Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (The New American Commentary), B & H, Nashville 2003, 45-46; e28.

“**5. Purpose**

The purpose of the letter is to encourage believers to stand fast while they endure suffering and distress in the present evil age. Achtemeier says that the letter is intended “to strengthen the readers in the ‘now’ of their suffering and persecution by assuring them that the future of glory will transform their present condition as surely as their present situation transformed them from their past.” They are encouraged to persevere, knowing that a great reward will be theirs on the day of salvation. Such perseverance is exhibited by living a godly life, living as good citizens, model slaves, gentle wives, and understanding husbands. When believers live in such a way, they indicate that they are placing their hope in God rather than in the joys and comforts of this world. Another way of describing 1 Peter is to say that those who hope and trust in God and in his future reward will have the strength to endure whatever comes their way in the present. When believers set their hope on the future, they reveal that their salvation comes from the cross of Christ, who bore their sins (2:24; 3:18). The Christ who suffered is also the Christ who is now exalted (1 Pet 3:19–22). Those who resist the church of Jesus Christ now will be judged on the last day (4:1–6). Since the end is coming soon, believers should imitate Jesus Christ and follow his example of suffering, for all those who suffer will also experience a great reward.

None of what Peter said should be construed as a call to works righteousness. Those who have had their sins forgiven by means of the cross and resurrection of Christ are now to set their hope on him and their future salvation. The message of Peter can be summarized as a call to stand in grace (5:12). Peter did not call on his readers to earn God’s grace or strive to obtain a grace that is not theirs. No, they are to stand in a grace that is already theirs. Any grace received on the last day, on the day when hope becomes a reality, flows from the grace they received when God called them to himself (2:9; 5:10) as his people.

Peter wanted his readers to conceive of themselves as the people of God. They had become part of Israel by believing in Jesus Christ and were God’s holy nation and special people (2:9–10). They were exiles and sojourners during their earthly journey. The encouragement to live as sojourners and set their hope only on God is also matched by the threat that they will be judged if they turn away from the gospel. The promise and threat are corollaries in the letter, for the threat of final judgment also spurs the readers to set their hope entirely on the promise. They realized that the future reward is also matched by future judgment and that hoping in God is not trivial but momentous.”