

PART I

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

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Excerpt
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EMOTION STUDIES AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

This book aims to explore how emotions, specifically emotion terms, function in the discourse of 1 Peter. Since our study is concerned with how the author seeks to persuade his audience towards a particular viewpoint in order to alter behaviour, it may be categorised as a type of rhetorical analysis, even if some features of rhetorical analysis (e.g. categorisation of rhetorical species, and identification of rhetorical τόποι and figures) will here play no role.¹ Although they are often overlooked, it will show that in this letter emotions play a vital role in the persuasion of the audience, at a deep level and in highly significant ways. It will reveal that emotions are not a manipulative moving force that is separate from logical argument, but in themselves communicate logically and can be deployed to alter an audience's interpretation of events, promote systems of value, influence goals, and, consequently, shape behaviour. Therefore, the focus of this investigation will be the *emotion terms* that appear in the letter, specifically, joy (χαρά), distress (λύπη), fear (φόβος), hope (ἐλπίς), and shame (αἰσχύνη). We will not address the audience's own emotions other than as they are idealised in the text itself.

Recent progress in the study of emotions, notably in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, has generated greater understanding about what constitutes an emotion, and revealed its interpretive and directive role. Scholars in these fields have argued persuasively that emotions are culturally constructed and can be used to shape worldviews and therefore affect our understanding of our place in the world. Subsequently, emotions influence one's conception of reality, including social structure and self-identity. To date, there has been no attempt to use these insights to explore how

¹ For an example of this type of approach see B. L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, SBLDS 160 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), discussed below. For more on the rhetorical approach of this study see pp. 44–6.

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emotions function in 1 Peter's persuasive communication. In fact, such a thoroughgoing investigation of emotions has not been undertaken for any New Testament epistle.

The Wider New Testament

In recent years, there have been only a few scholars who have analysed emotions in the New Testament.² One notable example is Matthew Elliott.³ Elliott demonstrates awareness of modern and ancient theories of emotion. He outlines cognitive and non-cognitive theories of emotion; emotion in the Greco-Roman world and Jewish culture;⁴ and then discusses love, joy, hope, jealousy, sorrow, fear, and anger in the New Testament. Elliott promotes a cognitive approach to emotions, and reveals that cognitive perspectives on emotion were present in the ancient world. He seeks to determine whether the New Testament has a cognitive view of emotions by examining whether the authors command emotion, categorise emotions as right and wrong, and hold their audiences responsible for their emotions. Where these are demonstrated, as they are in the New Testament, a cognitive understanding of emotions is present.⁵ The problem with

² Certain emotions have been acknowledged in the scope of other arguments, but emotions themselves have not been the primary focus. Older works that address individual emotions include, J. Moffatt, *Love in the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1929) and W. G. Morrice, *Joy in the New Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1984). In both of these, 1 Peter receives only a brief mention.

³ M. Elliott, *Faithful Feelings: Emotions in the New Testament* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2005). Another example is S. Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels* (London: T&T Clark, 2011). Voorwinde does address the question 'what is an emotion?' However, his discussion is brief and results in the vague definition that emotions are feelings that motivate action (3). In his exegesis he gives a basic understanding of each emotion investigated by translating the Greek word to English equivalents, which shows a historical and cultural naivety towards emotions. Voorwinde does recognise that emotions are situational and implicitly assumes that they have some reasoning. But, he does not reveal how emotions are functioning as part of the discourse of the gospels other than to detail what they reveal about Jesus' own character and identity. Thus, Voorwinde's study it is not comparable to this investigation. Though it addresses emotions, it has a different type of text in view and asks different questions. In fact, it demonstrates that even Voorwinde, who seeks to take seriously emotions in the New Testament, provides only a surface-level examination with little theoretical or analytical sharpness.

⁴ Though his discussion is thin, having only a few references to the ancient primary texts and relying on secondary scholarship (see 56–79). Furthermore, he gives little or no recourse to Greco-Roman views on emotion in his analysis of the New Testament. Thus, he does not show historical and cultural awareness of the emotion he is investigating.

⁵ Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 54.

Elliott's work is not with his theoretical awareness but the extent to which this translates into critical questions asked of the text. Despite making important observations about emotions – assertions this study will echo – he does not utilise these fully in his exegesis.⁶ For each emotion analysed he gives a general explanation of the emotion and its occasion; highlights the range of relevant Greek terms; and then surveys the occurrence of the emotion in groups of New Testament texts such as the gospels, 'Pauline Literature', and the 'general epistles and Revelation'. His approach tends towards the general and gives little detailed investigation of the role of the emotions in the discourse of the New Testament letters. Instead, the thrust of his work is to show that emotions are treated as cognitive in the New Testament and therefore are linked to ethics. This is a foundational concept for this present study, but the limitations of Elliott's exegesis show that there is still work to be done. It is not sufficient to note emotions and recognise that the author gives them importance; we need to understand why the author is using an emotion in a given context and what the implications of this are.

Most attention has been paid to the emotions within the field of rhetorical criticism. But, still, few works have centred on the emotions. The most prominent volume is *Paul and Pathos*.⁷ This essay collection uses ancient rhetorical theory to assess how Paul sought to move his audience. The first part outlines the background and method for analysing Paul in this manner. The second part addresses πάθος in particular Pauline letters. The introductory essays helpfully highlight the importance of πάθος in ancient rhetoric, and rightly call for more attention to be paid to pathetic persuasion. However, this collection does little to utilise conceptual insights from modern theory when approaching the idea of πάθος (equated by the authors with 'emotion'). It is evident that some baggage carried by the English concept of emotion (see

⁶ See particularly Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 53–5.

⁷ T. H. Olbricht and J. L. Sumney, eds., *Paul and Pathos*, SBLSymS 16 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001). Another example is A. Harker, 'The Affective Directives of the Book of Revelation', *Tyndale Bulletin* 63 (2012): 115–30. Harker's short article highlights the importance of the affective aspects of Revelation's directives. Theoretically, it relies on Jonathan Edwards' conception of affections (Harker cites Edwards' *Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections*, 1746). Its main point is to acknowledge that the author aimed to affect his audience in order that they might have the appropriate attraction to and repulsion from the right things. See also P. von Gemünden, *Affekt und Glaube: Studien zur historischen Psychologie des Frühjudentums und Urchristentums*, StUNT 73 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), which is not strictly interested in rhetoric, but emotion in discourse more generally.

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pp. 19–25) is absorbed into a number of essays that persist in distinguishing between head and heart, emotion and reason. There are exceptions: for example, Steven J. Kraftchick acknowledges that ‘emotions are part of the rational process’.⁸ Nevertheless, this does not equate to recognising that emotions are themselves cognitive, which is a key tenet of this study. The generally non-cognitive standpoint pushes this collection in a certain theoretical direction.⁹ Thus, the majority of exegetical essays approach emotions by looking at the relationship between author and audience, frequently exploring how the author moves the audience by arousing its emotion. This is generally considered a persuasive manoeuvre separate to the *λόγος* of the argument. Most essays take the same approach: they examine a passage that they think exhibits *πάθος*; suggest which emotion they think the author is exciting in his audience; then, give their reasoning for why Paul would want to arouse this emotion. The last stage requires relating the emotion to the behavioural outcome Paul must have desired. The problem with this approach is that it becomes conjectural, being based on the scholar’s own understanding of emotions and opinion of what is most fitting. The cultural boundedness of emotions is not appreciated, and therefore emotions are analysed through English-speaking conceptual frameworks.¹⁰ Furthermore, despite the wealth of material in ancient rhetorical handbooks that could have been accessed, the discussion linking epistolary content to emotional arousal remains basic.¹¹ Furthermore, no essay focuses on the emotion terms in the actual text, but instead on the projected emotions of the audience.

⁸ S. J. Kraftchick, ‘Πάθη in Paul: The Emotional Logic of “Original Argument”’, in *Paul and Pathos*, ed. Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, SBLSymS 16 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 39–68, at 45.

⁹ Sumney’s essay is more insightful. It does acknowledge the dynamic relationship between emotions and perspective, and recognises that emotions are not irrational and are ‘based to some degree on beliefs arrived at through reason’. He notes that emotions are interpretive, and that they signify the meaning of an event, but he does not utilise these insights to their full extent in his discussion. For example, the link between emotions and values or goals is never made, though this would be an obvious outcome of the statement that emotions make events meaningful; see J. L. Sumney, ‘Paul’s Use of Πάθος in His Argument Against the Opponents of 2 Corinthians’, in *Paul and Pathos*, ed. Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, SBLSymS 16 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 147–60, esp. 147–9.

¹⁰ For another example of this see P. Lampe, ‘Affects and Emotions in the Rhetoric of Paul’s Letter to Philemon: A Rhetorical-Psychological Interpretation’, in *Philemon in Perspective: Interpreting a Pauline Letter*, ed. D. François Tolmie, BZNW 169 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 61–77.

¹¹ Martin more successfully mines Aristotle’s comments in *On Rhetoric* and consequently provides a fuller and more convincing discussion of *πάθος* in Galatians;

Contrastingly, this study will start from the emotions present in the text. It will not suggest which emotions the audience might be caused to feel, but how 1 Peter directly addresses and uses certain emotion terms to communicate.

There are other short works that approach emotions in the New Testament from a therapeutic angle. The best example is Welborn's article 'Paul and Pain'.¹² Welborn examines Paul's innovative stance towards constructive pain in 2 Corinthians. He highlights that Paul speaks of emotions in a manner that does not map neatly on to contemporaneous philosophical opinions but is shaped by Paul's view of God's action in Christ. Consequently, Paul posits a different relationship between emotions, here pain (or distress), and the moral life. Subsequently, he suggests an alternate emotional therapy. Welborn's essay, which uses Greco-Roman philosophical theories of emotion throughout, is an excellent example of how a historical and cultural awareness of emotions can shed fresh light on New Testament texts. Welborn also rightly highlights that ancient discussion about emotions is necessarily linked to ethics, and so is not an abstract but a practical concern.¹³ This study aims to follow Welborn by having the same level of cultural and historical sensitivity. Welborn's article achieves a number of important steps for the analysis of emotions in New Testament texts, but these are mostly at the level of general philosophical/theoretical views of the emotions. There are still advances that need to be made in the analysis of particular emotions, and in the understanding of the argumentative function of emotions in New Testament epistles.

One scholar who has made notable progress in studying emotion in the New Testament is Stephen Barton. In 2011 Barton published an article entitled 'Eschatology and the Emotions in Early Christianity'.¹⁴ Barton comments that the 'study of the emotions has

see T. W. Martin, 'The Voice of Emotion: Paul's Pathetic Persuasion (Gal 4:12–20)', in *Paul and Pathos*, ed. Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney, SBLSymS 16 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 181–202.

¹² L. L. Welborn, 'Paul and Pain: Paul's Emotional Therapy in 2 Corinthians 1.1–2.13; 7.5–16 in the Context of Ancient Psychagogic Literature', *NTS* 57 (2011): 547–70.

¹³ In this regard see W. Klassen, 'Coals of Fire: Sign of Repentance or Revenge?', *NTS* 9 (1963): 337–50 for discussion on Paul's therapeutic stance towards dealing with one's enemies.

¹⁴ S. C. Barton, 'Eschatology and the Emotions in Early Christianity', *JBL* 130 (2011): 571–91; see also S. C. Barton, 'Why Do Things Move People? The Jerusalem Temple as Emotional Repository', *JSNT* 37 (2015): 351–80 for discussion on the relationship between emotions and material objects. I will not discuss this essay as its key themes are less applicable to the current study.

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attracted relatively little attention in studies of early Christianity'.¹⁵ He states: 'Arguably, this neglect reflects a scholarly preoccupation in academic theology with matters of doctrinal, historical, and textual reconstruction. Arguably also, however, it reflects a certain myopia with respect to approaches to human perception and cognition that take seriously the expressive and cognitive resources of the emotions and the realm of the experiential.'¹⁶ Since 2011, New Testament scholarship has not taken up Barton's challenge to extend its vision to encompass the emotions. Barton's approach is the only attempt I have discovered that takes account of the Greco-Roman historical cultural setting of the emotions *and* is analytically informed by modern emotion theory. He adopts a cognitive view of emotions stating that 'emotions communicate culturally mediated moral judgements'.¹⁷ Barton goes on to say:

That is to say, emotions are cognitive and evaluative. This implies that study of early Christian emotions offers a window on the ethos, ethics, and identity of Christianity in a crucial formative period in a way that supplements traditional approaches. To put it another way, emotions as a form of rationality offer another avenue toward understanding early Christian rationality as a whole.¹⁸

This crucial insight has been overlooked in New Testament studies to date. Barton also recognises that emotions 'arise in the course of social relations and interactions' and therefore 'emotions are integral to personal engagements in social processes'. Thus, 'the study of emotions offers additional insight into the tenor and character of early Christian social life and action'.¹⁹ He goes on to explore grief in 1 Thessalonians, acknowledging that his essay does not answer every question raised by investigating emotions.

A second article by Barton assesses the role of emotions in moral theology.²⁰ This time, using Greco-Roman moral philosophy comparatively, Barton reveals how Christian stances towards emotions

¹⁵ Barton identifies the exception as the field of rhetorical studies, and cites *Paul and Pathos*, discussed above, as the primary example; Barton, 'Eschatology', 571.

¹⁶ Barton, 'Eschatology', 572.

¹⁷ Barton, 'Eschatology', 578.

¹⁸ Barton, 'Eschatology', 578.

¹⁹ See Barton, 'Eschatology', 579–80.

²⁰ S. C. Barton, "'Be Angry But Do Not Sin" (Ephesians 4:26a): Sin and the Emotions in the New Testament with Special Reference to Anger', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 28 (2015): 21–34.

can be at variance to surrounding society and, thus, emotions are integrated into Christian moral life differently.²¹ He shows that Christian emotions are shaped by the ‘salvific narrative of divine grace’ in Christ. Therefore, emotions ‘as a form of cognition’ have the potential to ‘be in alignment with, and an expression of, *the truth*’.²² For the early Christians, having the appropriate moral emotions involved a process of learning, instructed by both biblical traditions and the New Testament authors themselves.²³ Hence, Barton demonstrates that investigating emotions gives insight into the moral theology of New Testament authors and New Testament therapeutic education.

Barton has argued strongly that much can be gained by analysing the place and use of emotions in the New Testament. Thus, Barton’s work has been a springboard for my own. This study will build on Barton’s by presenting the first full-length exploration of the role of emotions in a New Testament epistle that uses analytical tools from modern emotion theory, the cultural and historical insights gained from Greco-Roman philosophy, and the theological background of biblical tradition. In doing so, it will, to quote Barton, engage with early Christian emotions with ‘greater depth and with greater analytical sophistication than has been the case hitherto’.²⁴

1 Peter

Where emotion terms appear in 1 Peter they have been noted, but they have not received an informed analytical treatment. For example, in most major commentaries, e.g. Michaels’, Achtemeier’s, and Elliott’s, emotions such as shame are given a sideways glance, whereas others like fear receive more attention. However, the comments are often thin and not thoroughly worked through, with the consequence that

²¹ Barton also investigates anger in Biblical and Jewish tradition, noting that this also has influence on early Christian moral understanding.

²² Barton, ‘Be Angry’, 33.

²³ Barton, ‘Be Angry’, 33–4; For more on how emotions align with belief see S. C. Barton, ‘Spirituality and the Emotions in Early Christianity: The Case of Joy’, in *The Bible and Spirituality: Exploratory Essays in Reading Scripture Spiritually*, ed. Andrew T. Lincoln et al. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 171–93. In this same volume is a theologically illuminative, if rather analytically simple discussion of love in Galatians; see P. G. R. de Villiers, ‘Love in the Letter to the Galatians’, in *The Bible and Spirituality: Exploratory Essays in Reading Scripture Spiritually*, ed. Andrew T. Lincoln et al. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 194–211.

²⁴ Barton, ‘Eschatology’, 573.

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the specific communication contained in the emotion term is missed and, therefore, its influence on interpretation is not recognised.

There have been three notable examinations of joy in 1 Peter, specifically its relation to suffering.²⁵ Both Nauck and de Villiers provide short treatments, whereas Millhauer's analysis is part of his larger work *Leiden als Gnade*. Millhauer's study does not investigate the rhetorical function of joy, rather it is a tradition-historical investigation of the *Leidenstheologie* of 1 Peter. Likewise, Nauck's article focuses on tradition-historical questions. In de Villiers' essay, he provides some useful comment on the contextualisation of joy, e.g. its object in 1.6, and links joy to the argument and purpose of 1 Peter.²⁶ He also comments that the Christians, through 1 Peter's address, have 'obtained the proper perspective on their sufferings'.²⁷ However, he does not provide a full examination of *how* the author by utilising the emotion of joy has sought to achieve this, nor does he suggest the implications of employing joy in this context. It is unfair to expect these authors to give a full treatment of emotions given that the developments in emotions studies, on which my work relies, postdate them. Thus, in light of progress in other fields, a fresh reading of emotions in 1 Peter is needed.

Even in Paul Holloway's *Coping with Prejudice*, a thematic approach that utilises psychological theory, discussion of emotions is surprisingly scant.²⁸ Holloway does acknowledge that the fears and anxieties produced by prejudice occasioned 1 Peter, but, where such themes are encountered in the text, Holloway gives little discussion on the emotions themselves.²⁹ Holloway highlights 'emotion-focused' strategies as a means of coping with prejudice. This includes 'social comparisons', 'attribution of negative outcomes', and 'a restructuring of one's self concept'.³⁰ But, Holloway does not evaluate the rhetorical function of emotions that leads the audience

²⁵ W. Nauck, 'Freude im Leiden: Zum Problem einer urchristlichen Verfolgungstradition', *ZNW* 46 (1955): 68–80; J. L. de Villiers, 'Joy in Suffering in 1 Peter', in *Essays on the General Epistles of the New Testament: 11th meeting of Die Nuwe-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika, 1975*, ed. W. Nicol, Neotestamentica 9 (Pretoria: NTWSA, 1975), 64–86; H. Millhauer, *Leiden als Gnade: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Leidenstheologie des ersten Petrusbriefes*, EH 23 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1975).

²⁶ de Villiers, 'Joy', 70–2, 77–9.

²⁷ de Villiers, 'Joy', 84.

²⁸ P. A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective*, WUNT 244 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

²⁹ Holloway, *Coping*, 8.

³⁰ Holloway, *Coping*, 122–7.