



1 Peter Chapter Five

IV 1 Peter 4:12-5:11 - Persevering in Suffering (Continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Five

Here, Peter gives particular directions, first to the elders, how to model themselves and their duty towards their flock (v.1-4); then to the younger Christians, to be obedient and humble, and to cast their care upon God (v.5-7). He then exhorts all to humility, watchfulness against temptations, and steadfastness in the faith, praying earnestly for them; and so concludes his epistle with a solemn doxology, mutual salutations, and his apostolic benediction.

IV.b 1 Peter 5:1-11 - To Elders and Young Men

Peter does not command those he writes to but appeals to the elders as their equal, not as their apostle. He instructs them in their duties as shepherds of their flock, which they must hold throughout life until Christ returns. Peter possibly addresses newer Christians as young men, or he could be speaking to literally younger members of the congregations, and instructs them to live in all humility towards God, casting their cares on him.

Peter warns of the need to remain alert and in control of their lives in order to prevent the enemy from gaining a foothold, something he is always striving to do. He warns again that there will inevitably be suffering to undergo in this life.

1 Peter 5:1-4

Peter's credentials are not only remarkable they are almost unique. He is both an apostle chosen by Christ and also an eye-witness of Christ's sufferings; therefore a servant of the truth. He commends the church elders as he himself is considered to be one of such standing, but he does so from a position not of lordship but as a servant of God's people. Elders were often chosen from more mature men who had acquired knowledge through their experience. However, it should be recognised that it is the gifts and qualities of the individual, and their spiritual maturity that

is of concern, not necessarily their actual age. It is proper for older Christians to show deference and due respect to younger leaders who are called to such service. There is no hint of pride in Peter's claims about himself; just simple statements of fact.

¹ To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

1 Peter 5:1

The most common NT term for church leaders is elders: <<*Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust*>> (Acts 14:23). Paul's churches followed the synagogue pattern of leadership by elders. It is significant that elders were appointed from the beginning for such young churches, confirmed in these words: <<*Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord*>> (James 5:14), which dates to sometime between AD40-50. The language here indicates a plurality of elders in every church.

The terms: overseers, elders, pastors and shepherds seem to be used interchangeably by the NT authors. Apparently elders served as leaders in all the churches, including those in the northern part of Asia Minor, showing that this was the typical form of leadership in NT churches.

Peter, who is an apostle, as stated in 1 Peter 1:1, also serves as a fellow elder and an authoritative witness of Christ's ministry, especially his sufferings, i.e. his beatings and death, and then his resurrection and ascension. Peter often reminds those to whom he writes that suffering precedes glory.

As a fellow elder, Peter is stating that he is not asking them to do anything he would not be prepared to do for his own church congregation.

Peter was clearly a senior leader in at least one church congregation in Rome at this time and possibly had apostolic oversight of most church groups in the city. However, there is a big difference between being a church elder and being God's sole or main representative on earth, and therefore being the forerunner to the papal office as some would like to think. There is no supporting evidence from Peter's own letters or from any other historical writings from the time to believe that Peter was the first Pope in Rome.

Peter, like all other faithful believers, will share in the glory to be revealed: <<*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea*>> (Habakkuk 2:14), and: <<*At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory*>> (Mark 13:26). However, he has already shared in a partial revelation of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration: <<*After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them*>>

Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus>> (Mark 9:2-4), <<*About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him”*>> (Luke 9:28-35), and: <<*For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*>> (2 Peter 1:17-19).

² Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:2-3

There is one Chief Shepherd (v.4), but he delegates authority to his under-shepherds to fulfil two key duties: protecting the flock and keeping them fed spiritually. The sheep do not belong to the under-shepherd but to the Chief Shepherd. The former are responsible to the latter to ensure they are well kept. Peter himself had received such a command directly from the Lord: <<*Jesus said, “Feed my sheep”*>> (John 21:17c).

Elders (v.1) are entrusted with the responsibility to shepherd God’s flock, the Greek word *poimainō*, which means to tend sheep or to act as a shepherd: <<*Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep”*>> (John 21:16), <<*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood*>> (Acts 20:28), and: <<*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers*>> (Ephesians 4:11). It is from this word that the English verb and noun pastor is derived and Latin pastor means shepherd.

Elders are also entrusted with exercising oversight, or serving as overseers, derived by translating Greek *episkopeō*), which is the verb form of the noun

overseer, Greek episkopos, which is another title for those who serve as elders, again refer to Acts 20:28. The terms shepherd and exercising oversight emphasise the function of elders, i.e. they are to feed and watch over God's flock, while the title elder focuses on the office.

Episkopountes, which is derived from episkopos, means 'being a bishop', and is a ministry, not an office in the church. Not only are they to feed the sheep on the Word of God but they are also to teach them how to make good life-style choices in keeping with the Christian faith. However, each individual must take responsibility for their own discipleship in Christ.

Terms like bishop, pastor, elder, overseer. etc. are all expressions for servants and ministries in the church. They should all be undertaken by people who are humble servants of the flocks they have been entrusted to care for. It is something they are called to do willingly and not through compulsion or desire for status. There are those who have taken on leadership for the wrong reasons, including some of the big TV evangelists, but Jesus warns them most severely: <<As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely">> (Mark 12:38-40). There are leaders who have demonstrated the right heart for the job and have taken nothing from the people which they were not entitled to receive, including Moses: <<Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not accept their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them">> (Numbers 16:15), or Samuel: <<Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right." "You have not cheated or oppressed us," they replied. "You have not taken anything from anyone's hand." Samuel said to them, "The Lord is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand">> (1 Samuel 12:3-5), or Paul; when speaking to the Ephesian elders, confirms that: <<I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'>> (Acts 20:33-35).

It is right that believers give respect to their leaders and that, where appropriate, they conform to their leaders' advice and teaching, but the leaders need to be aware that the flock does not belong to them nor are they there to serve the leaders, for they belong to Christ alone, and the leaders are not there to lord it over the flock in any way. The Lord himself confirms this quite clearly: <<Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves">>

(Luke 22:25-26).

Peter now gives three exhortations to elders as to how they are to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them:

1. Elders are to shepherd the church gladly or willingly, in accord with God's will, instead of doing it out of a sense of compulsion, i.e. not because you must.
2. They are to do the work eagerly and not greedy for money or for shameful gain, the Greek term *aischrokerdōs*, which means in fondness for dishonest gain, or greedily.
3. They are to serve as examples to the congregation and, as previously noted, they must not use their place of leadership as a means to be domineering, or lording it over those entrusted to you.

One of the greatest attributes a church leader can display is to live their own lives as an exemplary example of Christian living, being faithful to God, dutiful to him in the discharge of their office and by being humble in their service to God through their service to his flock.

Paul tells us that: <<*The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages"*>> (1 Timothy 5:17-18), and it is quite right that key leaders should earn their living from the work they perform on behalf of the church, but Peter points out that the true worth of their office will be through eternal reward, a reward beyond all measure or comprehension. Again, it should be noted that the reward should not be the motivating factor; it is a ministry to which some are truly called and equipped to fulfil.

⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

1 Peter 5:4

The Chief Shepherd is Jesus Christ, and when he comes again he will reward every pastor and teacher who has served faithfully with the crown of glory. However, anyone who is called to this office by being given that gift by the Holy Spirit should not entertain the thought of doing so with the reward in mind. That is a gift of grace rewarded for the faithful service that is both out of obligation to and love for the Saviour.

There are many crowns of glory to be attained: <<*Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever*>> (1 Corinthians 9:25), <<*Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing*>> (2 Timothy 4:8), <<*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him*>>

(James 1:12), <<Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life>> (Revelation 2:10), and: <<I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God>> (Revelation 19:11-13). It does not say whether one of these crowns will be his original one given to him by us here on earth: <<When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”>> (John 19:5).

⁵ Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”

1 Peter 5:5

Young men, or you who are younger in some translations, probably means younger members of the congregation, who are more likely to be headstrong and resistant to leadership. They are to subject themselves or be submissive to the elders: <<Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you>> (Hebrews 13:17).

It is probably the spiritually mature and guided members that are to rule over those with lesser gifting or wisdom, but could be age related as already noted. The account of Job gives us a prime example of how a younger member would defer to an older member normally but then must speak out when realising they have wisdom on their side: <<So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said: “I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. I thought, ‘Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.’ But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right>> (Job 32:6-10).

All of you. Christians, as well as nonbelievers, are self-oriented by nature and therefore need to relate with humility toward one another.

Peter cites Proverbs 3:34, as does James: <<You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud gives grace to the humble”>> (James 4:4-6), to remind his readers that God is against the proud but will lavish his favour upon those who are humble. Part of the Lord’s challenge to Job was to: <<Unleash the fury of your

wrath, look at every proud man and bring him low, look at every proud man and humble him, crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave>> (Job 40:11-13), showing what the Lord did as part of his reckoning with mankind.

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

1 Peter 5:6

Humble yourselves. In their suffering, God's people are to give themselves entirely to him, submitting to his wise ordering of their lives. Therefore, as noted, Peter takes part of Solomon words: <<**He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble**>> (Proverbs 3:34). Where God gives grace to be humble, he will give more grace, more wisdom, stronger faith, holiness and even more humility!

God's mighty hand brings to mind the Exodus, where the Lord delivered Israel from Egypt 'by a mighty hand', e.g. <<**But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him**>> (Exodus 3:19), <<**But Moses sought the favour of the LORD his God. "O LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?"**>> (Exodus 32:11), <<**Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?**>> (Deuteronomy 4:34), <<**Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day**>> (Deuteronomy 5:15), and: <<**Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong**>> (Daniel 9:15). Those who suffer can likewise be confident that the day of humiliation will not last forever. Whether later in this earthly life or on the Last Day, God will exalt his people at the proper time.

⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxiety on him. The participle casting modifies the main verbal phrase <<**humble yourselves**>> from v.6. Worry is a form of pride because it involves taking concerns upon oneself instead of entrusting them to God. Believers can trust God because, as their Father, he cares for them. Jesus speaks out strongly against those of us who choose to worry: <<**Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"**>> (Luke 12:22-26).

The strongest of disciples are apt to labour under the burden of anxious and excessive care; the apostle calls it, **all your anxiety**, intimating that the anxieties and cares of Christians are varied and often many, including personal cares, family cares, cares for the present, cares for the future, cares for themselves, for others, and for the church: *<<For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favour and honour; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless>>* (Psalm 84:11). After listing many of the hardships he had faced in his ministry, Paul adds: *<<Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches>>* (2 Corinthians 11:28).

This life can become a burden to the strongest of people but they need never despair for Christ has invited us all to place our burdens upon him, for just as he bore the weight of our sin on the Cross, so too he will bear the weight of our problems that we cannot resolve for ourselves.

⁸ Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8

Be self-controlled and alert. Christians need to be spiritually vigilant, watching for attacks from **the Devil**, their great enemy and opponent. Peter uses the graphic image of **a roaring lion** to describe Satan's destructive threat: he **prowls around, looking for someone to devour**, hoping that believers will be terrified in their hardship and persecutions, or that they will be deceived and fall into sin. Although the Devil may threaten to **devour** believers, they nevertheless have assurance that they will be guarded by God's power: *<<who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time>>* (1 Peter 1:5). It is interesting to note that the prophet had long ago foreseen the leaders in Jerusalem behaving as Satan is described here: *<<Her officials are roaring lions, her rulers are evening wolves, who leave nothing for the morning>>* (Zephaniah 3:3).

Peter gives a warning that we would all do well to heed. We must remain in control of our senses and our own way of life, for **the Devil** is always **looking for** a way to make us fall. God had given Cain a similar instruction: *<<If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it>>* (Genesis 4:7). Jesus, in a warning about his return, stated: *<<But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into>>* (Matthew 24:43). If we remain alert then we will know what the enemy is up to and will not fall into his trap.

We never want to give the enemy too much credence nor should we give him the credit for everything that may go wrong in our lives; that is mostly due to human weakness. At the same time, we must never doubt that the evil in this world never sleeps and will look for any and every opportunity to disrupt the work of the Kingdom in order to try to advance his own desires and ambitions. By being alert, watchful and by remaining close to God in prayer, we have little to fear but vigilance is the watchword that Peter and others advise.

⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1 Peter 5:9

Resist him. Christians need not fear the Devil, for the Lord has given them power to stand against him by being **firm in the faith**: <<*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints*>> (Ephesians 6:12-18). Trusting in God's promises, believers know that suffering is not the final word and that ultimately they will be exalted: <<*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you*>> (James 4:7).

The same kind of sufferings that are being experienced by the believers in Asia Minor are not unique to them, for it is the portion allotted to believers everywhere, i.e. **your brothers throughout the world**. Hence, they can take courage that they are not alone. Although **throughout the world** does not indicate an empire-wide decree against Christians in Peter's day, Christians who suffer in any age can be assured that they are not alone in their distress.

¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

1 Peter 5:10

Peter now concludes his epistle which has provided its readers with a truly Christian doctrine; he has done so in what is a masterly manner, especially in the way he has described faith, love and the Cross of Christ; and how he instructs and warns us as to how we should contend with the enemy. Whoever comprehends this letter doubtless has all the knowledge and encouragement he needs. He needs nothing else other than that which God so richly teaches him found in this letter and which likewise overflows in all the other books of the NT. But that is little different from this, for here the apostle Peter has forgotten nothing which is necessary for a Christian to know. He ends the letter in the way every faithful teacher of God's Word should in that he not only takes care to feed the sheep but also cares and prays for them; and concludes with a prayer that God may give them grace and strength that they may understand and retain the word.

A little while is something Peter chooses to repeat in his exhortation to his readership: <<*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials*>> (1 Peter 1:6). See the associated comments made in Chapter One. This includes the period of time beginning with Christ's ascension: <<*So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven">> (Acts 1:6-11), until Christ comes again at the end of the age. From God's perspective, one's time in this world is notably brief, as James records: <<*Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes*>> (James 4:14), and elsewhere Peter points out: <<*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day*>> (2 Peter 3:8). Thus, no matter how long or intense one's suffering may be, it will be short compared to the joys of eternity.

That Christ will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast reminds believers that God will eventually restore whatever they have lost for the sake of Christ: <<*I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten*>> (Joel 2:25), and: <<*"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life"*>> (Luke 18:29-30).

Although suffering will come first, it will be followed by eternal glory. The God who effectually called believers by his grace will fortify them with his strength, so that they are able to endure to the end.

Peter's wish is to commit them to God who alone bestows all sufficient grace and has called them to himself through his Son that they might share in eternal glory with him. This has been done for Christ's sake and not through any merit of their own. This life is there to prepare them, make them grow in strength and faith, and to stand for Christ that they might accomplish much through him and His Spirit, and that they may be able to bear much suffering as they do so, without falling away from the faith that was given to them through free grace.

¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:11

Praise is a dutiful pleasure that we as Christians should offer up to God. Because God is sovereign and rules over all, believers have nothing to fear, no matter what their circumstances are.

V 1 Peter 5:12-14 - Final greetings

The letter concludes with greetings and a final exhortation. Peter sums up his letter by emphasising that this is the true grace of God, urging his readers, in the midst of persecution and suffering, not to forsake the faith and to stand firm in that grace.

¹² With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

1 Peter 5:12

Peter, with the help of Silas, has written to them as confirmation of the true grace of the Gospel they have received. It was not to teach them anything they did not already know, but as a way to encourage them to hold fast to what they have been given in true faith so they may endure to the end.

Some scholars have suggested that with the help of Silas, I have written designates Silas as the secretary who helped compose the letter, but the Greek construction here, dia plus genitive of a person's name, would indicate instead that Silas delivered the letter, e.g. <<*Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing*>> (Acts 15:27), where the same construction occurs with this meaning. Silas is called Silvanus in several translations.

Silas accompanied Paul on at least his second missionary journey (circa AD49-52), which probably brought apostolic confirmation of the Gospel into Europe, including Macedonia and Greece, for the first time. Silas was imprisoned with Paul in Philippi (Acts 16:16-40).

Whom I regard as a faithful brother. Peter would be aware that Silas was probably well known among many of his readers and that he was a Diaspora Jew himself, but that he had accompanied Paul in his role as an apostle to the Gentiles. Peter's readers would be a mixture of Jewish converts, former proselytes and God-fearers, and those that had come to faith from a purely Gentile background. Thus Peter's commendation of Silas would help to ensure that he was well received by all aspects of the church, for the aim of men like Paul and Peter was to create a unified church in Christ.

Testifying. This is about being a witness for God. Jesus did so: <<*He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe*>> (John 1:7), then John the Baptist testified to the truth of Jesus as the Christ: <<*I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God*>> (John 1:34), as did those who went before him: <<*All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name*>> (Acts 10:43).

Stand fast in it. This exhortation is a call to generations that have followed the time the letter was written. Anyone who is in Christ and is prepared to stand in his free grace will taste true life during their time on earth and everlasting life in the

one to come.

¹³ She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

1 Peter 5:13

She who is in Babylon, who is chosen almost certainly refers to the church in Rome, not a literal woman. John uses a similar technique in his second epistle, using the phrase chosen or elect lady: <<*The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth – and not I only, but also all who know the truth – because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever*>> (2 John 1). In John's second epistle the Greek Kuria or Kyria is used for lady, which is a proper name but few scholars would hold this to be anything but referring to a church and not a person.

Although the Babylon of the OT was in ruins, the reference resonates with the OT, where Babylon represented a centre of earthly power opposed to God, see Isaiah Chapters 13-14 and Jeremiah Chapters 50-51. See also Revelation Chapters 17-18, where Babylon is recognised as an everlasting place of opposition to the Kingdom of God, a place of lustful living. In Peter's day that city would be Rome. The language of Babylon and chosen forms an *inclusio*, a literary envelope, with the first verse of the book. The OT background of Babylon reminds believers that, although they are exiles and strangers, they are: <<*elect strangers*>> (1 Peter 1:1b), or a chosen people, who will receive the promised inheritance in the Kingdom of God.

Mark is the same John Mark, who travelled with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey: <<*When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark*>> (Acts 12:25). Although he left Paul and Barnabas without their blessing or permission, which had caused Paul and Barnabas to argue over his inclusion on the second missionary journey: <<*They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord*>> (Acts 15:39-40). But Mark was later restored to his former usefulness: <<*My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him)*>> (Colossians 4:10), <<*Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry*>> (2 Timothy 4:11), <<*And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers*>> (Philemon 24).

Peter would have known Mark from the earliest days following the Lord's ascension, because the church had met in his mother's Jerusalem home, recorded after Peter's angelic-led release from prison, which even Peter at first found incredulous: <<*When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying*>> (Acts 12:12).

In addition, this verse shows a close personal and spiritual relationship between Peter and Mark, as Peter calls him my son, and is one indication of the validity of

the early church tradition that Mark wrote his Gospel at Peter's direction. According to church tradition, Mark also founded the church in Alexandria, Egypt, which was a Jewish dominated city in the Roman Empire.

Paul also refers to his closest co-workers as his spiritual sons: <<*To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*>> (2 Timothy 1:2), and: <<*To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour*>> (Titus 1:4).



The image is of Babylon in ruins as it is today and probably was in Peter's day.

The second image is a depiction of the famous hanging gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.



Babylon was the name of the city in Chaldea, known as Babel in Hebrew, which means confusion, for it was there that God had confused the attempts to build a tower to heaven by confusing the language of all the people, thus making it impossible for them to instruct one another in how to build it, see Genesis 11:1-9. Rome was a city in confusion at the time Peter was there, with all kinds of shameful practices being accepted, and indeed encouraged, as part of everyday life, as Paul confirms: <<*Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them*>> (Romans 1:28-32).

¹⁴ Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

1 Peter 5:14

The kiss of love had become a mark of the shared brotherly love that believers had for one another in the early church. It would have been common for the disciples to greet their Rabi with a kiss and it was in this fashion that Judas had agreed to betray Jesus: <<*Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard”*>> (Mark 14:44), <<*but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”*>> (Luke 22:48). Paul refers to greetings between brothers and sisters in Christ as a holy kiss: <<*Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings*>> (Romans 16:16), <<*All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss*>> (1 Corinthians 16:20), and: <<*Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss*>> (1 Thessalonians 5:26).

With this style of greeting Paul signifies the warm affection that all Christians should have for one another. Like some other practices with symbolic meanings that change from culture to culture, such as foot washing, or head covering for wives, a holy kiss would not convey the same meaning today that it did in the 1st Century, and in most cultures it could be seriously misunderstood. Such commands are best obeyed by substituting an action, such as a handshake or hug or bow, varying by culture that would convey the same meaning of acceptance in a modern culture. The kiss was usually reserved for special reunions among family members or formal greetings; extending such a kiss to an entire group was a practice unique to the early church that signified their mutual acceptance as a family.

Peter closes his letter with a final prayer and apostolic benediction that his readers will know peace, which will be their portion because they are in Christ. Peter had opened the letter in similar fashion: <<*Grace and peace be yours in abundance*>> (1 Peter 1:2).

Although given in Greek in this letter, the expression peace in Jewish benedictions, the Hebrew word shalom, has a much richer connotation than the English word does, since it conveys, not merely the absence of conflict and turmoil, but also the notion of positive blessing, especially in terms of a right relationship with God and, as a result, the idea that ‘all is well’ in one’s life. This may be manifested most clearly amid persecution and tribulation.