

Chapter 7. The Reversal of Roles as the Solution to the Believer's Alienness

The solution to the believer's problems cannot solely be solved by changing perspectives and attitudes. Peter is not only playing mind games with society and Christians, but he also needs to institute practical changes for their survival and retention as Christians. This is where the solution to the believer's alienness comes in. The author creates a practical, physical, new community to counter their alienness. This is done by:

7.1 Changing the Believer's Identity and Value

Peter not only changes their symbolic universe or perspective but also their identity away from alienness to the elect (1:2, 15; 2:6), priests (2:5, 9), etc. This identification in turn, also affects their perspective of themselves. As the elect they are precious contrary to the societal view, consequently a reversal of value. Their new value now also has a new source, namely God rather than society. The identification as priests serves a twofold purpose. Firstly, it fosters the idea that they are not outcasts and weird but that they share Jewish tradition. In fact, they are not only sharing Jewish heritage but are themselves part of it. Secondly, the designation as priest serves the purpose of exposing them as those who serve God in contrast to those who don't. This can be seen in the fact that the term "holy" is used in conjunction with priesthood (2:5). These new identifications also have honour and shame consequences for it places Christians above society (generally speaking). The following illustrates this concept:

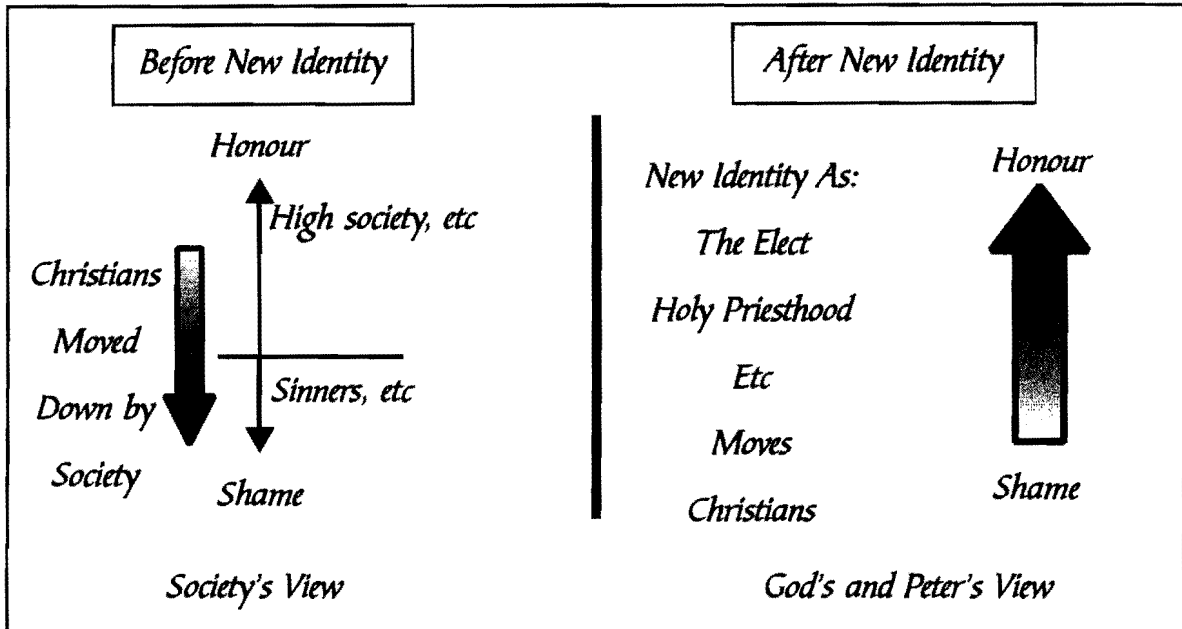


Figure 22

On the left hand side of figure twenty-two, Christians were moved down the "status line" from honour to shame by society. Somewhere on the status line is a cross line. People that ranked above that line was acceptable to society whereas people below were unacceptable. The placement of Christians below this particular line was shaming. However, Peter grants them a new identity (on the right) which moves them up the scale from shame to honour. This is restoring them.

To offer some kind of current relief from suffering the above would imply that God's approval ($\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$) is a present reality for the suffering addressees. This does not only become applicable at the eschaton but presently. Whenever a believer does good and suffers for it, God's approval is granted. This view in 2:19-20 is complemented in 2:7, where τιμὴ seems to be viewed as already granted to believers in Christ. It is thus also presumed that they have already suffered for doing good and being Christ-like. The purpose of their good behaviour is not only limited to the will of God but also to serve as a relief because good behaviour in

the face of maliciousness leads to the shaming (καταϊσχυνθῶσιν) of the maligners (3:16).⁵⁵⁸ If the maligners' malicious accusations lead to shaming it could certainly not be envisaged to continue.

7.2 Changing the Believer's Community

It seems apparent that Christians did not really fit into society as they used to. This left them alien and "groupless". Peter now changes their societal community to a new community called the Christian church. They are now no longer alien but have found belonging in a new community. One way to facilitate the endurance and perseverance of the Christian is to create a community that would be conducive to the retention of its members. The supply of such a community represents a reversal of roles since it replaces a loss. Peter attempts to rebuild the shameful image of Christians with an honourable one - giving them value. Hence, whenever an explicit reference to insider - outsider conflict occurs, there is a corresponding reference to the honour to be granted to the believers. While Peter takes cognisance of the believers status as παροίκους he juxtapositions it with their exalted status as the οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ. In so doing he establishes them as a heavenly community. Society has rejected them and ostracized them from the earthly community. Peter replaces their loss. As a new community they have a new social order and identity that surpass the earthly. As such they hold an honoured position before God (2:4-10; 4:17). The readers' status thus, although shameful in the eyes of the society, is one of honour and distinction before God.⁵⁵⁹ The role that the Christian plays in this new household is one of being God's child. This simile confers responsibility and obedience. The Christian's responsibility is now focussed upon his/her new Father and therefore not society. They are asked to adhere to civil rule, but not anymore because of social

⁵⁵⁸ Bechtler (1996:250).

⁵⁵⁹ Campbell (1995:88); Elliott (1990:165-266).

responsibility, but because God wants them to. If, however, civil authorities enforce requirements that conflict with what God requires, they are then to obey God, since their primary responsibility lies with God and not society. As children of God they now need to conform to His holiness. The ultimate point of this simile is that Christians / children embrace behaviour that is according to, and in conformity with behaviour expected by God, their Father, who has called them. In 1:17 the readers are informed that they are to conduct themselves in fear⁵⁶⁰ of their Father who judges their actions. God's holiness (1:15) consists not only of parental love but also the flip side of the coin, viz. judgemental wrath.⁵⁶¹ The theme of election⁵⁶² is closely related to the theme of the household of God. Only the elect are part of this household. The οἰκέται are paradigmatic for the entire οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ.⁵⁶³ As such one can presume that everything that is said of the οἰκέται in first Peter 2:18-25 also automatically applies to all Christians. They are chosen⁵⁶⁴ and called by God. And as such they enjoy honour from God just as Christ does.⁵⁶⁵ The very fact that these believers are chosen, royal and holy, intensifies the honourable nature of the attributes that these

⁵⁶⁰ The fear mentioned here is not to be associated with terror or with an attitude of worship. It should rather identify a motive for behaviour (Best 1971:88). Kelly (1969:71) interprets this fear as a "healthy dread".

⁵⁶¹ Reike (1964:84).

⁵⁶² 1:15; 2:4,6,9,21; 3:9; 5:10,13.

⁵⁶³ The house slaves should not be viewed in isolation as their function here is also representative in nature, see Elliott (1985:187; 199; 1990:206-207); Campbell (1995:199); Carrez (1980:216-217).

⁵⁶⁴ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, 2:9

⁵⁶⁵ 2:4,6,7.

adjectives⁵⁶⁶ modify and thus are good examples of amplification. Their honourable status is thus amplified. This amplification is also taken one step further by the contrasting of the shame of the antagonists. The contrast also serves as amplification of the Christian's honour. Other examples of amplification in first Peter can be cited in (2:9-10).⁵⁶⁷

In verse nine, the epithets are attended by five notable stylistic devices:⁵⁶⁸

- a. *Asyndeton* in the cola before the dependent clause ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς.
- b. *Homoeoptoton* with ος- three times and -ον endings three times.
- c. The utilization of the common Christian *topoi* of darkness and light.
- d. The adjective θαυμαστός is emotive, recalling the language of praise and worship in the Psalms, and is an example of grand diction, a word that imparts grandeur, beauty

⁵⁶⁶ Although these adjectives are in Peter's source (the LXX), they still function rhetorically as αὐξησης (growth / increase / amplification). For a further discussion on amplification and related matters see Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric* 1.9.1368a.38-40; Cicero, *De Oratore* 3.26.104-27.107; Cicero, *De Partitione Oratoria* 15.52-17.58; Longinus, *On the Sublime* 11.1-12.2; Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria* 8.4; Lausberg (1960:401-409); Martin, J (1974:208-210); Watson (1988:26-28).

⁵⁶⁷ In this case, however, the amplification is done through accumulation (frequentation) which is one of nine types of amplifications identified in Watson's (1988:26-28) survey of the subject. The amplification is done by ordering the attributes in ascending grades of value. This kind of amplification is called augmentation which can include gradation and a climax. Other New Testament examples of this kind of amplification includes Rom. 5:3-5. Also refer to Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria* 8.4.26-27; Longinus, *On the Sublime* 12.2; *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 4.40.52-41.53.

⁵⁶⁸ Campbell (1995:134-135).

and force.

- e. The pronomination τοῦ καλέσαντος recalls 1:15 where the same figure is used for God as it is here. Yet, this is not all, because they are to receive even more honour both presently and eschatologically (1:7; 2:12,19-20; 3:14; 4:13-14; 5:4,10). It is aptly put when it is stated⁵⁶⁹ that the present suffering moves to future glory.⁵⁷⁰

We thus find two different views here. Firstly, society's view that Christians are worthless and shameful. Secondly, God's view that Christians are part of His house and therefore honoured. Firstly, God's honoured esteem of the hearers can be seen in:⁵⁷¹

- a. Their election by God. The fact that God elected them shows that God values them. Such election also serves as a distinction between themselves and society. It serves the function of calling them out of society into a new community.
- b. Their sanctification by the Holy Spirit. This changes them from what they previously

⁵⁶⁹ Kendall (1986:112-117).

⁵⁷⁰ *Asyndeton* - see Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria* 9.3.50; *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.30.41. A Colon is a phrase that is brief and complete yet does not express an entire thought until it is supplemented with one or more cola. The four pairs of cola in verse nine are two pairs of isocola - two pairs which respective phrases have virtually an equal number of syllabi. The isocola can be divided by an A-B-A₁-B₁ pattern. Reading aloud these epithets would be rhythmically pleasant and symmetrical. *Homoeoptoton* - see *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.20.28. For a discussion on the light - darkness motif in the New Testament see Selwyn (1949:375-382). For references to the Psalms where Peter's language recalls the Psalms, see Ps. 8:1,9; 9:1; 25:7; 70:17; 85:10 (LXX). Examples of grand dictation can be cited in Longinus, *On the Sublime* 30.

⁵⁷¹ For a more complete discussion on these points see Campbell (1995:60).

were to what they ought to become, hence it also has to do with the formation of a new community.

c. *Their high calling and purpose.*⁵⁷² *This defines the new community.*

*Secondly, when becoming a Christian there is restoration. Through baptism*⁵⁷³ *there is a rebirth into a new family and household (οἶκος), the patriarch of this family / household being God (τοῦ θεοῦ). Therefore, on account of a spiritual birth, a new and higher honour is bestowed. Their previous family is replaced by the Christian church which now becomes the new community. Peter uses their own dyadic*⁵⁷⁴ *culture*⁵⁷⁵ *to change their view from shameful to honourable. God, the Father, and Jesus are their ancestors. On account of this their rebirth is a birth into a living hope (1:3). The origin, genealogy and birth of Christians are thus noble and honourable.*⁵⁷⁶

As the group is the judge of honour or shame and the group has now changed from society to the Christian church it also changes the judge. They are now judged by a new group using different values to reach a judgement which leads to a verdict of honour.

⁵⁷² *For a similar discussion consult Rhetorica ad herennium 1.5.8.*

⁵⁷³ *It seems possible for baptism to serve as an inauguration into the new community.*

⁵⁷⁴ *A term primarily from the world of Mathematics meaning relating to two. Malina (1981:55) coined this term in relation to cultures. It refers to the fact that self-worth is determined not only by yourself but also in relation to society. In fact, you don't know your self-worth bar the projection from society. Self-worth is thus related to two views viz. the person's and the group's (society).*

⁵⁷⁵ *For an example of where this term is used in this manner and context see Campbell (1995:245).*

⁵⁷⁶ *Campbell (1995:63).*

Peter's reasoning is: Stand firm (5:9,12) in the faith for a reversal of roles will transpire. The sufferers will have eternal life as children of God in the house of God while the persecutors will have to answer to God in the judgement (1:17; 4:5,6). And so Peter confirms and creates the social universe of his readers that is to be used to motivate and comfort them.

The directive in 4:7-11 pertaining to the conception and well-being of such a community consists of basically six directives:

- a. *Be serious and discipline yourselves (4:7).*
- b. *Maintain love for one another for love covers sins (4:8).*
- c. *Be hospitable to one another (4:9).*
- d. *Serve or minister to one another (4:10).*
- e. *Speak God's words (4:11).*
- f. *Serve with God's strength (4:11).*

The first three directives pertain to internal attitude. They are to implement these directives beginning with themselves. Then they should love and care for one another. The last three directives pertain to external actions. This formula represents the necessary components required to retain members. Love for one another represents a bond and acceptance amongst believers. Hospitality caters for their physical needs and contributes to their fellowship. Serving or ministering to one another furnishes their spiritual needs. The parallelism between this directive and the book's initial exhortation for intra-communal relations in 1:22 is remarkable:

ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς (1:22)

εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες (4:8)

Peter prioritized the command in 4:8 with the introductory prepositional phrase πρὸ πάντων.

It has now been established that Peter created a new community. To a certain extent the differences between this new community and society (their previous community) have been discussed. However, this new community needs to be defined further. Hence the new community is characterized with the following sections:

7.2.1 Providing the New Community with an Eschatological Perspective⁵⁷⁷

Providing the new community with an eschatological perspective does not seem like a new theme since there appears to be an eschatological perspective even in the gospels. This can be seen in texts like Matt. 16:28 where Jesus says: "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom". Jesus said furthermore that "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15).⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁷ *The opinion that Peter does in fact cast his rhetoric in an eschatological light can also be found and researched in a 294-page dissertation about "The apocalyptic perspective of first Peter". See Webb (1986). There is also an article on this topic entitled: "What is the Christian's Expectation?" (Parnham 1969).*

⁵⁷⁸ *Also see Matt. 4:17. There is a chapter written about the eschatology of the gospels in Jackson (1913:37-111). The basis for an eschatological reading of the gospels is not only found in the "kingdom" theme but also in, inter alia, the "present and coming age", the "judgement", the "hereafter" and the "resurrection" themes in the gospels. Christians did not only have an eschatological perspective applicable to the near future but also a view of realized eschatology as can be discovered in the book "The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity" by Aune (1972).*

There seems to be a recognition by many scholars "of the significance which eschatology had in the origin of the Christian faith and in its subsequent early theological and historical development" as Aune puts it.⁵⁷⁹

In first Peter 4:7-11 we find a directive to establish such a community as the one which is being described. Although there might be many reasons for doing so, one obvious reason seems to be that Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν(4:7). The eschatology could be seen as, inter alia, a major reason for these directives since the eschatological phrase is followed by οὖν. We thus find that Peter casts these directives in an eschatological light. Davids describes Peter's eschatological perspective as follows:

"The whole of 1 (sic) Peter is characterized by an eschatological, even an apocalyptic focus. ... To some extent this fact is obvious".⁵⁸⁰

The end time refers to the effecting and culmination of the reversal of roles. This is when most of the promised reversals will take place. There seems to be no doubt that Peter and his readers considered themselves to be living in the end time (4:7). If 1:5,6 is examined it seems to imply that first Peter understands suffering Christians to be living in the last days.⁵⁸¹ They also viewed the commencement of the judgement to be at hand (4:5,17). The proximity of the

⁵⁷⁹ Aune (1972:2). Also see Perrin (1963) who presented a survey of eschatology in the synoptic tradition.

⁵⁸⁰ Davids (1990:15).

⁵⁸¹ It is understood that the ἐν ᾧ of 1:6 could possibly refer to either the previous noun "in the last time" or to the sentence that follows (as the New Revised Standard Version translates it). If it pertains to the end time it strengthens the case of an eschatological perspective [as Michaels sees it (1988:27-28)].

judgement also points to an eschatological view.⁵⁸² Yet, Peter advises them how to live in order that their future lives may possibly be better. Even if their future lives amongst the persecutors do not improve they are still to embark on the course that Peter sets out for them, as their ultimate destination requires that route, and their current situation is trivial in the long run. The possibly only missiological statement to the wives about their husbands is also reminiscent of future expectation. Their view of the present καιρός therefore was not one of the authentic καιρός ἔσχατος but rather at the time so near to the καιρός ἔσχατος that it can be equated to the time of the beginning of the events of the καιρός ἔσχατος. The present καιρός is the time to believe and rejoice in contrast to their past, in the light of their future, and in spite of their present. The present καιρός is thus the current time of the spreading of the gospel and the acceptance or rejection thereof. This καιρός is placed at the end of the last epoch of history. That point in time is marked by the awaited appearance of Christ. This is when Christ and His glory will be disclosed. In other words, we are dealing with the end-before-the-end. The end-before-the-end phase finds its commencement in Christ's past suffering. The καιρός ἔσχατος will be inaugurated with the revelation of Christ's glory. The imminence of the ultimate disclosure of Christ's glory means not merely that Christian suffering is about to come to an end but that Christians are about to be vindicated by God just as Christ was. Hence, cessation of suffering is a function of God's eschatological vindication, both in Christ's case and in that of Christians. Accordingly, the epistle in effect super-imposes Christ's experience onto that of His followers so that Christ's experience becomes the interpretive lens through which the Christian's experience and the template that describes the shape of Christian's life, are viewed. The positive restoration and glorification which happened to Christ will happen to them in the eschatos. The desire for the realisation of the future promise helps shape the present and makes their experience tolerable.

⁵⁸² See Perkins who categorically states that Peter has an eschatological view when he writes "The eschatological perspective of 1 (sic) Peter ..." (1995:32).

Part of, and seemingly inseparable from the eschatological perspective, is the judgement. As one would expect the natural reaction to Christianity by Rome was persecution. Peter's contra-reaction is typical of the honour and shame contest. His contra-reaction to persecution was the placing of an eschatological world view in the foreground.⁵⁸³ Coupled with the eschatological world view however, is the inseparable judgement. In the context of the honour and shame contest in first Peter there are a number of judgements. Firstly, the general public passes judgement on Christians. In so doing Christians lose their honour (negative judgement). It is possibly also this judgement that is the cause of the societal suffering. In all likelihood there was a second judgement, viz. that of the courts of law. In this case the judgement is also negative since this appears to be the source of the official / governmental suffering. Peter's plea for good behaviour could be motivated out of his desire to stop these court judgements. But then there is a third judgement, viz. that of God. Peter attempts to teach that the first two judgements are not important, and in fact, false. Only the judgement of God is real, and it is this judgement that determines the long term outcome. All other judgements have only short term consequences. With this in mind Peter employs legal⁵⁸⁴ language of appeal and vindication in the construction: παρεδίδου δέ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως (2:23,24). The verb παρεδίδου in association with κρίνοντι has the sense of handing over to someone's custody for trial or judgement. This is the course of action that Jesus chose instead of the

⁵⁸³ To see that an eschatological world view is one of Peter's responses to persecution see Warden (1986:193-196).

⁵⁸⁴ On the subject of this (παρεδίδου) term (and its derivatives) as legal language see Mark 10:33, 15:1; Luke 20:20; 22:4; John 18:30. There are also similar, (similar to 2:23) legal references in Eph. 5:2. In first Peter 2:23 the reflexive pronoun is understood as the handing over to God as the righteous judge (Robertson 1933:105-106). The word κρίνω (and its derivatives) is also utilized as a legal term in human courts (John 18:31; Acts 13:27; 23:3; 25:10; 26:6) as well as in divine courts (first Peter 1:17; 4:5-6).

customary retaliation. He rather entrusts Himself to God, for He, in contrast to both societal and governmental judgements, is certain to bring an impartial and fair verdict (1:17). But stating it in this manner also implies that the current verdict is partial and unfair. In this sense then there is a true (God) and a false (society / courts) judgement. Peter goes further than just asserting that man's judgement does not really matter in God's eyes. He uses the contrast between the just and unjust, and the righteous and unrighteous judgements to imply that Jesus is innocent, and one can therefore expect a favourable verdict. The point of the argument is that the Christian's plight is similar to that of Christ's, and that the Christian can therefore also expect to be exonerated.

When it comes to the last part of chapter four Peter places the disobedient in an inferior position in his reasoning on the κρίμα that leads from the greater to the lesser (4:17-19).⁵⁸⁵ Peter once again employs antithetical parallelism to make his point. The following is contrasted in this section:

first Peter 4:17b-19

17b εἰ δὲ πρῶτον ἀφ' ἡμῶν, τί τὸ τέλος τῶν ἀπειθούντων τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ

18 καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἀμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανείται

19 ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ.

Figure 23

⁵⁸⁵ For a discussion on inductive argumentation such as Peter is using here, see Quintilian - *The Institutio Oratoria* 5:11.9.

In figure thirty-three we have some contrasts. The last word in verse nineteen suggests that Christians are doing good. This is deduced because they need to “continue” to do good deeds. Therefore the contrast is made between the obedient (Christians) and the disobedient (non-Christians). This contrast is subsequently followed up by another, viz. if the judgement commences with those doing good, what will happen to those that don't? The implied contrast here is vindication versus condemnation. Then there is also the contrast between salvation for Christians versus the implied damnation for the non-Christians. We therefore find a reversal here. Verse nineteen says that Christians are suffering. The preceding section implied that Christians would be saved while the non-Christians would suffer. This implies that disobedience could be equated to a slide from honour to shame in God's eyes. This thought can also be deduced from 2:7,8 where those who believe (obey) have τιμή in contrast to those who disbelieve (disobey) for they stumble and are shamed. With this rhetorical⁵⁸⁶ question Peter presents to the readers, his differentiation between his readers (the saved) and the disobedient (the lost)(4:18).

The section continues with a plea for ἀγαθοποιῶν (continuing to do good)(New Revised Standard Version); (doing what is right)(New American Standard Bible)(4:19). The correct way to interpret this word is right behaviour in society, expressed in submission to political authorities, to masters, to husbands, in honourable treatment of wives (2:13-3:7) and generally in honour to all (2:17; 3:8-12).⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁶ Bullinger discusses the erotesis (interrogating) figure of speech in (1898:943-956). This question is also a quote from Prov. 11:31.

⁵⁸⁷ Goppelt (1978:317-318).

This judgement is about slander and vindication, honour and shame or in other words, accusation⁵⁸⁸ and exoneration.⁵⁸⁹ For in 5:8 the devil is described as ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν (your adversary)(Authorized Version). But this word is a legal⁵⁹⁰ term describing not just an adversary but specifically an adversary in a court of law. Hence, accusations and exoneration. The solutions that Peter offers against these accusations are:

- a. Appeal to God for vindication (ἐπικαλέομαι)(1:17).*
- b. Entrust themselves to their faithful Creator (2:23).*
- c. Continue to do good (3:11,13; 4:19).*
- d. Continue to follow Christ's example (2:21).*
- e. Resist in faith (5:9).*

The interesting fact about these accusations / slander / defamation is that they seem to have their ultimate source in the devil,⁵⁹¹ explaining the contrasts between good and evil. Jesus stands as the Head of Christians whilst the devil is the head of the accusers. Because Christians belong to the οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ and because Jesus is the patriarch of this house, the accusers stand in opposition, not only to Christians, but also directly to God. Since the devil accused God (Job 40:2; Rev. 12:7-10) and also stands in opposition to God, it is logical to deduce that the accusers are categorized under the devil, the great accuser.

⁵⁸⁸ There is other biblical evidence where the devil is described as the accuser, for example see Rev. 12:9-10.

⁵⁸⁹ Campbell (1995:314).

⁵⁹⁰ For more discussions on the legality of this term see Campbell (1995:314-315) and Caird (1956:33).

⁵⁹¹ Campbell (1995:315).

Hence, we find the following table:

<u>Good</u>	<u>Evil</u>
Jesus	Devil
Christian	Gentile
Good Works	Slander / Defamation / Accusations
Honour	Shame
Experience Suffering	Inflict Suffering
Saved	Lost

Figure 24

God is the final arbiter in the honour contest and not society as was customary. In 2:23 God's judgement is declared to be just. But the verse also implies that society's judgement is unjust. This thought is further enhanced in 1:17 where God judges impartially, implying partiality in society's judgement. In 4:5,6 God also performs the duties of judgement. The strongest evidence that God is the final arbiter is presented in 4:17. It is time for the "judgement to begin" inferring that the judgement has not commenced yet. If this is the case, then society's judgement is swept away as insignificant and of no consequence in God's perception. Therefore only His judgement is significant. Society's adjudication may mean something to society and in the short term on earth, but does not amount to anything in God's and the Christian's views. Peter informs his readers what God's judgement will be, viz. the bestowal of His χάρις and δόξα. The author goes even further than this by asserting that God is the God of πάσης χάριτος (all grace). This means that every true favour and distinction of honour come only from God and not as they thought from society. In fact, the honour that society bestows is temporal and based on a false concept of what honour really is. Thus in essence, society's honour is a false honour for they have no right to bestow true honour since that belongs to God only. Therefore the calumny of the Gentiles against Christians is

insignificant and worthless. The true eternal verdict of the honour contest which is being waged between the believers and the antagonistic world can only be delivered by God. Following only God's rules of what constitutes honour and how and to whom honour is bequeathed, counts. Thus the antagonists are taking part in this honour contest but competing with the wrong rules and therefore aiming at the wrong goal. The end result is that the Christians' opponents are shamed instead of honoured.

It is in view of the eschatological judgement that the author reminds his readers that they are παρεπίδημοι (1:1; 2:11). Peter further calls them πάροικοι (2:11) and refers to their παροικία (1:17). Two thoughts are implicit in these words: firstly, their alienation from the present world and secondly, the anticipation of the next. Part of this anticipation is the judgement. In fact, no transition can be made from the present world to the next without the judgement which is to preempt the next world. Their anticipation is a pleasant one due to the expected cessation of their current hardship caused by the afflictions which seemingly were a daily part of the lives of the readers. It was these very afflictions which led the believers to find consolation in the judgement which was soon to transpire, and which prompted them to remain Christians. Because of this view we repeatedly find the suffering of the believers fused with the eschatological anticipation and in turn fused with the judgement. When referring to the judgement there is also a dualistic view caused by their suffering and eschatological anticipation. Firstly, the judgement of Christians represents a positive judgement in the sense that their good names / reputations are to be restored. They are to be vindicated, the result being glorification. Secondly, the judgement of the non-believers represents a negative judgement as they are going to be found guilty, and God is therefore against them, the result being shaming. Christians are to behave in order that neither God nor the believer may be maligned in the present world or in the eschatological judgement. It would seem as if bad behaviour on the part of the Christian will result in the shaming of God (if that were possible) during the

judgement.⁵⁹² Christians are God's children and their shaming leads to their Father's shaming. The following is thus the result:

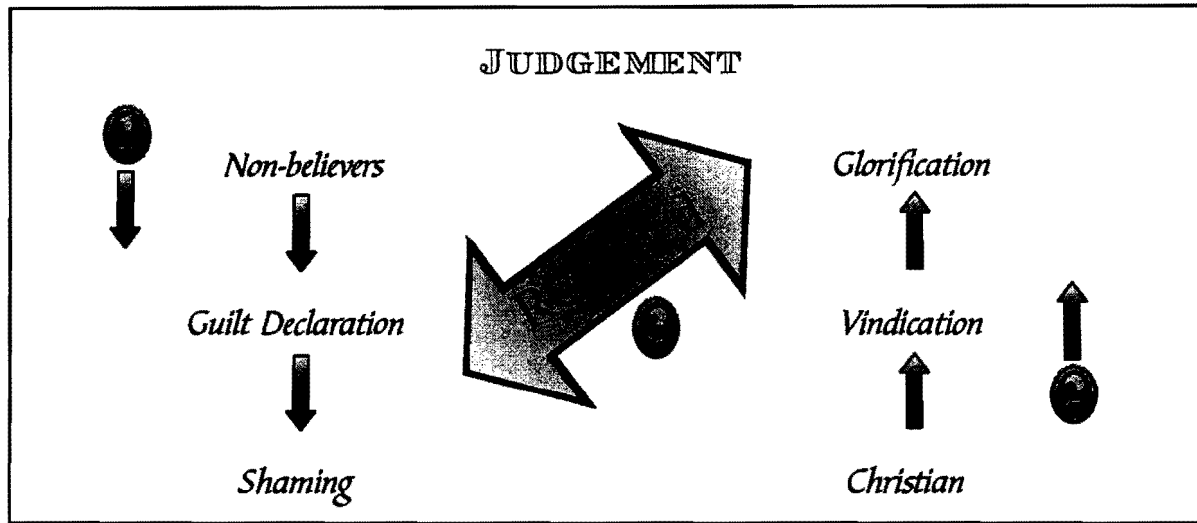


Figure 25

The reversal that takes place in the judgement is portrayed in figure twenty-five. Firstly, the non-believers are declared guilty. A guilty verdict results in shaming. Secondly, Christians are vindicated in the judgement which results in glorification. This represents a reversal as the two groups were at opposite ends previously, as the non-believers shamed Christians.

The eschatological anticipation together with the positive promise of the judgement amongst other things, in the mind of the author, makes bearable whatever present suffering may be brought on them. Their good works will result in their vindication as well as the condemnation of their oppressors in the judgement.⁵⁹³ A comparison between 3:15 and 4:5 reveals yet another

⁵⁹² Warden (1986:203).

⁵⁹³ For a discussion on the concept of good works that is connected with eschatology in Peter see Van Unnik (1954:98). Bear in mind that although Van Unnik (1954:98) acknowledges that "a strong eschatological note runs through the whole letter", he could have given more attention to the connection between the "eschatological note" and good works.

reversal of roles between the Christian and the non-believer. In 3:15 the Christian is requested to give an account (αἰτοῦντι ... λόγον) to society. The term ἀπολογία points in the direction of judgement. Thus Christians give an account to society in order for society to judge them. The verdict is presupposed to be negative, hence the harsh treatment. Similarly⁵⁹⁴, but this time reversed, the non-believer is to give an account (ὑποδώσουσιν λόγον) to God. The verdict is also presupposed to be negative. The moral of the two judgements is rather to be judged negatively by man than by God, since according to Peter, man's judgement is of no lasting consequence, because of the fact that God's judgement is the only proper one.⁵⁹⁵

The living hope in 1:3 together with the inheritance which is kept in heaven (1:4), is realized in the eschatos with the judgement. The hope of the culmination of this present age, gives the readers cause to rejoice when they suffer ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς (1:6). It is this living hope among other things that makes suffering bearable, giving reason to rejoice, and motivating them to remain Christian.

7.2.2 Providing the New Community with Structure⁵⁹⁶

Peter provides the new community with structure. To do this he uses, amongst others, the term and concept with which they seem well familiar - a house. The οἶκος (house) concept

⁵⁹⁴ Michaels gives support to Windisch's case after supplying additional arguments. To see these arguments on the similarities between 3:15 and 4:5 and the reversal of roles between the Christian and the non-believer see Michaels (1966-1967:398). On the subject of the eschatology of first Peter in Michaels see (1966-1967:401).

⁵⁹⁵ Peter refers to God's judgement as impartial (1:17) and just (2:23).

⁵⁹⁶ It is said that "one of the greatest strengths of Christianity was its social organization", in other words its structure (Wardman 1982:133).

was seen by the early Christians as an image for the Christian community.⁵⁹⁷ What better concept for Peter to use than the concept of a house which should, no doubt, be seen as an institution with strong structural lines.⁵⁹⁸ In fact, the very existence of the household was dependent upon the adherence to such a structure. When the οἶκος (house) concept is used of the new community Peter provides, in so doing, structure to the new community. An illustration where Peter uses the term οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ in reference to the new community is 4:17.⁵⁹⁹

“For the time has come for judgement 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”

Here the household of God is equated by Peter with “us” which is the new community - the church. Not only does the author equate the two but he does so in sharp contrast to those not part of their community - the “those who do not obey”. The household then seems to separate the two groups into an “us” and “them”, the new community and those not part of it.

⁵⁹⁷ Aune (1972:130); Michaels (1988:271). There are also other New Testament references (like Heb. 3:2-6) which define the house of God as the church. An example of such definition is first Tim. 3:15: “... the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth”.

⁵⁹⁸ It is noted that some believe that the house of God refers to the temple rather than the household (Michaels 1988:271). However, that would not detract from what is said here, since the reader would probably also see structure in the temple, both in its outlay and in the services, possibly even in the positions held there.

⁵⁹⁹ Also possibly see first Peter 2:5.

The sentiment in 4:7-11 is emphasized by a third repetition of Peter's directive in 5:5,6. Here the relationships within the Christian community are given structure. The structure is explained by yet another set of metaphors - the shepherd (ποιμάνετε)(5:2) and the flock (ποιμνιον)(5:2,3). Similarly the designations of elders (πρεσβύτεροι)(5:1,5) and younger ones (νεώτεροι)(5:5) are used. The purpose of these metaphors is to distinguish between individuals in positions of leadership and their social-structural inferiors.⁶⁰⁰ The elders are shepherds who are to tend to the flock, and the younger ones are to subject themselves (ὑποτάγητε) to the elders. The elders are not to lord it over (κατακυριεύω) their charges but to become moral examples (τύποι) for them. This implies that the social position of the elders are not one of domination by force but rather leadership by example. Given the nature of first Peter's paraenesis, which focuses on sibling love, one must conclude that the moral example the elders are to provide their flocks with, consists of their embodying love, along with such virtues as hospitality, sympathy, and even humility.

7.2.3 Providing the New Community with Cohesion

It is suggested that Christians were marginalised and disenfranchised by society, but that Peter offers a solution in the form of a tightly bound support group which he calls the house-church.⁶⁰¹ The "house-church" provides the believers the social and spiritual cohesion that the

⁶⁰⁰ *If a word like "inferior" is permissible in the Christian's context. It would suffice to say that Peter does not replace the internal structure of the new community with a replica of society's structure. The "superiors" are shown to be leaders and not bosses. Furthermore, the societal pyramid of status is turned upside down in another reversal as the superiors are there to serve and not to be served. It is in this sense that the members of the new community are not really superior or inferior.*

⁶⁰¹ *Beker (1987:63-68).*

larger society denied them. Unfortunately this also served as an irritation to society as it was seen as a defiant step against them, the social order and Roman rule. The purpose of good conduct is to gain their antagonists' respect and in so doing curb suffering but also to strengthen their cohesion. What Peter has to say in 4:7-11 has an abundance of cohesive attributes. Firstly, the casting of πάντων (all things) into an eschatological light somehow, hints of urgency (4:7). Urgency usually acts as a contributing factor in fostering cohesion. Secondly, being clear minded and self-controlled would probably lessen words and actions that would be counter-cohesive. Thirdly, love is the glue of cohesiveness which also covers sins. The covering of sins within a group gets rid of that which stands between people, resulting in cohesiveness. Fourthly, hospitality and service are outward actions that illustrate and build cohesiveness. Lastly, verse eleven could serve as a summary of the whole section in as much as the preceding section dealt with both actions and words. Here it is said that both actions and words need to be like God's.

7.2.4 Providing the New Community with a Calling, Namely, ἐκλεκτοῖς

This adjective occurs frequently in the literature of Hellenistic Judaism. ἐκλεκτοῖς designates the faithful ones who will be vindicated in the end.⁶⁰² Anyone who fits into that description was called ἐκλεκτοῖς, for example the people of Israel. In Christian vocabulary the word means Christians as the eschatological people of God.⁶⁰³ This word appears five times in first Peter (1:1; 2:4; 2:6; 2:9; 5:13). The concept of ἐκλεκτοῖς as the people of God, comes to the fore in these verses as they have to do with group identity, definition and cohesion. In 1:1 the word has to do with their calling as a group. It also refers to their identity as "elected

⁶⁰² Michaels (1988:7); Gottlob Schrenk (1967:4.183).

⁶⁰³ See Matt. 22:14; Mark 13:20; Matt. 24:22; Mark 13:22; Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:27; Matt. 24:31; Luke 18:7; Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12.

sojourners” which is the earliest mention of the new identity that Peter is in the process of creating. There is a slightly different slant in the next occurrence of ἐκλεκτοῖς as here (2:4) the word defines the value of their new identity as precious. We find the exact same construction in 2:6. However, in 2:9 we find an exposition of what exactly is meant by their election as precious. Thus there is a progression in Peter’s construction of their new identity as ἐκλεκτοῖς. The progression moves from the readers’ calling to their value in God’s eyes followed by a strongly worded expression of that value in 2:9. The election circle is completed with 5:13 which ties up with 1:1 reiterating their calling.

By addressing his readers as ἐκλεκτοῖς Peter is accomplishing, inter alia, three things:

- a. He is creating an analogy with Israel’s election. This could be seen as an attempt to legitimate their existence as a group to those (Israelites) who reject them.*
- b. He is metaphorically transferring a predicate of the LXX people of God to its Gentile addressees.⁶⁰⁴*
- c. He is building on the theme of vindication in the end time. Their election could serve as a type of verdict from God which could be seen as a forerunner of the judgement as God’s election could be interpreted as favour, in which case their election would point to eschatological vindication.*

The reader’s election also forms part of a paradox for they are elected by God but rejected by society (2:4). Here we also find a reversal, this time from rejection to election (2:4). Peter attempts to show that this is normal for Christian life. The fact that they are elected contributes to the creation of the new community called Christians by legitimating their existence as a group because God elected them to be such a group.

⁶⁰⁴ Schrenk (1967:190).

7.2.5 Providing the New Community with Purpose, viz. Discipleship

It appears that the word "discipleship" as we use it today does not really occur in exactly the same way in the New Testament.⁶⁰⁵ It is true that the μαθητής (disciple) word-group is widespread in the gospels, but there still was no corresponding noun for discipleship. Another option that conveys the idea of discipleship is one argued by certain scholars,⁶⁰⁶ viz. the verb ἀκολουθεῖν. This word (to follow) bears the idea of discipleship but it represents an action and not a concept.⁶⁰⁷ The word that seems to dominate the Pauline writings associated with discipleship is μιμηταί (imitator) (first Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Eph. 5:1; first Thess. 1:6; 2:14; etc). This word is depicted as the concrete, obedient following of the example and word of Christ, and therefore the definition of μιμηταί is deduced to be a synonym of μαθητής.⁶⁰⁸

An attempt was made to define discipleship as having two common features, firstly, faith in Jesus and secondly, a lifestyle that is modelled after the example of Jesus himself.⁶⁰⁹

This lifestyle once again has three characteristics, firstly, missionary activity and secondly, self-denial (even to include suffering and death), and thirdly, service.⁶¹⁰ Thus we have the following

⁶⁰⁵ Dixon (1989:4).

⁶⁰⁶ Examples of scholars holding to the validity of this option in connection with discipleship are Rengstorf (1967:406); Kittel (1964:214).

⁶⁰⁷ Kittel (1964:214).

⁶⁰⁸ Michaelis (1967:671-673). This view is also shared by Schnackenburg (1968:118).

⁶⁰⁹ Segovia (1985:17-20).

⁶¹⁰ For a full discussion on the definition and implications of discipleship see Segovia (1985:17-20).

outline of discipleship in figure twenty-six:

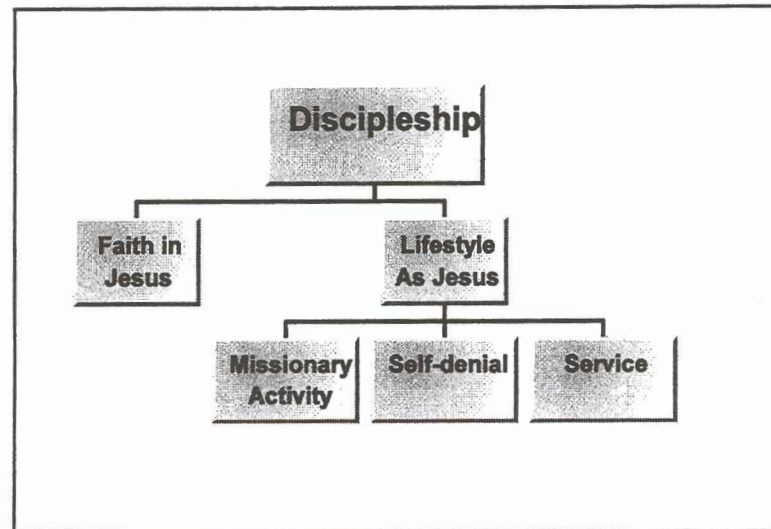


Figure 26

This concept was described to include the following:

- a. Jesus calls people to follow Him.*
- b. This call inaugurates something new, as it changes all things.*
- c. Following Jesus implies togetherness and service to Him.*
- d. It entails giving up all ties, including to oneself.*
- e. As Jesus' life led to rejection, suffering and death, similarly would the follower's life.⁶¹¹*

Although references to follow Jesus frequents the gospels this concept has seemingly received hardly any attention elsewhere in the New Testament. It appears as if there are only two New Testament references with regards to following Jesus outside the gospels.⁶¹² The concept of

⁶¹¹ *Schweizer (1960:20).*

⁶¹² *Dixon (1989:9).*

*discipleship within the first letter of Peter consists, inter alia, of the following:*⁶¹³

- a. *Humility (3:8; 5:5,6).*
- b. *Self-sacrifice (2:5).*⁶¹⁴
- c. *Loving action (1:22, 2:17; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14).*
- d. *Righteous prayer (3:7,12; 4:7).*
- e. *A genuine proclamation through good behaviour (2:12,15; 3:16).*⁶¹⁵

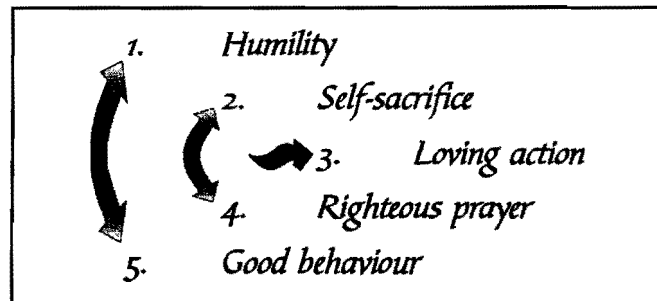


Figure 27

⁶¹³ *The first reference is in Rev. 14:4 which mentions the 144 000 followers (ἀκολουθοῦντες) of the Lamb. The second reference concerns our topic of discussion since it is found in first Peter 2:21. It reads as follows: "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow (ἐπακολουθήσητε) in his steps" (New Revised Standard Version).*

⁶¹⁴ *Also see the texts on suffering (examples of which are: 1:6; 2:19-23; 3:14,17; 4:12,13,15,16,19; 5:10) and the endurance thereof since the endurance of suffering is a self-sacrificial action.*

⁶¹⁵ *The five demands of discipleship which form the concept of discipleship is the conclusion of a Ph.D. dissertation by Dixon (1989) on "discipleship in 1 (sic) Peter as a model for contextual mission". The five points as they appear here have been modified and / or quoted from the work of Dixon (1989:140).*

In figure twenty-seven we find another structure. Humility could be seen as a proclamation through good behaviour. Righteous prayers for other people could be seen as a self-sacrificial act. The apex is loving action. All the other points could be classified as loving action. Discipleship is not just about adopting a belief system but rather following in Christ's footsteps which would include loving action. Discipleship is rather important to Peter since it contributes to the formation and creation of the Christian community. This could be illustrated in the fact that the above mentioned components of discipleship contributes in providing Christians with similar goals, attributes and behaviour, in other words, discipleship provides the new community with a common purpose. This in turn creates the feeling of unity through both the same belief system and actions. Discipleship thus acts as a binding factor in the Christian community.

7.2.6 Providing the New Community with Ties to God Through Holiness

The new community needs to be connected to God. Peter makes use of various connections to God.⁶¹⁶ This time the author uses the tie of holiness which connects the new community with God in basically two ways. Firstly, they are dedicated and set aside for God and secondly, God's presence is with them. Peter's reasoning regarding holiness follows the following logic. The major premise is that I, (God), am holy. The minor premise is that you (God's people) should be like God. Therefore the conclusion is made that you (God's people) should be holy

⁶¹⁶ *Examples of such connections between the new community and God are, inter alia:*

- a. God is their Father.*
- b. They are God's children.*
- c. Christ is their Example.*
- d. God is the Judge.*
- e. God honours and values them.*

too.⁶¹⁷ Peter writes, “but just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do” (1:15). There appears to be a further link that leads to holiness. Peter refers to his readers as the children (1:4) of God and to God as their Father (1:2,3,17). The relationship between fathers and children in a patriarchal system could well be one that is epitomized by obedience. Hence, because they are God’s children they should be obedient. Since their Father is holy, obedience to such a Father would also lead to holiness.⁶¹⁸

He even goes further than that by calling them a holy nation and a holy priesthood (2:5,9).

The term ἅγιοι which is used here seems often to be confused with a state of sinlessness. The word ἅγιός (holy) has a two fold meaning. Firstly, it deals with the concept of setting something aside for a specific purpose (usually religious to God or a god). Christians ought to set themselves aside for the specific purpose of serving Jesus. This means having Jesus as Lord of their lives. Secondly, it deals with the concept of God’s presence. After the Christian has decided to set his/her life aside for Jesus he/she then invites God’s presence into his/her life. This is how the ground surrounding a burning bush could be holy (Ex. 3:5). This is what should drive them to live the way Peter wants them to live. This is what should help them through suffering. Their final hope is then to be physically united with God at His coming, but in the mean time to be spiritually united with God now. Other “holy” references include: 1:16; 2:5; 2:9; 3:5.⁶¹⁹ The previous argument of the statement of God’s holiness, the Christian’s

⁶¹⁷ Campbell (1995:92).

⁶¹⁸ Refer to Perkins who describes the link between children and obedience as follows: “First Peter returns to the association between believers as ‘children’ and ‘obedience’ ...” (1995:36-40).

⁶¹⁹ The twofold concept of holiness (setting aside and God’s presence) can be seen in 1:16,17 where Peter writes: “Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work

calling and spiritual childhood with the conclusion of the Christian's holiness, includes both components of holiness - you are His child, meaning, you are set aside, and you are His, implying God's presence. Christianity therefore implies holiness. Once a person lives in this state his behaviour becomes altered and this is what Peter wants. Good deeds thus serve to identify God's people (2:12; 3:17). Seen from society's perspective, good works and / or evil deeds, are defined in the context of submission. Submission was considered to be a good work as it contributed to orderly society. Refusal to submit was considered to be an evil deed. [Since good works are intertwined with holiness, non-believers will be shown to be unholy by the believers' holiness in the end time].⁶²⁰ The spinoff of holiness is that "governments are inclined to look approvingly on well conducted citizens".⁶²¹

The theme of holiness in first Peter has different facets. Examples of which are:

impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear." Firstly, they call on their Father (thus His presence) and secondly, they are called to live a certain life (thus setting their lives aside). The same could be said of 2:5 where the spiritual house and holy priesthood might imply God's presence and the sacrifices might have a bearing on their conduct, in other words setting their lives aside. In 2:9 we also find both concepts of "holy" in as much as their belonging to God and their identity as "chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" could refer to His presence. The declaration to follow (2:9), viz. praises to Him as well as the calling out of darkness into His wonderful light could then provide the second part of being holy - the setting aside, as they are to live a new life. Our last reference (3:5) also refers to a person as holy because of her setting her life aside for her husband.

⁶²⁰ Warden (1986:217).

⁶²¹ Kelly (1969:109).

- a. *Personal holiness. This aspect of holiness refers to the holiness of the individual in terms of self-control and abstention from certain desires. Examples of this theme can be found in 1:13-2:10; 4:3.*
- b. *Social holiness. The issue at hand here is not so much personal holiness, but the problem of relating to non-Christian society. Here issues of obedience to human institutions, masters, husbands, etc are addressed. An example of this theme can be found in 2:11-4:11.*
- c. *Communal holiness. This theme is concerned with that which leads to solidarity. For example Peter is concerned about the use of the tongue which could destroy solidarity (3:10). Peter addresses topics like love, hospitality, service, leadership and humility (4:7-11; 5:1-7).⁶²²*

The concept and usage by Peter of holiness contribute to the creation of the Christian's new identity and calling. In fact, holiness plays a part in defining the very notion of Christianhood. Holiness says both that they belong to God and therefore that they dwell in His presence as well as defining the way they live by setting their lives aside to live the life God wants them to. Thus holiness defines who they are and how they live in terms of their new calling.

7.2.7 Providing the New Community with a New Allegiance

The question of allegiance appears to be rather important to the reader of first Peter. Their allegiance determines who they ought to obey as obedience or disobedience is determined by their allegiance. Peter differentiates between a primary and secondary obedience. The primary obedience is radical and absolute, while the secondary obedience is subordinate to the primary obedience and therefore a limited commitment. Only God deserves the primary obedience (ὕπακοή 1:2,14,22). Humans will have to be satisfied with the secondary obedience that is

⁶²² Davids (1990:17-19).

due to every person (πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει).⁶²³ The concept of obedience in first Peter helps the new community to make the choice of allegiance between God or society⁶²⁴ by providing Christians with a new allegiance - that to God. It also serves the purpose of legitimating their limited disobedience to society. It helps to rationalize their choice of whom to serve. Obedience also helps define the new community as people who are obedient to God. Their new identity as God's people calls Christians to depend on such defining concepts as, inter alia, obedience and holiness for their very existence as a group.

7.2.8 Providing the New Community with Behavioural Directions

One of the defining attributes of a new community is what they do and don't do. Behavioural directions are provided to help define the group but also to guide them.⁶²⁵ In 4:15 Peter refers to the behavioural advice⁶²⁶ he had given to the slaves and the wives earlier on. But this time his advice is applicable to everyone. This seems evident due to the use of τις ὑμῶν. He asks

⁶²³ *First Peter 3:6 seems to be the only exception to the consistency within first Peter that applies ὑποτάσσω to human relationships (2:13,18; 3:1,5; 5:5) and ὑπακοή to God / Christ and the Christian message (1:2,14,22). Michaels (1988:124) refers to this exception as "one passing reference ... within a biblical illustration". Best (1971:113-114) suggests that πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει may well function as a title for the entire social code (2:13-3:7).*

⁶²⁴ *It is acknowledged that allegiance and or obedience to society is not always conflicting with that to God. The problem arises when there are conflicting expectations.*

⁶²⁵ *Piper (1980).*

⁶²⁶ *To read texts in first Peter that address good behaviour see 2:12, 15, 20; 3:11-13, 16, 17; 4:19. Because of the frequent mention of good behaviour / deeds / conduct we could possibly conclude that the theme is important to Peter and therefore to his readers and subsequently, to Christian living.*

them to refrain from certain behaviour which he makes a list of (murder, thievery, criminal activity and meddling into other's affairs)(New International Version). When it comes to the word "meddling" Peter makes use of yet another hapax legomenon - ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος.⁶²⁷ This word has been translated in various ways: revolutionary (Moffat); busybody, spy (Phillips); mischief maker (New Revised Standard Version). It is admitted that the meaning of this word "has not yet been determined with certainty".⁶²⁸ But the thought that emanates from ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος would suggest that Peter is telling his audience not to play Christ or God in other peoples' lives. The new community is therefore called to live upright lives.⁶²⁹ What according to Peter constitutes an upright live might include:

⁶²⁷ Sander suggests that ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος means a wrong or alien bishop. This is deduced from the -επίσκοπος section of the word. According to Sander it therefore refers to one who does not lead the flock in purity and innocence to Christ, but rather leads them to the devil (Sander 1966:xxxiv-xxxvii). If we take the addressees into account we do find certain sections of the book devoted to certain portions of the wider audience, for example: house servants, slaves and wives. However, the church leaders (elders) are only singled out or addressed in the last chapter of the book. It would also seem that in this section in particular (4:12-) the wider audience is addressed since this section starts with the salutation of friends and all the attributes, happenings and deeds that ought to be refrained from, pertaining to everyone. Ramsay (1919:293) for example interprets this word as the "tampering with the slaves and the families of others". For further discussion on the word see Michaels (1988:267-268); Brox (1986:220); Ramsay (1919:293); Campbell (1995:292-295); Selwyn (1949:225); Best (1971:164,165).

⁶²⁸ Campbell (1995:295).

⁶²⁹ The question of how Christians should live and why, in support of the notion that they should live righteous lives, is discussed by Perkins (1995:19-21; 46-47).

7.2.8.1 Living Like a Spiritual Sacrifice

Part of living an upright life is to live like a spiritual sacrifice. The thought of a life that is acceptable (2:5) to God constitutes uprightness. The conception of metaphorical sacrifices certainly seems to permeate Scripture (Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8; Rom. 12:1,2; Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:16). The metaphorical nature of this sacrifice in 2:5 is confirmed with the inclusion of the word πνευματικᾶς. The πνευματικᾶς θυσίας refers to a life lived in accordance with the letter's ethic, amid a hostile society.⁶³⁰ Dismissing societal responsibilities in obedience to the will of God could be perceived as an act of worship (2:5).

7.2.8.2 Girding up the Loins

The metaphor rich first Peter here employs yet another, this time (1:13) one that echoes the tradition preserved in Luke 12:35. Luke utilizes this tradition to signify readiness. This is confirmed by the use of the image of lighting and burning lamps.⁶³¹ In the ancient

⁶³⁰ This can be said in the light of 2:9-17, especially verse nine and 12. The letter's emphasis on doing good is also in abundance.

⁶³¹ Luke may have interpolated an element of Matthew's parable of the virgins (25:1-13). Yet, it is worthy to note that the two authors used different words for lamp. Matthew used λαμπάς while Luke used λύχνος. However, the message in both remains the same - γρηγορέω (watch) (Matt. 25:13 and Luke 12:37). Although that verb does not appear here in Peter (first Peter 1:13) he makes use of a word of similar meaning - νήφοντες. This word, having to do with sobriety, in this context also connotes the meaning of watchfulness. Especially if this word is used metaphorically since you cannot be watchful if you are not sober. Campbell (1995:84) writes: "the verb νήφω can refer to sobriety in regard to alcohol, but seems to carry its figurative sense in 1 (sic) Pt. (sic) 1:13; 4:7; 5:8".

Mediterranean people wore long gowns. Before strenuous work could have been done they needed to be girded up. Similarly, the Christian needed to be ready for strain. Thus this metaphor has a twofold purpose. Firstly, to connote readiness and secondly, to express a warning of what is yet to come. This has a bearing on an upright life, as part of their uprightness is to be ready and prepared to face hardship in a Christian way. Here the behavioural directive is to gird up the loins to hardship rather than experiencing hardship in a pagan way.

7.2.9 Providing the New Community with Attitudinal Directions

It was discussed how a new community was created. Furthermore, it was seen how the author provided the new community with a new way of thinking. That was followed up with directions as to their lifestyle. Lastly, the new community is supplied with attitudinal directions. This divulges what attitudinal attributes Peter wanted them to have. Amongst others, the following three attitudes are perceived:

7.2.9.1 The Attitude of Received Grace - χάρις

Society did not seem to have a graceful disposition towards the new community, hence their maltreatment of the believers. Peter did not want them to feel this way - worthless and without grace. He knew that the attitude of grace and worthiness was important for their disposition. Therefore he wanted to instill the attitude of received grace which was to serve both their moral and future hope. This living hope stems from the χάρις that is to be granted at the parousia. In first Peter the word χάρις belongs to the semantic field of honour

and shame.⁶³² The word boasts ten appearances in first Peter.⁶³³ When Jesus is to be revealed in the ἔσχατος, the readers' faith leads to praise, glory and honour (1:7). They receive the praise, glory and honour, due to the grace of God. Thus χάρις is directly linked to the ἔπαινος, δόξα and τιμή granted to the faithful at the parousia. These terms are indicative of the bestowal of divine favour. Shamefulness will therefore be reversed into honour. Society grants grace to people who pledge their allegiance to it. Since Christians did not fall into this category, society granted disfavour. Peter illustrates that the reverse is also

⁶³² The word χάρις was classified to belong to the honour word-field by Campbell (1995:84).

⁶³³ These references are: 1:2,10,13; 2:19,20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5,10,12. In 1:2 we see that grace is to be multiplied. However, this multiplication of grace does not refer to a corporate multiplication to the whole society, but rather to the addressees of the letter, in other words Christians. God's grace is thus elective in the sense that it is only bestowed on people who choose to be Christian. God's grace is declared to be the readers' in 1:10. Grace is promised to be revealed in the end time in 1:13. The connection between grace and God's approval / favour is made in 2:19,20. This classifies Christians in a different category in God's eyes. In 3:7 we read that God's grace is to be inherited (we know that only children of God will inherit this grace) therefore they are once again being separated into different groups. Christians are declared stewards of God's grace in 4:10. Humility is one of the conditions to the reception of God's grace (5:5). The source of true grace is God (5:10,12). This has grave implications as to what society's "grace" really constitutes. The concept of grace for Peter is thus:

- a. The only source of true grace is God - therefore society does not really have grace to bestow.
- b. Grace is only to be had by the people who fall into Peter's new community - Christians.
- c. True grace will finally be granted at the parousia.

true of society, viz., that God grants grace to people who pledge allegiance to Him. Since society does not fall into this category they fall into disfavour with God. This constitutes a reversal. This reversal can be seen in the following explanatory diagram:

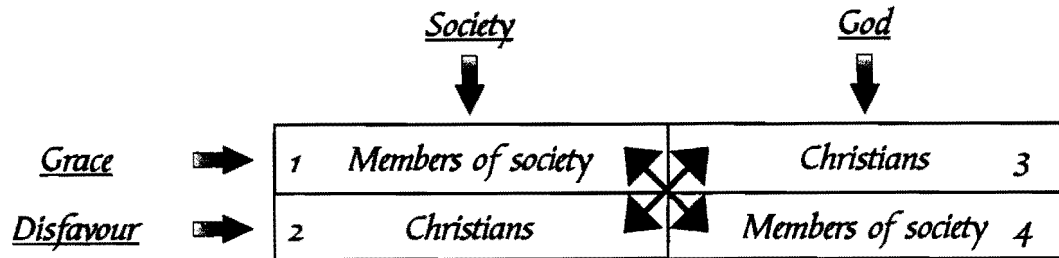


Figure 28

When one starts with society and moves down, as the arrow suggests, and also move from left to right the first block in figure twenty-eight indicates how society grants grace to its own members while the block below, block two, shows how society affords disfavour to Christians. Peter explains that God grants grace to Christians, as can be seen from block three, and disfavour to the members of society in block four. The two groups thus reverse places.

Furthermore, these (ἔπαινος, δόξα and τιμή) are attributes of God. This implies that He is to share His own attributes and in fact, Himself, with the faithful. In a certain sense Christians are to become like God as they are partakers of His glory and honour. The logic then for the Christian vis-à-vis the reversal of earthly shame to honour is this: If χάρις is indicative of divine favour and if Christians receive divine favour then surely they are worthy of honour from fellow humans. And if fellow humans don't agree, they are to be shamed by God via the judgement.⁶³⁴ This logic is relayed⁶³⁵ as follows: "Exaltation and grace are

⁶³⁴ In first Peter the One who exercises the prerogative of judgement is unspecified. However, God (יהוה) (in Isa. 28:16 in the LXX) is evidently the One who lays the stone in Zion and establishes faith in Him as the criterion for an honourable verdict (2:6). Hence one may presume that God is the judge. Judgement is not explicitly assigned to Jesus Christ as His

synonymous: χάρις refers to vindication, honor (sic), and deliverance from a humble state".⁶³⁶ Thus it could be seen that the attitude of received grace would not leave the new community morally denigrated and alien as society left them, but would rather rejuvenate them as worthy and rich in grace.

7.2.9.2 The Attitude of Hope - ἐλπίς⁶³⁷

It appeared as if Christians were in a hopeless situation, viz. being alien and harassed⁶³⁸ (2:21-24), amongst other things. Society certainly seemed to think so. Peter wanted to provide them with hope. He wanted them to have an attitude of hope since this attitude made bearable whatever they were enduring.⁶³⁹ It provided something for them to hold on to while their very social foundation was pulled out from under them by society. It was with this in mind that

agent (1:7;13; 2:12; 3:16; 4:5,6,17; 5:10). Jesus apparently is the judge in 5:4 (as the ἀρχιποίμην). God the Father is clearly the judge in 1:17 ad 2:23.

⁶³⁵ Campbell (1995:86).

⁶³⁶ This connection between χάρις and exaltation for the sufferers also appears in first Peter 5:10. "Additionally" Campbell (1995:86) writes, "the term is linked to δόξα and thus acquires an eschatological dimension in its denotation of honored (sic) elevation for suffering ones".

⁶³⁷ It is shown that hope for the Christian is a major theme in the book of first Peter. Davids (1990:19); Piper (1980).

⁶³⁸ Perkins (1995:17).

⁶³⁹ Peter does not only provide the readers with rhetoric to help them make their suffering bearable, but if it were possible even to rejoice about their suffering (Perkins 1995:17)(1:4-9).

the attitude of hope was discussed. The living hope described in 1:3 has been widely interpreted.⁶⁴⁰ The idea of hope appears to be a core⁶⁴¹ rhetorical device that Peter employed to motivate Christians in a hopeless situation. They had all the reasons in the world to forsake their faith. Everything seemed to be going against them. But Peter gave them hope which was to serve as a motivating factor. This hope has a twofold base. Firstly, it is based on the resurrection of Christ (1:3) and secondly, it is based on the parousia (1:13). Without the resurrection of Christ there is no hope. Without the parousia there is no hope. If the hope in 1:3 is compared with that of 1:13 the following emerges: the noun ἐλπίς is used in 1:3 whereas the verb ἐλπίζω is used in the form of an aorist, active imperative in 1:13. To a certain scholar this usage represents an ingressive use of the aorist and when the aorist is used in this manner, it is believed that it implies a new attitude and thus he translated it “start to hope”.⁶⁴² A possibly more accurate view of this hope is held by Goppelt⁶⁴³ who saw here an exhortation for the readers to illustrate the hope they already had.

⁶⁴⁰ Bigg (1902:100) states that the hope is living because it is active. Selwyn (1981:124), probably due to the context of the letter, called it “a hope that is never extinguished by untoward circumstances”. Kelly (1969:48) noted that this hope will not disappoint because it is “certain and effective now”. For Reicke (1964:79) this is a hope to live by. Beare (1970:82) relates the living hope to the livingness of the sacrifice of Rom. 12:1; of the water of John 4:10; 7:38.

⁶⁴¹ It is classified as such because this concept frequents the pages of first Peter. For example, we find references to hope in 1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15.

⁶⁴² Beare (1970:96).

⁶⁴³ Goppelt (1978:116).

The combination of the tense of the verb with the associated adverb τελείως supplies a sense of urgency. Furthermore, their need to rely fully on the grace of God is implied.⁶⁴⁴ They are to prepare themselves to a state of readiness for the struggle to come.

Their preparations should include psychological⁶⁴⁵ and emotional (stability) readiness.⁶⁴⁶

As this hope includes readiness, this life of hope becomes a life of holy conduct (1:15).⁶⁴⁷ Another part of this life and readiness involves prayer which should directly influence the Christians' social lives as they are to live in reverend fear (1:17).⁶⁴⁸ The underlying principle of 3:7 which deals with husband-wife relationships and that relationship's influence on prayer, is that one's relationship to others affects one's relationship to God.⁶⁴⁹ A good life and righteousness are also linked to prayer in 3:10-12. As logic would reason and Goppelt⁶⁵⁰ perceived, prayer is characteristic of the Christian community.

This is one of the ways in which Peter assists his readers to build a new group identity. He realizes that cohesion and hope play a major role in keeping them together which in term will help them cope. He creates the new cohesive group identity by providing hope through:

⁶⁴⁴ Selwyn (1981:140).

⁶⁴⁵ *Psychologically they need to be prepared: ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν. And emotionally they need to be prepared: νήφοντες.*

⁶⁴⁶ Goppelt (1978:116).

⁶⁴⁷ *This further step implies that readiness includes a holy life, see Piper (1980:215).*

⁶⁴⁸ Dixon (1989:77).

⁶⁴⁹ Best (1971:128).

⁶⁵⁰ Goppelt (1978:282,283).

- a. *Pointing out that they are elected by God (1:1,2; 2:6; 5:13).*
- b. *Making them all disciples of Jesus thereby guiding the way they should live (2:21).*
- c. *Identifying them as holy which should make them willing to set their lives aside for God and not for society, realizing that God is with them during their time of trouble since His presence is with them (1:15,16; 2:5, 9).*
- d. *Legitimizing their disobedience (limited) to society in favour of obedience (absolute) to God (1:14).*
- e. *Persuading them to behave well (2:12, 15, 18, 20; 3:10,11, 13, 16,17; 4:19).*
- f. *Convincing them that they should be ready to defend their faith (3:15).*
- g. *Placing them under the grace of God (1:2, 10, 13; 5:5).*
- h. *Contrasting their immortality (ultimately) with the mortality of society (5:10).*
- i. *Providing hope for the future (1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15).*

Thus a strong committed group which is full of hope, is constructed.

7.2.9.3 The Attitude of Eternity Versus Temporality

Christians seemed to have lost many things⁶⁵ⁱ that would probably have influenced them negatively. One way of pointing out that their loss, although real and valued, should not cause negativity, was by conveying the attitude of temporal loss versus eternal gain. This was done by use of the simile of grass and wild flowers.

Here (1:24) we have another simile that illustrates the eternal nature of God's glory. This glory stands in sharp contrast to the transient glory and honour bestowed by society. The readers need to set their hope upon God's glory (1:13,17). The reality of the audience's situation

⁶⁵ⁱ *Such losses might include: honour, family, inheritance, society as a group, belonging, etc.*

was that the esteem of pagan society had been denied them. Not only was esteem denied but they were slandered, abused and reckoned as evil-doers (2:12; 3:16; 4:4). This is where this simile comes in. It serves as an evaluation of an earthly, pagan, societal esteem. The simile does not deny the existence or even the beauty of this esteem but points out that it is transient. Peter attempts to say that the pagan notion of glory is false. The glory and honour of the heathen will fade and fall like flowering wild grass.⁶⁵² The sufferers are thus consoled since the shame that they are experiencing happens to be the false opinion of a false glory embraced by society at large. Contrasted to this type of honour and glory we find the glory that God bestows which lasts forever. The true glory has already been conferred on them. Now they just need to be patient as they are waiting for the recognition of their true glory by their adversaries (2:12). This recognition forms part of the last stage in the honour contest.⁶⁵³

This simile also serves as a contrast between mortality (that which is temporary) and immortality (that which is eternal). One could possibly see a few applications of this contrast. Firstly, society's glory is mortal (temporary) whereas God's glory is immortal (eternal). Secondly, society's judgement is mortal (temporary) compared to the immortal (eternal) judgement of God. Thirdly, society itself is mortal (temporary) whereas Christians will become immortal (eternal) at the parousia. All of these thoughts represent reversals. By arming the new community with this attitude Peter lifts their morale.

⁶⁵² Peter uses three words to attack this false glory of society, namely: δόξα, ξηραίνω and ἐκπίπτω (1:24). The latter two are gnomic aorists which express proverbial and universal truths (Campbell 1995:110; Michaels 1988:78). These words can be categorised as shameful in the honour - shame word field. This passage is almost a verbatim quote from Isa. 40:6-8.

⁶⁵³ Campbell (1995:110-111). Also examine the earlier discussion in this dissertation dealing with the honour and shame contest.



7.3 Changing the Believer's Status

Part of the believers' alien problem was the image that they had no status. This might even have played a part in the very reason why they were alienated in the first place. Peter does not leave them without a proper measure of status. In fact, he gives them more status than what they have lost. The author effects this by implementing the honour and shame dynamic positively for Christians. Peter utilizes this cultural value in the reversal from shame to honour for Christians and the reversal from honour to shame for pagans.

This appears to be exactly what Peter does in his epistle. Firstly, he changes the group by clearly defining an "us" and "them" scenario. Secondly, he changes their perspective by nullifying the value of society's honour and attaching great value to God's honour. Thirdly, he changes the deeds and attitudes for which honour is ascribed. Fourthly, he changes and legitimates their symbolic universe.

Previously the honour and shame contests were used by society against the believers. Now the author implements these same contests with certain responses for the benefit of Christians. Examples of such honour and shame contests and responses in first Peter are:

Example 1.

First Peter 2:12-15

- 12: τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν, ἵνα, ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσιν τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς.
- 13: Ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον, εἴτε βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι,
- 14: εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν.
- 15: ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θελημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθοποιούντας φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν,

Figure 29

In figure twenty-nine we see that Christians should be characterized by good conduct. When society speaks of them as wrongdoers, they may see the good deeds of those they are speaking about, and glorify God. Glorification of God by the antagonist implies that the believers were correct. This acknowledgment should raise the Christian's status too. In 2:12 the following transpires:

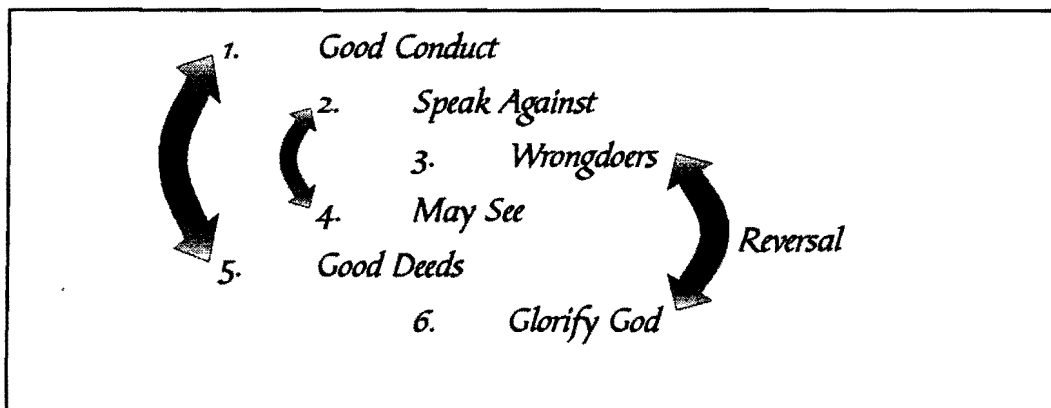


Figure 30

In figure thirty we find that the very people who classify or accuse Christians of being wrongdoers, ultimately glorify God as a result of the good conduct of Peter's readers. As

mentioned before, God's glorification by society implies:

- a. That the adversaries acknowledge that they were wrong.*
- b. That the previous acknowledgement implies that Christians were right.*

This represents a reversal from the antagonists. In 2:13,14 we find that the readers are asked to be subject to human institution for the Lord's sake. The interesting thing is that this institution punishes the wrong and praises the right through the use of certain institutional representatives. The inference then seems plausible that Christians would be praised by these representatives as their conduct is correct. Here we find another reversal. Society calls Christians "wrongdoers" but the institutional representatives praise them (although praise is deduced). In 2:15 we find that the adversaries will be silenced through the Christian's right doing. This reversal takes place when society speaks against Christians but is silenced. All of these reversals are enveloped with one more reversal. In 2:12 the antagonists call Christians wrongdoers while they themselves are called ignorant and foolish by God. This contributes to the elevation of the believer's status.

Another way in which Peter bolsters his audience's status is by denying the adversaries' honour challenge. The author repeatedly and throughout the book denies and estranges Christians from κακοποιεῖν (3:17), κακοποιός (2:14, 4:15) and κακία (2:1, 16). The denial can also be seen in the word order which together with the similarity of the genitive, plural (-ων) endings, creates a startling contrast between ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων and the preceding phrase, ὡς κακοποιῶν. By so doing the author places emphasis on the fact that such accusations are not true and that these denials also serve as a counter challenge. Peter builds on this contrast later on with the use of κακοποιῶν, and ἀγαθοποιῶν (2:14,15). Peter goes one step further by anticipating the outcome in favour of Christians which is to glorify

God.⁶⁵⁴

The change in perception that Peter makes can apparently be clearly seen in verse thirteen. The imperative ὑποτάγητε implies that subjection is a matter of choice. Christians are therefore not forced into adherence by societal pressure but Peter rather convinces them to cooperate "for the sake of the Lord" (2:13). This is further enhanced due to the fact that ὑποτάγητε refers to respect rather than total submission.⁶⁵⁵ This way of thinking represents a major paradigm shift for his readers.

Verse fifteen commences with the use of a purpose clause (ὅτι) making the verse paraenetical and explanatory. The adverb οὕτως in the place of the expected τοῦτο points to the importance on how the will of God is accomplished rather than on what is accomplished. This accentuates ἀγαθοποιούντας rather than φιμοῦν making the point that doing good is important rather than silencing the foolish.⁶⁵⁶ Peter is thus saying, don't just talk and debate

⁶⁵⁴ *It is important to note that the most important people in society determine the criteria for what constitutes honour and shame for the whole society. Society behaves accordingly and therefore earns the honour from the esteemed elite. By placing God above the most important people, Peter changes the Person who determines the "rules". God is also the Judge who determines the outcome. The honour bestowed upon them by God thus cancels out the shame from society.*

⁶⁵⁵ *For a discussion on the reference of ὑποτάγητε see Michaels (1988:124).*

⁶⁵⁶ *Although the syntax places more importance on ἀγαθοποιούντας than on φιμοῦν notice is given that the juxtaposition of truth with ignorance is important themes in the determination of honour and shame. Thus it is admitted that the role of φιμοῦν is not negated as the ignorant are labelled foolish (2:15). However, the end result is still the same regardless of the means (ἀγαθοποιούντας or φιμοῦν) viz., honour to Christians and*

like the non-Christians but let your actions speak for themselves. Two aspects come to play in this particular reversal of honour and shame. Firstly, Peter assumes that God is good and righteous. Whoever obeys God is therefore also good and righteous. The shame which is to befall the antagonists is the result of non-conformity with God's criteria of good and righteous. Secondly, one manner of acquiring shame is the acknowledgment by the opponents that they are wrong or if they are persuaded over to your side. Their silencing serves as just such an acknowledgement which would lead to shame. Because of these two aspects (good behaviour - obedience to God and the antagonist's silencing) there is a reversal of honour and shame. Peter's readers are thus honoured while society is shamed.

Example 2.

First Peter 3:13-17

- 13: Καὶ τίς ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς ἐὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε
 14: ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ ταραχθῆτε,
 15: κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἔτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαὶν παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος,
 16: ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε καταισχυρθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀνατροφῆν.
 17: κρεῖττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιοῦντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιοῦντας.

Figure 31

We also find reversals in this section (figure thirty-one)(3:13-17). Firstly, they are to be blessed if they suffered unjustly. Secondly, those who reviled their good behaviour would be put to shame. Here, in figure thirty-one, Peter assumes that his readers will suffer regardless of

shame to the non-believers.

doing good. The challenge to their honour then comes in the form of a face-to-face confrontation in which the non-believer demands of the believer an ἀπολογία for the hope that they embrace. The fact that apologetics is required, substantiates that a challenge to honour has been made, hence a defence is necessitated, therefore we are dealing with an honour and shame contest here. Peter's command to be ready at any time confirms the agonistic character of Mediterranean honour / shame society in which challenges to honour can arise in any social encounter. The believers' response should be one of gentleness and respect as well as the display of good behaviour. This will cause the attempted defamation to fail, leading to the accuser's καταισχυθῶσιν (dishonour) and vice a versa, glory and honour to the readers.

Verse fourteen starts with the connective ἀλλά which serves the purpose of bolstering the assurance given in verse thirteen. It is not meant to contrast the assurance of verse thirteen.⁶⁵⁷ The question in verse thirteen is a rhetorical question which implies a negative answer, hence it serves as assurance. Yet this assurance suggests that his readers are fearing κακῶσων (harm). It appears as if Peter has more than just social friction in mind when it comes to the suffering of his readers. In fact, the two optatives used in connection with suffering could present the possibility that πάσχειν in verses fourteen and seventeen could be translated as "suffer death". The use of αὐτως in the place of αὐτοῦ once again refers to the antagonist (3:14).

The word ἀγιάσατε in verse fifteen does not denote making holy but rather designates the acknowledgement or declaration of holiness. This is important since Peter attempts to explain the concept that Christ's holiness is declared by Christians who believe in Him. This declaration is the counter-challenge for fear which is the antagonist challenge to their honour. A challenge is also represented in the words αἰτεῖν λόγον. As in verse fourteen, the word

⁶⁵⁷ Michaels (1988:185).

ἀλλά here in verse sixteen introduces additional information and not a contrast. The fact that they are reminded to be humble implies that they have reason for not being humble. This in turn implies, once again, victory for his readers over the challenge presented them by the accusers. This is confirmed by the statement following the purpose / result clause ἵνα, so that those who denounce you may be put to shame.

Example 3.

First Peter 4:14

14: εἰ ὀνειδίζεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, μακάριοι, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται.

Figure 32

Here, in figure thirty-two, the challenge to their honour is expressed with the verb ὀνειδίζεσθε which is a virtual synonym of the word ἐπηρεάζοντες used in 3:16. The contrast is created by the word ridicule (in the passive here) on the one hand and the beatitudinal μακάριοι on the other hand. In this challenge there is no explicit defamation based on the charge of improper conduct but rather a general notion of reviling someone simply for being a believer in Christ. However, 4:15 probably infers that charges of wrongdoing or mischief making had been brought against them. The fact that honour is at stake here, is substantiated in 4:16 where Peter commands them not to be μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω (ashamed).

If the Spirit rests upon Christians, and they are rejected, then there seems to be a parallel rejection in Peter's mind, viz. the rejection of the Spirit by the rejecters. It could be phrased as follows:

“... blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a sin committed not by Christians but by their enemies”.⁶⁵⁸

Once again we have the two groups contrasted here. The one group commits blasphemy whilst the other glorifies God. If this contrast is taken to its full conclusion then the result can be inferred from 4:16 which not only informs Christians not to be ashamed, but also implies that the non-Christians are to be shamed.

The concern illustrated by these three examples of the honour / shame contests is that the Christian should maintain his honour in the midst of threats from outside the Christian community. This concern permeates the whole letter.⁶⁵⁹ Just about every issue in the letter has

⁶⁵⁸ Michaels (1988:266).

⁶⁵⁹ There are also other challenges / accusations mentioned in the book that might originate from the disruption of the hierarchical household structure (slaves and wives that forsook the religious practices of their paterfamilias) and that of society (Christians who withdrew from certain ceremonies, etc). This topic will be discussed elsewhere. For further discussion thereof see Balch (1981:81-121; 1984:161-173); Corley (1994:350-354); Fiorenza (1994:260-266). Whether these challenges / accusations form part of the honour / shame contest is another question. Bechtler (1996:132,133) does not agree that they indeed do form part of such a contest because of:

- a. *The generalness of the statements about the confrontation.*
- b. *The words that are being addressed to the slaves seem to be formulated to serve as an example to all the addressees and not only to instruct the slaves.*
- c. *Stereotypical wording that does not necessitate the specific criticism of the disruption of the household order.*

to do with the values of honour and shame. Peter presents the reversal of these values as part of the reasoning for remaining Christian in the face of hardship. The moral is that Christians are presently shamed while the pagans enjoy earthly honour but a reversal will occur leaving the pagans shamed and Christians honoured. This is achieved by postulating another system of calculating honour and shame (we will deal more in depth with this model later on).

As mentioned before, honour and shame are perspectives in the eyes of a certain community. Peter alters this perspective by changing the composition of the community. Already in 1:3-5 the idea of a new group is fostered with the creation of the family model in which God is the Father and the believers are the children. Secondly, in reference to our three examples of the honour and shame contest discussed above, it seems as if a scenario of "us" and "them" is created, resulting in the enhancement of the birth of a new group, viz. Christians. Christians functioned as a group for some time, but they appear not to have perceived themselves outside of the general community. Peter got them to see themselves as a group outside of the general community. Now he starts to shape their (the "us"-community) perspective of what constitutes honour and how honour is judged.

Society still judges Christians in the same manner as they used to do. Their verdict was shame on Christians, hence the suffering. On the other hand, Peter judges Christians as honourable. He persuades them that God is judging them honourably too. He attempts to convince them that they should judge themselves honourably also. He helps them to do this by assigning them a new identity. This identity consists of the following:

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- d. *The address to the slaves and wives (household code) does not play a prominent role in the book and only occupies a few verses.*

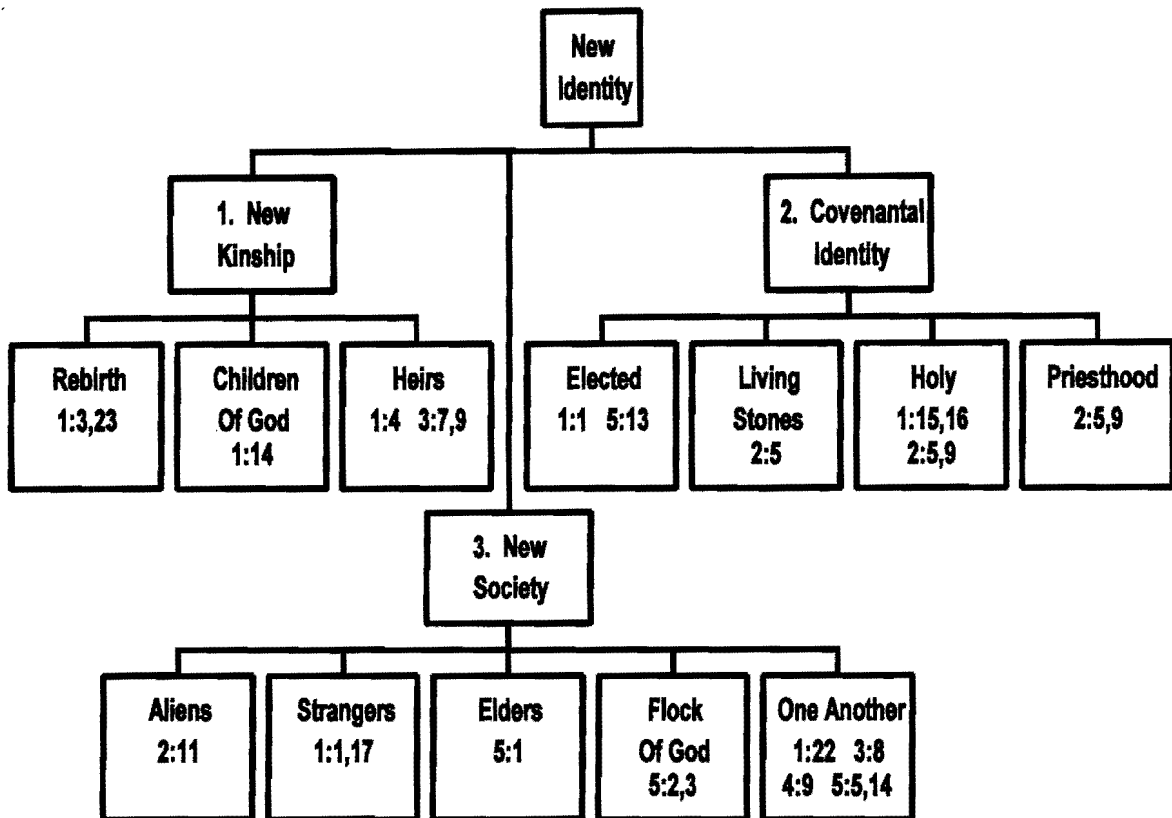


Figure 33

In figure thirty-three we see that Peter provides them with a new identity consisting of inter alia three identity forming concepts. Although it appears as if society has expelled them from the customary societal kinship structures, Peter firstly, points out that they now form part of a new kinship structure. The author points this out in three main ways by writing about their rebirth, the notion that they are children of God, and that they are heirs of God. Secondly, Peter replaces their old covenantal identity, that they appeared to have lost, in four ways: They are the elect of God; they are the living stones; they are holy; and they form a priesthood. Thirdly, Peter forms their new identity by replacing their societal group with one of their own - thus a new society. The author distantiates the new society from the old by utilizing the known concepts of aliens and strangers. The new group's identity is not only built on what is different but also on their own structure of which eldership forms a part. Lastly, they are the flock of God and such they are to treat one another in a certain way. In a



certain sense this new way of treating each other lays down the societal rules of this new group.

Thus by creating a new identity it also creates a new set of criteria which is used to determine honour and shame. The new set of criteria results in a different verdict from that of society's. Whereas society's verdict is shameful towards Christians, both God's, and their own verdict is now honourable. This represents a reversal of honour and shame and this is the reason why Peter uses these values towards his goal - the reversal of roles as reasoning for remaining Christian in the face of hardship.

It was seen that society treated the believers as if they were alien. Peter employs this very concept to confirm their alienness (1:1,17; 2:11). However, although they do not really fit into society anymore, the author does not want to leave them alien and groupless in a group orientated society. He replaces their previous group with the creation of a new community. This chapter explored that community in three ways:

- 1. The Christians' identity and value was changed.*
- 2. The community itself was changed.*
- 3. The believers' status was changed.*

The creation of the new community and the way in which the author achieved such a creation resulted in numerous reversals.

Lastly, the solution to the macro and micro cosmic problems needs to be dealt with.