

PRESERVATION THROUGH PERSEVERANCE:  
AN EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF 1 PETER 1:5

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A PAPER

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The purpose of this paper is to prove that in 1 Peter 1:5 Peter praises God by affirming His act of preserving the elect for salvation by means of their perseverance. This thesis will be demonstrated, first, by introducing the macro-level in which 1:5 appears, second, by examining the individual component parts of the verse, and thirdly, by summarizing the evidence, revisiting the macro-level, and drawing some relevant, theological implications.

### *Macro-Level Introduced*

Typical letters during Peter's time period often began with some form of thanksgiving, blessing, or wish for good favor following the letter's greeting.<sup>1</sup> In Jewish writings, this practice was often formulated as a *eulogia*, a prayer of praise to God.<sup>2</sup> Modeling after this precedent, Christian writers often began letters with a blessing or thanksgiving prayer directed toward God.<sup>3</sup> As such, following his greeting (1:1-2) Peter begins his letter in 1:3-12<sup>4</sup> with a blessing directed towards God. Verse 5 is found within the structure of this section.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (ed by. Grant R. Osborne, D. Stuart Briscoe, and Haddon Robinson; The IVP New Testament Commentary Series; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 33.

<sup>2</sup> Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (ed by. Ferdinand Hahn; trans by. John E. Alsup; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 78.

<sup>3</sup> For example, note several of Paul's letters: Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; Phlm 4; 1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:3; 2 Tim 1:3.

<sup>4</sup> 1:3-13 is clearly marked off from the rest of the letter as a distinct section. First, it serves as the introductory blessing. Second, it exists as one long unbroken sentence. And third, not a single imperative occurs in the text until verse 13, which clearly begins a new "imperative" section (1:13-2:3).

Two noteworthy scholarly discussions outside the scope of this paper are at least worth noting. First is whether 1:3-12 has baptismal-liturgical origins. Second, is whether 1:3-12 forms an early church hymn. Regarding these issues, see Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 50 and 79.

Specifically important for this paper are verse 3-5 which are structured as follows:

<sup>3</sup> Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,  
 ὁ . . . ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς  
 κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος  
 εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν  
 δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν,  
<sup>4</sup> εἰς κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον,  
 τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς  
<sup>5</sup> τοὺς . . . φρουρουμένους  
 ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ  
 διὰ πίστεως  
 εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ.

Straightaway in verse 3 the encapsulating theme of 1:3-12 is introduced: praise be to God for His comprehensive saving work.<sup>5</sup> In verses 3-5 Peter begins to praise God by describing “the totality of reborn Christian existence from its inception to its final outcome.”<sup>6</sup> God has caused the elect to be born again, a rebirth ultimately aimed at their future inheritance, which God is reserving for them. Yet up until verse 4 one vitally important question remains unanswered.

You may know that God is merciful [v.3]. You may know that God has caused you to be born again [v.3]. You may know that God raised Jesus from the dead [v.3]. You may know that God promised to keep your inheritance imperishable in heaven [v.4]. In other words, you know what God has done in the past to give you life, and you know what God is going to do in the future to give you your inheritance.

But what about now? What about the time between new birth and final salvation? What about the temptations, pressures, stresses, weariness,

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (ed by. E. Ray Clendenen; New American Standard; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 58–59.

<sup>6</sup> John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (ed by. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman; The Anchor Bible; New York, NY: Yale University Press, 2000), 338.

persecution, frustrations, suffering, confusion, perplexity, fears, and traps that we face now? Does God do anything about that? Does he send his Son to die for our sins, raise him from the dead to open eternal life, cause us to be born again, and then stand back to see if we will make it to heaven?<sup>7</sup>

Peter does not leave the answer to this question uncertain; he answers it explicitly in verse 5 with a participle modified by three prepositional phrases.

τοὺς . . . φρουρουμένους

Verse 5 begins with the participle *τοὺς . . . φρουρουμένους* (with the participle phrase *ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ* embedded between the participle and its article). *φρουρουμένους* is an attributive participle modifying *ὑμᾶς* (v.4)<sup>8</sup> and is best translated with the words “the ones . . .” or “who are . . .” *φρουρέω* often occurred in military contexts to denote either protection from external threats (cf. 1 Esdras 4:56; Jdt 3:61; Macc 6:50; Phil *Moses*, 1.235) or guarding in the sense of not allowing escape (cf. 2 Cor 11:32; Wis 17:16; Josephus, *Life*, 53 and 240). It therefore conjures up the image of a fortress being carefully watched by military forces.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> John Piper, “The Elect Are Kept by the Power of God,” *Desiring God*, October 17, 1993, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/the-elect-are-kept-by-the-power-of-god>.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Zondervan Publishing House and Galaxie Software, 1996), 617–618; William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 272; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 337; Contra Scot McKnight it is not adverbially modifying *κληρονομίαν* (inheritance; v.4) (*1 Peter* [ed by. Terry Muck; The NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996], 71).

<sup>9</sup> Frederick William Danker et al., eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.; Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1066–67; Paul J. Achtemeier, *Peter 1: A Commentary on First Peter* (ed by. Eldon Jay Epp; Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 97; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (ed by. F. F. Bruce; The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 53; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (ed by. Henry Chadwick; Harper’s New Testament Commentaries; New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), 52; Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1946), 125; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 38; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 337; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64; Wayne A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary* (ed by. Canon Leon Morris; The Tyndale New

The question is then rightfully posed, “against what is God guarding the elect?”<sup>10</sup> or “what is the nature of this protection?” Certainly Peter does not intend physical protection, e.g., from trials,<sup>11</sup> for as vv.6-7 indicate, this preservation is not *from* trials but *through* or in the context of trials. As will be shown, εἰς σωτηρίαν identifies the end-goal of this guarding (φρουρουμένους). What then could prevent one from receiving this salvation, the outcome of one’s faith (v.9)? Unbelief and apostasy (cf. διὰ πίστεως). Therefore, with military connotations close at hand, Peter employs φρουρέω in a metaphorical sense (cf. Gal 3:23; Phil 4:7; Diog 6.4) to denote God’s act of preserving the elect (cf. John 6:37-39; 10:27-30; 1 Cor 1:8-9; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23-24; 2 Thess 3:3; 1 Pet 5:10; Jude 24).<sup>12</sup> It implies not merely a secure position (i.e., “eternal security”) but refers to the basis of that security—God’s continual protection.<sup>13</sup>

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Testament Commentaries; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 58.

<sup>10</sup> “The military image as well as the embedded phrase ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ clearly indicate that φρουρουμένους is a divine passive, “that is, the Christians are being guarded by God’s power, rather than guarding themselves by its use” (Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97).

<sup>11</sup> Contra J. Ramsey Michaels who states, “It is in reference to these ‘ordeals’ . . . that they are ‘being protected’ . . .” (*1 Peter* [ed by. David A. Hubbard et al.; Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1988], 22).

<sup>12</sup> Hence the following translations: “guarded” (ASV, RSV, ESV, YLT); “protected” (HCSB, NASB, NET, NLT); “kept” (KJV); “shielded” (NIV); “preserved” (Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 77). See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64–65.

<sup>13</sup> The present tense of φρουρουμένους designates an imperfective aspect that views the action from an “internal” perspective with proximity (Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008], 40). One might call this a “progressive present” as it describes “a scene in progress” (Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: And Intermediate Greek Grammar* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000], 222; see also Grudem, *1 Peter*, 58).

*ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ*

As made clear by its embedded position, the prepositional phrase *ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ* modifies *τοὺς . . . φρουρουμένους*. It describes the means by which God preserves the elect.<sup>14</sup> *δυνάμει θεοῦ* denotes God's power, might, strength, capability,<sup>15</sup> or negatively, His lack of insufficiency (cf. 2 Tim 1:12). In other words, God guards the elect through the reservoir of His omnipotence. "The power that raised Jesus from the dead (v 3) is the power that ensures the safety of those reborn through him."<sup>16</sup>

So in sum, God protects the elect by means of His power. Yet the question remains, by what means does God's power protect us? As will be shown next, "it is as the Christian trusts in God that they experience his power to protect them" (cf. Phil 2:12-13)<sup>17</sup>

*διὰ πίστεως*

The second prepositional phrase modifying *φρουρουμένους* is *διὰ πίστεως*. The construction *διὰ πίστεως* (genitive object) occurs a total of 19 times (excluding 1 Peter 1:5) in the NT and every single incident is used instrumentally, i.e., *means*.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, *διὰ πίστεως* in 1 Peter 1:5 is most assuredly instrumental.

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<sup>14</sup> Contra Selwyn who suggests a *spatial* use (*First Peter*, 125). The construction *ἐν δυνάμει* occurs a total of 17 times (excluding 1 Pet 1:5) in the NT. At least 6, if not 8, of these occurrences are *instrumental/means* (e.g., Luke 4:14[?]; Acts 4:7; Rom 15:13, 19 [x2]; 2 Cor 4:7[?]; Col 1:11; 2 Thess 1:11; 2:9). *Manner* is the only other viable possibility (cf. Mk 9:1; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 1:5; Rev 1:16[?]), although this is less likely. Nonetheless, difference in meaning between *manner* and *means* here is not incredibly significant.

<sup>15</sup> Frederick William Danker et al., *BDAG*, 262. *θεοῦ* is a possessive genitive—"God's power."

<sup>16</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 38.

<sup>18</sup> Rom 1:12; 3:22, 25, 30, 31; 2 Cor 5:7; Gal 2:16; 3:14, 26; Eph 2:8; 3:12, 17; Phil 3:9; Col 2:12; 1 Thess 3:7; 2 Tim 3:15; Heb 6:12; 11:33, 39.

The question that immediately follows then is, whose faith or faithfulness is being referred to here, man or God's? Does God protect believers through their faith or by means of His faithfulness? David Horrell argues that, although a definite decision cannot be made, good reason exists in favor of the latter option. He states, "the clear focus in verses 3-5 is God, whose great mercy and salvation are acclaimed. God's activity is the foundation throughout."<sup>19</sup>

Although this statement is certainly true, the view that Peter has human faith in view is preferable for several reasons. First, all but one use of *πίστις* or *πιστός* in 1 Peter refer to human faith.<sup>20</sup> And further, the three references to human faith in the immediate context (1:7, 8, 9) highly suggest that human faith is in view here as well. Secondly, Peter not only described *δυνάμει* with *θεοῦ* but embedded *δυνάμει θεοῦ* within *τοῦς . . . φρουρουμένους* to clearly communicate that *God's* power, not man's, was in view. However, neither of these measures was taken with *διὰ πίστεως*. Third, *διὰ πίστεως* is most assuredly means; yet to say that God guards the elect *by means of* His faithfulness makes little sense. Surely God's faithfulness is involved; yet this guarding is not *by means of* His faithfulness but *based on* His faithfulness. Yet if a *basis* or *causal* use is in view, the object of the preposition would need to be an accusative (not a genitive). And more so, if Peter had the *manner* of God's guarding in mind he could have easily used the adverb *πιστῶς* to make this clear.<sup>21</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>19</sup> David Horrell, "Whose Faith(fulness) Is It in 1 Peter 1:5?" *Oxford University Press* 48, no. 1 (April 1997): 110–15.

<sup>20</sup> The following refer to human faith: 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:21; 2:6; 2:7; 5:9; 5:12. Only 4:19 refers to God's faithfulness. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 58.

<sup>21</sup> David Horrell, "Whose Faith(fulness)?" 113.

Peter affirms that God preserves believers by means of their continual faithfulness and trust<sup>22</sup> (the assumed object of faith, among other things, being Christ [v.8]).

Therefore, Peter identifies an important level of human responsibility to persevere. Surely God guards His children, yet this preservation does not occur apart from human faith; faith is the means by which God's protection is effected.<sup>23</sup> Faith is always a condition for salvation, not simply in conversion but also in the life thereafter (cf. Mt 10:22; 24:13; Mk 13:13; Heb 10:36). However, lest salvation be seen as a human achievement, the instrumental relationship between *διὰ πίστεως* and *τοὺς . . . φρουρουμένους* implies divine initiative. The understood subject of the passive participle *φρουρουμένους* is God. Consequently, the means by which *φρουρουμένους* is accomplished, i.e., human faith, is ultimately grounded in God's work.<sup>24</sup> As Schreiner states,

If his [God's] power plays no role in our faith, then it seems that his power accomplishes nothing in our making it to the end—since it is precisely unbelief and failure to hope in God that causes us to fall away from God. If God's power does not protect us from unbelief, it is hard to see what it does. How is God protecting us until the end if his guarding plays no role in our continuing faith?<sup>25</sup>

Believers persevere ultimately because of divine enablement.<sup>26</sup> “Faith is therefore the visible evidence of the unseen reality evoking that truth” (cf. Col 2:21-23; Heb 3:14; 1 Jn 2:19).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 87; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 58–59; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 23; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 53; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 337.

<sup>23</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 58.

<sup>24</sup> Contra. Kelly who provides the translation, "who through God's power, *as a result of your faith*, are being kept safe . . . ." (*Peter*, 45, 52). However, as noted, a causal use would require an accusative (not genitive) object.

<sup>25</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 65.

<sup>26</sup> And certainly Peter already knew this from personal experience (Lk 22:31-34). John Piper,



*εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοίμην ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ*

Peter's salvation-framework is primarily future oriented.<sup>28</sup> Salvation is paralleled with the believer's *future* inheritance,<sup>29</sup> is "ready to be revealed *at the last time*" (1:5), and is the *final* outcome of faith (1:9). Given Peter's frequent OT references/allusions and *σωτηρία*'s association with the OT prophets (1:10), the OT probably provides the conceptual setting for *σωτηρία* in 1:5.<sup>30</sup> *σωτηρία* refers to "the future full possession of all the blessings of our redemption"<sup>31</sup> and "the ultimate deliverance that is the final goal of redemptive history . . . ."<sup>32</sup> It refers not merely to future deliverance but "the ensuing state of salvation . . . ."<sup>33</sup>

In its 11 occurrences in the NT (outside of 1 Peter 1:5), *εἰς σωτηρίαν* always has a *telic* force in which *εἰς* indicates *σωτηρίαν* as the end, aim, and goal.<sup>34</sup> Regarding this *telic* use, a level of ambiguity and overlap exists between *purpose* and *result* (e.g., Rom 10:10). However, a bifurcation between these two uses does not always need to be made;

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"Kept by the Power of God."

<sup>27</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97.

<sup>28</sup> Various NT passages exemplify the different "tenses" of salvation: past (e.g., Eph 2:8; Titus 3:5), present (e.g., 1 Cor 1:18; Phil 2:12-13), and future (e.g., Rom 5:9; 8:23).

<sup>29</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64.

<sup>30</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97; Kelly, *Peter*, 52.

<sup>31</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 59.

<sup>32</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (ed. by. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein; Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 88.

<sup>33</sup> Friedrich Gerhard, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. by. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 974.

<sup>34</sup> Acts 13:47; Rom 1:16; 10:1, 10; 2 Cor 7:10; Phil 1:9; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15; Heb 9:28; 11:7; 1 Peter 2:2(?).

with God, His purposes effectively become results. Such is the case with *εἰς σωτηρίαν* in 1 Peter 1:5.<sup>35</sup>

But then the question emerges, of what is *εἰς σωτηρίαν* the *telos*, verse 3's *ἀναγεννήσας* (A) or verse 5's *φρουρουμένους* (B)? In favor of A, Achtemeier argues that the three prepositional phrases *εἰς ἐλπίδα* (v.3), *εἰς κληρονομίαν* (v.4), and *εἰς σωτηρίαν* (v.5) form an easily recognizable structure that designates the threefold consequences of *ἀναγεννήσας*.<sup>36</sup> However, Jobes leans toward option B arguing that Peter's eschatological view of salvation suggests that *σωτηρίαν* is probably not bound up with something that has occurred in the past (i.e., *ἀναγεννήσας*).<sup>37</sup>

This split in opinion is quite possibly due to vv.4-5's chiastic structure:

[A]	<i>εἰς κληρονομίαν</i>	. . .
	[B]	<i>τετηρημένην</i> . . .
	[B']	<i>τοὺς . . . φρουρουμένους</i> . . .
[A']	<i>εἰς σωτηρίαν</i>	. . . <sup>38</sup>

In one sense, the chiastic structure places *εἰς σωτηρίαν* parallel to *εἰς κληρονομίαν*, which supports option A. Yet in another sense, given the chiastic structure the close relationship between *εἰς κληρονομίαν* and the participle *τετηρημένην* suggests a similarly close relationship between *εἰς σωτηρίαν* and *φρουρουμένους*, suggesting option B. A decisive decision in either direction seems difficult; however, the close connection in 1:9 between

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<sup>35</sup> Contra. a temporal (i.e., “until”) use as suggested by the NIV and NLT.

<sup>36</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 92, 97. See also Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 87.

<sup>37</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 90. See also Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 53.

<sup>38</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 337.

πίστεως and its *telos*, namely σωτηρίαν, suggests a similar connection in 1:5 as well, lending to option B.

Theological conclusion: if the means of God’s guarding the elect is His infinite power, then the necessary conclusion is that God’s guarding is unthwartable. And if the *telos* of God’s guarding is σωτηρίαν, then eschatological salvation is the efficacious outcome of genuine faith (cf. 1:9).

Peter describes this future oriented salvation as “ready to be revealed” (v.5). *έτοιμην*, an adjective attributively modifying σωτηρίαν, refers to a state in which something or someone is *prepared* or *ready* (cf. Jdth 9:6; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 7.339; Works of Philo, *On the Creation*, 78; Mt 25:10; Mk 14:15; Acts 23:21), such as a *prepared* feast (e.g., Est 6:14 [LXX]; Mt 22:4; Lk 14:17). Peter uses it one other time in 1 Peter 3:15 where he urges his audience to be *prepared* (*έτοιμην*) to give a defense for their hope. Complementing this adjective is the infinitive ἀποκαλυφθῆναι,<sup>39</sup> which means *to reveal* or *to make known*<sup>40</sup> and is often used in a redemptive-historical/eschatological sense.<sup>41</sup> As Elliot notes, “In this letter, with the sole exception of 1:12, the verb *apokalypso* (1:5; 51) and its related noun *apokalypsis* (1:7, 13; 4:13) refer to the future and final revelation (of Jesus Christ, salvation,

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<sup>39</sup> Grammatically, ἀποκαλυφθῆναι is adjectival, complementing the adjective *έτοιμην*. But conceptually, ἀποκαλυφθῆναι functions adverbially to complement the verbal idea implicit in *έτοιμην* (i.e., *έτοιμάζω*).

While the context, namely *έν καιρῷ έχάτω*, identifies the action as future, the aorist tense indicates a perfective aspect, external view, and remote perspective (Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 34, 37). It is a constative aorist, viewing the action as a whole, placing stress on its occurrence rather than its makeup (Wallace, *New Testament Syntax*, 241).

<sup>40</sup> Frederick William Danker et al., *BDAG*, 112.

<sup>41</sup> E.g., the *revealing* of the man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2:3, 6, 8), Christ at His second advent (Lk 17:30), future glory (Rom 8:18; 1 Pet 5:1), or “the coming of faith” (Gal 3:23) and “righteousness of

or glory).<sup>42</sup> This perspective is further supported by the prepositional phrase *ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ*, which refers to the specific eschatological point in time at which Christ will return (cf. 1:7, 13; 4:13).<sup>43</sup>

The believer's final salvation is ready, that is, ready to be consummated at Christ's return (cf. Mt 25:34; 1 Cor 2:9; 1 Pet 4:5). Theologically, this "ready salvation" contains no element of possibility or potentiality; it can only be *ἐτοίμην ἀποκαλυφθῆναι* if its accomplishment is certain. As Michaels states, "God's salvation exists already in His saving intent,"<sup>44</sup> an intent which is guaranteed by God's power (1:5), rooted in Christ's definitive work (1:3), and already initiated in the believer (1:3).

### Conclusion

*Summary.* In 1 Peter 1:5 Peter praises God by affirming His act of preserving the elect for salvation by means of their perseverance. Peter states that God guards the elect

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God" (Rom 1:16) associated with Christ's first advent.

<sup>42</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 338.

<sup>43</sup> The construction *ἐν καιρῷ* occurs 18 times (excluding 1 Pet 1:5) in the NT, all of which function temporally (Mt 11:25; 12:1; 13:30; 14:1; 21:41; 24:45; Lk 8:13; 12:42; 13:1; 18:30; 21:36; Rom 3:26; 11:5; 2 Cor 8:14; Eph 6:18; 2 Thess 2:6; 1 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 5:6). *καιρός* is often used to refer to a particular moment or period of time (e.g., a season) and is also "one of the chief terms relating to the endtime. . . ." e.g., Mt 8:29; 16:3; Mk 13:33; Lk 21:8; Acts 1:7; 1 Cor 4:5; 1 Thess 5:1; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 1:3; 22:10 (Frederick William Danker et al., *BDAG*, 498). The adjective *ἔσχατος*, especially when modifying nouns of time (e.g., χρόνος, ἡμέρα, ὥρα), is often used to describe eschatological realities or time periods (e.g., Jn 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:17; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Tim 3:1; 1 Pet 1:20; 1 Jn 2:18; Jud 18; Rev 15:1). In light this evidence as well as the near references to Christ's second advent (1:7, 13), *ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ* most assuredly refers to the return of Christ (see Michaels, *1 Peter*, 23; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 54; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 87). Therefore, *ἀποκαλυφθῆναι* is clearly a "referential" or "divine passive" with God as the implied actor, or more specifically, Christ at His revelation (Achte-meier, *1 Peter*, 92; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 64).

<sup>44</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 23. Further, and quite significantly, he notes *ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ* does not describe when salvation will be *ready* but when this ready salvation will be *revealed* (15-16).

from unbelief and that He does so by means of His infinite power. But Peter also recognizes the necessity of human faith and specifies that God protects the elect by means of their continual faith. Finally, the goal or *telos* of this preservation through perseverance is the believer's ultimate, eschatological salvation at Christ's return. The surety of this final salvation is seen in its readiness to be revealed.

*Macro-Level Revisited.* In vv.3-5 Peter praises God for causing believers to be reborn for (*telic*) a living hope through a living Messiah (v.3) and for (*telic*) an inheritance being reserved for them (v.4). The divine preservation spoken of in v.5 provides certitude to this promised hope and inheritance,<sup>45</sup> and consequently, further grounds upon which to praise God. This sure salvation (1:5) provides a basis to rejoice amidst present trials (6-7). "Their lives are now characterized by joy and by love for Jesus Christ, precisely because they know that eschatological salvation lies ahead of them (vv. 8-9)."<sup>46</sup> Peter's audience can rejoice in their privileged place in redemptive history, knowing that "concerning this salvation" the prophets spoke (10-12).

1:3-12, including the role of v.5 in this unit, forms the basis and tone (i.e., introduces key themes) for the instruction found in the rest of the letter.<sup>47</sup> "The certainty of a future salvation [v.5] animates the hope in which Christians now live, making the eschatological future a present reality."<sup>48</sup> The believer's life is to be lived in a doxological

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<sup>45</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 97.

<sup>46</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 58–59.

<sup>47</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 32–34; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 329; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 79–80.

<sup>48</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 88.

context.<sup>49</sup> Peter presents their current situation in the overall plan of redemption, noting that the faith resulting in their alienation is the very same faith by which they will persevere such hardships.<sup>50</sup>

*Theological Implications.* 1 Peter 1:5 is a fantastic, theologically loaded verse that presents a beautiful tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility. First, it denies any notion that those who are regenerate (1:3) can lose or forfeit their salvation. On the contrary, God definitively preserves the elect to the end. But secondly, Peter's words also deny what one might call "arbitrary eternal security"—"once saved; always saved" despite "once faith; now no faith"—the unfortunately common idea that a simple profession of faith, despite its temporary nature, establishes eternal security. In contrast, Peter asserts that final salvation will not occur apart from enduring faith. Therefore, as a logical inference, formerly professing believers that *ultimately* (as opposed to "backsliding" or a lapsing) "fall away" prove themselves to have never been regenerate and genuine believers. But on the other hand, those who have sincerely placed their confidence in Christ can resonate the simple words of John Newton,

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come.  
T'was Grace that brought me safe thus far  
and Grace will lead me home.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 79. In fact as Elliott notes, "The body of the letter opens (1:3-12), as its closes (5:10-11), on a worshipful note of blessing and praise" (*1 Peter*, 329).

<sup>50</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 87; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 69.

<sup>51</sup> "Amazing Grace," public domain.

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