

## The New Testament, Book 21

### I Peter

The epistle of I Peter is one of the “general epistles” whose message is not addressed to a specific church or person. I Peter is a letter dealing with hope in the midst of suffering; its content is more practical than doctrinal, and it seems to have been written against the background of the persecutions under Nero. This epistle is addressed to “the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,” those Christians facing persecution in Asia Minor.

There were groups of believers scattered throughout Asia Minor which had their Christian beginnings as Jews who were present in the crowd in Jerusalem, when Peter preached his great message at Pentecost. After he preached they had received the Messiah Jesus and the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and returned to their homes, carrying the good news of the gospel message with them. Although Peter had played a key role in opening the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10 and 11), his primary ministry was as apostle to the Jews<sup>1</sup>. It is natural that he should feel a pastoral responsibility for the scattered Jewish Christians in Asia Minor.

As is the case with the general epistle of James, I Peter is so densely packed with significance and revelation that much of it is slow going. As a result, and again like the epistle of James, many highlights will consist of only two or three verses, for we cannot hurry past things so rich in meaning. I Peter requires, and deserves, much chewing.

**A. Author.** The author identifies himself as “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ...” in the first verse. Since the time of writing, there has been almost unanimous agreement concerning Peter’s authorship of this epistle. No other book in the canon has stronger attestation of authenticity by the Church Fathers, including Papias (60-130 AD), friend of Polycarp (ca 70-ca 160 AD) and, like Papias, a disciple of the apostle John<sup>2</sup>.

**B. Place and Date.** The time of writing is generally considered to be ca 65 AD, while Paul was a prisoner for two years in Rome (his first, “house arrest,” imprisonment)<sup>3</sup>. The writer shows acquaintance with early epistles,

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 2:7-9.

<sup>2</sup> ANF, Vol 1, Fragments of Papias, VI, p 155.

<sup>3</sup> This statement is based upon the generally accepted belief that Paul was imprisoned in Rome twice: first for two years of humane house arrest, released by Nero for approximately three years, and then re-arrested, imprisoned in the terrible Mamartine prison with Peter, after which they were both martyred.

such as James, I Thessalonians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians. At the time of the writing of this epistle, John Mark and Silas (Silvanus) were with Peter; and Silas would carry the letter to the churches.

The place of writing, however, is another matter indeed. Peter says that he is writing from “the church that is at Babylon.” Commentators are divided over this; did he mean literal Babylon, or was it a symbolic reference to Rome and its ungodly rulers? This question may never be answered until the Lord returns to answer all questions. Literal Babylon still existed at the time, had a large Jewish population, and it was not very far from Israel<sup>4</sup>. Rome could be compared, symbolically to the earlier, oppressive Babylon; yet Paul had written a letter to the church at Rome about ten years earlier, and called Rome by its actual name; and there is no mention, in Acts or in the epistles of Paul, of Peter’s having been in Rome. I am inclined to believe that the place of writing was the city of Babylon; but no one knows, and we definitely will not settle the “Babylon” question here.

**C. Occasion.** With growing persecution of Christians in Asia Minor, Peter wished to warn the churches to expect suffering, and to prepare them to endure it victoriously. Suffering is mentioned 16 times in the book’s five chapters.

**D. Highlights.** Highlights in I Peter include the following:

***NOTE:** This epistle was written, as we have seen, to Jewish believers, scattered throughout Asia Minor; however, it was inspired by the Holy Spirit as a message also to you and to me--to all of us, in the centuries that have followed, who would believe the good news and be redeemed. It would be extremely tiresome and awkward to repeatedly use “the Jewish believers...” and “the Jewish Christians...” throughout this study guide (and the study guide to Peter’s Second Epistle). For this reason, I will use the simpler “us” and “we” throughout; it will be easier, both on you and on me.*

1. Elect According to the Foreknowledge of God. (1:1-2)

Even in his salutation, Peter makes an important teaching point. He describes those scattered Jewish believers as “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father....” These believers are chosen for redemption because God knew in advance that they would believe on Jesus the Messiah and be faithful. In God there is no past, present or future; there is only one enormous present<sup>5</sup>.

2. An Incorruptible Inheritance. (1:3-5)

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<sup>4</sup> Josephus wrote of literal Babylon at about the same time, concerning a great slaughter of the Jews there. (Josephus, Antiquities , 18. 9. 1)

<sup>5</sup> Romans 8:28-31.

God the Father has “begotten us again” (the new birth) and has given us, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, a living hope of an incorruptible, undefiled inheritance, one in Heaven that will not fade away<sup>6</sup>. And, through faith, we are kept in our salvation by the power of God, unto the final victory of the last day.

3. Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory. (1:6-9)

We have reason to rejoice, even though we are going through difficult trials and manifold temptations--really bad times--like gold which is being purified by fire in the crucible, because when we persevere and let patience have its perfect work, we grow and improve. As a result, we will receive praise and glory when Jesus appears and all things are made right, and we will enjoy the salvation of our souls forever. Although we have not seen Him, yet we believe; and, even in hard times, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

4. The Mystery of God’s Plan of Salvation. (1:10-12)

Continuing to speak of the reward of the faithful in the end time, Peter reveals an interesting thing. He says that even the prophets, inspired and prompted by the Holy Spirit, who saw glimpses of God’s plan for the Messiah who would suffer, the just for the unjust, and purchase redemption for those who would someday receive Him, were not told everything. They wondered when and how this redeeming work would take place, but did not know the answers. It was revealed to them, however, that the things they ministered were not meant for them, but were instead meant for us. And the angels, whom God sends to do his bidding, would like to understand this wonderful plan of redemption, but cannot.

***NOTE:** It seems that angels, even though they live in the presence of God and have certain supernatural powers given to them by God, cannot understand God’s plan of salvation, for they are created beings, designed by God to do only certain things. Because they have never experienced being human and lost without God, they cannot understand the joy of being redeemed from that awful condition. This seems to be what Jesus had in mind when He said that there is joy “in the presence of the angels” (i.e. in Heaven) when one sinner repents<sup>7</sup>. He did not say that there is joy **experienced by the angels**; He said that there is joy **in their presence**. I find no place in the Bible where angels rejoiced. (Editors: do you know of any?)*

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<sup>6</sup> Concerning “begotten us again” see Jn 3:3-7.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 15:10.

Gird Up the Loins of Your Mind. (1:13-16)

The battles we face are won or lost in the mind, where decisions are made<sup>8</sup>. For this reason we must guard our thoughts and fill our minds with the Word and its truth, arming ourselves against the deceptions and devices of the devil, and the temptations of the ungodly world around us. We must not slip back into the way we thought before we knew the Lord.

To “gird up the loins” refers to preparing for action. In the ancient Middle East men wore long robes, down to their feet (many still do). When preparing to fight, or to move quickly for any other reason, they would reach down to about knee length, pull up the robe and fasten it high up with a girdle or belt--usually a sword belt--around the hips, or loins<sup>9</sup>. In the same way, Peter reminds us, since mental and spiritual battles are won or lost in the mind, we must strengthen and guard our minds with the Word, and be always diligent and ready for the battle between our ears. In the process, we will be disciplined, obedient children, emulating our holy God. If we allow unholy thoughts and actions to contaminate our lives we will be handicapped in the battles that come with living.

4. The Incorruptible Seed of Salvation. (1:22-25)

Because we have been cleansed of sin by the work of the Holy Spirit, we should love one another, and we should love one another sincerely and fervently. We should do this because we are new creatures, born anew of the Spirit through the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, which is eternal and will never change. All things fleshly and human are temporary, like flowers and grass. The beautiful flower and the green grass flourish at their best, but then fade and wither away<sup>10</sup>. But the incorruptible seed of our salvation, the eternal Word of the Lord, will neither fade nor cease to exist; it will endure forever in its beauty and perfection<sup>11</sup>.

5. Growing Spiritually, Feeding on the Word. (2:1-6)

We must put ungodly things out of our lives--such things as meanness, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. Such attitudes and behavior are offensive to God and should have no part in our lives; they will hinder our spiritual growth.

When we come into the Kingdom of God we are, in spiritual terms, babes, and we must grow spiritually. To grow spiritually, we must feed on the

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<sup>8</sup> In this regard, see also 2:11, 4:1; Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23 and Hebr 12:3.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see Ex 12:1-11.

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 40:6-8

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 12:6-7.

pure spiritual milk of the Word of God. Having already tasted the grace and goodness of the Lord, Peter says, we should come to Him, the stone rejected by the builders, but chosen by God to be the Cornerstone of his spiritual house, the Church<sup>12</sup>. We believers become living stones, built up into that spiritual house; and we will also be a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord.

**NOTES:**

*a. Dealing with the requirements of v 1 usually takes time. God can, of course, set us free from these sinful practices and attitudes in an instant, and sometimes He does; but, often, ridding ourselves of such things is a process of gradual improvement. The process however, no matter how long it takes, begins in a moment--with a decision.*

*b. Spiritual growth comes as a result of three essentials:*

*(1). We grow from feeding on the Word--the Bible itself; and it should be done regularly and systematically. Any Bible reading is better than none, but it is more effective if it is regular and systematic. Reading books and watching films about the Bible can be useful, but real growth comes only from feeding on the Word itself. And, in my opinion, reading and studying paraphrases does not bring growth. A paraphrase is not the Bible--it is only someone's idea of what the Bible means. Thus, it lacks that life-changing power of inspiration which God has breathed into the actual Word by the Spirit of God.*

*(2) We grow from being doers of the Word, and not forgetful hearers only. By being doers of the Word we become established in who and what we are, and we grow in other ways as well.*

*(3) We grow by praying. The more we pray the more we grow; there is no substitute for it. George Washington combined reading the word and prayer; he spent two hours daily on his knees with his Bible before him, reading and praying--an hour in the morning, and an hour at bed time.*

**8. Jesus the Great Cornerstone. (2:7-10)**

Jesus, our Messiah, is precious. To us who believe He is the Cornerstone of the Church and of our existence. To those who reject Him, however, He is a rock of offense and a stumbling stone, the stone that the builders rejected. Jesus cannot simply be ignored or avoided; one way or another, He must be acknowledged and faced. We believers are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people, very different from the ungodly world around us. We become these things to glorify the Lord,

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<sup>12</sup> Psalm 34:8, 118:22.

who has called us out of darkness, into his glorious light, to be the children and people of God.

9. Be Examples of Godliness. (2:11-12)

Peter urges us to abstain from sinful things and set an example for the unredeemed Gentiles around them to see. We are, he says, like strangers and pilgrims, passing through a foreign land. If our lives are lived no differently from those of the ungodly world around them, we will be bad witnesses to them; and, not only that, but the wicked things that we say and do will be the enemies of our very souls. If, however, we lead godly lives, the unredeemed ones around us will see the difference in us, God will be glorified, and He will look upon us with approval.

10. We Should submit to Civil Authorities. (2:13-17)

Peter calls on us to be obedient to civil authorities, for the sake of the Lord and his kingdom. We should be law-abiding citizens, because civil laws and regulations are established for our own good; they are intended to bless the lawful and punish those who break the law<sup>13</sup>. This is the will of God, he says, for by being lawful and obedient to civil authorities we set an example to those unredeemed around us. Those around us may not accept the testimony about their need of Jesus and his gift of salvation, but they will not be able to deny what they see in the way we believers live and conduct ourselves. He summarizes by saying that we should treat others with respect, love one another, fear and revere God, and respect the king for the position he holds.

**NOTE:** *In all passages directing believers to obey civil authorities (or Church authorities), the assumption is that the laws and regulations are to punish bad behavior and reward good behavior. If laws and regulations require us to do wrong, punish righteousness, or reward wickedness, then our Christian duty is to disobey human authorities and obey God. It is impossible to avoid sinning (disobedience) by sinning (obedience to an ungodly law). After all, it was the same Peter who wrote this epistle, who also refused to obey the Sanhedrin and cease speaking of Jesus, saying that he must obey God and not man (Acts 5:26-29).*

11. Servants and Masters. (2:18-21)

Christian servants are to be obedient to their human masters and serve them well, as examples of Christian virtue. This applies to servants with difficult masters as well as to those with kind and considerate masters. It is easy to be obedient and submissive to a kind and considerate master;

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<sup>13</sup> See in this regard Acts 5:29; the study guide to Rom 13:1-7; and Hebr 13:17.

however, it is not easy to be submissive and obedient to a master who is unkind and difficult to please. If we are obedient to a difficult master, suffering patiently under his authority, God is glorified<sup>14</sup>. After all, Jesus Himself “learned obedience by the things which He suffered.”

12. By His Stripes We Are Healed. (2:22-25)

Jesus suffered being despised and rejected by those He had come to save; yet he did not return evil for the evil done to Him, or threaten retribution or revenge. Instead, He patiently endured the contradiction of sinners, trusting his righteous Father for the outcome. He who was sinless allowed his body to be tortured and torn, in the scourging that preceded crucifixion, and in the agony on the cross, in order that we might be dead to sin, and alive to righteousness. And in the tearing of his sinless body He, the great Shepherd of the sheep, purchased health and healing for us.

13. Guidance for Husbands and Wives. (3:1-7)

Chapter 3 opens with a summary of guidance for husbands and wives. He advises wives to set an example of domestic order, quietly and chastely going about their daily lives, not rebelling against the authority of their husbands. He also advises against conspicuous jewelry, expensive clothing and elaborate hairdos. He urges instead that the conspicuous thing about them be their godly virtue, so that the lost people around them will notice the difference in them and be attracted to the gospel. Instead of elaborate clothing, jewelry and hair styling, let the unbelievers see the beauty of an humble and quiet spirit<sup>15</sup>. In old times, he says, holy women of God, such as Sarah, Abraham’s wife, were in submission to their husbands--not rebelling against them--and were secure--not in fear. Likewise, he says to husbands that they should live with their wives, being sensitive to their needs, protecting and honoring them. If they do not relate to their wives in this way, he says, their prayers will be hindered and they will not be able to pray effectively<sup>16</sup>.

14. General Guidance for Christian Behavior. (3:8-14)

It is the will of God that we all be in harmony, not divided into conflicting factions; and we should be considerate and compassionate with one another, not seeking revenge, but blessing one another so that we all inherit a

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<sup>14</sup> I Peter 3:17.

<sup>15</sup> See also I Tim 2:9-10. I cannot read and contemplate these verses without thinking of women, prominent in Christian television, who dress and present themselves to the world in exactly the way that Peter here says they should not. In my opinion, they make themselves look cheap, gaudy and superficial, doing harm to themselves and the gospel.

<sup>16</sup> Colossians 3:19.

blessing. If we would love life and see happy days, we should control our tongues, reject evil, seek to do that which is good, and pursue peace. The Lord is watching and listening to us, and his face is unchangeably set in opposition to those who practice evil. It really is that simple; and, when we suffer for doing what is right, we will not be alone--the Comforter will be with us<sup>17</sup>.

15. Be Always Ready to Share the Good News. (3:15-16)

We must keep Christ and his gift of salvation always sanctified and set apart in our hearts, protected and treasured, and we should always be ready to give a simple, logical answer to anyone who asks us why we follow Him. And, when we give our answer, we should do it respectfully--not arrogantly, or with hostility. We should, as always, speak the truth in love, especially this most important of truths. And we must be careful to live our lives according to our profession of faith; otherwise our testimony will be dishonored and ineffective.

16. Can It Be the Will of God for us to Suffer? (3:17)

Can it be the will of God that we suffer? The Scriptures make it clear that the answer is an unqualified "Yes." But why?

The death of innocent martyrs, slain for being faithful to the truth of the gospel and refusing to deny our Lord is, to the enemies of the gospel, a powerful witness to the Truth.

Most of us, however, will probably not die as martyrs. In the lives of most of us, it seems to me, God uses suffering to get our attention when we are straying into sin, or just when we are choosing a wrong path, and missing the path that He has chosen for us. It seems to me that when we are living in the will of God, we will have the peace of God. And, conversely, when we stray out of his will we will not have his peace. And, when our error is serious, some pain may be required in order to get our attention<sup>18</sup>.

17. Did Jesus Preach the Gospel to the Old Testament Dead? (3:18-22)

As we have seen already, Christ died for our sins, he just sacrificed for the unjust, so that we could be made acceptable to God; in this he willingly died physically, but was resurrected to life by the Holy Spirit. By this Holy Spirit power, Peter plainly tells us, our Savior "went and preached unto the spirits in prison." He states the fact plainly, but the meaning of what he plainly states is not so plain. He then refers to those (spirits?) in the days of Noah who, being Noah and his family, were saved from the flood by the ark.

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<sup>17</sup> John 14:16; Hebr 13:5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Supporting Scriptures are much too numerous to list here. For examples see Ps 34:16-19; Prov 3:11-12 (Hebr 12:3-6); Jn 16:33; Rom 5:3-5; II Tim 3:11; James 1:2-4, 12.

Further, he relates this, somewhat mysteriously, to water baptism which, he says, does not cleanse us, but is rather “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” This was made possible, he says, by the resurrection of Jesus the Christ, who has gone into Heaven, is seated on the right hand of the Father, superior to all angels, authorities and powers in the heavenly realm.

*NOTE: Did Jesus, in the Spirit, descend to some place below the surface of the Earth where he declared Himself as the awaited Messiah to those who had died under the Old Covenant (Old Testament)? This has been a matter of controversy for a very long time. Verses 5 and 6 of Chapter 4 strongly support this interpretation, and it seems reasonable to me; those who reject this interpretation, however, argue that this preaching to the spirits of the OT saints was actually done back during the OT period, while those people were still alive; but there seems to be no scriptural evidence for this interpretation. This question is discussed at some length in the study guide to Ephesians 4:8-10, “Did Jesus Descend into Hell,” and will not be repeated here.*

18. Some Old (Sinner) Friends Will Not Appreciate the Change. (4:1-7)

When we come to the Lord, and receive the new birth, our old friends, still unredeemed, will not understand what has happened to us; and some of them will not like the change. They will not understand why we do not want to do the sinful things that we shared with them before, and they will take offense. A common reaction is, “You think you are better than I am, don’t you?” They will, however, someday have to give account for their own lives.

All who ever lived will, at one time or another, have an opportunity to accept or reject God’s gracious gift of salvation, because God is perfectly just<sup>19</sup>. Meanwhile, Peter reminds us, the end is near. He failed to tell us what it was that he was talking about--probably the end of the Christian age, culminated by the return of Christ in the Second Advent. For this reason, we must not take our relationship with the Lord lightly; we must be prayerful, for **nothing** could be more serious or more important.

19. Love Covers a Multitude of Sins. (4:8-9)

Above all, Peter says, we must relate to one another in love, the agape love of God. This love forgives easily, does not bear grudges or keep a record of wrongs done, seeks not its own advantage over others and is not easily provoked. In fact, when all other things fail, three things will abide: faith,

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<sup>19</sup> John 1:1-9; I Tim 4:10. For the Old Testament dead, it seems to have happened during the three days and nights after the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross, as we have just seen in Highlight 17 above..

hope and the agape love of God; and the greatest of these is that love<sup>20</sup>. We should also practice hospitality with one another, and with strangers; in being kind to strangers we may even be entertaining angels without realizing it<sup>21</sup>.

20. Minister to One Another in the Spirit. (4:10-11)

Speaking to the scattered Jewish believers (and, of course, to us) Peter reminds them of the supernatural empowerment which the Holy Spirit has given them, and admonishes them to minister to one another accordingly. He says that they are different from the way that they were before meeting the living Lord Jesus and receiving the gift of the Holy spirit, and that when they speak and minister to one another (or to those who are not yet redeemed) they should speak and act as the representatives and vessels of God, and not merely with human wisdom and abilities. In this way it will be God who is glorified, through Jesus the Christ, and not men<sup>22</sup>.

*NOTE: The modern versions, including even the NKJV, use the indefinite article ("a" gift) in v 10, whereas the AV/KJV uses the definite article ("the" gift) which latter choice, it seems to me, makes the meaning of the passage much more clear. Although the Greek for "gift," "charisma," can mean a gift, whether natural ability or a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, here in these two verses Peter is speaking of living and ministering as the "oracles" (vessels/spokesmen) of God, not just in terms of human abilities. Remember that the first Christians to populate these scattered places in Asia Minor were Jews, who had been in Jerusalem for Pentecost. They had heard Peter preach, received the risen Jesus as Messiah, had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, and returned to the countries from which they had come. Peter is speaking to born-again, Spirit-baptized Jewish Christians; and he is speaking about ministering in the Spirit--not in the flesh.*

21. Fiery Trials Shall Come. (4:12-19)

This epistle was probably written during the spreading persecution of Christians by insane Nero, and it is possible that these persecutions had already begun in Asia Minor. Peter says here, at some length, that suffering for the gospel is to be expected. It will not be long before Peter himself will be crucified upside down in Rome, and will be buried next to the beheaded corpse of Paul. This letter, and the one to follow, will be Peter's last messages for the Church. We should not be surprised or discouraged when

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<sup>20</sup> Proverbs 10:12; I Cor 13:4-13; Jas 5:20.

<sup>21</sup> Hebrews 13:1-2.

<sup>22</sup> Acts 2:1-11; 2:38; 10:44-48; 19:1-6).

persecution comes. After all, Jesus Himself said that the world system hated Him, and that we should expect the same<sup>23</sup>. It is an honor (although it is not pleasant) to suffer for the Savior and for being righteous; however, by all means, we should avoid the suffering that comes from doing wrong.

In the plan of God, Peter says, judgment will begin in the Church, among God's own people; and, if we can expect chastening and cleansing, what grief and pain will the future hold for the ungodly and habitual sinners<sup>24</sup>? When persecution and suffering do come to us, the thing to do is to commit the keeping of our souls and our eternal destiny into the hands of God, our faithful Creator, trust Him and hang on to our profession of faith.

## 22. Guidance for Elders. (5:1-4)

Peter turns to the elders among the Jewish believers, with wise advice and admonition. Reminding them that he, himself, is an elder, and one who actually witnessed the sufferings of the Lord in his scourging and crucifixion, he charges them to exercise the oversight and guidance of those committed to their care, not with a heavy hand of compulsion, or for money, but because it is their calling and desire. They are not to lord it over the flock of God as if they were superior beings, but should lead by setting godly examples for them<sup>25</sup>. When the Chief Shepherd (Elder) returns, if they have carried out their duties in this way, they shall receive a crown of glory that will never fade away<sup>26</sup>.

### **NOTES:**

*a. It should be noted that Peter speaks here of "elders" (plural) and "flock" (singular). Likewise, he speaks of "lords" (plural) and "flock" (singular). It seems that here, and in other places, the Scriptures set forth the basic plan for church government: leadership over one congregation by a plurality of elders (and, although not stated here, deacons). If a congregation is led by only one man, Satan has only to deceive one man, in order to corrupt an entire congregation.*

*b. In v 4 the Greek clause rendered "that fadeth not away" is actually one word, "amarantinos," which means "unfading." It is derived from the genus of flowering plants, Amaranthus, known and appreciated for many purposes, but especially the endurance of its flowers, and its resistance to*

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<sup>23</sup> Matthew 10:16-25; Jn 15:18-20; 17:14.

<sup>24</sup> Proverbs 11:31.

<sup>25</sup> Acts 14:23, 20:25-28.

<sup>26</sup> The word "shepherd" appears 14 times in the NT. In the first 13 the underlying Greek word is *poimen* (simply "shepherd"). Here, in the 14th and final appearance, the reference is to Jesus, and the underlying Greek word is *archipoimen* meaning "Chief Shepherd."

*withering or fading when picked or cut. If wilted, once put in water, it has a remarkable ability to recover its freshness and beauty. Thus, it “fadeth not away.”*

23. Submission and Humility. (5:5-7)

Wise counsel continues, advising young Christians to recognize the knowledge and experience of their elders, and the importance of general submission of the flock to one another. Acting out of pride and striving for superior position or recognition over one another is something that is particularly offensive to God. Echoing the guidance in James, Peter says that God resists the proud, but is gracious to the humble<sup>27</sup>. In fact, he says, if we humble ourselves, under the mighty, protective and all-authoritative hand of God, He will, at the proper time, exalt and lift us up into a place of honor. Included in this humble position that we assume before Him, is that we can cast all of our cares, worries and things that we cannot fix, upon Him; in this way we can live in his peace.

***NOTE:** With the words “in due time” Peter adds clarification to the admonition of James, cited below. If we are lifted up, or exalted into a position of leadership or honor in the Church prematurely, it can hurt us, as in laying hands on a young and promising Christian too soon, placing him in a position for which he is not ready<sup>28</sup>.*

24. Be Vigilant and Resist the Devil. (5:8-9)

Finally, Peter urges the believers not to take the Christian life lightly or for granted. Instead he advises us to be sober and on our guard, because Satan walks about “as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour<sup>29</sup>.” We should, at all times, resist Satan, and we should do it steadfastly and consistently, walking in faith, remembering that other Christians, all over the World, are also going through essentially the same troubles and afflictions.

***NOTE:** It is important to note that Satan walks around “as” (like) a roaring lion. He **is not** a roaring lion; otherwise, we would not be so lightly advised (by both James and Peter) to resist him. If we draw nigh to God (as James advises), and walk in the Spirit as the Scriptures elsewhere advise, knowing our authority as believers, we can, as representatives of Christ Jesus (in his name), resist Satan and he must flee **from us**<sup>30</sup>. Although Satan has great--but--limited power, we, as Spirit-filled Christians, acting in the will and*

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<sup>27</sup> James 4:6-10. To be resisted by the God of the Universe is a sobering--if not terrifying--thought.

<sup>28</sup> I Timothy 3:1-10; 5:22.

<sup>29</sup> Job 1:6-7; Jas 4:6-10.

<sup>30</sup> James 4:7.

*authority of Jesus, can cause Satan to flee--not just from God (which is obvious and unconditional), but from us, as his servants and representatives.*

*Yes, Satan can deceive, and can appear to be frightening; but, when we act within Scriptural rules, he is more like the Wizard of Oz, huffing, bellowing, and blowing smoke from behind a curtain in the L. Frank Baum classic story. When he was exposed to Dorothy for what he was, it was the “wizard” who was afraid. Although he must never be taken lightly, for he has great power, when we are acting within our authority and the guidance of Scripture, Satan is in reality fearful of us<sup>31</sup>.*

25. Was Peter Writing from Babylon? (5:12-14)

And, with a closing benediction, and greetings from Silas (who did the actual writing) and Mark, Peter asks the Jewish believers to greet one another with a kiss of love, he prays peace for them, and closes this epistle.

**NOTE:** *In verse 13 Peter seems to be saying that he is writing from Babylon. But was he? For a refresher on this question, return to “**B. Place and Date**” at the beginning of this guide to the study of I Peter.*

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<sup>31</sup> Acts 19:13-16