions. If you knew you were going to have another child... Could and would you rejoice when you learned that you were pregnant again? How about at the delivery (like above) of miracle #2? – would you rejoice there again. No doubt we'd all answer Yes! and YES! to those two questions. Amen.

So... then... let me ask you one more... What's it going to take to have you rejoice in the middle, in between your learning of the miracle's starting reality and its final delivery and ride home. What's it going to take to get you (and me) to rejoice IN and THROUGH the short-term, very difficult, even suffering process of labor and delivery?

1. Don't let what you don't know interfere with what you do know!

2. Focus on The Father, your faith, and The Family.

3. Pray, obey, and repeat... rejoicing to God's glory!

VIDEO: *“Rejoicing In Pain” (Sproul)*

Suffering for Christ's sake is a cause for joy! See **Acts 5:41**, *“The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”*

Rejoicing in their present suffering is mandated, so that believers will have joy 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 **intensity of joy** in the future is reflected in the two words that are used for joy, *“rejoice and be glad”*

see the teaching of Jesus...he exhorted his disciples to “rejoice and be glad” when persecuted ([Matt 5:12](#)).

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; 16:25; Rom. 5:3; Col. 1:24; Heb. 10:34)

- Grudem

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).

- Grudem

Our Christian faith means nothing until we come to the valley of the shadow of death...
The hardest time to believe that God is faithful is when His hand is heavy on your back.

- R.C. Sproul

III. We are blessed & empowered NOW and forevermore.

¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

The main point of the verse emerges in the second clause. Insulted Christians are “blessed” (*makarioi*, cf. 3:14).

They may be insulted by human beings, but they are blessed by God himself. **Matt 5:11:**

“Blessed are you when people insult you”

(“blessed” and “insult” are in both texts.)

The last clause in v. 14 explains why believers are blessed, ***“for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”***

Believers who suffer are blessed because they are **NOW** enjoying God’s favor, tasting even **NOW** the wonder of the glory to come and **experiencing** the promised, Holy Spirit. – Schreiner

(The verbs suggest continuation over time!)
The blessing named in verse 13 was **future**;
the blessing named here is present.

(ALSO)

The word **glory** in the verse suggests another theme as well:
the New Testament fulfilment of the Old Testament cloud of
God's glory (the 'shekinah glory') is to be seen in the powerful
dwelling of the Holy Spirit **within Christian believers!**

- Grudem

IV. **We call out the shame-full... while BE-ing unashamed!**

***15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief
or an evildoer or as a meddler.*

***16** Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be
ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.*

The admonition reminds us that the early Christian churches were imperfect. Believers were still prone to sin, and hence they needed exhortations to encourage them to walk in godly pathways.

- Schreiner

Peter knew how easily people can rationalize punishments that are deserved and explain them as "Christian" suffering.

“meddler” = “watching over another’s affairs.”
“mischief-maker” - “busybody” - “troublesome meddler”

Verse 16 now examines the other side.

Those who are ashamed would be guilty of apostasy.

**By way of contrast believers glorify God
by confessing and praising his name publicly**
(cf. Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 9:13).

*They glorify God in the name “**Christian**” by enduring such suffering with joy (v. 13), pleased that they are privileged to suffer because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ.*

“in that name” = then derogatory “Christian**”**

The one being reviled as a Christian should so act and speak that God is continually honored in his or her life. The idea of living so that in everything God is glorified is stated explicitly in verse 11, but is frequently implied in previous verses as well (see notes on 1:7, 16; 2:5, 9; 3:4). – Grudem

V. We long for sanctification and the Lord’s refining fire.

17a *For it is time for judgment to begin*
FROM *the house/household of God...*

This word for judgment does not necessarily mean 'condemnation' but is a broader term which can refer to a judgment which results in good and bad evaluations, a judgment which may issue in approval or discipline as well as condemnation. – Grudem

We have already seen in **1:6–7** & **4:12** that the trials and difficulties of the righteous are designed to purify and refine believers so that they will receive their final reward.

The Old Testament background = **Ezekiel 9 and Malachi 3.**

In Ezekiel 9 rebellious sinners are being destroyed...

- The Lord is calling to *'the executioners'* of judgment to *'draw near'* (9:1) to bring judgment on Jerusalem for its horrible sins.
- One messenger of God puts a mark on the forehead of all who were found to *'sigh and groan'* over the *'abominations'* committed in Jerusalem (9:4–5). Then the *'executioners'* of judgment are told to **kill all who do not have the mark on their foreheads** (9:5–6).

*The order of Malachi 3 is preserved here.
When the Lord comes to his temple, he refines and
purifies his people (3:1-4), but those who are
unrepentant sinners will be destroyed (3:5).*

God's household is the temple in the Old Testament, but Peter, in concert with other New Testament writers now conceives of the church, God's people, as his temple
(1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19; 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 3:6).

Remember: Peter already identified the church as God's *priesthood*, his *chosen people*, and his *holy nation*... (1 Pet 2:9).

NOTICE: Peter wanted to focus on the failure to obey, for all unbelief leads to disobedience.

- **3X those who will be judged** (or are being judged) are described as disobeying (1 Pet 2:8; 3:1, 20).
- **Believers 4X** are characterized by **obedience** (1:2, 14; 3:10-12; 4:3-4).

**VI. We set the standard for excellence...
with "truth in love!"**

17b and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 *And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”*

The picture is that God has begun judging within the church, and will later move outward to judge those outside the church.

(Grudem)

The refining fire of judgment is leaving no one untouched!

Verse 18 restates the truth of v. 17 from **Proverbs 11:31**.

*Peter did not mean by this that God was punishing believers for their sins. Rather suffering purifies the church, and God uses it (**cf. 4:1**) to provoke believers to make a clean break with sin. -Schreiner*

Peter was not saying that the righteous are scarcely saved, as if they were almost consigned to destruction and were just pulled from the flames. What he meant was that the righteous are saved *“with difficulty.”*

The fire of God’s holiness is so intense that even *the righteous* feel pain in its discipline.

– Grudem

VII. We will BE Christ's faithful family... No matter what!

¹⁹Therefore,
*let those who suffer according to God's will
entrust their souls to a faithful Creator
while doing good.*

We learn from vv. 12 and 17–18 that the suffering that strikes believers is according to God's will. It passes through his loving hands for the purification of believers. Hence, those who belong to God should entrust their lives to their faithful Creator, just as Jesus entrusted his life to God when he suffered (2:23). – Schreiner

This one verse summarizes all of 1st Peter!

Christians do not suffer accidentally or because of the irresistible forces of blind fate; rather, they *suffer according to God's will... While this may at first seem harsh (for it implies that at times it is God's will that we suffer), upon reflection no better comfort in suffering can be found than this: it is God's good and perfect will.* - Grudem

So no suffering occurs apart from his will. He is faithful, and so he will see to it that the suffering does not exceed what we can bear (cf. 1 Cor 10:13).

– Schreiner

A conclusion from all of vv. 12–18 is now drawn.

Those who suffer according to God's will are those who share in Christ's sufferings (v. 12), who are insulted in Christ's name (v. 14), and who suffer as Christians rather than for doing something evil (vv. 15–16). The reference to God's will here as in 3:17 indicates that all suffering passes through his hands (cf. 3:17), that nothing strikes a believer apart from God's loving and sovereign control. When suffering strikes, believers should "commit themselves to their faithful Creator." Christ modeled what Peter enjoined, for when he was suffering, he entrusted himself to God (1 Pet 2:23). Jesus used the same word (paratithēmi) when he entrusted his spirit to God at his death (Luke 23:46). In Acts the word is used when Paul entrusted his converts to God (Acts 14:23; 20:32), and in the Pastorals the word designates the entrusting of God's truth to faithful men (1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:2). Similarly, believers should entrust their lives to God as Creator. The reference to God as Creator (ktistēs) implies his sovereignty, for the Creator of the world is also sovereign over it. Therefore, believers can be confident that he will not allow them to suffer beyond their capacity and that he will provide the strength needed to endure. Such confidence can be theirs because he is a "faithful" Creator, faithful to his promises and faithful to his people, never abandoning them in their time of need, always vindicating the righteous and condemning the wicked (cf. 4:17–18). The way believers will reveal that they are trusting in God is by continuing "to do good." - Schreiner

VIDEO: *Does God Want Me To Suffer (Piper)*

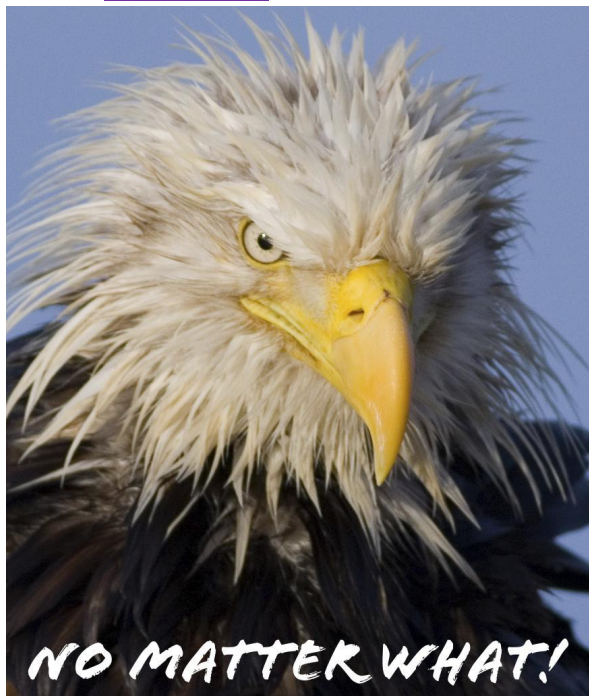
T/S: You may have been asking yourself:

Why was Pastor Jeff making orange juice during this sermon?

Making fresh squeezed orange juice... is like suffering.

- Forrest Gump said: "Life is like a box of chocolates."
- I want you to know that **life is like a bag of oranges...**
- Note: plastic fruit is fake fruit & it's only good for looks...
- Real fruit is for squeezing... **Real fruit's needed for juice!**

Church... this passage shows us that as real Christians, we were set-apart, Spirit-filled, and sent out so that the world would get Jesus-juice out of us.



REVIEW:

The question is not why there is so much suffering in the world, but why there is so little.

The problem of suffering is based on two things that we fail to know: the character of God and the seriousness of sin. Those are

weighty matters. - R.C. Sproul

1. We know the T/truth and are made ready by Him/it!
2. We rejoice in what we do not enjoy... for good reason.
3. We are blessed & empowered NOW... & forevermore.
4. We call out the shameful, while BE-ing unashamed!
5. We long for sanctification and the Lord's refining fire.
6. We set the standard for excellence; with truth in love!
7. We will BE Christ's faithful family... **No matter what!**

CLOSE:

Let God's Word inform, inspect, & inspire you

1st Peter 1:6-7; 2:19-21; 3:18

6In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, **7**so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

19For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. **20**For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. **21**For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. **18**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Psalms 119:71

It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

Isaiah 43:2a

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

Matthew 5:10-12

10“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11**“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12**Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Romans 5:3-5; 18

we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4**and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5**and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. **18**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10; 17

7But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. **8**We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; **9**persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; **10**always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies... **17**For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

Colossians 1:24

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,

Philippians 3:8-10

8Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9**and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— **10**that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

James 1:2-4; 12

2Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, **3**for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. **4**And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing... **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.

PRAYER

WORSHIP: *Ain't Nobody; Fear Is Not My Future; Hallelujah Feeling*

[1 Peter 4:12-19](#)

12Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13**But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. **14**If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. **15**But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. **16**Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. **17**For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18**And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the
sinner?”

19Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

STUDY NOTES:

New American Standard Commentary: Schreiner

1. Suffer Joyfully in Accord with God's Will (4:12–19)

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And,

“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

¹⁹ So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

A new section of the letter commences with “Beloved” and the imperative not to be surprised at the fiery testing. We have no evidence that fresh news reached Peter about the increase of suffering in Asia Minor. The language used in this paragraph is not remarkably different from what we have seen already in 1:6–7. Peter reminded his readers again that the fiery ordeal was for the purpose of testing and refining their faith, and hence they ought not to conceive of their suffering as something strange or unexpected. Indeed, instead of being surprised at their sufferings, they should rejoice and be glad (v. 13), for such suffering indicates that they will exult with remarkable joy when Jesus Christ is revealed in all his glory. Verse 14 explicates the purpose clause from v. 13. Being reproached for the sake of Christ is an indication that the readers stand under God's blessing even now, indicating that the eschatological glory of v. 13 and the Holy Spirit rest on believers. In v. 15 Peter reverted to a theme we saw earlier (2:19–20; 3:17), that believers should not suffer because they practice evil. Rather they

must suffer as those who are called Christians, that is, followers of Christ. For such suffering they should not be ashamed but glorify God by suffering with Jesus Christ. **Verses 17–18** explain why believers were suffering. Suffering represents God’s judgment of his house. By “house of God” here Peter meant the church of Jesus Christ.

Peter did not mean by this that God was punishing believers for their sins. Rather suffering purifies the church, and God uses it (cf. 4:1) to provoke believers to make a clean break with sin.

The judgment begins with the church and purifies it, but if God purifies the church by his judgment, then his judgment of those who disobey the gospel will have terrible consequences. In v. 18 the same point is restated and explained. If the righteous are saved by means of a purifying suffering, if they need such a refining work, then the judgment of the ungodly and the sinner will be terrible indeed.

Verse 19 functions as the conclusion to the entire paragraph.

1. We learn from vv. 12 and 17–18 that the suffering that strikes believers is according to God’s will. It passes through his loving hands for the purification of believers. Hence, those who belong to God should entrust their lives to their faithful Creator, just as Jesus entrusted his life to God when he suffered (**2:23**).
2. **“Faithful Creator”** signifies that God is sovereign and true. He is sovereign, and so no suffering occurs apart from his will.

He is faithful, and so he will see to it that the suffering does not exceed what we can bear (cf. 1 Cor 10:13).

3. Hence, *believers should persist in doing good, for entrusting themselves to God always manifests itself in a changed life, in the pursuit of goodness.*¹

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

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 217.

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” (*peirasmois*) 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.

4:14 In v. 13 believers are commanded to rejoice in their present sufferings, but **v. 14** adds a distinct point, emphasizing that believers are blessed by God if they are insulted because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ.

The sufferings of believers are described here as being “insulted because of the name of Christ.” **The word “insulted” (*oneidizesthe*) is important and helps us understand the “fiery ordeal” (NRSV; *pyrōsei*) in v. 12.**

The latter term might suggest that believers were being put to death and were experiencing some kind of physical torture for their faith. Peter certainly wanted the readers to be prepared for such experiences. The evidence of the letter does not support the idea that suffering had yet reached such an intense state. The opposition was mainly verbal at this stage. They were “insulted” by others for their devotion to Christ.¹⁶ We saw previously in 4:4 that they were abused by unbelievers for not participating in their former activities. Even the persecution in Rome under Nero (ca. A.D. 64) did not represent a concentrated empirewide campaign against Christians. It probably was a temporary response to the fire at Rome and designed to deflect responsibility from Nero (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15:44; Suetonius, *Vit.* 6.16.2). Pliny’s correspondence with the emperor Trajan (ca. A.D. 112–114) reveals that no official policy had been established to respond to Christians, nor do Trajan’s responses suggest a policy throughout the empire in which believers were sought out and punished (*Ep.* 10.96). We do see in the Book of Revelation that some believers were being killed for their faith (cf. 2:13; 6:9–11; 13:7; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4), but even in this case the persecution probably did not represent an empirewide and official persecution. **What we have are sporadic instances of intense persecution that threatened believers.**

The main point of the verse emerges in the second clause.

Those who are insulted as Christians are actually “blessed” (*makarioi*, cf. 3:14).

They may be insulted by human beings, but they are blessed by God himself.

Peter was almost certainly recalling the words of Jesus here, for Matt 5:11 says

“Blessed are you when people insult you”
(makarioi este hotan oneidisōsin hymas). The
words ***“blessed”*** and ***“insult”*** are in both texts.

Christians may be reproached by human beings, but they are blessed by God.

The last clause in v. 14 explains why believers are blessed,
“for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

The NIV smooths out the Greek syntax, which is quite awkward. It is possible that the clause should be interpreted quite differently and could be paraphrased “for the eschatological glory promised in v. 13 and the Spirit of God rest upon you.” Achtemeier adduces a number of other examples in which the kind of construction found here (*to tēs doxēs*) would support the latter interpretation (LXX Lev 7:7; 1 Sam 6:4; Matt 21:21; 1 Cor 10:24; Jas 4:14; 2 Pet 2:22). This interpretation also explains why the word “Spirit” (*pneuma*) is found only in the second phrase “the Spirit of God.” If this interpretation is correct, Peter’s point was that they were blessed because they possessed even now the glory that would be theirs at the end time and also that the eschatological gift of the Spirit even now rested upon them. Davids, on the other hand, argues that the reference is to the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God as translated in the NIV.²² First, he thinks the phrase “Spirit of God” is “stereotyped” and would not be broken up. Second, “glory” is placed first to contrast it with the “insult” of the first part of the verse. Finally, the use of the article to refer to glory would only work if we had a “stereotyped” phrase as in Matt 21:21; 1 Cor 10:24; Jas 4:14; 2 Pet 2:2. Davids maintains that such a stereotyped phrase is not evident here. The arguments Davids suggests fail to convince. First, the phrase “Spirit of God” on any reading is broken up in some sense, which is why scholars debate whether the first use of the article (*to*) refers to the Spirit. The second argument is not distinctive to the interpretation proposed by Davids. Since it can apply to both interpretations, it is not determinative. Third, it is unclear what Davids means by “stereotyped phrases,” since the examples adduced seem to be parallel to what we have in 1 Pet 4:14.

The wording of the verse hearkens back to Isa 11:1–3, where the branch of Jesse, obviously Jesus himself for Peter, will be endowed with the Holy Spirit.

The wording of v. 2 in the Septuagint is especially important. Isaiah said about Jesse's branch that "the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him" (*anapausetai ep auton pneuma tou theou*).

The main difference is that Isaiah used a future tense verb, while in Peter we have a present tense, probably to emphasize that the prophecy uttered in Isaiah has now been fulfilled and that the Spirit that was upon Jesus now also rests on Christians.

Believers who suffer are blessed because they are now enjoying God's favor, tasting even now the wonder of the glory to come and experiencing the promised Holy Spirit.

4:15

The "for" introducing v. 15, deleted by the NIV, explains that believers' joy and blessing is conditioned upon truly suffering as Christians. Not all suffering qualifies one for God's blessing and joy, for human beings also suffer when they do what is evil.

The realism of Peter and of the early Christian movement manifests itself here.

Peter knew how easily people can rationalize punishments that are deserved and explain them as “Christian” suffering.

The admonition also reminds us that the early Christian churches were imperfect. Believers were still prone to sin, and hence they needed exhortations to encourage them to walk in godly pathways.

The first two sins listed are blatant examples of falling short of God’s standards. Indeed, murder and stealing are not only sins but also crimes in society. We should not discern from this that believers in the Petrine churches were actually committing such crimes, nor is it clear from this that Christians were being taken to court. **Blatant sins are listed for rhetorical reasons, so that believers will distinguish between genuine Christian suffering and suffering that is a consequence of misbehavior.**²⁷

In any case, we see elsewhere in paraenesis prohibitions or warnings against murder (Matt 5:21; 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom 1:29; 13:9; Jas 2:11; 4:2; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15). Stealing is also regularly condemned (Matt 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom 2:21; 13:9; 1 Cor 6:10; Eph 4:28). The third sin is defined by the NIV as “criminal” (*kakopoios*). Peter used the same word on two other occasions, and in both those cases it refers to doing wrong in general and cannot be limited to criminal acts (**1 Pet 2:12, 14**).

The verbal form also seems to bear this same meaning and is **invariably contrasted with doing good (Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9; 1 Pet 3:17; 3 John 11)**. Hence, the term probably should be translated as “wrongdoer” (RSV) rather than “criminal.”²⁸

Some evidence suggests that the word could mean “sorcerer” or “magician,” but no evidence for this can be sustained from the Petrine usage, which regularly contrasts doing good in general with doing evil in general.

The fourth word represents one of the most difficult interpretive problems in the New Testament. This word, translated **“meddler”** (*allotriepiskopos*) by the NIV, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nowhere in the Septuagint, and nowhere in other Greek literature before 1 Peter.

When we examine the word’s parts, we could define it as **“watching over another’s affairs.”**

From this we can glean the interpretation that is represented in most English translations, **“mischief-maker”** (RSV, also NRSV), **“busybody”** (KJV, NKJV), **“troublesome meddler”** (NASB).³⁰

Others have suggested that the term means “revolutionary” or “embezzler.” The latter, especially, is promoted by quite a few scholars. Certainty is impossible because of the lack of data, but it is argued by some that “embezzler” makes the best sense contextually.³² They claim that meddling is annoying, but the context demands actions that are seriously wrong, and meddling does not fit in such a context. Warnings against defrauding others are found elsewhere in the New Testament (Mark 10:19; 1 Cor 6:7–8; 1 Tim 3:8; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2). Yet **the words “even as”** (*ē hōs*) preceding the word in question suggest that Peter did think of something less serious than murder or thievery here.

Peter realized that most Christians will not be guilty of obvious sins like murder and stealing, and so he concluded by encouraging believers to even refrain from annoying others.³⁴

If believers act like busybodies, they would be considered to be pests who deserve ostracism and mistreatment.

Hence, though certainty is impossible, **a reference to being a busybody seems most probable.** Peter wanted believers to refrain from acting tactlessly and without social graces.

4:16

Verse 16 now examines the other side.

The word “if” as in v. 14 should not be translated as “since” or “when.” It is not as though Peter was saying that Christians may escape suffering. The condition is used so the readers will consider the condition, focusing on the reason for suffering, namely, if someone suffers as a “Christian.” Early believers did not typically call themselves “Christians.” The name was first given to believers by outsiders in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Agrippa also used the term when Paul was making his defense in Caesarea (Acts 26:28). The usage here fits the paradigm, for the label “Christian” is ascribed to believers by those looking at the community from the outside (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44). The word “Christians” (*Christianoi*) means “followers of Christ,” just as “Herodians” (*Hērōdianoi*; Mark 3:6; 12:13) means “partisans of Herod the Great and his family.” Even though we saw in v. 14 that the Christian faith was not officially declared to be illegal in Peter’s day, the threat of persecution was constant, for as Christians emerged as a distinct entity from Judaism, they had no legal status as a religion. On the other hand, the term “Christian” does not indicate that being a Christian was a punishable offense per se when the letter was written. Even when Pliny wrote Trajan (ca. A.D. 112–114), the status of Christians was uncertain. It reflects instead sporadic and occasional persecution.

The call to renounce shame focuses on actions that are shameful. Specifically, Christians would act shamefully by denying Christ before unbelievers or by failing to persevere in the faith

(cf. Mark 8:38; 2 Tim 1:8, 12, 16; 2:15).

Hence, those who are ashamed
would be guilty of apostasy.

By way of contrast believers glorify God by
confessing and praising his name publicly
(cf. Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 9:13).

*They glorify God in the name “Christian” by
enduring such suffering with joy (v. 13), pleased
that they are privileged to suffer because of their
allegiance to Jesus Christ.*

The final phrase of the verse, *“in that name”* (NASB, *en tō onomati toutō*),
probably is a dative of sphere, signifying that believers suffer
for the epithet “Christian.”³⁹

4:17

The “for” (*hoti*) beginning this verse reaches back to the idea
of suffering in v. 16.

The suffering of believers is the beginning of God’s judgment
from “the household of God” (*tou oikou tou theou*).

The NIV interprets the phrase as “family of God,” but this obscures the Old Testament background of the term. The phrase “house of God” (translated literally) refers back to the Old Testament, where God’s house is almost invariably his temple. Many more examples could be adduced.

The Old Testament background stems especially from Ezekiel 9 and Malachi 3.

In Ezekiel 9 the Lord judges the sinners within Israel and begins from his sanctuary, the temple. The language of Ezek 9:6 is similar to Peter’s in that the Lord said, “Begin at my sanctuary” (*apo tōn hagiōn mou arxasthe*), while Peter wrote, “For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God” (NRSV; *arxasthai to krima apo tou oikou tou theou*; cf. Isa 10:11–12).

The language is similar, but the theology is actually quite different, for in Ezekiel rebellious sinners are being destroyed, but in Peter the judgment does not involve the destruction of the godly but their refinement and purification.

The background of Malachi 3 is closer conceptually to Peter’s message in this respect, for the Lord will come to his temple and refine and purify his people, and then the offerings of his people will be acceptable (Mal 3:1–4).

That the judgment in Peter does not involve destruction is clear from the parallel statement in v. 18, where the godly are “saved.”

We have already seen in **1:6–7** that the trials and difficulties of the righteous are designed to purify and refine believers so that they will receive their final reward (cf. also **4:12**).

Even though God’s household is the temple in the Old Testament, we see here that Peter, in concert with other New Testament writers (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19; 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 3:6), now conceives of the church, God’s people, as his temple.

Such a move is not surprising in Peter, for he already had identified the church as God’s priesthood, his chosen people, and his holy nation, so that blessings belonging to Israel now belong to the church (1 Pet 2:9).

In Ezekiel 9 the judgment literally begins at the temple, but now God’s judgment begins not at a building but with his people. **The judgment that begins with God’s people purifies those who truly belong to God, and that purification comes through suffering, making believers morally fit for their inheritance.**

The judgment here is the final judgment (cf. 1:17; 2:23; 4:5), but this judgment begins even now, in the present evil age.

The judgment **“begins with us,”** which means that it commences with Christians.

In the present age believers experience suffering, and this is the purifying judgment that begins with believers.

Peter proceeded to argue from the lesser to the greater. If even those who are going to be saved are purified and judged by suffering, then the “outcome” (*telos*) or result of those who reject the gospel will surely be a greater punishment. **Unbelievers are described here as “those who do not obey the gospel of God.”**

Peter could have written about judgment falling on those who disbelieved the gospel, but here he wanted to focus on the failure to obey, for all unbelief leads to disobedience.

On three other occasions those who will be judged (or are being judged) are described as disobeying (*apeitheō*, 1 Pet 2:8; 3:1, 20).

In 2:8 and 3:1 such disobedience is described as disobedience to the word (*logos*), and the “word” in these texts is simply another expression for the gospel.

Believers, on the other hand, are characterized by obedience (1:2, 14; 3:10–12; 4:3–4).

Peter did not specify what judgment awaits unbelievers, but he already had indicated in 4:5 that they await final judgment.

We should also observe that the order of Malachi 3 is preserved here. When the Lord comes to his temple, he refines and purifies his people (3:1–4), but those who are unrepentant sinners will be destroyed (3:5).

4:18

Verse 18 restates the truth of v. 17 in proverbial form.

Indeed, Peter virtually quoted **Prov 11:31** from the Septuagint.

The Hebrew text is quite similar to the Septuagint in some respects, but it has the words “on earth” instead of “with difficulty” (*molis*). The text form indicates that Peter drew from the Septuagint. The meaning of the proverb must be discerned from the context in which Peter used

it, and it clearly functions as a restatement of the previous idea in v. 17. The word *molis* can mean “scarcely” (Rom 5:7) or “with difficulty” (Acts 14:18; 27:7–8, 16), but context here favors the latter.

Peter was not saying that the righteous are scarcely saved, as if they were almost consigned to destruction and were just pulled from the flames. What he meant was that the righteous are saved “with difficulty.”

The difficulty envisioned is the suffering believers must endure in order to be saved.

God saves his people by refining and purifying them through suffering.

It is implied here that salvation is eschatological, a gift that believers will receive after enduring suffering (cf. 1:5, 9). If the godly are saved through the purification of suffering, then the judgment of the “ungodly and sinner” must be horrific indeed.

The verb “will become” (*phaneitai*) refers to the eschatological judgment of unbelievers. Peter wrote this to motivate believers to endure in suffering, and we have seen a similar argument in 4:3–6.

Suffering may be difficult now, but by participating in the pain of following Christ believers escape the condemnation coming upon the wicked.

4:19

A conclusion from all of vv. 12–18 is now drawn.

Those who suffer according to God's will are those who share in Christ's sufferings (v. 12), who are insulted in Christ's name (v. 14), and who suffer as Christians rather than for doing something evil (vv. 15–16). The reference to God's will here as in 3:17 indicates that all suffering passes through his hands (cf. 3:17), that nothing strikes a believer apart from God's loving and sovereign control. When suffering strikes, believers should "commit themselves to their faithful Creator." Christ modeled what Peter enjoined, for when he was suffering, he entrusted himself to God (1 Pet 2:23). Jesus used the same word (paratithēmi) when he entrusted his spirit to God at his death (Luke 23:46). In Acts the word is used when Paul entrusted his converts to God (Acts 14:23; 20:32), and in the Pastorals the word designates the entrusting of God's truth to faithful men (1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:2). Similarly, believers should entrust their lives to God as Creator. The reference to God as Creator (ktistēs) implies his sovereignty, for the Creator of the world is also sovereign over it. Therefore, believers can be confident that he will not allow them to suffer beyond their capacity and that he will provide the strength needed to endure. Such confidence can be theirs because he is a "faithful" Creator, faithful to his promises and faithful to his people, never abandoning them in their time of need, always vindicating the righteous and condemning the wicked (cf. 4:17–18).

The way believers will reveal that they are trusting in God is by continuing *"to do good" (agathopoia).*²

² Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 217–230.

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Do not be surprised at your trials, but rejoice (4:12–16)

Some have seen verse 12 as beginning a separate section of the letter, or even a separate letter which has been added on later, but the doxology and ‘Amen’ at the end of verse 11 do not require this (cf. Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; Gal. 1:5; Eph. 3:21; 1 Tim. 1:17). However, is the subject matter so distinct that we need to think of this section as written to a different situation, one where persecution was not just a possibility but actually happening?

To answer this question we must bear in mind that 1 Peter is addressed to Christians in ten or more major churches (with no doubt other readers in many other local churches that had grown out of them) scattered through four provinces in Asia Minor (see 1:1 and ‘Destination and readers’ in the Introduction). From the first spread of the gospel there had been hostility and even violent opposition in many places—sometimes opposition stirred up by unbelieving Jews (Acts 4:1–3; 5:17–18, 40–41; 7:57–60; and 8:1–3, in Jerusalem; 13:50–52 at Pisidian Antioch; 14:4–6 at Iconium; 14:19 at Lystra; 17:5–9 at Thessalonica; 17:13 at Beroea; 18:12–17 at Corinth; 20:3 probably again at Corinth; 21:27–36 at Jerusalem); and sometimes persecution by local officials, whether for political purposes (Acts 12:1–3) or because of false accusation from Gentiles whose profits from sin were threatened (Acts 16:19–25 at Philippi, cf. Acts 19:23–20:1 at Ephesus).

Thus, we have specific evidence of violent opposition to the gospel from the time it first reached some of the cities to which Peter was writing (at least Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and nearby Lystra, and Ephesus—if Ephesus be counted as a likely recipient of the letter), and it is not unreasonable to think that similar opposition would have broken out from time to time in the other cities to which Peter was writing.

Given this historical background, we must then ask whether Peter would have written to so many different churches (1) as if none of them were experiencing persecution; (2) as if some of them were experiencing persecution; or (3) as if all of them were experiencing persecution. Even if he had not had recent news of actual persecution currently being endured, it would not be surprising if, in a general letter to spread-out groups of churches, the apostle would write as

though varying degrees of formal and informal persecution were a live possibility for some readers and a present experience for others.

In fact, that is what we find in 1 Peter as a whole. Some passages regard persecution as just a possibility (1:6–7; 2:12, 21; 3:14; 4:1–2, 14, 16). Others suggest that for some readers persecution, or at least some kind of unjust treatment, is actually happening (2:15, 18–20; 3:9, 14, 16; 4:4, 17, 19; 5:9–10). And it is significant that two very clear statements about present persecution do not localize the phenomenon but rather universalize it, saying that it is the characteristic experience of the church generally: 4:17 and 5:9.

Thus, **although persecution is specifically in view in verses 12 to 19, it is not necessary to see them as addressed to a different situation than the earlier parts of the letter. This section continues the long discussion, begun at 2:11, on living as a Christian in a hostile world.**

The theme of suffering as a Christian has been prominent since 3:13, with only verses 7 to 11 forming a minor parenthesis about life within the church in the end times.

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).

14. A specific example of suffering as a Christian is now given: *If you are reproached* (reviled, abused, slandered) *for the name of Christ*. Again, **the verbs suggest continuation over time: 'If you are being reproached ... you are blessed ... the spirit ... is resting on you.'**

The blessing named in verse 13 was future; the blessing named here is present.

The spirit ('Spirit', as in NIV, NASB, TEV would be better, since it is certainly the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of God) *of glory and of God rests upon you* indicates an unusual fullness of the presence of the Holy Spirit to bless, to strengthen, and to give a foretaste of heavenly glory. The words echo the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 11:2, speaking of the branch out of Jesse: 'And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him' (the same word for 'rest', *anapauō*, is used both in the LXX and here. Peter sees this Messianic blessing extending also to those who bear the name of the

Messiah (or 'Christ')—see some examples in Acts 5:41; 6:15; 7:55, 59–60; 16:25. Yet the word *glory* in the verse suggests another theme as well: the New Testament fulfilment of the Old Testament cloud of God's glory (the 'shekinah glory') is to be seen in the powerful dwelling of the Holy Spirit within Christian believers (see 'Additional note: The dwelling place of God' at 2:5, p. 108 above).

15–16. Such a blessing is not bestowed upon every kind of suffering, however: *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer* (a general term, referring to anyone who 'works evil'), *or a mischief-maker*. The last term is extremely rare (only one other example of its use is known; cf. BAGD, p. 40) and various meanings have been proposed. The sense 'meddler' (NIV; cf. 'troublesome meddler', NASB) seems best, since the separate parts mean 'one who looks carefully on others' affairs' (or: on the possessions of others), and the general idea would then be that of wrongdoing by meddling in affairs which are not properly one's concern.

On the other hand, *if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed*. The world may think suffering for conscientious adherence to Christianity is disgraceful, but actually it is an honour in God's sight, and should be so in the eyes of Christians as well. The word *Christian* is found in the

New Testament only here and at Acts 11:26 and 26:28; it means ‘follower of Christ’—not ‘little Christ’, as some popular explanations claim (for it is formed like the word ‘Herodian’, see Mark 3:6; 12:13, which means ‘follower or supporter of Herod’).

Instead of being ashamed Peter suggests another alternative: *but under that name let him glorify God*. The sense is that the one being reviled as a Christian should so act and speak that God is continually honoured in his or her life. The idea of living so that in everything God is glorified is stated explicitly in verse 11, but is frequently implied in previous verses as well (see notes on 1:7, 16; 2:5, 9; 3:4).

Under that name (or, more literally, *‘in that name’*) seems to have the sense ‘acting in Christ’s name, as the one who represents Christ to others’. The NIV’s ‘But praise God that you bear that name’ is difficult to derive from the Greek, unless it is based on an uncommon use of the word ‘name’ (*onoma*) to mean ‘category’ (BAGD, p. 573, II), which is then extended to mean ‘praise God in that matter’ (the matter of bearing Christ’s name). Yet this is unlikely, for (1) the presence of the name ‘Christian’ in the sentence makes it likely that *onomati* is being used in its common sense, ‘name’, rather than to mean ‘matter’; (2) the nuance of the present imperative (*doxazetō*, ‘let him glorify or praise’) makes better sense as ‘let him continually glorify’ (in life) than as ‘let him continually praise God’ (that he bears that name); and (3) the disciplining process of God’s judgment (v. 17, which begins with ‘for’) is a good reason to live generally in a way that glorifies God, but not nearly as clear a reason to praise God that one bears the name ‘Christian’.

(i) For God’s judgment is beginning from God’s own house (4:17–18)

17. *For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God* puts verses 12 to 16 in a broader theological context. ‘What is going on in the world?’ the readers might wonder. ‘Why are God’s people suffering and evildoers going unpunished?’ Peter explains that the ‘fiery ordeal’, or ‘refining fire’, of verse 12 is really a fire of God’s *judgment*.

Yet...

this word for judgment (krima) does not necessarily mean 'condemnation' (which would be katakrima) but is a broader term which can refer to a judgment which results in good and bad evaluations, a judgment which may issue in approval or discipline as well as condemnation.

The picture is that God has begun judging within the church, and will later move outward to judge those outside the church.

The refining fire
of judgment is leaving
no one untouched!

...but Christians are being purified and strengthened by it—sins are being eliminated and trust in God and holiness of life are growing.

The translation *household of God* emphasizes the family-like nature of the church. But this translation seems hardly justifiable in terms of the Greek phrase **oikos tou theou ('house of God')**.

Dennis Johnson has argued persuasively that this phrase in the LXX never refers to the 'household' of God's people, but always to the temple, the 'house of God' in terms of the building in which God dwells. Thus, it is likely that it should be translated 'house of God' here as well.

This argument gains support when we recall Peter's only other use of the word *oikos*, 'house', in 2:5: 'Coming to him, you are being built into a spiritual house' (see note at 2:5 regarding the reference to the temple here).

Moreover,

the text literally reads not *with* but **'from'** (*apo*):
'The time has come for judgment to begin **from** the house of God.'

Such a translation allows Johnson correctly to see this verse in the light of two other Old Testament passages, Ezekiel 9 and Malachi 3. Ezekiel 9 pictures the Lord calling to ‘the executioners’ of judgment to ‘draw near’ (9:1) to bring judgment on Jerusalem for its horrible sins.

One messenger of God puts a mark on the forehead of all who were found to ‘sigh and groan’ over the ‘abominations’ committed in Jerusalem (9:4–5). Then the ‘executioners’ of judgment are told to kill all who do not have the mark on their foreheads (9:5–6).

Significantly,

God tells the executioners,
‘Begin **from** my sanctuary,’

and Ezekiel adds, ‘So they began from the elders who were inside the house’ (9:6).

The words ‘begin from’, used twice here, are the same words Peter uses to say that it is time for judgment to ‘begin from (*archomai apo*) the house of God’.

‘House’ (*oikos*) is also the same word in both places.

Both 1 Peter 4:17 and Ezekiel 9:6 have mention of God’s glory before and after them (1 Pet. 4:14 and 5:1; Ezek. 9:3 and 10:4).

Finally, whereas Ezekiel’s judgment begins with ‘the elders’ who are in God’s house, Peter begins his next section of admonition, ‘Therefore, I exhort the elders among you ...’ (5:1; the word for ‘elders’ is *presbyteroi* in both cases). It seems very likely that

the judgment scene of Ezekiel 9 is in Peter's mind when he writes, indicating that God's judgment will begin with God's house (now the church; cf. note at 2:5) and then spread outward to destroy all unbelievers.

But the mention of the 'fiery ordeal' or 'refining fire' (v. 12) which does not destroy but purifies God's people calls to mind a second Old Testament passage, whose vivid imagery may have been joined with that of Ezekiel 9 as Peter wrote. Malachi 3 predicts that the Lord himself 'will suddenly come to his temple' as 'the messenger of the covenant' who 'is like a refiner's fire' (3:1–2; 'fire' is *pur* in the LXX, not the same word but a related word to *pyrōsis*, 'refining fire', in 1 Pet. 4:12).

Malachi adds,

'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the LORD' (Mal. 3:3). 'Then I will draw near to you for judgment ...' (and then on unbelievers: [Mal. 3:5](#)).

Johnson rightly points out that though Peter's *language* may have been more influenced by Ezekiel 9, the *concepts* in 1 Peter 4:12–19 are closer to the picture of Malachi 3: the Lord himself is acting as a refining fire, purifying the priests ('the sons of Levi'; cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9) so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the Lord (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5). **Then the judgment which began at**

God's house (the temple, Mal. 3:1) will move from there to unbelievers, no longer as a purifying fire but as a judgment of condemnation—which brings us directly back to 1 Peter 4:17: 'For the time has come for judgment to begin with the house of God; *and if it begins with (Greek 'from', apo) us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?*'

'The thought is simply:

"If the purifying fire of God's eschatological visitation ... entails, for those united to Christ, such anguish as Peter's readers are undergoing, what shall the consummation of that purifying divine presence mean for those who have rejected God's good news—if not a conflagration of utter destruction?" '

The application of this passage to Peter's readers should be clear: if the Lord is already in the midst of his new temple (i.e. his people), they should 'not be surprised at the refining fire which comes among you (Greek *en humin*, 'in the midst of you') to prove you ... the Spirit of glory and of God is resting upon you' (vv. 12, 14). He is the 'messenger of the covenant in whom you delight' (Mal. 3:1), so they can 'rejoice' (v. 13) in his presence.

But with him also comes a refining fire, and they must purify themselves of all iniquities in order to avoid the pain of his disciplining judgment, even while they continue trusting him who alone can enable them to stand before himself (v. 19).

18. This verse has the same theme, but expressed this time in words taken exactly from Proverbs 11:31 (LXX): '*If the righteous man is scarcely saved, where will the impious and sinner appear?*'

The fire of God's holiness is so intense that even *the righteous* feel pain in its discipline.

The *impious* (a godless person, a person without true reverence for God) *and sinner* will, by implication, find it to be a fire of eternal destruction.

(ii) Therefore do right and trust God continually (4:19)

19. What should Christians do in such circumstances? They should *do right*, maintaining moral purity in their lives (cf. 1:15, etc.), and should continue not to trust themselves but to *entrust their souls to a faithful Creator*.

In this one verse is summarized the teaching of the entire letter.

Christians do not suffer accidentally or because of the irresistible forces of blind fate; rather, they *suffer according to God's will.*

While this may at first seem harsh (for it implies that at times it is God's will that we suffer), upon reflection no better comfort in suffering can be found than this: it is God's good and perfect will.

For therein lies the knowledge that there is a limit to the suffering, both in its intensity and in its duration, a limit set and maintained by the God who is our creator, our saviour, our sustainer, our Father. And therein also lies the knowledge that this suffering is only for our good: it is purifying us, drawing us closer to our Lord, and making us more like him in our lives. In all of it we are not alone, but we can depend on the care of a faithful Creator; we can rejoice in the fellowship of a Saviour who has also suffered (v. 13); we can exult in the constant presence of a Spirit of glory who delights to rest upon us (v. 14).

Some have thought that the phrase *according to God's will* refers to the way Christians act while they are suffering, not to the reason for suffering. However, such an understanding is not possible because it would make the phrase *do right* redundant: the verse would in essence then say, 'Let those who suffer while doing right, do right.' But this is meaningless repetition. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the sentence to mean, ***'Let those who suffer because God has willed that they suffer do right ...'***

The phrase *entrust their souls* does not use the usual word for 'trusting' God, but a verb (*paratithēmi*) which means 'to give to someone for safekeeping, to turn over to someone to care for' (cf. Luke 23:46, 'Father, into thy hands I *commit* my spirit', quoting Ps. 31:5; see also Acts 14:23). *Souls* may also be translated 'selves' (NIV: 'commit themselves to their faithful Creator'—however, see note on 'soul' at 1:22).

The mention of 'souls' here, together with the possible echo of Jesus' words on the cross (Luke 23:46), suggests the idea of the believer's soul living on even after his body is destroyed, and puts the question of temporary suffering in the proper perspective.³

³ Wayne A. Grudem, [*1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 184–192.

St. Andrews Expository Commentary: Sproul

SUFFERING AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD

1 Peter 4:12–19

Throughout our study of 1 Peter 4, we have seen passage after passage that has generated untold controversy over doctrinal and philosophical issues. In our last study we focused on a portion of verse 11 that deals with the glory of God. We looked briefly at the glory and majesty of God's eternal, self-existent being, which so transcends everything creaturely that it causes us to fall on our knees before Him. In the midst of this symphony of celebration of the glory of God, a dissonant note is sounded, a bit of discord that enters Peter's text when he turns his attention from the glory of God to the suffering of God's people in the world. **Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you** (v. 12). Twice here Peter speaks of something strange, a sort of anomaly in the Christian life—the presence of pain and suffering under the watchful eye of God.

Evidence for God

Earlier I mentioned Bertrand Russell, who became an atheist as a teenager after being exposed to an essay by the philosopher John Stuart Mill. In that essay Mill argued against the existence of God, saying that if everything has a cause, then God must have a cause, and if God must have a cause, then He is just like any other part of creation. I pointed out that such thinking represents a fundamental misrepresentation of the law of causality, which does not teach that everything must have a cause, but simply that every *effect* must have a cause.

Another man, the son of an evangelical Methodist minister and scholar, also became an atheist as a teen. The reason for his atheism was the influence of the same philosopher, John Stuart Mill. This young man was captured by a statement Mill made that God cannot be both omnipotent and good. If God is omnipotent and yet allows the atrocities that befall human beings, then He has the power to stop the suffering. Since He does not, it is proof that He is neither good nor all-loving. On the other hand, if He is good and all-loving and does not want to see the savage brutality that afflicts the human race, then it must mean that He simply is incapable of stopping it and, therefore, is not omnipotent. That fifteen-year-old boy felt the weight of Mill's argument and came to the conclusion that there must be no God, certainly not the God of the Bible.

Later on, this same boy told a story, which became a famous parable. It is a story of two explorers who were working their way through a jungle in Africa, uninhabited, far removed from

any civilization. As they were hacking their way through the undergrowth with machetes, they came upon a clearing, and in the clearing they found a magnificent garden. The garden contained flowers and vegetables perfectly arranged in rows, not a single weed invading its beauty. It appeared to be perfectly tended. One explorer said to the other one, "Isn't this incredible? I wonder where the gardener is. Let's wait for him and ask him how he came to plant this magnificent garden in the middle of this seemingly uninhabitable place." So they waited, but no gardener came.

One of the explorers said, "We must have been mistaken. There must not be a gardener. The garden must have happened by accident; it is just an inexplicable freak of nature. So let us go on with our work of exploring."

The other said, "No, maybe this gardener is different from other gardeners. Maybe this one is invisible, and he is busy tending the garden, and we are just not able to see him."

As they were having this discussion, one said, "Let's set a trap for him. We will set up a wire around the perimeter of the garden and attach bells to it. If he in his invisible presence comes to tend the garden, he will bump the wires and the bells will ring, and we will know that he has been here, even though we cannot see him."

So they carefully prepared their trap, and they waited, but the bells did not ring. One explorer said, "See? There is no invisible gardener."

The other replied, "Wait. Maybe this gardener is not only invisible but also immaterial. Perhaps he does not have a body that will bump up against the wire and make the bells ring."

The author of the parable, philosopher Antony Flew, was saying that the concept of God has died the death of a thousand qualifications. In the final analysis, he asked, what is the difference between an invisible, immaterial God and no God at all? Of course, the answer to that screams that the difference is the garden. How does one account for the perfect design of the garden apart from a designer?

Some time ago, I interviewed Ben Stein for the *Renewing Your Mind* radio program. At the time, Stein was heavily involved in the production of a Hollywood movie titled *Expelled*. In that movie, Stein addressed what is happening to professors and teachers on college campuses in America, and also in high schools, who have the audacity to suggest that the universe may be here as a result of intelligent design rather than as the result of a cosmic accident. Throughout the history of Western science, the work of philosophy and the philosophical foundations of science have promoted free inquiry on any question of this type with the virtue of having the courage to allow one to go wherever the evidence leads. Yet now in America there is an inquisition against free inquiry. The Orange County school board ruled any teaching of intelligent design out of bounds in the public schools. An editorial that appeared at the time in the *Orlando Sentinel* strongly agreed with this decision. Yet that is an unintelligent decision, because what is at stake is not just religion or theology but scientific inquiry.

In the midst of this debate about intelligent design, something remarkable happened. Antony Flew announced to the world that he had changed his mind and come to the conclusion that the evidence for God is compelling. Intelligent design is not simply an optional theory, he said, but a philosophical necessity. It has been interesting to see how the world of atheists has responded to Flew's conversion. His character has been all but assassinated by philosophers and scientists who say that the only reason he changed his mind is that he developed dementia in old age. Flew then wrote a book, *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*,

explaining why he changed, and if you read it, you will see that it does not contain the writings of a demented person.

What made Flew become an atheist in the first place was not the parable of the garden in the wilderness but the problem of suffering. When he was fifteen years old, he read Mill's statement, that God cannot be both all-loving and good and at the same time be omnipotent, and Flew could not answer that criticism of Christianity. Nineteenth-century critics of Christianity called the problem of pain the Achilles' heel of the Christian faith. Flew came at it from a different angle. He said that when the existence of something is asserted, whatever evidence works against it must be taken into account. For example, in order to say that the world is round, all the evidence that appears to render the world flat must be considered. The idea of a round earth took a long time to supplant the idea of a flat earth, because it was strange—so strange that it seemed much easier to continue believing that it is flat.

Scientists know that scientific theories change as quickly as weather patterns. Many things I learned in high school have long since been put aside. In the scientific world, there are paradigms or theories that attempt to describe all of reality; but so far, no scientific theory for understanding everything in the world has been free of contrary evidence. Think, for example, of the well-established claim that uniformitarian geology is a scientific truth. This holds that the changes in the surface of the earth have developed over vast periods of times in a uniform and gradual way, not as the result of a sudden, catastrophic moment that changed everything.

Albert Einstein's friend Immanuel Velikovsky wrote two books about the anomalies of that, mentioning, for example, the problem of the mastodons that were frozen in the icecap with their bodies completely intact. When scientists thawed and dissected them, they found undigested tropical food in their bellies. Tropical food did not get to the arctic gradually, so the perplexed scientists looked for a theory to account for it.

I am not picking on the uniformitarians. I am saying that every theory, whatever it is, has counterevidence, and if the counterevidence becomes too severe, too multiple, or too profound, the theory has to change, which is what Antony Flew said. Flew read of the holocaust in World War II, about the camps in which so many millions were extinguished, and he became aware of the slaughter that had occurred through Joseph Stalin. Today we read that Saddam Hussein killed more Arabs than any man in human history, sometimes just for the fun of it.

There is unspeakable evil in this world and unbelievable pain and suffering. When we see that, we have to ask the question that the people in the Old Testament raised more than once in the Wisdom Literature: why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer? It just makes no sense. There are few people who, in the midst of suffering, can say, *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD"* (Job 1:21).

One must have a profound understanding of the character of God and a profound trust in His goodness.

Why Consider It Strange?

Both Jesus and the Apostle Peter answered the question as to why the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. Here Peter asks us why we are taken by surprise. Why do we consider it strange?

The Jews were unable to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, because He suffered.

What kind of a God would send His own Son to Golgotha? They came to Jesus and asked about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, and about the eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them (Luke 13:1–4). Jesus did not respond that those situations were anomalies for which there is no answer, or that people would have to adjust their understanding of the character of God. He did not say that the promises of Scripture are poetic hyperbole. What Jesus did say was this: ***“Unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (v. 3).***

Jesus said to His disciples, and through His disciples to us, something that we almost never think about: why should God have prevented the temple from falling on the heads of those people? They had been in utter rebellion against their Creator.

The question, it seems to me,
is not why there is so much
suffering in the world, but
why there is so little.

Why, in light of our blasphemous hostility to our Creator, are we not all suffering in hell this very moment?

One reason that there is suffering in this world—in fact, *the* reason why there is suffering—is not that God is not good, but because He is. A good God will not allow evil to go unpunished. Jesus said that they were asking the wrong question.

Peter says that we are not think it **“strange.”** The word he uses here is the one from which **we get the term xenophobia, which is a phobia or a fear of strangers, people who do not fit into our mold.**

He wants his readers to understand that **our trials are not without purpose.** The God who has redeemed us counts our soul more valuable than gold, and as gold is refined in the fire, so are we refined. Though we suffer for a moment, the goal of God in our suffering is our redemption, not our destruction. What about those who perish in hell? God can create people, knowing in advance that they will sin and die for it, because He is holy.

The problem of suffering is based on two things that we fail to know: the character of God and the seriousness of sin.

Those are weighty matters.

John Stuart Mill said that if God is good, He has to be all loving, but why does a good God have to love evil people? In fact, **though there are some respects in which God does love evil people, there are other respects in which He does not.**

The Bible says that God’s love is poured out to the whole world—His benevolence, His beneficence, goes toward

everyone—yet, at the same time, from another perspective, the Bible tells us that God abhors the wicked.

We have no inherent claim on the love of God. We would not be here today apart from it, but the fact that He loves us is not because He owes us or because our character demands it. It is only because of a mercy and grace that transcend our understanding.

Do not think it strange, Peter says, *but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy* (v. 13).

Rejoice, Peter says, that our sufferings come as a result of our participation and identification with the suffering and humiliation of Jesus. We suffer because He suffered, and He asked us to join Him in that. *His suffering is redemptive; ours is not, but in our suffering we bear witness to the glory of His.*

This is similar to what Paul wrote to the Colossians: *"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ"* (Colossians. 1:24).

Paul did not mean that there was merit lacking in Jesus' passion, but rather that Christ has invited all who are in Him to taste of His suffering. To the extent that we have a share in the suffering of Christ, this should be an occasion, Peter says, not for consternation but for exceeding joy.

Our Faithful Creator

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you (v. 14). In our last study we looked at the glory of God; here we are looking at suffering. Peter sees no conflict between the glory of God and the suffering that exists in this world. *On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified* (v. 14). Then Peter warns that we are not to suffer as a result of participating in evil, and he concludes by saying, *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator* (v. 19).

Several years ago I was invited by the president of the American Cancer Society to deliver a series of lectures on suffering to people who were terminally ill with cancer. I titled that series of lectures “Surprised by Suffering,” which later became a book. In those lectures I applied Peter’s concept to receiving a medical report of incurable disease. I talked to them about vocation, saying, “I don’t know what your vocation was before you came to this place—banker, physician, schoolteacher, or truck driver—but I know what it is now. Your vocation now is to suffer for the glory of God, because you are not here by accident. You are here according to the will of God.” Some of them bristled at that, but I told them that if God had nothing to do with their illness, then they have no hope.

If we think that our suffering is a result of blind chance and a collision of atoms outside the will of God, we are of all people the most to be pitied. However, **if we know that our pain comes to us by our heavenly Father, then we ought to be able to say with Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth” (Job 19:25).**

That is the very heart and soul of Christianity.

Our Christian faith means nothing until we come to the valley of the shadow of death.

If God calls us to suffer, we have to commit our souls to Him, not as to a capricious, vengeful, tyrannical deity, but as to a faithful Creator.

The hardest time to believe that God is faithful is when His hand is heavy on your back.

Yet we are told that though we suffer—and the pain may be excruciating—it is only for a moment and not worthy to be compared with what God has prepared for us for eternity.

No scientific paradigm reaches the point of omniscience, of knowing what will take place tomorrow. We cannot judge the final goodness and power of God until we see the new heavens and the new earth, where pain is exiled, suffering is vanquished, and death is forever banished. We can trust God, because He is worthy of our trust. He is faithful, and trusting Him is the only answer that I know of to the reality of suffering in this world.

“REJOICE”

◀ 5463. chairó ▶

Strong's Concordance

chairó: to rejoice, be glad

Original Word: χαίρω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: chairó

Phonetic Spelling: (khah'-ee-ro)

Definition: to rejoice, be glad

Usage: I rejoice, am glad; also a salutation: Hail.

HELPS Word-studies

5463 *xairō* (from the root *xar-*, "favorably disposed, leaning towards" and cognate with [5485](#) /*xáris*, "grace") – properly, to delight in God's *grace* ("rejoice") – literally, to experience *God's grace* (*favor*), be conscious (glad) for His *grace*.

[5463](#) /*xairō* ("glad for *grace*") has a direct "etymological connection with *xaris* (grace)" (*DNTT*, 2, 356). S. Zodhiates (*Dict*, 1467) likewise comments that [5479](#) /*xará* ("joy") and [5485](#) /*xáris* ("grace") are cognate with [5463](#) /*xairō* ("to rejoice"), i.e. all share the same *root* and therefore *the same core* (*fundamental*) *meaning*.

[The etymological link between [5463](#) /*xairō* ("rejoice"), [5479](#) /*xará* ("joy") and [5485](#) /*xáris* ("grace") – i.e. that they are all cognates – is brought out by *LS* (p 1,976), *Zod* (*Dict*), *CBL*, *Wigram's Englishman's Greek Concordance* (Ed. Ralph

Winters), *Word Study Greek-English NT* (Tyndale, Ed. Paul McReynolds); see also *DNTT* (2,356) and *TDNT* (9; 359,60).

TDNT likewise groups them as cognates, referring to [5479](#) (*xará*) as the noun-form (*nomen actionis*) and discussing them separately in terms of their distinctive connotations.]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. verb

Definition

to rejoice, be glad

NASB Translation

am glad (1), glad (7), gladly (1), greeted* (1), greeting (2), greetings (4), hail (4), joyfully (1), make (1), rejoice (33), rejoiced (8), rejoices (2), rejoicing (10).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 5463: χαίρω

χαίρω; imperfect ἔχαιρον; future χαρήσομαι ([Luke 1:14](#); [John 16:20, 22](#); [Philippians 1:18](#), for the earlier form καιρήσω, cf. (Winers Grammar, 90 (86); Buttman, 68 (60)); Alexander Buttman (1873) *Ausf. Spr.* ii. 322f; Matthiae, § 255, under the word; Kühner, § 343 under the word; Krüger, § 40, under the word; (Veitch, under the word)), once χάρω ([Revelation 11:10](#) Rec., a form occurring nowhere else); 2 aorist (passive as active) ἐχάρην (cf. συγχαίρω, at the beginning); from Homer down; the Sept. for שׂמַח, גִּיל, שׂוּשׁ; **to rejoice, be glad**;

a. in the properly, and strict sense: ([Mark 14:11](#)); [Luke 15:5](#),(32); ; [John 4:36](#); [John 8:56](#); [John 20:20](#); [Acts 5:41](#); [Acts 8:39](#); [Acts 11:23](#); [Acts 13:48](#); 2 Cor. ()); (some refer this to b. in the sense of farewell); [Philippians 2:17, 28](#); [Colossians 2:5](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:16](#); [1 Peter 4:13](#); [3 John 1:3](#); opposed to κλαίειν, [Romans 12:15](#); [1 Corinthians 7:30](#); opposed to κλαίειν καὶ θρηνεῖν, [John 16:20](#); opposed to λύπην ἔχειν, *ibid.* ; joined with ἀγαλλίασθαι, [Matthew 5:12](#); [Revelation 19:7](#); with σκιρταν, [Luke 6:23](#); χαίρειν ἐν κυρίῳ (see ἐν, L 6 b, p. 211b middle (cf. Buttman, 185 (161))), [Philippians 3:1](#); [Philippians 4:4, 10](#); χαίρειν χαράν μεγάλην (cf. χαρά, a.), to rejoice exceedingly, [Matthew 2:10](#); also χαρά χαίρειν (Winers Grammar, § 54, 3; Buttman, § 133, 22), [John 3:29](#): ἡ χαρά ἡ χαίρομεν, [1 Thessalonians 3:9](#); χαίρειν ἐπί with a dative of the

object, [Matthew 18:13](#); [Luke 1:14](#); [Luke 13:17](#); [Acts 15:31](#) [Romans 16:19](#) L T Tr WH; [1 Corinthians 13:6](#); [1 Corinthians 16:17](#); [2 Corinthians 7:13](#); [Revelation 11:10](#) (Xenophon, mem. 2, 6, 35; Cyril 8, 4, 12; Plato, legg. 5, p. 739 d.; cf. Kühner, § 425 Anm. 6; (Winers Grammar, § 33 a.; Buttman, § 133, 23); in the Greek writings generally with a simple dative of the object as [Proverbs 17:19](#)); [διά τί](#), [John 3:29](#); [διά τινα](#), [John 11:15](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:9](#); [ἐν τούτῳ](#), [Philippians 1:18](#); ([ἐν ταῖς παθήμασι μου](#), [Colossians 1:24](#)); with an accusative of the object, [τό αὐτό](#), [Philippians 2:18](#) ([ταῦτα](#), Demosthenes, p. 323, 6; cf. Matthiae, § 414, p. 923; Krüger, § 46, 5, 9); [τό ἐφ' ὑμῖν](#) (see [ὁ](#), II. 8, p. 436a), [Romans 16:19](#) R G; [ἀπό τίνος](#), equivalent to [χαράν ἔχειν](#), to derive joy from one, [2 Corinthians 2:3](#); [ἐχάρητε](#) followed by [ὅτι](#), [John 14:28](#); [2 Corinthians 7:9, 16](#); [2 John 1:4](#); [ἐν τούτῳ](#), [Luke 10:20](#); with a dative of the cause: [τῆ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες](#), let the hope of future blessedness give you joy, [Romans 12:12](#) (yet cf. Winer's Grammar, § 31, 1 k., 7d.).

b. in a broader sense, **to be well, to thrive**; in salutations, the imperative [χαῖρε](#), "Hail!" Latinsalve (so from Homer down): [Matthew 26:49](#); [Matthew 27:29](#); [Mark 15:18](#); [Luke 1:28](#); [John 19:3](#); plural [χαίρετε](#) (A. V. **all hail**), [Matthew 28:9](#); at the beginning of letters the infinitive [χαίρειν](#) (namely, [λέγει](#) or [κελενεῖ](#)): [Acts 15:23](#); [Acts 23:26](#); [James 1:1](#) (often in the books of Maccabees; cf. Grimm on 1 Macc. 10:18; Otto in the Jahrb. f. deutsch. Theol. for 1867, p. 678ff; cf. Hilgenfeld, Galaterbrief, p. 99ff; Xenophon, Cyril 4, 5, 27; Aelian v. h. 1, 25); fully, [χαίρειν λέγω](#), **to give one greeting, salute**, [2 John 1:10](#) (11). (Compare: [συνχαίρω](#).)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

farewell, be glad, God speed, rejoice.

A primary verb; to be "cheer"ful, i.e. Calmly happy or well-off; impersonally, especially as salutation (on meeting or parting), be well -- farewell, be glad, God speed, greeting, hall, joy(- fully), rejoice.