

1 Peter 1:13-21 – Part DD

In v14 Peter says that we cannot “**conform ourselves**” to how we use to live, or to how the world lives. The very nature of the Christian life is a very different quality of life compared to how the world lives. We all eat food, drive cars, have jobs, and live in homes, but our values, our morals, and the principles that we live by are very different. In the culture in which we live, it is easy to consistently find ourselves swimming upstream against the tide of public opinion and generational values. So, we have to use a phrase like – “**do not be conformed**” (NASB, ESV, NIV) - as a way of measuring whether or not we really understand what it means to be a Christian and how to live out the Christian life. In our life before Christ, we were spiritually, ignorant, spiritually blind, and almost unconscious of how deeply rooted was our rebellion against God. Now, however, we have been given all that we need to effectively live out the Christian life.

In v15, we are confronted with the reality of what it really means to be a Christian. We are to be “**holy**” in all that we do so that every part of our life can reflect the wonder and beauty of our God. God is holy, and we as believers are to reflect that holiness. An unholy life can never bring honor or glory to God, so it is imperative that we understand what it means to actually “**be holy**” in a very practical way. Positionally we are holy, but practically we have to become holy in our “**conduct**”. The motivation for living out a holy life is the very holiness of God Himself. Every area of our life, everything that we do, the decisions that we make, the choices that ultimately create the direction of our life - all of these are to reflect God and are to be a mirror image of His person and of His character.

Then to make it an even stronger exhortation, Peter says that we are to be holy in all of our “**conduct**”. The noun form of the word “**conduct**” is used six times in [1 Peter](#) and one time as a verb (1:17). If we are going to be able to “**call**” on our Father (v17), then we must understand that our calling, entreating, and appealing to God for His help in our life is directly related to how we live, to the actual “**conduct**” of our life. Personally, I love the way that Peter expresses this at the end of v17 where he says that we are to do so with a particular “**fear**”, or a deep reverence for God. The AMP actually says with a “**true reverence**” and the NIV says “**reverent fear**”. So, in this particular context, the word “**fear**” refers to a deep and reverential respect and honor for God. God’s holiness demands that we honor Him in every area of our life – our lifestyle, our decisions, our choices, our speech, our conduct, our goals, our ambitions, our resources, our time – the list is endless, everything.

Then in v18, Peter makes a very important statement. He says that there is something that we must “**know**”. This is a verbal participle, but it is given in an imperative sense. It is also in the perfect tense which means that the emphasis is not on what happened in the past, but rather on how what happened in the past is impacting the individual in the present. The actual “**knowing**” in the perfect tense is something that you learned in the past, but it is presently having a great impact on your life. If the spiritual truths someone says they learned in the past is not impacting their life today, then they never really learned it. In this verse, Peter is clearly saying that these believers learned something in the past, and now they know and understand something in the present that should be controlling and governing their life.

In v18, what we must know and understand is how we were redeemed and what the cost of that redemption actually was. I never mind talking about salvation because in reality it is the only thing that

matters in life. Everything else is minor and subservient to the idea of our salvation. Someone can live their entire life doing whatever they want to do, living however they want to live, accomplishing whatever they want to accomplish, but if they are not saved, then it is all utterly and eternally meaningless. I was thinking about someone like Elon Musk who has become so successful. His creativity and ingenuity are remarkable. He is literally changing the way the world may operate in the future and is in the process of sending people to Mars. So, what if Elon Musk accomplishes all of that and more, but in the end he loses his soul and dies without Christ? What good will any of his accomplishments be to him at the moment that he stands before a holy God who provided the means of redemption from sin by the precious blood of His Son? What good will his accomplishments and his impact be at that moment? The answer is none, zero, not one iota. I love the way that Solomon closed out his conclusion to the Book of Ecclesiastes when he said this in [Ecclesiastes 12:13-14](#),

Ecc 12:13 (NKJV) Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. ¹⁴For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Notice in v18 how Peter describes everything about our former life apart from Christ. He says that it was “**aimless conduct**” (v18), useless conduct, meaningless conduct. The word for “**aimless**” means to be void of significance, empty, useless, fruitless, and profitless. It means that the person had a senseless understanding of reality in contrast to the reality of God and His redemption.¹ The Bible emphatically declares that a person is actually a “**fool**” to ultimately invest their lives in things that have no eternal value while utterly ignoring the reality of a living God who will judge all men and what they did with His Son.

[1 Peter 1:19](#) in my mind is the most theologically important verse in [1 Peter](#) and it says,

1Pe 1:19 (NKJV) but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

This is the end result of what we have to know. This is what God really wants us to understand – the incredible cost of our salvation. The blood of Christ is “**precious**” and refers to something that is of such great worth that its value cannot actually be measured.² We have no idea how valuable the blood of Christ truly was. [1 Peter 3:18](#) says,

1Pe 3:18 (NKJV) For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

[Hebrews 9:12](#), may be the single most important doctrinal verse in all of the Word of God and says,

Heb 9:12 (NKJV) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

That is what I have to know. That is where I have to rest my life. That is what I have to build my life on – the precious sacrificial blood of Christ. The way that Peter closes it all out is in v20-21 when he says,

1Pe 1:20 (NKJV) He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Okay – that is the brief overview of this passage, and we are ready to begin our verse by verse exegesis of [1 Peter 1:13-21](#). As we begin this exegesis and exposition, please do not lose sight of how Peter writes. Peter constantly mixes doctrine with exhortation. That is his style. He is much different than Paul, so we have to constantly be alert to when he is changing lanes and changing gears on us. That is a very important aspect of how he writes and it will impact how we actually study and teach this passage. We begin with [1 Peter 1:13](#).

1Pe 1:13 (NKJV) Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

In reality, v13 is simply part of a much longer sentence that runs from v13-16 and ends with the exhortation to recognize that we are living our life before a holy God. We must appreciate that all that we do is open to God's view. Nothing is hidden from His sight. [Hebrews 4:13](#) expresses that reality when it says,

Heb 4:13 (NKJV) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account.

Just to emphasize how important our daily lives and conduct really are, listen to several verses that warn believers of becoming somewhat flippant with how they may live. [Matthew 12:36](#) says,

Mt 12:36 (NKJV) But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

[Romans 14:12](#) says,

Ro 14:12 (NKJV) So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

[2 Corinthians 5:10](#) says,

2Co 5:10 (NKJV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

[Hebrews 13:17](#), speaking to those of us who teach, the author said,

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

[1 Peter 4:5](#), speaking of those who live immoral and ungodly lives, says,

1Pe 4:5 (NKJV) They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

[1 Peter 4:17](#) says,

1Pe 4:17 (NKJV) For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

In v13, there are three primary verbs – “**gird up, be sober**”, and “**rest**” (or “**hope**”). What we have to do now is drill down through some grammatical rock, so bear with me. What is not obvious in the English is how the imperative mood is often used in the Greek language, and especially in [1 Peter](#). The only one of these three verbs that is in the imperative mood is the word “**rest**”, or “**fix**”, or “**set**” based on your translation. The problem is that it is also an aorist tense verb which means that it is something that happened in the past. Normally that kind of action would come from the present imperative, or what is viewed as a command that is to be a continual action. In [1 Peter](#), the present imperative occurs 10 times, but the aorist imperative occurs 25 times.

So, think of it this way. When the Greek language uses the present imperative, it is the default tense for general instructions, or what we would call commands. However, when the aorist imperative is used, it carries a stronger sense, a more compelling sense, but it still retains the aspect of continuing action (which is different than a normal aorist, or past tense verb). The aorist imperative generally has four aspects. The first aspect is what we would call a specific focus on a change of behavior. It is the idea that we as a believer need to specifically change our behavior to reflect the exhortation. The second aspect is what really applies the most with the word “**rest, fix, or set**”. It carries a sense of urgency, and therefore a sense of forcefulness in the text. It becomes the primary verb in the verse. In this case, it is like Peter is increasing the intensity of the verb. The third aspect of the aorist imperative is that it focuses on the believer carrying the action to completion. So, the phrase “**rest your hope**” (actually just one Greek word) being in the aorist imperative is Peter’s way of conveying to his readers a forceful resolve to orient their focus on this particular action and to work it out as a way of life. The last aspect is that it emphasizes the action being performed over and over again.³

So, what happens when the aorist imperative is used is that it governs and controls the other verbs that are connected to it – in this case “**gird up**” and “**be sober**”. It is like their translation is going to reflect the intensity and forcefulness of the aorist imperative. For instance, when we read the words “**gird up**”, it just seems to be in the present tense. However, it is not a present tense verb. It is actually in the aorist tense which is what we would call the past tense. Then to make it even a little more difficult, it is also a middle voice participle. You may be wondering what a participle is. A participle is a verb generally ending in “ing” that is most often used as an adjective or an adverb. It is formed from a verb, but modifies other words and can be used as an adverb or an adjective. An adjective modifies a noun and an adverb further explains or defines the action of the verb

The Greek Interlinear and YLT seem to capture the essence of how an aorist middle participle should be translated when they translate it as “**having girded up**”. Because it is a participle, that is why they translate it as “**having**”, and since it is an aorist tense verb, “**girded**” seems to be the more accurate translation to identify that it is in actuality a past tense verb. Now, someone is going to ask why most all of the other translations translate it differently, or simply as “**gird up**”. The answer is that in [1 Peter](#) that Peter uses what is known as an “imperative participles”. This is a very unusual participle, so I am not trying to bore you with Greek grammar, but it is very important to understand if we are going to properly handle these verbs as well as many others throughout the letter. These imperative participles in this verse are dependent on the main verb “**rest your hope**” (one word in the Greek). So, even though at first glance it would appear that it should be translated as “having girded up”, it is not, and the reason

is because the aorist imperative verb “**rest your hope**” governs, and a primary aspect of that verb type is that it emphasizes an urgency in the action being performed continuously.

The other verb is “**be sober**” and is translated in the Greek Interlinear as “**being self-controlled**”. It is different than the other two verbs and is in the present tense, active voice. However, it too is a participle and that is why the Interlinear uses the word “**being**”. However, we cannot lose sight that no matter what the tense of the verb, it is still subordinate to the main verb “**rest your hope**”. The better way to actually read this verse would be like this to emphasize the main verb.

“Set your hope fully on the grace...by preparing your minds for action and being sober.”

In this way of seeing the verse, it puts the emphasis at the beginning of the sentence. We have to appreciate that in the Greek language that word order is not near as important as it is in English. “**Hope**”, which we have not yet defined, will never become a reality in our life without disciplined thinking on our part. Thinking in a new way is not something that just happens, but to the contrary, it requires effort, concentration, and intentionality. I have been encouraging you for a good while to “think strong”. Why? It is because there is a way of living that becomes dull and muted to the realities of the Christian life. It becomes sedated and deadened by the fascinations, charms, and attractions of the world, and the result is that believers concentrate more on meeting all of their earthly goals and lose sight of the future revelation of Jesus Christ.⁴

So, what we have seen because of this aorist imperative verb “**to rest**”, or to “**set**” or “**fix**”, is that Peter is giving us a very, very strong exhortation. These words, because of the aorist imperative, generally carry an even stronger weight than just a normal present imperative verb because they are always connected to other verbs. Peter is calling on the believer to exercise a great personal resolve to incorporate this exhortation into their life. Then, to make it even stronger, what we have not yet seen is that because v13-16 are just one sentence in the Greek, the actual verb in the aorist imperative that is governing the entire sentence is the verb in v15 to “**be holy**”. In the Greek Interlinear, v15 reads this way – “**so also yourselves holy in all conduct become**”.

ENDNOTES

¹ Logos, *1 Peter 1:18, aimless*, ep.

² Logos, *1 Peter 1:19, precious*, ep.

³ Forbes, *Use of the Imperative*, ep.

⁴ Schreiner, 78.

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