

Dr. David Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Lecture 30, 1 Peter 1:3-12

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This is Dr. David Bower in his teaching on Inductive Bible Study. This is session 30, 1 Peter 1:3-12.

I want to go ahead now and just trace the thought and say a bit with regard to the interpretation of this foundational passage.

That's a passage that, in our book survey, we consider to be foundational for the exhortations that we have throughout the rest of the book of 1 Peter. I'm referring, of course, to 1 Peter 1:3 through 12. We begin with a survey of this, and in my judgment, we have two main units.

The first main unit is actually only half a verse long. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, it begins with the declaration of blessedness of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then the rest of this statement from 3b through 12 is a substantiation of it.

The reason why I say that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be blessed is because, and this then has to do with the Christian's experience in 1:3b through 9, two things really. First, in 1:3b through 9, the Christian's experience of God's mercies, the Christian experience, and then in 1:10 through 12, the Christian surpassing privileges and status over against the messengers from the earlier dispensation, prophets, and angels, the Christian advantage. So, in 1:3b through 9, the Christian experience, in 1:10 through 12, the Christian advantage.

Now, with regard to the Christian experience, that itself is broken down into two movements. The Christian experience in terms of rebirth to hope and inheritance in 1:3b through 5, and then the Christian experience stemming from that in terms of the possibility of positive response amidst difficult circumstances in 1:6 through 9. And again, in 1:10 through 12, the Christian surpassing privileges and status over against messengers, the Christian advantage, also involves a two-fold movement, privileged over prophets in 1:10 through 12a, and privileged over angels in 1:12b. Notice that he moves here in 1:3b through 9 from the Christian's present trials and sufferings over against future glory, future glory, and salvation to in 1:10 through 12, Christ's trials and sufferings over against subsequent glory.

So, both in 1:3b through 9 and in 1:10 through 12, he talks about the movement from trials and sufferings to future glory. In 1:3b through 9, he talks about the Christian's movement from trials and sufferings to future glory, and in 1:10 through 12, he talks about Christ's movement from sufferings to subsequent glory.

So, in terms of structural relationships, we have a substantiation clearly, as we already mentioned, 1:3a is the effect, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then in 1 3b through 12, the cause or the reasons why God is blessed or should be blessed. I didn't take space here to raise questions, but of course, I would do that.

We also note that we have a recurrence by the, a comparison by the recurrence of contrast here with, and really this relates to what I just mentioned, and that is in this passage, Christians are compared to Christ in that both Christians and Christ experience present trials and sufferings, but look forward to future glory and salvation, which of course involves a contrast, a contrast between present, we might say trials and sufferings, versus future glory and salvation. So, this contrasting experience is actualized both in the lives of Christians and has been actualized in the life of Christ. So, you have this comparison then between the destiny, this contrasting destiny of Christians and the destiny of Christ.

Now as I say, I think that you may have an element of substantiation with this because Christians have sure hope that present trials and sufferings will give way to glory and salvation, 1:9, because Christ's sufferings were likewise followed by subsequent glory. In other words, the reason why Christians will experience this and can experience it is that Christ has experienced it. We also, of course, have a recurrence of causation here.

Faith amidst trials is a cause for salvation, which is the effect. Repeatedly, he makes that point here, and salvation is understood here in terms of praise, honor, and glory, as well as future praise, honor, and glory, and present rejoicing. We also have a contrast, though, between Christians, the readers he describes here, and their experience in 1, verses, as this should read, verses 3 through 9, who experience salvation and are served by prophets and angels, who are the served, over against the prophets and angels in verses 10 through 12, who are not said to have experienced this salvation, but to have predicted this salvation and serve Christians.

So, Christians are served by prophets and angels, and the prophets and angels serve Christians. There is a contrast, in other words, between Christians who experience a salvation that the prophets and angels only declare. This course points to the whole notion, which we mentioned, of the Christian advantage there in verses 10 through 12, but it actually pertains to the whole segment because, of course, the Christian experience is described in verses 3 through 9, and then the subordinate and somewhat lesser experience of prophets and angels is described in verses 10 through 12.

So, let's go ahead and look at what we have in terms of a detailed analysis or a thought flow, but kind of using the main units and subunits of our segment survey as

a general broad framework for that. As we said, he begins with a declaration of blessedness in 1:3a, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He begins with a description, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then really moves to address the readers in verse 3b: by his great mercy, we have been born anew.

In a sense, he begins by addressing God, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this business of blessedness, when blessed is used in this way, it has to do with worshipful adoration of God in recognition of the fact that God alone possesses all good things and gives all good things. In other words, we ought to bless God because God has blessed us.

Our blessing of God comes in response to God's blessing of us. Because he blesses, therefore, we ought to bless him. It involves a recognition and affirmation that he is a source of all good.

By the way, if, in fact, one of the major purposes, if not the major purpose of 1 Peter is to address and establish the whole notion of Christian identity, the fact that he begins his epistle this way suggests that one purpose or function of the church of the Christian community and of Christians is the praise of God, the blessing of God, and to promote God's praise throughout the world. Notice, remember the purpose statement that we mentioned in 2:12. Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. The purpose of the people of God, and this is at the center of the identity of the people of God, is to praise God, to glorify God, and to be the means in the world of the world, finally glorifying God.

That they may see, that these Gentiles may see your good works and glorify God on the day of visitation. Now when he, when he talks, but he does talk here especially about, about this God being the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just two or three things with regard to this phrase.

This phrase suggests when he talks about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we can know God and understand God with full adequacy only in reference to what God has done in Christ, the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is only through Christ that we know God as God, and as Father, Peter suggests. Not natural revelation, not through natural revelation, not even through Old Testament revelation on its own terms, without reference to its fulfillment in the New.

As a matter of fact, in 1:10-12, Peter, when he talks about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, links Old Testament revelation with Christ. When he says with regard to the prophets in verse 11, they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and his

subsequent glory. In fact, our sonship with God and our being born anew by God are closely linked to Jesus' relationship with the Father.

Our new birth and our sonship to God are derived from and mediated by Christ's, if you want to use this expression, new birth, His resurrection. Again, we'll go ahead and say in verse 3 that by His great mercy, we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We have been born anew through His resurrection.

Now, this also suggests, 3a does, that only the person who knows Jesus as Lord can utter this blessing. No one else is in a position truly to worship or to glorify God in this full sense. Only through Jesus, and especially by submitting to Him as Lord, notice our Lord Jesus Christ, can we call upon God as Father in this sense.

He'll pick this up again later in 1:14, as obedient children, which you are by virtue of your new birth by God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, as obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy, and if you invoke as Father, Him who judges each one impartially according to his deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, if you invoke as Father. Now, in 1:3b through 5, of course, well, in 1:3b through 12, He goes ahead and substantiates this declaration of blessedness, and so He begins, as we said, with the Christian's experience of God's mercies in 1:3b through 9, the Christian experience, and as we said already in the survey, He begins here with rebirth to hope and inheritance in 1:3b through 5. So, He says here, we have been born anew, and the word here, born anew to, ace, a living hope and to an inheritance. We have been born to a living hope through the resurrection, and note the connection between living and resurrection here, to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and been born anew to an inheritance.

Now, of course, there is a conceptual connection between new birth and inheritance. New birth implies sonship, and inheritance belongs to the realm of sonship. By virtue of being born of God, we are inheritors of God.

To an inheritance, and He talks about the character of this inheritance as indestructible, undefiled, and unfading, and the reason for this character, the substantiation of this character of this inheritance being indestructible, undefiled, and unfading, is that it is in heaven. But He also talks about the, and then He also substantiates this by talking about the preservation of this inheritance. He says it has been guarded, it is being guarded by means both divine and human, by the power of God, that's the divine aspect, and by our faith, that's the human aspect, to the end of eschatological salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Now, clearly, new birth here, which is *anagenao*, born from above or born again, new birth is significant. It is used not only here but also; he'll bring it up again in 1:23: you have been born anew, He says there, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God. Now, although the idea of new birth is found elsewhere in the New Testament, especially in the Johannine writings, this verb is actually only found in the New Testament here in 1 Peter, in our passage in 123.

Here, it involves a new existence, a new type of existence, an existence that is shaped by the reality of God and God's work in Christ, especially Christ's resurrection, over against a view of reality that sees the present life and worldly things as ultimately significant, an existence that is shaped by the realities of this world. It stands over against that. And this, of course, leads to this whole business, as we saw before, of strangers and exiles language here.

Now, the source of this regeneration of this new birth is by His great mercy. Really, this involves a notion of merciful help. This is the New Testament way of talking about the Old Testament notion of *hesed*, by His merciful help, active, merciful help toward those in need.

That's all bound up in this notion of mercy. Now, we might expand upon this by noting two or three things in terms of emphasis. We note that He emphasizes here that the new birth is entirely the act of God.

It is radically theocentric. It is entirely the act of God. By God's great mercy, we have been born anew.

By the way, there again, you have the divine passive we talked about in James. We've been born anew by God. No human power or merit is involved.

And this, of course, has all sorts of implications for the Christian life. The Christian life is characterized by gratitude for what God has done, by faith in what God has done, and confidence in what God has done, by confidence that God will continue by the same great merciful power to meet all of our needs, especially our spiritual needs, by wonder, by praise. Again, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by humility, by expectation.

All of that, you see, is suggested by this business that our new birth is by the merciful help of God. It implies, secondly, help or deliverance from destructive forces. By His great mercy, we have been born anew.

These destructive forces are powerful, hence great mercy, by His great mercy. Great mercy is called for. Now, this probably, when we talk about these forces, these destructive forces from which we have been delivered, probably, of course, these

forces are related to death and all that is involved in death, such as despair, hopelessness, futility.

All these things He will develop, Peter will develop in the context. The third thing that is emphasized here is that it is by merciful new birth that Christians become the people of God and are incorporated into the people of God. He'll bring this out again, of course, in 2:10 and 7. Once, you were no people, but now you are God's people.

Once you had not received mercy, the same word you have here, by His great mercy, we have been born anew. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that make war against your souls.

In other words, peoplehood is possible by having received mercy. Receiving mercy is the bond that unites the church and allows it to function as a people of God in the world. That's what we share ultimately.

We are recipients of this kind of mercy. We, together, share this kind of mercy and that binds us together and actually sets us apart as well. Binds us together within the body of Christ and sets us apart from other peoples of the world.

Once, you were no people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. And, of course, this mercy then determines the character of the people of God in the world.

Merciful to one another and merciful towards those who are on the outside. Now, the goal of this, being born anew, is twofold. Notice the A's.

Born anew, two. First of all, a living hope. Now, hope is a key term in this book.

Hope in 1 Peter involves a firm anticipation of the future deliverance of God that will come in the second coming of Christ, the parousia of Christ. This implies trust. This hope implies trust.

This hope involves trust, informed optimism, and patient waiting. It involves freedom from anxiety and worry, living in light of the end, and viewing everything now in light of the ultimate reality of the end. It involves freedom and anxiety from worry and a firm conviction that God is the only source of deliverance and security.

It is future-oriented but has fulfilled the found implications for present existence. In fact, it is present life lived in sure anticipation of the future act of God. And therefore, it's a way of allowing future salvation to inform and shape our present existence and thus to experience a kind of salvation now.

Now let me just mention here that, and we won't have time to develop this, that hope is the basic characteristic of Christian existence in 1 Peter, even as faith is for Paul. So, the exhortations begin in 1:13 with Peter's urging his readers fully to shape their thinking to the hope that is directed to the parousia. In 1:21, hope is a fundamental posture of the Christian towards God.

As he says here, so that your faith and hope are in God. In 3:5 and 6, hope characterizes a life that is acceptable to God. 3:6, as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord, well let me put it this way, actually 3:5, so once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands, as he says there.

And in 3:15, the Christian life is characterized by the hope that God is within you. As he says there, always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is within you. Really this involves two things with regard to the theology of Peter, which marks really some difference of emphasis between Peter and Paul.

In Peter, salvation is not only salvation; salvation is essentially the future. If in Paul for the most part, in Paul, the point of salvation is at the cross. As they say, we were saved by virtue of Christ's work and especially, of course, focusing on his death on the cross.

That is a locus of salvation in Paul. But in 1 Peter, the locus of salvation is in his second coming. So, that in 1 Peter, salvation is essentially future.

As a matter of fact, the salvation that we experience now, and Peter does have a notion of present salvation, the salvation that Christians experience now is a kind of anticipation of and a kind of foreshadowing of, a kind of foreshadowing of, a kind of retroaction of the salvation that we will experience. We are beginning to experience by way of anticipation and hope for the salvation that we will experience at the end. Now I said that that's somewhat different from Paul.

Actually, that is exactly Paul's understanding of salvation in 1 Thessalonians, which is arguably Paul's first epistle. 1 Thessalonians does not really have much of a theologia crucis, to use a technical theological term, that is to say, a theology of the cross. Theology of the cross is not dominant, and it's not primary in 1 Thessalonians. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul links salvation to the future. We will be saved. And the experience of salvation we have now is anticipatory of that.

And also in 1 Thessalonians, like 1 Peter, we are saved primarily by hope and only secondarily by faith. So whereas faith is the operative, is emphasized as the operative element in salvation in most of Paul, in 1 Peter, faith is important, but the thing that's even more important than faith in terms of making salvation possible is hope. And

that's also true of 1 Thessalonians, where Paul emphasizes the role of hope in salvation more than he does the role of faith, even as 1 Peter emphasizes the role of hope in salvation more than the hope of faith.

Of course, you really have to have both. So, it's not a matter of either or, but it's a matter of relative emphasis. Now, this hope is qualified in 1 Thessalonians 3 as a living hope.

He's going to employ the word living twice more. He's going to talk about the word being the living word. We are saved, we have been born anew, and actually, they're also in terms of new birth, by the living word, the living word of God, the living word of God.

Also, he will talk about Christ in 2:4 as being a living stone. In both cases, the notion of living points toward endurance, not susceptible even to the threat of death, and to vitality, and to dependability and certainty. Living in the sense of life that comes from God and is inextricably linked to God so that life exists as long as God exists.

It is stronger. Life is stronger than all things, according to 1 Peter, including death. Moreover, it is vital; that is to say, it is active, and it has the power to shape all of life. Bo Reiche, the great Swiss New Testament scholar, put it this way: a hope by which one may live.

This hope is certain and living because it is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus, a past event in history that is both historical and an event that actually transpired on the plane of history. It is part of the past, it's a past event, and also eschatological, it belongs to the end of history. It is an eschatological event in time.

The end of the ages has come. In this resurrection of Jesus from the dead, God demonstrates the victory of hope in the most hopeless of all circumstances, death. The point is that hope is in no way weakened or diminished by circumstances.

And note the relationship to the reader's circumstances here, which are very grave, are very difficult. Nothing can or will stand in the way of God's end-time salvation. Now, we could say much more with regard to all of this, but we move on here to note the second element here, really, we might say the second effect of this being born anew, that is not only to a living hope but also through an inheritance.

Now, the living hope really, to a living hope, is really in a sense more subjective, that is to say, to a life of hope, whereas this inheritance is more objective, the substance of that which is hope for. This involves really receiving or experiencing the promise of God, especially the promise of eternal salvation and glory. Now, he uses inheritance here, and this is really an allusion to Old Testament language, where inheritance is used especially of the land of Canaan, the land of Canaan.

Of course, God promised the patriarchs the land as an inheritance, and he uses inheritance also in terms of speaking to the people of Israel. The land is their inheritance. So, clearly, he is alluding to the Old Testament notion of the land.

But this inheritance is characterized as different from the land of Canaan, and that difference is indicated by three negatives, to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, he says. Imperishable, *aphthartos*, which is characteristic of God, the property that characterizes God Himself, imperishable, entirely free, in other words, of any change, of any decay, of any corruption, free of catastrophe, undefiled, *amiantos*, free from moral defilement, free from the kind of spoilage that evil necessarily brings to things in the world, not only free of catastrophe but free of the spoiling, the defilement, the spoilage from evil, unfading, *amaranton*, that which will not lose its luster or appeal, over against earthly things which are of such a character that we grow tired of them. Incidentally, it's interesting that this was an issue with the fathers.

It was an issue with some of the fathers greatly when they reflected upon eternal glory, eternity, of course, being understood by them, as I think is in the New Testament, as endless time. The question is, how will we be satisfied with that? Won't we become bored? The whole issue of the boredom of heaven. And Peter is really addressing this.

It will not lose its luster or appeal over against earthly things that are such a character that we grow tired of them, free from the effects of time. Now, it's interesting. So, what we really have is an entirely new order, thus related to the new birth.

This is true reality, for it is reality that transcends the transitory and the temporal all around them. Now, I think it's theologically significant that he chooses to, and this is something that you have quite often in the New Testament, that he chooses to describe future heavenly glory negatively, that is to say, by what it is not. This really implies the transcendence of heavenly glory.

That is to say, the only way really to talk about it is not the way to talk about it is not by what it is because what it is is so different from what we experience that it cannot really be positively described. The only way to describe it is what it isn't, how it is different from what we presently experience. Now, he goes ahead to insist that this, as he says, is kept in heaven for you.

This is a divine, kept by God. You have the divine passive here once again, kept by God in heaven for you, which of course, heaven is a place where God reigns and exercises his sole control. Now, he uses the perfect tense here in the Greek.

The perfect tense indicates that it is being kept on deposit. That is, it already exists. Our reward already exists.

It's not something that is yet to come into existence. This point emphasizes, of course, its surety. It's already there.

It's waiting for us. It already exists and is being kept on deposit by God himself. Not only is the inheritance preserved, but readers are also preserved so that they are reassured of receiving this inheritance.

They are guarded through all. They are guarded. Now, again, you have the passive voice indicating divine passive, guarded by God.

This word guarded, by the way, has military associations. It can be understood as, as someone has put it, protective custody. God is the one who stands guard.

Now, here you have the present tense, constantly standing guard, continuously standing guard. Now, this guarding involves really two means. It involves both the divine and the human.

On the divine side, we are being guarded by God's power. God's power, of course, is described in the context of his power by his act of raising Jesus from the dead. This business of the resurrection of the dead is a pretty powerful event.

And this, again, gives assurance that the very same power that involved the resurrection from the dead is operative in God's guarding us. No one needs to fall away, no matter how adverse the circumstances are. Even for those of us on the other side of my say, in the Methodist and Wesleyan traditions, who believe that the New Testament as a whole suggests or teaches that it is possible for someone to fall away, we must acknowledge that it's not easy for someone to fall away, being guarded by faith.

And, of course, those in the Reformed tradition would say it is impossible. Leave it up to you as to where you come down on that one. But you certainly have a kind of synergism here.

It's not just a matter of God's power. It's also a matter of the human participation in that, making operational God's power through faith. Who, by God's power, are guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Again, as we said, salvation is primarily future. Salvation is ready to be revealed for the last time. This divine protective power is operative *dia pistis*, through faith.

Faith in God's power causes God's power to be operative. Now in Peter, faith is used not so much in the sense of entering into the Christian life as preserving Christian life and existence. This, again, is a slight difference from most of Paul's letters, at least.

But not a difference of kind, but a difference of emphasis. Now, he says here, though, that the object of this business of being guarded by God's power through faith is a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. And we already talked about the future emphasis upon salvation here.

And so, we'll move on then to verses 6 through 9, where we have the second movement here in this, here within verses 3 through 9. Positive response, which really is the effect of being born anew, is the possibility of positive response amidst difficult circumstances. Chapter 1, verses 6 through 9. Now, the emphasis in this passage is on rejoicing. It actually begins and ends with rejoicing.

Verse 6, in this you rejoice. And then, of course, he will indicate in verse 8 here, without having seen him, you love him, though you do not now see him, you believe in him, and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. So, the overarching theme that binds this material together is rejoicing amidst difficult circumstances.

Now, he begins here in verses 6 and 7 by discussing the rejoicing amidst adverse realities. Rejoicing amidst adverse realities and trials. 1:6 and 7, in this you rejoice, though now for a little while, this, of course, is a mild contrast, kind of a concession, in this you rejoice in spite of the fact that now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that, here you have a purpose statement, in order that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold, which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, when he talks about rejoicing amidst trials here, this as I say rejoice establishes the theme in verses 6 and 7, it is a result of being born again to a living hope and to an inheritance that is, as he says here, imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, with direct implications for action. This rejoicing will climax at the revelation of Christ, which is, but this rejoicing which climaxes at the revelation of Christ is experienced even now, as he will say in 4:13, but rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. Now, he says, of course, he emphasizes here the context of this rejoicing amidst trials, which he presents here in the book, not simply as a possibility but as a reality.

As a matter of fact, it's interesting as you read throughout the book, the notion of suffering, this is a good example of how recurrence can actually mark development within a book. As you read through the book, you'll note that increasingly the certainty of suffering of these re-readers is indicated. He begins by indicating that

you may suffer, and then he goes ahead and increasingly he talks about the fact that they are suffering.

But there are three emphases here in this business of rejoicing in the midst of trials. The first is that, and this has to do with three emphases with regard to trials. One is that trials are probational or preparatory.

God has decreed that glory should come at the end of and as a result of trials. Of course, that is exactly Christ's experience. He enters into his glory after and because of his sufferings.

It is probationary. We mentioned with regard to James that, at least for the most part in the Bible, you do not have any sort of understanding of middle knowledge on the part of God. And we find the same kind of, but rather that God can know really who we are, whether we are fit for eternal glory, only as he sees how we respond to things in terms of the tests or the trials that he sends to us.

And so, the same thing is found here so that the genuineness of your faith may redound to praise and glory, etc. Probational.

It is also relational. It involves the privilege of sharing Christ's sufferings, being one with him in his sufferings, and being one with him in glory. It is also eschatological.

That's the third emphasis in these present sufferings. It's related really probably to the messianic woes in Judaism and in the New Testament. That is to say, the fact that Christians are enduring trial, and incidentally, in contrast to James, trials here have to do specifically with Christian persecution, not trial.

James talks about various kinds of trials. And he develops, you know, various kinds of trials that Christians, that his readers might experience. Many of them that James goes ahead to describe pertain to human life in general and are not unique to Christian existence; they don't have to do specifically with Christian persecution.

But Peter uses trials in the sense of suffering for Christ. So, this involves really suffering for Christ, and he's going to suggest, Peter will later on in the book, that this is actually an encouraging thing because insofar as you suffer for Christ, you recognize that you are actually participating in the messianic woes. That's to say, you are really part of the people of God who will be delivered when the end comes.

In Judaism, there was a significant, pretty broad belief that just before the Messiah comes, there would be a great falling away, and there would be a time of great tribulation and affliction for those who are faithful to God. And that is picked up and taken up by early Christianity in the New Testament. And so, in passages like the Olivet Discourse in the Gospels, Mark 13 and parallels, Jesus suggests that really the

whole period will be characterized by, the whole period between his resurrection and his second coming will be characterized by these messianic woes.

But especially in the period just before the second coming of Christ, there will be an intensification of these messianic woes and the like. Peter picks up on the same idea in 4:17 when he says, for the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? So, oddly enough, ironically enough, suffering for Christ is actually good news, he suggests.

Now, this suffering is for a little while, in comparison with the eternal glory that they will experience as a result. By the way, he indicates here that the very testing of faith is necessary because of the preciousness of faith itself. Again, this is the bright side of Christian persecution.

That is to say that God has a purpose in these kinds of trials, and that is to refine and test faith, both just by refining faith. Really, he has in mind removing faith from faith of everything that is unlike faith, even as refining fine metal involves removing the alloys from it, making it pure. But it also tests it so that if it's not true faith, it will not survive the trials and the like. But God goes through that process, and God intends that process because of the value of faith.

Even as people don't bother with refining metals that are essentially worthless, but only fine metals like silver and gold, so also God refines faith because faith is precious. Now, he also, though, in verses 8 and 9, talks about rejoicing in another context, and that is rejoicing amidst invisible realities. In 6 and 7, he talked about rejoicing amidst adverse realities that they can see.

Now, he talks about rejoicing amidst wonderful, glorious realities that they can't see. In verses 8 and 9, without having seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with an utterable and exalted joy.

As the outcome of your faith, you obtain the salvation of your souls. Now, this does point to a possible difficulty. After all, and by the way, it's a difficulty that we experience, too.

If we say to people, if we say with regard to ourselves that we are saved because of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is our Savior, there is at least a potential problem in the fact that he isn't here, that we have never seen him, and we don't see him now. This was a difficulty for the readers that Peter suggests he himself did not have. He will say later in 5:1, I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

He had seen our Lord, but this second generation of Christians have not, and they do not see him now. Christian life is based upon a person they have never seen. Now, this problem is reflected often in the New Testament, for example, in the Gospel of John, this famous passage there in John 20, verses 26 and following.

Eight days later, let's say after the resurrection, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here and see my hands, and put out your hand and place it on my side.

Do not be faithless, but believe. Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

Of course, there is a contrast here in our 1 Peter passage between what they do see, persecutors and persecutions, and what they do not see, Christ. This could lead to doubt and despair, but the solution is to adopt a future orientation. Again, note the role of rejoice here in comparison with verse 6. In this, you rejoice.

What do you rejoice? In the hope, in hope. And in verse 8, Without having seen him, you love him, though you do not now see him, you believe in him, and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith, you obtain the salvation of your souls.

Christian existence is related to the future and not dependent upon the past or present realities or present circumstances, except as these bear witness to the future. I would note reference to the word now here. Though you do not now see him, which implies that they will, though you do not now see him, you believe in him.

It may be that the impossibility of depending upon past and present sight forces a believer to focus upon the future, thus engendering faith and hope, a kind of faith and hope that leads to or nurtures love. Without having seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy.

In which case, Peter might be suggesting that even as suffering turns out to be good news, so also this inability, the fact that they haven't seen Christ and are not seeing him now, may provide them with an opportunity to exercise a kind of faith and a kind of hope that would not be possible if they had seen him or if they were seeing him now. That's really what Jesus says in John chapter 20, doesn't it? Do you believe me because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen yet believe. Now, just a word with regard to verses 10 through 12.

Here we have the Christian surpassing privileges and status over against the messengers in the previous dispensation, the Christian advantage. And of course, he

gives most attention here to the, this is quantitative selectivity, bulk of attention is given to their privilege over prophets in verses 10 through 12a. The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation.

They inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them, again divine passive by God, it was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preach the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Now, really just a few things to note here.

First of all, let me just say that I mentioned status over against messengers in the preceding dispensation. You may say, well, yes, that clearly pertains to prophets. They were the messengers, but why do you refer to angels as the messengers? Peter doesn't say it explicitly here, but I think that the fact that he links angels with prophets suggests that he is drawing upon the notion that was very prominent in Judaism at the time.

It actually derives from the Septuagint translation of a passage in the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy, and that is that the law was mediated through angels. Paul says exactly that in Galatians chapter 3, that the law was mediated through angels. Stephen says the same thing in the 7th chapter of Acts.

You receive the law, or you accept the law as mediated through angels and the like, so in the New Testament as well. And Hebrews 2, in Hebrews chapter 2, around verses 2 and 3 also indicate this pretty broad view in the New Testament that the law was mediated by angels so that the angels were also the mediation of God's revelation. They were messengers of God.

Now the verbs with regard to all of these, all the verbs here use the present tense and indicate diligent and persistent inquiry on the part of them. I would also note that the substance of the prophetic message is the experience of these Christians. Notice that Peter says that really what the prophets were talking about was Christ when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory.

Peter is picking up here on the New Testament conviction that the whole of the Old Testament bears witness to Christ. All the prophets bear witness to Christ, and especially centering, of course, upon the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. This has great significance.

I won't take time to go into it here, but it has great significance with regard to how Christians make use of the Old Testament. But he also emphasizes here the continuity of message between the prophets in the Old Testament and the Christian

proclamation, the gospel that has been proclaimed to you, in two ways. In terms of the means or the empowerment of proclamation, the Holy Spirit was involved in both cases.

They inquired what verse 11, they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. And then he will say in verse 12, they were serving not themselves but you in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preach the good news to you through the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that who is operative in the preaching of the Christian gospel was operative in the prophets. But not simply, you know, the same empowerment, the same means, the same agency of proclamation, but also the same message.

Christ is the message both of the prophets and of the Christian gospel that has been proclaimed to you. Now, of course, there are three emphases in this passage. The first is that, the first is, and this is the fundamental point that he wishes to make, the exalted status of Christians over prophets and angels.

These were the preeminent mediators of God's salvation. And there was a view in Judaism that the prophets were really especially privileged. But now Peter declares that we Christians, the least Christian has great advantage, great privilege over the greatest of the prophets.

The implication of this is very clear. You are advantaged. Embrace your advantage.

This should lead to joy and should lead to your living into the Christian gospel in ways that they were not able to do because of where they stood in terms of salvation history. They lacked the salvation historical advantage that you have. And you should do everything you can to maintain the faith and not to fall back from it.

It would be a tremendously great loss if you were in any way not to take full advantage of this grace that is yours, that they could only hope for, that they could only inquire about. And angels could only long to look at. The second emphasis is that prophetic proclamation exists for the sake of Christian existence.

This points to the significance of the Old Testament for the Christian, both the value of the Hebrew Scriptures and also the nature of its value, which has to do with the direction of its use and the way in which we ultimately read it. Basically, what this means is that when Christians work with the Old Testament, read the Old Testament, study the Old Testament, preach from the Old Testament, to be sure they need to be careful to ascertain as best they can what is the meaning of these Old Testament passages in their contexts. To do anything less than that is to deny the manifest historical and incarnational character of divine revelation.

So, it's not a matter simply of uncritically and in a very superficial way reading New Testament teaching back into the Old Testament itself so that the Old Testament is never allowed to be heard on its own terms. Do that. But the point is you don't stop at that.

It's always a matter of going ahead and asking how does this teaching, how does this truth from this Old Testament passage point towards Christ? How does it come to fulfillment in Christ? In the person of Christ, in the work of Christ, in the people of Christ? Now, the third emphasis is on the continuity of the message by the Spirit of Christ in terms of means, the sufferings of Christ, and its subsequent glory in terms of substance. And then, of course, fourthly, the emphasis is that salvation, though primarily the future, is already present as fulfillment. You can talk about salvation in the first period being primarily future, but there is a sense in which it is also present and is in fulfillment of the past so that it has been prepared for so that we are actually living in the last days at the end of the ages, although this eschatological period, this eschatological existence is yet to be consummated.

So, in other words, the Christian kind of looks both backward and forwards. Salvation as we presently experience it is informed and richly informed, really, necessarily informed from the past, the prophets and angels, by the way, he may have in mind here the law. But it also, of course, salvation being essentially future, it involves our looking at the future and our present salvation being informed by the future, and in fact, salvation insofar as we experience it now is future salvation that is being, that is being proleptically experienced.

The future is breaking into our present. Well, that's at least the foundation that Peter gives for the view of the Christian life that he'll go ahead and present by way of exhortation in the rest of his book.

This is Dr. David Bower in his teaching on Inductive Bible Study. This is session 30, 1 Peter 1:3-12.