

Peter's Epistles #37

Shepherding the Flock and Resisting the Devil

1st Peter 5:1-14

(also available on-line at ichthys.com)
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Paragraph I (vv. 1-4)

(1) So I urge the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, even one who shares [with you] in the glory which is about to be revealed, (2) pastor the flock of God under your charge, overseeing them not out of compulsion but willingly in response to God, not eager for shameful material gain, but out of genuine enthusiasm, (3) not lording it over the charges [entrusted to you], but as genuine examples to your flock. (4) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will carry off in victory the crown of glory which will never fade.

1st Peter 5:1-4

Elders (v.1):

So I urge the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, even one who shares [with you] in the glory which is about to be revealed . . .

1st Peter 5:1

The word "elder", the Greek *presbyteros* (from which our word "Presbyterian" because of that denomination's form of church governance by a board of elders), literally means "old man". In local churches, however, being an "old man" is not sufficient to partake in the direction of any given local church. In terms of the office of "elder", qualified men are appointed to that role after appropriate vetting (1Tim.3:2-7; 5:17; Tit.1:5-9).¹

Rather than reminding his readers that he is an apostle, Peter appeals to the leaders of the churches receiving his epistle on the basis of their common position, "elder". In doing so he invites comparison with himself. On the one hand, he is "no better" than they are, being under the same obligation as they are to the Lord to fulfill his charge to those sheep the Lord has given him to tend. On the other hand, this also means that they can judge their efficiency by comparison with Peter and his "job performance" – and no doubt many fell short. By laying claim to common eldership, Peter thereby removes any excuse that some may be clinging too, justifying their relatively poor track record through the rationalization that as an apostle, "of course", his performance is superior to theirs. But while the gift of apostleship gave Peter special authority over all churches (something no longer true of any single individual today), the

¹ See [Bible Basics 6B: Ecclesiology](#), section II.C.b., "Pastor-Teachers and Elders".

mechanics of the job he was given were precisely parallel to those of the elders to whom he was writing. All were charged to shepherd Christ's flock, whether locally in their case or throughout the churches in Peter's case.

In terms of the issue of "plurality of elders", that is, whether churches should have only one, or a group, or a group with one in charge, much ink – too much ink – has been spilled trying to resolve something the Bible is deliberately ambiguous about. In a small group, one elder who does the teaching may be sufficient. As the church grows, if others are appointed as elders to help him, he will still be doing the teaching unless and until a superior teacher emerges, or at least he will be doing the main job of teaching the congregation during the plenary meetings. And even if the church decides to give all of their elders an "equal vote", inevitably in all groups one person ends up being "the first among equals". Since all true biblical authority springs from teaching the truth of the Word of God, a good teacher in any such group will naturally be the one to whom the others defer – and if they do not, nothing good will come of it. That is how even good Bible teaching churches occasionally split up.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

1st John 2:19 NKJV

What we can take from Peter's words in our context, as well as from what he is about to say, is that any man who has been appointed to the office of elder has accepted a weighty responsibility that must not be taken lightly. Being an elder responsible for teaching a local group the truth is comparably important to the task of being an apostle to the entire Church, even though its scope of authority is one local church. So whether it is a question of a "teaching elder" (without which there is no true local church), he should teach as best he can, or an administrative elder, he should rule over the congregation (in company with his fellows) as best he can. As Peter put forth in the previous chapter:

(10) As each one [of us] has received a [particular spiritual] gift, [so let us be] ministering it to each other as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God. (11) If anyone communicates, let him do so as if he were speaking words directly from God. If anyone serves, let him do so from the strength which God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power for ever and ever.

Amen.

1st Peter 4:10-11

Therefore in this context we would be remiss not to point out that this principle, namely, of every Christian being responsible to the Lord to carry out the ministries they have been given in a diligent way, applies regardless of whether that person is an elder or a deacon or occupies any "official" position at all in the local church. We are all part of the same body, the Body of Christ, and we can only thrive as a body when each and every member is doing its job as unto the Lord. We are all accountable to Him – and we will all be evaluated and rewarded according to what we have actually accomplished for Him and for His Church, not on the basis of any office we have held (Eph.4:11-16; Col.2:19).

(9) And [so] let us not grow weary of doing the good [work of God], for at [the appointed] time we will reap [our reward], provided that we do not give up. (10) So then as long as we have this opportunity, let us keep accomplishing the good [work of God] towards all [people], and especially to the family of faith.

Galatians 6:9-10

Witness to the Sufferings of Christ (v.1):

So I urge the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, even one who shares [with you] in the glory which is about to be revealed . . .

1st Peter 5:1

Rather than invoking his authority as an apostle to urge the local leaders reading his letter to continue to honorably discharge their duties, Peter appeals to these elders on the basis of his witnessing the sufferings of Christ. This inspired device turns their focus – and ours – to its proper place, namely, to our dear Lord and Savior whose shepherds and sheep we are. Whatever authority we may have on earth – and whatever duties and responsibilities – everything we are and have and hope to have and be is founded upon the sacrifice of our Rock, Jesus Christ our dear Lord and Savior.

Peter did not witness our Lord's early life with all the suffering and sacrifice required to bring Him to the point of the three and a half year ministry detailed in our four gospels.² Peter was called by our Lord only after it began (Matt.4:21-22). Peter did witness our Lord's hardships and the opposition He encountered during the three and a half years, and most especially the gauntlet He had to run to get to the cross, wrongly arrested, accused and condemned, betrayed, abandoned and denied (by Peter, three times), beaten and scourged, His face marred beyond human likeness (Is.52:14), turned over to the gentiles to be abused, made to carry His own cross to the hill of death, crucified and made to see the loss of all that was His, mocked and taunted to come down by those for whom He was about to die. Peter was witness to all this. And it is to these sufferings that he appeals as the basis of his authority – because all such authority came from Jesus Christ. But what Peter did not see, what no one could see, and what even today we still may only barely understand, was the ultimate suffering of Christ, His death in the darkness for the sins of the entire world, the "blood of Christ" whereby our Lord paid the penalty for every sin, making salvation possible.³ There is nothing greater to appeal to than that. For on that sacrifice our salvation and all that we have depends.

(9) For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (10) He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

1st Thessalonians 5:9-10 NIV

² See Bible Basics 4A: Christology, section I.5.g, "Early Life and Preparation for Ministry".

³ See Bible Basics 4A: Christology, section II.4, "The Blood of Christ".

Unlike Peter, we did not see our Lord's sufferings during His ministry and during the abuse He suffered in the ordeal of His trials and crucifixion. But like Peter, we can know and appreciate much about all these matters, and also something about the ultimate sacrifice He made for us in dying for our sins, through the truth of the Word of God and the Spirit's ministry of that truth to us. In that way, we are all "witnesses" to our Lord, to His truth, and to His kingdom.

"There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true."

John 5:32 NKJV

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8 NKJV

The Glory about to be Revealed (v.1):

So I urge the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, even one who shares [with you] in the glory which is about to be revealed . . .

1st Peter 5:1

As we have seen previously (most recently in our treatment of 1st Peter 4:14), this "glory which is about to be revealed" in which we have a share is a reference to our glorification at the resurrection, when we shall receive our perfect eternal bodies and, shortly thereafter, the eternal rewards that will be ours forever based upon the quality and quantity of our genuine service to the Lord in this life (in spiritual growth, progress and production). It is this resurrection and reward, our "glorification", which glorifies God for all eternity.

(28) And we know that, for those who love God, He works everything together for good – [that is to say,] for those who have been called according to His plan. (29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined (i.e., foreordained) to share the likeness of His Son, so that He might be the Firstborn over many brothers [and sisters]. (30) And those whom He predestined (i.e., foreordained), these He also called [to salvation], and those whom He called, He also justified (i.e., made righteous through faith in Christ), and those whom He justified, these He also *glorified* (i.e., our future resurrection and eternal life).

Romans 8:28-30

(13) In [Christ] you also when you heard the Word of truth, the good news of your salvation, in whom [I say], when you believed, you were sealed by the Spirit of promise, the Holy [Spirit], (14) who is a pledge of our inheritance for redeeming its preservation (i.e., safeguarding our resurrection and reward in every way), for the purpose of the praise *of His glory* (in eternity).

Ephesians 1:13-14

God is glorified by glorifying us. That is, His inherent glorious character is made manifest by His blessing of us with perfect eternal bodies suited to the refulgent light of eternity, decked out with crowns and other rewards which will reflect His glory forever. To have a share in this glory

– the eternal glory of God – is the most marvelous thing imaginable (cf.2Pet.1:4). For that reason, we all look forward with the greatest anticipation to the day when we will see the glory of God face to face, being taken up together in resurrection and never leave His glorious presence again.

(18) For I do not consider these present hardships in any way comparable to *the glory* destined to be *revealed* for us [at the 2nd Advent]. (19) For all creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. (20) For the created world is now subject to futility – not of its own choosing, but because of Him who subjected it [as a consequence of Adam's sin] – but not without hope. (21) For [at the 2nd Advent] the created world will be liberated from its enslavement to decay at the *glorious liberation* of the sons of God (i.e. our resurrection).

Romans 8:18-21

But your faith, when proven genuine in the crucible of life, will result in praise, glory and honor for you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (i.e., the 2nd Advent).

1st Peter 1:7

Pastor the Flock (v.2):

(2). . . pastor the flock of God under your charge, overseeing them not out of compulsion but willingly in response to God, not eager for shameful material gain, but out of genuine enthusiasm . . .

1st Peter 5:2

The first thing to note about this command is that discharging the responsibilities we have been given to serve the Body of Christ is not optional. The Christian life properly lived is a serious business. Fulfilling our charges to His Church is not something we do "when and if we can get to it" – or at least it should not be. If Jesus has entrusted us with something this important, then we certainly ought to make it a top priority in our lives. That is true of all ministries which Jesus Christ assigns – and He is the One who assigns them (1Cor.12:4-6). All believers who have advanced to the point of being given ministry duties of any kind should keep at them, "in season and out of season", especially if these entail teaching the Word of God.

Proclaim the Word! Keep at it, whether circumstances are favorable or not! Reprove, rebuke, [and] encourage with all patience [in your] teaching!

2nd Timothy 4:2

As the verse above suggests, it is primarily through teaching the Word of God that the pastor-teacher exerts his authority and "pastors the flock" under his care. Most pastorates will entail some administrative duties as well, but the bulk of that load ought to be borne by non-teaching elders, deacons and other members of the congregation (whatever titles these may be given), so that the pastor-teacher has sufficient time and energy to do his primary job. Without the teaching of the Word of God, there can be no spiritual growth, progress or production on the part of anyone.

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as

those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.
Hebrews 13:17 NKJV

The pastor and flock analogy is used by the Bible for good reason. A good shepherd will have the actual welfare of his sheep ever in mind. He will keep them safe from wolves. He will make sure that they have abundant pasture and plenty of good water (the substance and encouragement of the Word of God; Ps.23:1-4). He will protect them from false teachers and false teaching, and will never exploit them. Prudent sheep will "hear his voice" and respond to him appropriately (cf. Jn.10:1ff.), understanding that he has their best interests at heart. The shepherd's voice is his teaching, and it is through that teaching that he establishes his authority on the one hand and benefits his sheep on the other.

Just as pastoring is accomplished mainly through teaching, so also submission to the pastor-teacher's authority is accomplished mainly through hearing, believing and applying that teaching. Just as many pastors go astray through concentrating on comparatively erroneous matters, such as expanding membership, musical programs, money, buildings, and calling on the congregation – which leaves them little time for what is really important while also skewing the proper focus of the church – so also a church where the membership becomes involved in legalistic "accountability" processes will never prosper, because true spiritual growth must come from the inside out through adherence to the truth and can never be imposed from without through any hypocritical system of whitewashing the congregation's behavior.

So in our verse, "overseeing" (from *episkopeo* from which word *episkopos*, "bishop", is derived) should not be understood as a pastor of a church organization interfering in the lives of the congregation, telling them what to think, what to do – and what not to do – and regulating the details of their behavior through personal intervention. Cults do that. Highly legalistic churches often do that. But the biblical way is to let the Bible do that: whatever Christ wants us to think and say and do is contained in the scriptures; a church which is teaching the truth in depth and detail will, eventually, cover every aspect of proper Christian behavior and all other things besides which are necessary for a believer to thrive spiritually and produce a good crop for the Lord. For this process to work correctly, a believer has to be able to hear the truth – the actual truth taught substantively – and then consider it, engage with it, believe it, adopt it and apply it in the privacy of his or her own heart.

A good pastor "oversees" his congregation (and not other churches as some denominational "bishops" do) by providing them with all the truth they need – not only warnings against particular sins or particular threats from the outside but teaching them the entire realm of the truth which the Bible contains. A good pastor wants absolutely the best for his flock, and the only way he can supply it is by providing them with the truth so that they may grow, become equipped to pass the tests which come our way in this world, rise to spiritual maturity and beyond, and come to produce a good crop for the Lord themselves through engaging in the ministries which the Lord assigns to all who are willing to do His will in this world. That is what a true "bishop" or overseer is: someone who takes care of his own small portion of Jesus' sheep in the way our Lord actually desires him to do.

Not out of Compulsion but Willingly (v.2):

(2). . . pastor the flock of God under your charge, overseeing them not out of compulsion but willingly in response to God, not eager for shameful material gain, but out of genuine enthusiasm . . .

1st Peter 5:2

Attitude is important. Motivation is important. So while it is true that pastors are responsible to feed their flocks even if their attitude on any given day is not the best and even if their motives on any given day are not as pure as they should be, no good will come of allowing a bad attitude to linger and fester or of allowing incorrect motives to gain a foothold. In the secular world, it is not uncommon for the pressures of any and all responsible positions to cause those who hold them to sour on what may have originally been their "dream jobs". It is a near universal human trait to occasionally allow the troubles and unpleasantness of any given situation to dominate one's attitude about it, even if in other respects it is something which was previously longed for and diligently sought after. That is true even among the most privileged of worldly livelihoods and professions (whining celebrities and sports figures come to mind), and can also become true for pastors (and for those holding other positions in a church) – unless care is taken to avoid this dangerous occupational hazard.

Perhaps the most famous biblical examples of the above are Moses becoming exasperated with his charges and striking instead of speaking to the Rock as he had been instructed to do (Num.20:8-13), and Elijah telling the Lord that he alone was left in Israel when the Lord had in fact reserved 7,000 who had "not bowed the knee to Baal" (1Ki.19:14-18). When the flock becomes unruly and the task of shepherding them becomes onerous and seemingly impossible, it is understandable that a pastor-teacher might become frustrated with his charges and bitter about their "ingratitude". But this is to forget that the Lord is the One we work for – in all ministries. We are responsible to do a good job *for Him*, whether or not those we minister to are ruly or unruly, grateful or ungrateful, and in fact in spite of any other consideration whatsoever.

(23) And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, (24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24 NKJV

Not Eager for Gain but with Genuine Enthusiasm (v.2):

(2). . . pastor the flock of God under your charge, overseeing them not out of compulsion but willingly in response to God, not eager for shameful material gain, but out of genuine enthusiasm . . .

1st Peter 5:2

The love of money is, as scripture assures us, "a root [cause] of all evils" (1Tim.6:10), and is thus a very poor motive for genuine shepherds of the Lord to do their jobs. The Pharisees, who should have been pastoring the flock of Israel and feeding them with the truth, were little interested in fulfilling their basic responsibilities (Matt.23:1-36; Mk.12:38-40; Lk.20:45-47; cf.

Ezek.34:1-31), but very much interested in money (Lk.16:14; cf. Mk.7:9-13).

(7) Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? (8) Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? (9) For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? (10) Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. (11) If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

1st Corinthians 9:7-11 NKJV

In the same way the Lord has also directed for those proclaiming the good news (i.e., teaching the truth) to live off of so doing.

1st Corinthians 9:14

Let him who receives instruction in the Word share in all good things with him who gives instruction.

Galatians 6:6

(17) Let those elders who lead well be held worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the Word and in teaching. (18) For the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing", and, "The worker is worthy of his pay".

1st Timothy 5:17-18

As all of these verses make clear, a pastor-teacher who is doing his job in feeding his flock is entitled to be supported by that flock. But no scripture promises pastor-teachers a luxurious life style – far from it. Paul tells Timothy that if we have sufficient food and clothing, we should be content with that (1Tim.6:8). It is not right for a congregation to starve their pastor, but it is also not right for a pastor to exploit his congregation. The purpose of pastoral support is to allow the pastor-teacher the time and energy necessary to prepare to teach his congregation in sufficient quality and quantity for them to grow spiritually. If that level of support is forthcoming, as long as the pastor is not being deliberately kept at a level of subsistence far less than that of the congregation he is ministering to (which would amount to disrespect), then he should be satisfied with this and glory in the (nowadays extremely rare) opportunity to teach the Word of God as his full-time occupation to interested parties – because the vast majority of congregations which do support their pastors today are not at all interested in being taught the Word of God in an orthodox and substantive way.

(19) "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. (20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Matthew 6:19-21 KJV

Rather than being eager for material gain, something that has only marginal and, in spiritual terms, dubious utility in this life only, pastor-teachers – of all Christians – ought to be focused, in

terms of true motivation, on the eternal rewards that accrue to all believers who fulfill Christ's mandates for spiritual growth, progress and production. After all, He is our Master. It is Him that we serve. And we will all have to stand before Him and give an account for what we have done in this life – or failed to do.

(10) But you, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you also belittle your brother? For we will all stand before God's tribunal (11) as it is written: "As I live", says the Lord, "every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue will praise God" (Is.45:23). (12) So then each of us will give an account concerning himself to God.

Romans 14:10-12

For we must all stand before Christ's tribunal, so that each of us may receive recompense for what he has accomplished through this body, whether it be good or worthless.

2nd Corinthians 5:10

Not Lording it over the Flock (v.3):

. . . not lording it over the charges [entrusted to you], but as genuine examples to your flock.

1st Peter 5:3

Giving proper respect and deference to the pastor-teacher as the one who is responsible for the congregation's spiritual growth and safety is entirely appropriate and biblical.

(12) And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, (13) and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

1st Thessalonians 5:12-13 NKJV

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account (i.e., before Jesus Christ). Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17 NKJV

As the second passage above in particular demonstrates, this attitude of love and respect is beneficial for those who are commanded to give it, because harmony in the local church is conducive to the spiritual growth which benefits all, whereas conflict and division are not. These commands assume, of course, that the pastor-teacher in question is also treating his charges in a good and godly way, being concerned first and foremost for their spiritual welfare, and only involving himself in any exercise of his authority when absolutely necessary to protect the weak from the strong or the congregation as a whole from wolves in sheep's clothing coming from inside or outside of the church. In any case, any words of correction will normally be spoken at least in the first instance, in his teaching from the pulpit, whereby the message of remonstrance may be accepted in an objective way by all – because it is directed towards all (the pastor himself included).

(24) Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered

the greatest. (25) And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles *exercise lordship* over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' (26) But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. (27) For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves."

Luke 22:24-27 NKJV

Christ's phrase "exercising lordship" in the passage directly above is a translation of the same Greek verb as Peter uses in our context (where we are translating it "lording it over"). On more than one occasion, our Lord made this same point that Peter makes here, using Himself as the example of proper behavior (and often using this same verb as well: Matt.20:25-28; Mk.10:42-45; cf. Jn.12:26; 13:12-17). Jesus' example makes it clear that a pastor-teacher's exercise of authority must be one rendered in service to all and at sacrifice to self. In other words, pastoral authority, rather than being a privilege, is one of the pastor's responsibilities to be carried out for the benefit of his congregation's spiritual growth and spiritual safety, designed to protect them from negative influences and predatory behaviors, *not* something meant as a personal benefit: taking pleasure in throwing one's weight around has no place in the leadership of a local church which is truly following Jesus Christ's lead.

Genuine Examples to the Flock (v.3):

. . . not lording it over the charges [entrusted to you], but as genuine examples to your flock.

1st Peter 5:3

As Christ is the example that the pastor-teacher must follow, so the pastor-teacher should likewise present a worthy example for his congregation. If he is truly following Christ closely in all ways, both in carrying out of his responsibilities of studying and teaching the Word of God and also in his personal life, then, rather than glorying in his position, such a pastor will indeed be fulfilling the mandate of the verse above. This is clearly a high bar to clear. Preparing for the pastorate is neither an easy nor a quick process.⁴ And developing the character and the self-discipline necessary to effectively exploit the gift of pastor-teacher, the skills which need to be developed in preparation for ministry, the truth learned in his personal advance to spiritual maturity and beyond, and to do so consistently without giving offense in his personal life is also asking "a hard thing" (cf. 2Ki.2:9-10). But while hard to achieve, all of the above is absolutely necessary for success in any teaching ministry. Thus the standard of being a worthy example to one's flock is high indeed, but it is essential to meet it for any who deign to take up the mantle of teaching the Word of God. For it is the Lord Jesus Christ we are serving (Col.3:24; cf. Eph.6:7; 1Thes.1:9), and it is to Him that we must answer.

Do not many of you become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we will receive a stricter judgment.

James 3:1 [index]

⁴ See Bible Basics 6B: Ecclesiology, section II.B., "The Pastor-Teacher".

Chief Shepherd (v.4):

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will carry off in victory the crown of glory which will never fade..

1st Peter 5:4

The comparison of our Lord's superintendence of us to the good shepherd caring for his sheep is one that resonated deeply with believers in the ancient world and which still resonates today (Gen.48:15; 49:24; Ps.23:1-6; 28:9; 80:1; Eccl.12:11; Is.40:10-11; Jer.31:10; 49:19; 50:44; Ezek.34:23; 37:24; Mic.5:2-5; Zech.13:7; Matt.2:6; 25:32; 26:31; Mk.14:27; Jn.10:2-16; Heb.13:20-21; Rev.7:17; cf. Ps.119:176; 1Pet.2:25). Even for those of us who have never tended a flock have some concept of the hard work, dedication, courage and endurance – of heat and cold and dangers, of sleepless night and many other privations – which a truly good shepherd will have to suffer through in order to supply his flock with all they need to thrive and to protect them from various and sundry dangers. The sacrifices made by our Lord to provide for us and to rescue us are well-known to any reader of the gospels. And there is no greater sacrifice anyone could even conceive of making than the One our dear Savior made for us in laying down His life for us, in dying for all of our sins in the darkness on Calvary's cross.

"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sake of the sheep."

John 10:11

(14) "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep."

John 10:14-15 NIV

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

John 15:13 NIV (cf. 1Jn.3:16)

Being the perfect Shepherd, our Lord certainly knows from personal experience as well as from His omniscient deity just what it takes to be a truly good pastor who tends his flock in a manner worthy of the Chief Shepherd. And we know from seeing the opposition He faced from the flock – which should have rejoiced to follow Him – that persevering in the ministry of the Word is not for the faint of heart: the devil always opposes any good shepherd, and there will always be many in his flock who refuse to respond to him as they should, just as was the case with our Lord.

Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?"

Matthew 17:17a NKJV (cf. Mk.9:19; Lk.9:41)

Even Moses and Elijah became frustrated with their charges – and lost their temper and ran away respectively as a result. Our Lord's words cited above are not sinful in the least (God forbid!). They are a true expression of the actual status quo in Israel in His day, and they are recorded for us, and for pastor-teachers in particular, to remind us that ministering the truth and tending the flock of God, even as it is a labor of love, is also a contest of endurance. But for those who

persevere in pastoring as Jesus would have us do, there is great reward in the end.

The Crown of Glory (v.4):

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will carry off in victory the crown of glory which will never fade.

1st Peter 5:4

The doctrine of crowns and rewards given to believers at the judgment seat of Christ has been covered in detail elsewhere.⁵ Briefly stated, while many different types of rewards are at least hinted at in scripture (e.g., the "gold, silver and precious gems" of 1Cor.3:12), and while there are doubtless many awards that accrue to believers for our spiritual victories in this life (e.g., the "Morning Star" of Rev.2:28), the Bible does outline three major decorations which correspond to the three major areas of potential accomplishment in every believer's life (and to the "thirty, sixty, and hundred-fold production levels of the parable of the Sower: Matt.13:1-9; Mk.4:1-9; Lk.8.4-8): 1) the crown of righteousness (2Tim.4:8; cf. 1Cor.9:25; Rev.3:11), awarded for attaining spiritual maturity; the crown of life (Jas.1:12; Rev.2:10), awarded for successfully passing major testing which follows spiritual maturity; and the crown of glory in our passage here (cf. also Phil.4:1; 1Thes.2:19), awarded for successfully carrying out whatever life-ministry the Lord Jesus Christ assigns us.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

1st Corinthians 3:8 NKJV

While Peter does address his comments here to pastor-teachers, no believer is forestalled from winning any or all of the three crowns, neither on the basis of gender nor because of specific spiritual gifts received. As the verse cited above declares, whatever task we have been given to do by the Lord, He is just to reward us according to the actual godly effort we put in. So while in eternity there will be differentiations of many kinds (about which we cannot know until that day arrives), we can be absolutely confident that even a cup of cold water offered in Christ's Name will not fail to receive its full reward (Matt.10:42). How much more so then will those who, like Paul and Apollos, have diligently labored in the vineyard for many years not receive a bountiful recompense for all they have done for Jesus Christ?

(4) There are different gifts, but the same Spirit; (5) and there are different ministries, but the same Lord (i.e., Jesus Christ); (6) and there are different results, but the same God who brings about all results in all cases. (7) And to every [Christian] has been given a manifestation of the Spirit for the good (i.e., the edification of the Church).

1st Corinthians 12:4-7

The Holy Spirit assigns our spiritual gifts. The Lord Jesus Christ assigns us our particular ministries. The Father provides the results. Our job is to grow to maturity so as to discover our

⁵ See Coming Tribulation 6: Last Things, section I.7, "The Judgment and Reward of the Church"; and see also Peter's Epistles #18, section III.8, "The Doctrine of Crowns".

gifts, to pass the tests that come our way so as to be prepared for the ministry the Lord Jesus gives us, and to work at that ministry with all of our hearts, keeping ever in mind that it is God the Father who produces the actual results, so that whether the ground we have been given to work is exceptionally fertile or uncommonly unproductive, our reward will be calculated on the basis of our love, dedication and effort, not on the basis of the things that impress human beings.

Every believer, not just pastor-teachers, therefore, can win the crown of glory – and all believers should aspire to that blessed goal, because that is the way we glorify Jesus Christ in this life. It is His glory we are seeking (cf. Jn.7:18), and it is through contributing to the edification of His Body, the Church, that this glorification is achieved. Women are not given the gift of pastor-teacher – but relatively few male believers receive that gift either. If the crown of glory were reserved only for pastor-teachers, then it would be a very rare award indeed, especially since so few men given that gift today are doing anything like what Jesus Christ desires for them to do, not preparing for the ministry in the first place, and not edifying the Church through properly teaching the Word of God even if they do enter into ministry in the second.

As we have seen in the past, the Church is a Body and, as with the human body, has many different parts with diverse roles, all of which are necessary to the proper functioning of the whole. To carry out one's role according to the gifts one is given and to do so in a consistent way that glorifies Jesus Christ is the basis for the crown of glory. That is what all believers should aspire to do, regardless of spiritual gifts and regardless of gender. To paraphrase what Paul says in concluding his own catalog of heroes (Heb.11:32), "time would fail us", if we attempted to list all of the believers mentioned in scripture who have doubtless earned the crown of glory. However, in order to illustrate the point that this decoration is available to all, a short reprise of a very few of the more famous passages praising famous female believers who have undoubtedly won that honor seems appropriate here:

"Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back until I, Deborah, arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel."

Judges 5:7 NIV

(14) Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! (15) And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law [Ruth], who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him."

Ruth 4:14-15

(32) Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! (33) And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand."

1st Samuel 25:32-33 NKJV

And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

Luke 1:28 NKJV

(1) I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant (lit., "deaconess") of the church

in Cenchrea, (2) that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

Romans 16:1-2 NKJV

(3) Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, (4) who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Romans 16:3-4 NKJV

Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord.

Romans 16:12 NKJV

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Hebrews 11:11 NKJV

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Hebrews 11:31 NKJV

"What more shall we say" of so many others? Of the Hebrew midwives (Ex.1:17-21), of Rebecca (Gen.24:58; 27:13), of Hannah (1Sam.1:1ff.), of Huldah (2Ki.22:14-20), of Esther (Est.1:1ff.), of Anna (Lk.2:36-38), of Mary and Martha (Matt.26:6-13; Jn.11:17-44), of Lydia (Acts 16:15), of Rufus' mother (Rom.16:13), and of so many other women who dedicated themselves to spiritual growth, spiritual progress, and spiritual production? Not only are their names "written in heaven" (Lk.10:20), and preserved forever in the holy scriptures, but, having fulfilled Christ's purpose for their lives, they have attained to the three crowns which glorify our Lord Jesus forever. Let us all "be up and doing" (1Chron.22:16), and "go and do likewise" (Lk.10:37).

Paragraph II (vv. 5-11)

(5) And likewise you younger men, subordinate yourselves to your elders. And all of you, gird on a humble attitude toward each other, for "God opposes the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble" (Prov.3:34). (6) So humble yourselves under God's mighty hand so that He may exalt you at the proper time, (7) having cast all your care on Him, for He cares for you. (8) Stay sober and stay awake [on guard]. Your adversary the devil roams about like a roaring lion, looking for someone he can devour. (9) Resist him, solid in your faith, remembering that your fellow believers in this world are undergoing the exact same sort of suffering [that you are]. (10) And the God of all grace, the One who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, though you have had to suffer for a short time, will Himself equip you, solidify you, strengthen you, establish you. (11) To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever! Amen!

1st Peter 5:5-11

Subordinate Yourselves (v.5):

And likewise you younger men, subordinate yourselves to your elders.
1st Peter 5:5a

The "younger men" include not just men but women too, and not just those who are younger in chronological age but everyone in the fellowship of the local church who is not in authority, that is, who is not an elder (of which elders, as we have seen above, there may be a number or possibly only one). This is a question of rank and humility, not of years. Ideally, older people will have learned through a long life of hard knocks the value of being subordinate to proper authority, whereas, some of the younger individuals in the congregation may have yet to learn that important lesson.

Whatever their age, the elder or elders are responsible for governing and directing the church, a task which is carried out for the most part through teaching the Word of God. And whatever their age, the congregation is charged with responding to the authority of their spiritual elders, comporting themselves towards them with an attitude of respect. This sort of willing obedience is essential for the proper functioning of all military organizations, and so it is not for no reason that Peter uses the verb *hypotasso*, the Greek word employed for marshaling military units in ranks.

In the ancient world, keeping one's place in ranks was the most essential task for success in battle. An army which kept its order could generally survive and defeat a much larger opponent whose ranks became disorganized in the press of battle. The Christian life is likewise a battle, with shot and shell flying continuously. Christians who keep their head when the pressure is on, determined to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ in spite of whatever troubles, trials and tribulations come their way, are going to make spiritual progress and help others do likewise, whereas those who allow themselves to become frightened by the devil's assaults and thus abandon the field are never going to amount to anything nor be of any particular help to their fellow Christian soldiers. Likewise, a church which collectively responds to the teaching of its pastor-teacher will thrive (assuming that he is doing his job as well in teaching the Word in depth and orthodoxy), but if there is disorder in the ranks, the insubordination of a few can cause the wreck of all.

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."
Matthew 12:25 NKJV

This command to be subordinate to authority, therefore, is not given for the benefit of stroking the ego of the pastor-teacher or other elders. Rather, good order in the ranks of the local church is an essential prerequisite for the collective spiritual growth of all – exactly what every member's presence in that church is supposed to achieve in the first place.

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

Gird on a Humble Attitude (v.5):

And all of you, gird on a humble attitude toward each other . . .
1st Peter 5:5b

While it is true that the verb "gird" is derived from a band or girdle often used by slaves (*enkombomai* from *kombos*), both noun and verb are generic enough to allow us to see the military analogy being continued here by Peter. Before going into battle, soldiers of every time and place have always needed particular equipment, weapons and armor necessary to be able to fight the fight to which they have been called. This is a familiar Christian trope as we have discussed in the past (Eph.6:10-16; 1Thes.5:8).⁶ The particular piece of gear Peter commands us to "strap on" so as to be ready for battle is humility, singled out by him here because humility is indeed one of the most essential pieces of spiritual equipment in the believer's armory. That is because, if we become arrogant (the biblical opposite of being humble), we are essentially rejecting God's will for our lives, rebelling against Him instead of humbly accepting what He has for us and what He wants us to do. If we indulge our egos instead of following the Lord in humility, while our sense of self-importance may flush, in fact by following this dangerous course in thinking more of ourselves than we ought to – and speaking and acting accordingly – we make ourselves very vulnerable to every sort temptation.

"For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry."
1st Samuel 15:23a NIV

"To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I, [Wisdom,] hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech."
Proverbs 8:13 NIV

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.
Proverbs 11:2 NIV

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.
Proverbs 16:18 NIV

"I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless."
Isaiah 13:11 NIV

(21) "For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come – sexual immorality, theft, murder, (22) adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. (23) All these evils come from inside and defile a person."
Mark 7:21-23 NIV

Arrogance, pride, was the devil's downfall after all (Is.14:13-15; Ezek.28:17), and may be seen as the essential cause and motivation lying behind most if not all of our personal failures as well. When we are focused on self instead of on God and His truth, we have, in effect, taken our armor off and exposed ourselves to the devil's tricks and attacks. Whenever we come to think that "we"

⁶ See especially BB 6A: Peripateology, section II.2.D, "The Military Analogy".

are "something" instead of giving the glory to the One who is everything, we deprive ourselves of God's protection – and quickly find out how "nothing" we truly are! Only by properly subordinating ourselves *not only* in our words and deeds (the thrust of the previous command in the beginning of the verse), but *also* in our hearts, do we have a measure of safety from the blinding power of arrogance and pride which can so easily trip up even the most spiritually advanced Christian, if it is ever given an inch.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

Romans 12:3 NIV

God Opposes the Arrogant (v.5):

"God opposes the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble" (Prov.3:34).

1st Peter 5:5c

This quotation (also quoted by James: Jas.4:6), comes from Proverbs 3:34 and follows the rendering of the Greek Septuagint translation of the Bible. In place of "arrogant", the Hebrew actually has *letziym*, most commonly translated as "mockers". Clearly enough, "mocking" is a common enough outward manifestation of inner arrogance. But whether expressed openly or not, arrogance is something God Himself opposes, and what could be worse or more insane than gratuitously making oneself an enemy of God? But that is precisely what we do when we allow ourselves to stray from a humble mind-set into "arrogance territory". Moses was "a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth" (Num.12:3), but even a man who "girded on humility" more consistently and effectively than any other person before or since, outside of our Lord Jesus Christ, fell prey at least on one occasion to the siren song of arrogance, when he deemed his own ire and frustration of greater import than the very precise instructions of the Lord – and he paid for that mistake by being forbidden to enter the land of promise, something he had been anticipating for forty years or more (Num.20:12).

(30) If you have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil, cover your mouth in shame.

(33) As the beating of cream yields butter and striking the nose causes bleeding, so stirring up anger causes quarrels.

Proverbs 30:32-33 NLT

But He Gives Grace to the Humble (v.5):

". . . but gives grace to the humble" (Prov.3:34).

1st Peter 5:5d

Who are the "humble"? Speaking of our Lord, and speaking of Moses (a prominent "type" or symbolic representation of Christ in scripture) it is also important to observe from them that humility is essentially a lack of arrogance, *not* a lack of confidence. Our Lord was the boldest person who ever lived, but also the most humble. Moses was the humblest man of his age, but he had the courage to stand up to Pharaoh and also the entire nation of Israel when they were ready to stone him on more than one occasion. We admire David for his great courage, boldness and

confidence – yet he was also a humble man, a man who for the most part kept arrogance at bay far away. What he and Moses and all the great believers of the Bible and ever since have in common is a deep understanding of God's greatness and of their/our complete dependence upon the grace and the mercy of the Lord.

A Psalm of David.
Blessed be the Lord my Rock,
Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle.
Psalm 144:1 NKJV

David was a brave warrior – one of the bravest ever. But he had confidence *in the Lord* and in what the Lord had given him, and He esteemed and glorified the Lord for doing so, acting with boldness and courage when called for based upon his trust in the Lord rather than in himself. That is true biblical humility, a virtue of the heart, a virtue of spiritual maturity, one which is *not* to be found in an outward display of self-abasement but in an inner trust in and appreciation of the greatness and the mercy of God.

If anything, individuals who falsely effect what passes for humility in legalistic circles have to be arrogant in the extreme to imagine that they are better than others for behaving in a manner they imagine will be taken as marking them out as humble. Arrogance trusts in self and glorifies self. True humility trusts in God and glorifies God. The former may occasionally meet with success, especially when confronting cowardice. The latter will always be supported by the Lord, so that even when facing gigantic Philistines, those who are humble in the true, godly way can be "strong and courageous" (Deut.32:6-7; Josh.1:6-18) without worry or fear – because the battle is not dependent on us; rather we understand in our heart of hearts that "the battle is the Lord's" (1Sam.17:47).

How does one tell the difference? When the believer is motivated by the truth and fighting the battle for the sake of the Lord and His people, not for him/herself or his/her personal aggrandizement, then we may be sure that what we have is a case of humble courage rather than arrogant recklessness.

(23) This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of their wisdom or the strong man boast of their strength or the rich man boast of his riches, (24) but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.
Jeremiah 9:23-24 NIV1985

Arrogant people serve themselves. The truly humble serve God; they seek His glory, while the proud seek only their own. The proud boast in themselves; those who possess true biblical humility boast in knowing Him and being close to Him – for there is nothing better in this world since there is nothing greater in this world than Him.

(4) You adulteresses (i.e., immoral people of both sexes)! Do you not know that friendship with the world is inimical to God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world

establishes himself as an enemy of God. (5) Or do you assume that the Scripture (i.e., Gal.5:17) says to no purpose "The Spirit" which dwells in you "sets its desire against" [such] envy [emanating from the sin nature, a situation rampant among you (as is evident from the examples given in verses 1-4)]? (6) But [God] "gives grace [which is] greater" [than all these temptations] (i.e., in the provision of the Spirit which resists the flesh). That is why it says, "God *opposes the arrogant*, but He *gives grace to the humble*".
James 4:4-6

The "greater grace" above is help and favor coming from the Lord sufficient to get us through whatever trouble or opposition or temptation we may face. If we are walking where the Lord wants us to walk, doing what the Lord wants us to do, then who or what can oppose Him (Rom.8:31-39)? We have confidence that He will do whatever we need Him to do, helping and supporting us. Therefore we can be confident, "strong and courageous", not because we have any arrogant faith in ourselves – God forbid! – but because we have absolute confidence and faith in His love and care for us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Though the Lord is exalted, He looks with favor on the humble, but the proud He knows only at a distance.
Psalm 138:6 [index]

Humble Yourselves that He may Exalt You (v.6):

So humble yourselves under God's mighty hand so that He may exalt you at the proper time.
1st Peter 5:6

This command, while applying to all believers, is addressed first and foremost to the "younger men" of the previous verse whom Peter has admonished to subordinate themselves to their teachers (elders), and, in company with all, to "gird on humility" because while God "gives grace to the humble", He "opposes the arrogant". We can surmise from this that in some of the churches over which Peter had apostolic authority, churches which were "dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1Pet.1:1), certain members were becoming impatient with their leadership. No doubt some of this dissatisfaction came from these younger men who felt that they too had been given the gift of pastor-teacher, and that their personal preparation in the scriptures and the doctrines of the Bible were on a par with or even superior to those presently in authority in their local churches. In some cases, that may have been true – although it is typical of the arrogant to "think more highly of themselves than they ought to think" (Rom.12:3).

However, Peter does not even address the issues of relative qualifications, zeal or ability to teach. For his purposes here, these questions of fact were irrelevant. The local church is not a pride of lions wherein the stronger will presently replace the weaker as leader. Local churches are responsible to the Lord to conduct all of their affairs "decently and in good order" (1Cor.14:40), and that includes the processes they individually adopt to select elders and their primary teacher in the first place, as well as how and when and why to make changes or additions down the road.

Moreover, Peter does not presume to tell these local churches the how and the when and the why

of it. Those directly involved would really be the only ones capable of sorting these matters out in a godly way, using the wisdom that comes from scripture and from the Holy Spirit. But unless and until it pleased any given local church to allow a younger man into leadership, or even replace a present elder with someone new, Peter makes it crystal clear that all such prospective pastors and elders were to wait patiently for the Lord to open up a position or opportunity for them – just as every believer must wait on the Lord to reveal his or her spiritual gifts, prepare him or her for whatever ministry He has in mind, and open up the proper opportunity to employ them "at the proper time" (as Peter deliberately specifies here).

What a younger man must *not* dare to do is to attempt to exalt himself and replace another through political activity in contravention of the Lord's will. Regardless of how good he may think he is, and regardless of how insufficient in his eyes the man he intends to replace, all such attempts at staging a coup will only serve to destroy the local church in question and bring God's hostility down upon the head of the arrogant young man who seeks to substitute his will for the Will of God.

(4) "To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horns. (5) Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak so defiantly.' " (6) No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt themselves. (7) It is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another."
Psalm 75:4-7 NIV

Casting Your Cares on Him (v.7):

. . . having cast all your care on Him, for He cares for you.
1st Peter 5:7

This is actually a reference to Psalm 55:22:

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.
Psalm 55:22 NIV

Rather than quote the psalm directly, Peter recalls this famous verse in order to bring to his readers' remembrance the truth that whatever cares and concerns we have in this life, the proper procedure is not to attempt to solve them with purely human efforts, but instead to trust the Lord to solve them for us. David's words of encouragement come in the context of his own life experience when calling to the Lord for help in the midst of serious attacks launched against him by ruthless enemies. Even in such circumstances, as David assures us in the Spirit, the Lord sustains the righteous: if we trust in Him, He will bring us through. The Lord will "never allow" those who belong to Him to be undone by the assaults and machinations of evil men. If only we trust in Him, we will be brought safely through the storm, even if the Lord has to split an entire sea for us to do so.

Peter makes this blessed assurance even more personal by explaining our Lord Jesus Christ's motivation in saving and delivering those who belong to Him: "He cares" about us. What greater

thing can be imagined than that the Lord of the universe, the One who created all things (Jn.1:3; 1:10; 1Cor.8:6), the One who holds together everything by His Word of power (Heb.1:3; cf. Col.1:15-17), is concerned for us and our well being? This is truly blessed to consider – and absolutely critical to remember. It is all too easy for believers in trouble to fall into despair, to imagine that the Lord has forsaken them, forgotten about them, doesn't actually care for them. But the truth is far otherwise. He has never forgotten or forsaken those for whom He died. We belong to Jesus Christ. We are His Body, His Bride, His Church. He always has and He always will "care for us".

"Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you."
Isaiah 49:15 NKJV

In our context, this encouraging command, to let go of all our worries and concerns and anxieties, handing them over to Jesus Christ, trusting Him to take care of them in His own perfect way, has a special application to the young men who are becoming impatient. Our Lord is telling them through Peter to be patient and to trust the Lord. Wanting to be put into service for the Lord is just one of many concerns and godly desires believers have in this world. We are all most always waiting on the Lord for something or other, it seems. That is indeed a key part of the Christian life. That is indeed an integral part of the testing we receive, given to us with the loving purpose of building up our faith, helping us to learn to trust our Lord better, strengthening our faith, focusing our hope, and, if we do respond correctly, intensifying our love for Him. This is the "rest of faith" Paul speaks about in Hebrews (Heb.4:1-10). This is the Church Age fulfillment of the fourth commandment, whereby we learn to rest in Him at all times, not just one day a week, recognizing that whatever we do in the Spirit, it is actually the Lord who is "doing it", not us. This is the "perfect" or, more accurately, the "double peace" that is the portion of all believers who learn to trust the Lord in trouble and truly cast our cares and anxieties upon Him in full confidence that He will deliver us (Is.26:3).

Trusting the Lord, letting Him bear our burdens (Ps.68:19) and take on all our cares and concerns, does not mean, of course, that as we wait we do nothing at all; it means rather that we do everything it is reasonable to do to further the deliverance we seek, even as we have no illusions about the fact that He is the One who is going to bring that deliverance about. In practical terms in our context, these young men should, instead of angling for a position, trust the Lord to open up just the right opportunity at just the right time, even as they continue to prepare for that opportunity with all their might.

(3) And not only this, but let us glory in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces patience, (4) and patience produces proven character, and proven character produces hope – (5) and this hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.
Romans 5:3-5

(7) Therefore subordinate yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

(8) Get closer to God, and He will get closer to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and sanctify your hearts, you double-minded. (9) Lament and grieve and mourn. Let your laughter turn to grief, and your joy to humiliation. (10) Humble yourselves before the Lord, **and He will exalt you.**

James 4:4-10

Stay Sober Awake (v.8):

Stay sober and stay awake [on guard].

1st Peter 5:8a

Guard duty in the military is a deadly serious business. That is because if the guard falls asleep, and if the enemy were to then launch a surprise attack, all would be destroyed. For that reason, sleeping on watch has generally been a capital offense in times past. Just as our Lord tells us to be careful to stay spiritually awake during the Tribulation, lest we lose our clothing when the thief breaks in on account of our spiritual lethargy (Rev.16:15), Peter here makes a similar appeal. We are to "stay sober" – not only in terms of physical sobriety but also and even more importantly in terms of staying away from all that is spiritually debilitating. We are to remain alert on our guard post for however long the Lord will have us remain here on earth. Guard duty is hard enough in the day time when one is well rested. How much more difficult to carry out this pair of commands when the darkness of the Tribulation falls – but how much more necessary as well!

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into."

Matthew 24:43 NKJV (cf. Lk.12:39)

Just as a soldier on watch protects not only himself but his comrades, so also we believers are responsible for each other as well as for our own spiritual well-being. If we "fall asleep", who will encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ? Who will minister to them – and we all have ministries to perform, after all, since the Body needs all of its parts? One weak link can cause a cascade wherein many fail. But one strong pillar can prevent the collapse of many weaker ones. Following Peter's advice, let us resolve to remain awake and alert at our posts until our Master returns, not only for the sake of our own spiritual benefit and reward but also for the deliverance of our fellow believers who are counting on us to do so.

(34) "Watch out for yourselves lest your hearts be burdened down in debauchery and drunkenness and earthly cares, and that day fall upon you suddenly like a trap [snapping shut]. (35) For it will come upon all those who dwell upon the face of the earth. (36) So **be alert at all times**, praying that you might have the strength to endure all these things which are going to happen, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Luke 21:34-36

Your Adversary the Devil (v.8):

Your adversary the devil . . .

1st Peter 5:8b

Satan is the adversary of every believer. Peter's too – as he himself knew only too well from bitter experience (Lk.22:31-34). But in the Spirit, Peter here uses pastoral prerogative by calling him "**your** adversary" to bring home to his listeners all the more emphatically the fact that the devil really *is* the enemy of each and every one of us individually. He and his forces are in deadly opposition to us all, and they act accordingly. But do we? To paraphrase a famous quote, we may not be interested in spiritual warfare, but spiritual warfare is interested in us: a believer may not be keen to engage in the invisible conflict raging around us, but that conflict will eventually find us out, willing or not. The devil is "interested" in us, regardless of whether or not we are interested in participating in this fight our commanding general has brought us into. Thus our alertness is not just a matter of taking precautions not to stumble or stray. We are in the middle of a deadly serious warfare, combatants in a fight to the finish, whether we like it or not, and our spiritual survival requires that we actively fight this fight, through spiritual growth, progress and production, in the power of the Spirit through the Word of God.

(10) As you move forward, my brothers, strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power of His might. (11) Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand firm against the tricks of the devil. (12) For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against [angelic] princes, against [angelic] authorities, against the cosmic powers of this [present] darkness, against evil spirits in the heavenly realms. (13) On this account take up that full armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the day of trouble and, when you have completely done everything [necessary (in spiritual preparation)], to stand your ground. (14) So then do stand your ground, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (15) and having shod your feet with the [shoes] of preparation for [sharing] the gospel of peace. (16) And at all times take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery missiles of the evil one. (17) And [in this spiritual warfare] put on the helmet of salvation and gird on the sword of the Spirit – which is the Word of truth.

Ephesians 6:10-17

The devil goes by many names in scripture, Lucifer, Satan, tempter, liar, evil one, snake, dragon, Beelzebub, etc. Each of these monikers tell us something about him, his character and his tactics.⁷ "Devil" is the conventional English rendering of the Greek *diabolos*, which means "slanderer"; and "adversary" here is the Greek *antidikos*, meaning "opponent in a legal proceeding". Thus in our context both terms are calling attention to the fact that Satan is constantly slandering believers before God's throne in heaven, casting all of our shortcomings, errors and sins before the Lord, reproaching us and Him in the process. Whenever, therefore, we let down our guard and think or say or do what we should not, and whenever we fail to carry out our responsibilities in any of these three areas as well, we give the devil an opportunity to slander us in the court of heaven. Needless to say, this is not pleasing to the Lord, and it is far better for everyone, ourselves in particular, if these instances are few and far between, and of relatively minor consequence when they do occur. Nothing is unknown to the Lord – but we are also being observed with malicious intent by our opponent and his minions. That is the nature of the battlefield on which we are presently serving. Happy the day when our adversary is cast out of heaven and can no longer

⁷ See SR 4: Satan's World System, section V.1, "Names for the devil".

slander us before our Lord (even though this will mean harder times still for those still alive on earth at that time)!

(10) And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now our God's deliverance and might and kingdom have come, even the power of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, the one who accuses them day and night in front of our God, has been thrown down. (11) But these [believers] have defeated [the devil] through the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony. For they did not love their lives, [even] to the point of death. (12) Because of this, rejoice, O heavens and those residing in them! [But] woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you, having [great] anger, because he knows that he has [only] a short time [remaining]."
Revelation 12:10-12

Roams about like a Roaring Lion (v.8):

[Satan] roams about like a roaring lion looking for someone he can devour.
1st Peter 5:8c

As a strategist, Satan is woefully lacking. After all, imagining that his plan could "outsmart" the God of glory and defeat Him was the very definition of insanity. In terms of tactics, however, the devil is a wily opponent indeed, and perhaps all the more so for the fact that his operations are more reactive than they are strategic. Satan, to put things simply, is an opportunist. He attacks us when and where we are weakest, not when and where we are strongest. If we are sober and vigilant, the odds are that the devil and his followers will spend their resources attacking other targets which offer a more realistic prospect of success. This doesn't mean that our enemy won't occasional launch "probing attacks", for he often does that (he famously did that with our Lord, even though there was zero chance of success: Matt.4:1-11; Mk.1:12-13; Lk.4:1-13). But if his efforts do not result in easy success, that is, when he sees that he cannot devour us because we are standing firm in the Lord, then he will turn elsewhere.

Therefore subordinate yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
James 4:7

Lions are fearsome, and their roar can engender paralyzing fear. But the Lord is stronger than any lion (Jdg.14:5-6; 1Sam.17:36; Dan.6:16-24), always providing us with the protection we need (cf. 2Ki.6:17), and the Spirit who is in us, being God, is more powerful than any threat in this world, including the devil and all of his forces combined (1Jn.4:4). If we who belong to the Lord make it our habit to trust in Him whenever some terrifying attack is launched unexpectedly against us, we can be confident that all such attacks will ultimately fail, and that the Lord will bring us safely through that sea of trouble dry-shod to the other side.

(3) When I am afraid,
I will put my trust in You.
(4) In God, whose word I praise,
In God I have put my trust;
I shall not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?
Psalm 56:3-4 NASB20

(31) So what shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? (32) He who did not spare His own Son, but handed Him over for our sake, how will He not also graciously give us everything [we need] along with [that gift of] Him? (33) Who will [dare to] bring charges against God's elect? God is the One who is pronouncing [us] justified. (34) Who is he that condemns [us]? Christ Jesus is the One who died [condemned in our place], and the One, moreover, who was raised from the dead [for us], who is [seated] at the right hand of God, who is also making petitions on our behalf. (35) What will separate us from Christ's love? Tribulation? Or privation? Or persecution? Or hunger? Or destitution? Or danger? Or violence? (36) As it is written, "For your sake we are being put to death all day long. We were accounted as sheep for slaughter". (37) But in all such things we are decisively victorious through Him who loved us [enough to do what He did for us]. (38) For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither *angelic* nor human authorities, neither things present nor things to come, neither *heavenly powers*, (39) be they the highest [of the elect] or the lowest [of the fallen], nor *any other created thing* [on this earth] will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:31-39

Resist him, Solid in your Faith (v.9):

Resist him, solid in your faith . . .
1st Peter 5:9a

The second part here is not to be detached from the first. Faith is the means by which we resist the devil; being "solid" in that faith rather than unstable is essential in order to effectively resist the evil one. The Greek verb *anthistemi* here means, literally, to take one's stand against someone or something, and is the same word used by Paul in his description of spiritual warfare at Ephesians 6:13. The analogy is a military one. In the combat of the ancient world, standing fast in formation next to one's fellows was the only path to victory – and the only sure way of safety for oneself and those on either side in the phalanx or legion. Courage was necessary in order to stand fast amid the press of battle so as not to give way and thus endanger one's own life and that of one's fellow soldiers.

Such physical courage is an admirable quality, but spiritual courage is of much higher value because the rewards for having it as well as the consequences for lacking it have eternal repercussions. Physical courage of the sort necessary to stand "solid" in the heat of battle is seldom separable from the strength and health required to fight. But no human being, no matter how fit or strong, can do a single thing to oppose or resist our unseen adversaries in a physical way. Only God and His forces can actually impede the evil enemy and protect us. Our job, therefore, is not to try to engage in this spiritual warfare directly (that is only dabbling in demonism, a most dangerous and ungodly procedure); our job is to *trust the Lord* that *He* will grant us the victory, if only we stand fast, solid in our faith and belief that He will never let us down but will instead carry out all of His promises to us whatever the dangers we face, even if

they do entail facing a physical opponent who is far superior to us in bodily terms.

(9) As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. (11) They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? (12) Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (13) Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. **Stand firm** and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. (14) The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Exodus 14:10-14 NIV

(45) David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. (46) This day **the Lord** will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. (47) All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for **the battle is the Lord's**, and he will give all of you into our hands."

1st Samuel 17:45-47 NIV

The faith by which we resist the attacks of the evil one and his demonic army is the entire content of the truth we have believed and learned to apply in faith. It started out as small as a mustard seed when we first accepted the truth of the gospel, but, God helping us, over time it has grown strong and tall like a tree. We have been watering this tree with the truth of scripture day by day and it has grown from the good soil in which it was planted. God has pruned it with testing and shone His light upon it so that it has flourished and sent its roots down into the deepest recesses of our hearts. This did not happen overnight – any more that the giant oak we see grew to its massive size in a single day. Rather, our faith has been growing daily as we have pursued the truth diligently, expanding little by little in ways we have not even noticed as we have heard and believed and come to make a habit of applying the truth to our lives. Such a tree, well-balanced and deep rooted, strong and tall, will not easily be felled or uprooted. It will resist every windstorm and every flood – just as our faith should do, whenever we find ourselves under spiritual attack.

(1) Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers, (2) but in the Law of the Lord is his delight, and in His teaching he meditates day and night. (3) He will be like a tree planted where the waters divide, which will yield its fruit in its season, and whose leaf will not wither. He will prosper in whatever he does.

Psalms 1:1-3 [INDEX]

We have been preparing for these tests the whole of our Christian lives. When they come, our job is to trust the Lord to bring us safely through them. Nothing is unknown to Him: the plan of God for us is perfect, and has taken every eventuality fully into account in eternity past, including our

specific deliverance from whatever threat we now face. We belong to Jesus Christ. He loves us and cares for us. He has been perfectly faithful to us at every point in our lives – as is obvious upon reflection if we consider things past with even a mustard seed's amount of faith. And we have a right, a duty, to reciprocate that faithfulness with growing faith and trust here and now – especially when the pressure is on. Our faith protects us, because it leads us to rely on the only One who really can protect us in times of trouble, tribulation and satanic attack. Only if we remain "solid" in our faith, trusting in the Lord to deliver us no matter what we feel or hear or see, will we be able to resist effectively on the "evil day" (Eph.6:13).

Why should I fear when evil days come, when wicked deceivers surround me?
Psalm 49:5 NIV

Be on your guard; ***stand firm in the faith***; be courageous; be strong.
1st Corinthians 16:13 NIV

And at all times take up ***the shield of faith***, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery missiles of the evil one.
Ephesians 6:16

Your Fellow Believers are Undergoing the Same Suffering (v.9):

. . . remembering that your fellow believers in this world are undergoing the exact same sort of suffering [that you are].
1st Peter 5:9b

It is an occupational hazard of the Christian life to occasionally become self-absorbed in times of trouble, imagining that the assaults the devil is laying on are of a personal nature, that "all this" is happening "to me alone". But every Christian must always remember that we are living on a spiritual battlefield where ***all*** believers are constantly being observed and targeted by the enemy. Focus on self leads to self-pity; realization that ***all*** who belong to Christ are enduring similar pressures – even though the forms they take will be different and perhaps unseen by others – leads to a more humble and realistic attitude: ***all*** believers are receiving satanic opposition of one degree or another; and ***all*** of us are enduring suffering of one sort or another.

Men in combat have often related after the fact how that it was the comradeship of their fellow soldiers that helped them get through the most difficult times and the extraordinary stress of battle. It is on the basis of that same sort of comradeship that Peter appeals to us here, reminding us that "all this" is not about us personally, but about Jesus Christ, and in particular about the Body of Christ. We may be suffering, but when we are, our brothers and sisters should stand by to help and encourage us just as we should do for them; and even if we are suffering, we must never forget that our brothers and sisters are suffering too – even if they do not necessarily show it. All who are striving to live a godly life in Jesus Christ will face the evil one's attacks (2Tim.3:12). As we make spiritual advances, the pressure ramps up. But we are being helped by our comrades, our fellow Christians, who pray for us, encourage us, and help us according to the gifts and ministries they have been given – and we should be helping them as well, keeping ever in mind that we are ***all*** "in this" together.

(25) . . . there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. (26) If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (27) Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1st Corinthians 12:25b-27 NIV

The God of all Grace (v.10):

And the God of all grace . . .

1st Peter 5:10a

The word "grace" used here is the Greek *charis*, a term meaning "favor" or "good will". This word in English has picked up nearly magical connotations in some religious and theological arenas, but the writers of the New Testament never gave it any mystical meaning. Rather, "grace" represents God's attitude of "good will" or beneficence directed toward us, His children. As believers in Jesus Christ, we find ourselves under the Father's umbrella of good favor. Moreover, we are recipients of His favorable attitude called "grace" (and of all the blessings that attend it) not because of anything we have done, but because, as believers, the Father now sees us as being one with His Son, Jesus Christ, the One with whom He has always been "well pleased" (Matt.3:17; 17:5). "Grace" is the Father's attitude directed towards those He loves; blessing is the result of that favor – and all such grace derived blessing comes from Him to us on account of our belonging to Jesus Christ. In this context of suffering and endurance, the theme of Peter's entire epistle, the apostle thought it important in the Spirit to remind us that nothing can cut us off from the Father's favor and blessing – that is, from the grace of God – because we are one with His Son.

For though it is true that on account of the offense of the one death reigned through that one (i.e., by Adam passing down his sin to his progeny), how much more will those who receive this abundance of grace, even this **Gift** of righteousness [through justification] rule in [eternal] life through [the sacrifice of] the One, Jesus Christ!

Romans 5:17

I always thank my God for you because of the **grace** of God that was **given** to you in Christ Jesus.

1st Corinthians 1:4 NET

For you have been saved by [God's] **grace** through faith [in Christ]; and this did not come from you – it [salvation] is God's **gift** [to you].

Ephesians 2:8

[God] who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not through our works, but through His own [sovereign] choice [of us] and [His] **grace** [towards us], [that grace] which was **given** to us in Christ Jesus in eternity past.

2nd Timothy 1:9

Jesus Christ is thus the ultimate **Gift of grace**, given freely to us at an inestimable cost by our loving heavenly Father, that all who are willing to receive Him might have eternal life. All favor, all blessing, all "grace" we receive from the Father we receive because of Jesus Christ who bought

us free from our sins through His own blood, His death for those sins in the darkness on the cross.

Called to Eternal Glory (v.10):

[T]he One who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ . . .
1st Peter 5:10b

All believers have been "called" by the Father, summoned to respond to the truth of the gospel and so to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ. This "calling", which is the basis for our selection/election into the Body of Christ, is part of God's divine decree, the perfect plan of God which was consecrated in eternity past before creation was begun.⁸ God's perfect plan encompasses absolutely everything that transpires in this short span of history, after which our eternity with Him will commence. This is surely a great encouragement for us all to keep in mind, especially when we find ourselves experiencing severe testing and suffering in this life. For this life is very short compared to eternity, and just as God knew that He would create us and knew that we would suffer – for growth and for His glory – He also foreknew and foreordained the blessed outcome and result of our calling, namely, our resurrection, our reunion with Jesus Christ and the entire Church, and our eternal reward in New Jerusalem as part of the perfect and eternal family of God forever and ever. This is the "eternal glory" Peter is referring to in our context, our perfect, eternal, glorious bodies, and the incomparable blessings and rewards of eternal life which the Father has in store for all who belong to His beloved Son.

For I do not consider these present hardships in any way comparable to the glory destined to be revealed for us.
Romans 8:18

But as it is written: "What the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard, and [what] has not entered the heart of man, [these are the very] things which God has prepared for those who love Him".
1st Corinthians 2:9

(17) For this present light affliction of ours is working out for us an eternal weight of glory beyond any possible estimation. (18) [Let us] not [then be] having [any] regard for what can be seen, but [instead] for what cannot be seen. For the things which can be seen are ephemeral. But the things which cannot be seen are eternal.
2nd Corinthians 4:17-18

Suffering for a Short Time (v.10):

. . . though you have had to suffer for a short time.
1st Peter 5:10c

When we find ourselves under severe testing and difficult suffering, it is easy, all too easy, to lose

⁸ See especially BB 4B: Soteriology, section I.2.b, "Predestination, Foreknowledge and Calling".

our focus. This is essentially what happened to Job – although of course his suffering was and remains unprecedented **and** he did not have the benefit of the book of Job. If he had, he would have been able to remind himself that God has everything in hand, and that no matter how bleak things may look, and no matter how difficult they may be, our deliverance is absolutely certain. We today **can** know that without doubt through faith in the truth. Only the time and manner of our deliverance are hidden from us – necessary for the test we are facing to be a true and fair test. When we accept and embrace this truth of deliverance from whatever trouble we are encountering, God is glorified by our trusting of Him. In the meantime, we can console ourselves with the sure and certain knowledge that this tribulation, whatever it may be, will not only not last forever; in fact it will be short – when the time is measured with the eyes of faith.

Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.

Psalm 39:4 NIV

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:12 NIV

(32) Remember the days gone by, when you first saw the light, when you persevered through that terrible trial of abuse. (33) For you were publicly exposed to humiliation and persecution, and shared the lot of others who experienced the same. (34) You suffered from my chains, and accepted the confiscation of your belongings with joy, because you knew that you possessed a more valuable estate, and a more lasting one. (35) So do not throw away this conviction of yours – it leads to a great reward. (36) You need to keep persevering so that you may carry off in victory what has been promised – after you have accomplished God's will. (37) For yet a little while, how short, how short [the wait], and He who is coming shall come, nor will He delay. (38) "Then shall my righteous one by faith live because of his faith, but if he shrinks back, My heart takes no pleasure in him (Hab.2:3-4)."

Hebrews 10:32-38

In what amounts to the blink of an eye by eternity's standards, we will be standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be evaluated for everything we have done in this world or failed to do (Rom.14:10-12; 2Cor.5:10). At that moment, none of the present suffering we are enduring will matter to us. What will matter is how we handled it, whether or not we trusted the Lord to bring us through it, whether we glorified Him by trusting His promise given by Peter here that our suffering would not last forever and acting accordingly – or not.

(26) What point is there for a man to come to possess the entire world, if he should then come to lose his life? Or what can a man pay to regain his life? (27) For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay every man in his own coin.

Matthew 16:26-27

This perspective, the eternity perspective, is not so easy to maintain. No believer can long do so without first achieving spiritual maturity – and spiritual maturity is never achieved without some such "graduation test" that requires us to patiently endure undeserved suffering, waiting on God's

deliverance in some situation where we are largely powerless to deliver ourselves. Peter reminds us here that deliverance *will* come, in short order . . . from the divine point of view. Our job is to adopt that point of view as well, and wait on the Lord until it is His good pleasure to bring us safely across whatever Red Sea test we are facing. If we are willing to wait for Him, He will help us do so, and grant us His deliverance.

Wait on the Lord;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the Lord!
Psalm 27:14 NKJV

Equip, Solidify, Strengthen and Establish You (v.10):

. . . [God] will Himself equip you, solidify you, strengthen you, establish you.
1st Peter 5:10d

If we do bear up under suffering, it makes us stronger. Here Peter promises us in the Holy Spirit that in short order, God Himself will provide for us, stabilize, firm up and support us – so that we will have the ability to get through this particular test and also to bear up under future trials as well.

(2) Brothers, when you are being beset with all manner of trials, take pains to be joyful.
(3) For you should keep in mind that this testing of your faith develops perseverance. (4) So let your perseverance develop fully, that you may become fully mature and entitled to a full reward, having been found lacking in no respect.
James 1:2-4

(3) And not only this, but let us glory in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces patience, (4) and patience produces proven character, and proven character produces hope – (5) and this hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.
Romans 5:3-5

The equipping, solidifying, strengthening, and establishing Peter mentions here has to do primarily with our *faith*. Faith, as we have said many times in the past, is like a muscle. It has to be exercised to grow, and the exercise most conducive to that growth is the stress of testing wherein the believer commits to trusting the Lord. To the extent that we do rely on the Lord in trouble, He uses that experience to cause our spiritual growth (that is the meaning of the verb *katartizo*)⁹; He uses that testing to make our faith more firm, more solid; He uses that experience to make us stronger in faith and better able to cope with whatever comes next; and He uses that experience to build up our foundation of faith to make it ever more secure – that is, to the extent that we actually *do* trust Him to see us through, and *do* hold onto that attitude of courageous faith firm until the end of the test and deliverance we cannot see but are sure exists, seeing it clearly

⁹ See BB 6A: Peripateology, section II.1, "Spiritual Growth Vocabulary".

with the eyes of faith.

[Let us] not [then be] having [any] regard for what can be seen, but [instead] for what cannot be seen. For the things which can be seen are ephemeral. But the things which cannot be seen are eternal.

2nd Corinthians 4:18

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2nd Corinthians 5:7 NKJV

(1) It is faith [in the Living and written Word], moreover, that substantiates what we hope for. [Faith] provides proof of things unseen. (2) For it is by this [very faith] that believers of old received their divine approval.

Hebrews 11:1-2

Now without faith, it is impossible to please [God]. For whoever wishes to draw nearer to God must believe that He exists, and that He will reward those who earnestly seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

To Him be the Glory and the Power (v.11):

To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever!

1st Peter 5:11a

This verse is often technically designated a "doxology", that is, an expression of praise for the Lord.

Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

Psalms 147:1 NIV

It is indeed pleasing for us who belong to Him to praise the Lord for all He has done for us. We delight in doing so, and no wonder, since we have been created for Him and for this very purpose, namely, to sing His praises and to glorify Him.

Everyone who is called by my Name, *for My glory I have created him*, I have formed him, indeed, I have made him.

Isaiah 43:7

(5) Having foreordained us in [His] love for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will, (6) for the purpose of producing *praise for the glory of His grace* which He has graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved [One].

Ephesians 1:5-6

(11) In whom we also have an inheritance, having been ordained according to the design of Him who is working everything out according to the desire of His will, (12) that we who have previously placed our hope in Christ might serve the purpose of generating

praise for His glory.

Ephesians 1:11-12

God is light (1Jn.1:5), glorious and unapproachable light (1Tim.6:16). Acknowledging Him as the glorious One as Peter does here is the way we demonstrate that we understand that **He** is the One to whom all praise belongs for any success we have had or blessing we have received in this world. We are grateful and we are thankful that we have been delivered from whatever testing we have been brought through. Like Peter, therefore, we express our deep appreciation of the One who has delivered us, doing so now here on earth, and looking forward to eternity when we shall sing His praises for who He is and what He has done for us "forever and ever". This phrase means literally, "to the ages of the ages" when there is no more time and only an eternity of blessing with the One we love forevermore – all because of the Person and the work of Jesus Christ in saving us.

[Future generations] will come and proclaim [God's] righteousness to people not yet born, for He has accomplished it (i.e., salvation)!

Psalm 22:31 (cf. Jn.19:30)

Amen! (v.11):

Amen!

1st Peter 5:11b

It is easy to take this divinely inspired punctuation, added by Peter here in the enthusiasm provided by the Holy Spirit, for granted. It is easy to overlook this exclamation and to forget what it means. "Amen" is a Hebrew adverb meaning "truly", derived from the verb of the same root meaning (depending on the stem), "to be solid, verified, confirmed, faithful". "Amen", as any Bible reader knows, is used throughout the New Testament to underline the profound truth and applicability of a particular statement (often doubled by our Lord because He is the truth incarnate). In other words, "amen!", as used here following Peter's assurance of God's provision for us in times of testing and suffering, means that this is God's truth, worthy of being believed and remembered: regardless of the trouble or tribulation we will have to face in this world, our Lord will see us through with upraised hand and outstretched arm no matter what if we but wait on His deliverance. Amen!

"We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself."

Job 5:27 NIV

Paragraph III (vv. 12-14)

(12) I have written to you briefly through Silvanus, a faithful brother in my estimation, encouraging you and testifying to you that this is God's true grace. Stand fast in respect to it. (13) The church in Babylon, elect along with you, greets you, along with my son, Mark. (14) Greet each other [for me] with a kiss of *agape*-love. May there be peace unto you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1st Peter 5:12-14

Silvanus (v.12):

I have written to you briefly through Silvanus.

1st Peter 5:12a

As this verse tells us, Silvanus was Peter's amanuensis; that is, he physically wrote out this epistle at Peter's dictation. Silvanus is the Greek version of the Latin name "Silas" (it being very common in that time and place for individuals to have several versions of their names in multiple languages, including, along with Greek and Latin also Hebrew and Aramaic). This is indeed the same "Silas" who was Paul's longtime companion. Silas was sent by the Jerusalem church as one of their representatives to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the letter of the counsel which affirmed, among other things, that gentile believers had no need to be circumcised (Acts 15:22; 15:27). Silas had the gift of prophecy and ministered the Word to the Antioch believers during this stay, and he seems to have stayed on in Antioch (Acts 15:32-35); then, after the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, Silas teamed up with Paul for the "second missionary journey" (Acts 15:40), and followed Paul and company to Philippi (Acts 16:19; 16:25; 16:29), Thessalonika (Acts 17:4; 1Thess.1:1; 2Thess.1:1), and Berea (where he remained while Paul went to Athens: Acts 17:14-15); then, being reunited with him in Corinth, Silas contributed to the ministry of the new church there as well (Acts 18:5; 2Cor.1:19).

It is not possible to say dogmatically from these mentions in scripture that Silas continued with Paul until the end of his ministry, but as he is now associated with Peter in Rome, it is possible that he accompanied Paul there during his captivity. In any case, as Peter wrote this letter from Rome, at some point after Paul's martyrdom, Silas associated himself with this other great apostle's ministry. What we can say is that Silas continued to devote himself to God's work in whatever capacity the Lord wished to make use of him – precisely what every believer should be committed to doing as long as we are in the world.

Few of us, no doubt, have ever given much thought to Silas, but a brief consideration of such details of his spiritual career as scripture shares makes it abundantly clear that he accomplished very great things for the kingdom of God – and that his eternal reward will be wonderfully rich as a result. Silas is a good example of the fact that there have always been many believers laboring anonymously in the vineyard, giving their all for Jesus Christ. These believers may be of little account in the eyes of the world, but since, like Silas, they have put the Lord, His truth, and His Church first in their hearts, on that great day to come, Jesus Christ will honor them as they have honored Him (1Sam.2:30).

"But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Mark 10:31 NIV

"Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

Luke 13:30 NIV

A Faithful Brother in My Estimation (v.12):

. . . a faithful brother in my estimation.

Faithfulness is the key to any successful Christian life. Faithfulness means resoluteness in doing what Christ has asked us to do, denying ourselves, picking up our crosses and following Him – which is to say, putting Christ's priorities first, committing ourselves to doing whatever is necessary to carry out that mandate, and then getting on with it consistently. Faithfulness *is* consistency in all of the things Jesus requires of us. Sanctification, yes – but also extremely importantly continued and continuing spiritual growth, spiritual progress and spiritual production. We keep up the good work for Jesus Christ, one day at a time, making every day count for Him as best we can, and not letting one bad day begin a negative trend; rather we endeavor to keep putting one good day after another, not getting bogged down by the mistakes and errors and stumbles that come every Christian's way, but instead persevering in our Bible reading and Bible study, in our application of the truth to our lives in all we think and say and do, and in our service to the Lord, in prayer and encouragement and specific ministry, whatever He has called us to do. If we do persevere in our good course consistently, that is faithfulness, that is what our Lord desires from us – and that is what He rewards.

"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and *faithful* servant; you have been *faithful* over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' "
Matthew 25:23 NKJV (cf. Matt.25:21)

"And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were *faithful* in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' "
Luke 19:17 NKJV

Given the importance of this characteristic in Christ's evaluation of us all, Peter here refrains from calling Silas "faithful" without a small qualification: "in my estimation". This is not to be taken to believe that Peter is in any doubt whatsoever about Silas' faithfulness. Rather, this statement merely indicates that Peter is well aware that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who will be the Judge of whether or not we were faithful on this earth – because a believer's faithfulness (or lack thereof) is ultimately all about our constancy and dedication *to Him*.

(42) And the Lord said, "Who then is that *faithful* and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? (43) Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. (44) Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has."
Luke 12:42-44 NKJV

(1) Let [every] man evaluate us this way, namely, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (2) Now what you are looking for in stewards, moreover, is that one be found who is *faithful* [to the Lord] (i.e., and therefore worthy of one's trust). (3) It means less than nothing to me to be judged by you or by any human judicial proceeding. (4) I do not even judge myself – but I am not for that reason justified either. *The Lord* is the One who judges me. (5) Therefore, do not make judgments before the time, until the Lord shall come, who will illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and reveal the intents of every heart, and then the praise of each shall come to him from God.

1st Corinthians 4:1-5 [INDEX]

The True Grace of God (v.12):

I have written to you briefly . . . encouraging you and testifying to you that this is God's true grace.

1st Peter 5:12c

The "this" here is God's grace as described in this letter, that is, His favor to us by which Peter has been encouraging us and to which he has been testifying throughout this epistle: as believers in Jesus Christ, we are the recipients of the good will, the favor, the blessing, the grace of God the Father. We have that on good authority from an apostle of Christ testifying to this blessed truth in the Spirit and encouraging us through it. We may face testing – indeed we shall. We may have to endure suffering – indeed we shall. But never will we have to face *any* test or trial, no matter how large, no matter how hard, *without* God's gracious help. As those who belong to Jesus Christ "by grace through faith" (Eph.2:8-9) this is our blessed heritage which we can never afford to lose sight of this side of heaven home.

(1) So now that we have been justified by faith, let us take hold of the peace [we have] with God [the Father] through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom we have also obtained our access *into this grace in which we stand*, and let us boast in the hope of the glory of God (i.e., in anticipation of our resurrection).

Romans 5:1-2

Everything Peter has taught us in this epistle, a brief one by his lights (since he no doubt had much more to say, though the Spirit determined that this was sufficient), has been directly or indirectly focused on how we are to cope with the pressures of life and the undeserved suffering trials and testing that come every believer's way. We have the Holy Spirit, we have the encouragement of scripture, the truth of the Word of God, we have the support of the other believers who minister to us and pray for us, we have the sure and certain hope of an eternity with resurrection and reward which will exceed anything we can presently imagine – and we have all of these things through the ineffable sacrifice of Jesus Christ our dear Lord and Savior who died for us that we might have life eternal with Him and all of our brothers and sisters forever. *That* is God's true grace, and we are blessed beyond human estimation to possess it.

Stand Fast in Grace (v.12):

Stand fast in respect to it (i.e., this "true grace").

1st Peter 5:12d

Most versions render this short command "stand fast *in it*" (or something similar). But such translations miss the fact that what we have here is the preposition *eis* with the accusative, and *not* the preposition *en* with the dative case (which would be necessary for these translations to be correct). "Grace" is often misunderstood in traditional theology and is often transformed into some mystical concept incapable of being understood. In fact, as we have explained several times now in this present study, "grace" is God's favor directed towards His children, the glorious status of being part of the family along with all the blessings that entails for us who believe in Jesus Christ. In Him, we have all received and enjoy blessing upon blessing from our heavenly Father.

For we have all received from [Christ's] fullness one gracious gift after another.
John 1:16 NET

God blesses us, He looks with favor upon us, the same way we look with favor and bestow blessings on our own children – but our heavenly Father does so perfectly and to an infinite degree. Being the recipients of the grace of God, given the Holy Spirit, given the Bible, given the means to grow (ministries and ministers and fellow Christians to support us in that essential endeavor) and thus the means to earn great eternal rewards, Peter reminds us here that our success in the Christian life is not a given. *We* must "stand fast", making use of the wonderful grace opportunities which the Father has given us in Jesus Christ to do all we have been charged to do here on earth: growing spiritually, progressing in our walk with Christ, passing the tests that come, and helping others do likewise through whatever ministries and ministerial opportunities we are given. That is how we "stand fast" in respect to and in response to the wonderful grace that the Father has given us in Jesus Christ.

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which *you have taken your stand*.
1st Corinthians 15:1 NIV

Be alert, *stand firm in the faith*, be courageous, be strong.
1st Corinthians 16:13 CSB

(10) So come what may, draw strength from the Lord and be strengthened through His powerful might. (11) Put on the full armor of God, so *that you may be able to stand firm* against the tricks of the devil.
Ephesians 6:10-11

So then my beloved brothers whom I deeply desire, my joy and my crown [of victory], *stand fast in the Lord*, beloved, in this way [in which I have written you]!
Philippians 4:1

Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, *that you may stand perfect and complete* in all the will of God.
Colossians 4:12 NKJV

For now we really live, *if you stand firm in the Lord*.
1st Thessalonians 3:8 NASB20

Now to Him who is able to protect you from stumbling, and *to make you stand* in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy.
Jude 1:24 NASB20

The Church in Babylon (v.13):

The church in Babylon, elect along with you, greets you.
1st Peter 5:13a

At this point in history, the once famous city of Babylon was a small town of no particular account. There is no reason why Peter should have been there, and there is no convincing evidence that he ever was (or that there was ever a church there of sufficient size and importance to rate an apostolic visit). Peter's connection with Rome, however, is sufficiently supported by various traditional sources, and he is certainly referring to that megalopolis with this reference. Whether from a prudent desire not to mention the empire's capital or in order to evoke the clear similarities between the two imperial centers, the Spirit has allowed this cryptic reference and left it to us to properly interpret it. One thing it is important to understand about this, however, is that while Peter's words do equate Babylonian and Roman power, cruelty and persecution, there is no interpretive justification for similarly equating the city of Rome with the mystery Babylon of Revelation as a result (and far less with the Roman Catholic church "universal" which would not exist for many centuries to come, despite that church's mythology to the contrary).

Many of Peter's readers were Roman citizens and, in spite of incipient persecutions, were also no doubt at least nominally patriotic. Since setting up shop in Rome, Peter seems to have felt the need with this reference to disabuse his readers of any notion of alignment between our faith and the state to which we owe temporal allegiance. Christians are indeed responsible to be good citizens of whatever nation the will of God has seen fit to place us in, while at the same time never failing to put the Kingdom of God first in all things. Mentioning Rome as the place of writing could well have sent a mixed message to any and all who were not solid on this important point. Calling Rome "Babylon", on the other hand, makes crystal clear the distinction between our temporal and spiritual responsibilities.

The word "church" (Greek, *ekklesia*) does not actually occur here, but Greek often leaves out particular nouns when it is beyond clear (to a Greek reader) what is meant to be supplied. The adjective "elect" is in the feminine singular and with no noun around for it to refer to, we are left to supply that word. The only "elect" thing which could or would send greetings to the Christians receiving this epistle was, of course, the church at Rome. Taken together, the adjective "elect" and the noun "church" (etymologically, "assembly which has been called out") mean "called out so as to be selected". What is true of individual churches is only so because we are all a part of the true Church universal. It is both an honor and a privilege to belong to the elite, select, elect, called-out-to-be-special-and-separate Church of Jesus Christ, the most exclusive organization which has ever existed, not because Christ did not die for all mankind (He certainly did), but because only the few deign to count themselves worthy of eternal life in humbling themselves to accept the Gift of life through faith, so as to become part of His Church.

"For many are called, but few are chosen."
Matthew 22:14 NKJV

Being elected, selected into the Body of Christ is something the whole Church has in common. So it is right and good for believers in one geographical area, in one "local assembly" of the Church, to feel and to express solidarity with all other believers, regardless of where they live or their background or what language they speak or any other consideration . . . apart from their mutual love of and allegiance to the truth of the Word of God. For it is the truth of the written Word of God given unto us by Him who is the living Word of God which has bound us together in Him when we believed and which binds us together now as we all strive to grow closer to Him

day by day through that same truth (and which also separates us from those who do not share that same love of the truth: Matt.10:34-39 compared with Heb.4:12-13 and Eph.6:17). All who share this sacred commitment are brothers and sisters worthy of fellowship, there being in truth no divine distinction between believers or between any two groups of believers – other than their attitude towards the truth.

It has given me great joy to find some of your children (i.e., members of your congregation) walking *in the truth*, just as the Father commanded us.
2nd John 1:4 NIV

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children (i.e., all under my teaching authority in whatever church) walk *in truth*.
3rd John 1:4 NIV

My Son Mark (v.13):

. . . along with my son, Mark.
1st Peter 5:13b

The Mark to whom Peter refers affectionately as his spiritual "son" is undoubtedly the John Mark of the Book of Acts (Acts 12:2; 12:25; 13:5; 13:13; 15:37-39), the same young man who was present with Peter and the other disciples and the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal before the crucifixion. Mark is the one who was seized but pulled free, leaving behind his only covering, his linen tunic, in the hand of his would be captor, and then fled naked into the night (Mk.14:52).

Mark's story is an inspiring one, especially for any believer who has had a history of false starts, but comes around in the end to do the will of God. His conduct on the night Jesus was betrayed was no better or worse than that of the others, for all eventually fled (Matt.26:56; Mk.14:50). Later on we find him keeping vigil for Peter with other believers in his mother's house on the night of that apostle's miraculous release from prison (Acts 12:12), then later accompanying Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch from Jerusalem after their mission to the counsel of elders there (Acts 12:25).

Why Mark did not continue on in Jerusalem with Peter, we cannot say (perhaps he was eager for new experiences), but we do know that this new association resulted in his accompaniment of Paul and Barnabas as their servant on the so-called first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). He did not, however, stay the course, and left them to head home to Jerusalem when the party left Cyprus and sailed for the mainland (Acts 13:13). We can surmise that the hardships of such a journey were too much for the young man, and that he gave in to a bout of homesickness and spiritual fatigue, causing him to miss out on some of the most profoundly wonderful and miraculous developments scripture records in the incipient Church Age, as Paul and company proclaimed the gospel in Asia Minor for the first time, with "signs, wonders and mighty deeds" accomplished by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2Cor.12:2).

Later, when Paul desired to make a second journey to visit and strengthen the new believers

recently won to the faith, he opposed Barnabas' suggestion that they should give Mark, his cousin as it turns out, a second chance, and this disagreement between these two men of exceptionally strong wills led to a temporary breach, with Paul taking Silas and setting out to revisit the cities of Asia Minor (and from there eventually traveling to Greece), while Barnabas took Mark back to Cyprus (Acts 15:37-39).

True believers in Jesus Christ are nothing if not forgiving, and we know that later on Paul and Barnabas reconciled after their quarrel (cf. 1Cor.9:6; Gal.2:1; 2:9; Col.4:10), and that Paul also had a change of heart in regard to Mark – who had by then proven himself faithful and abundantly so. In the end, Paul, as Peter did later, came to regard Mark very highly as a useful coworker for the gospel, not only forgiving him but also seeking him out to help with the ministry of the Word when he was imprisoned in Rome.

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.

Colossians 4:10 NKJV

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

2nd Timothy 4:11 NKJV

And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers [greet you].

Philemon 1:24 NKJV

It is possible that Mark stayed on in Rome after Paul's death, and that it was here, after Peter's arrival, that the two men renewed their old acquaintance and friendship. As he had helped Paul, so Mark helped Peter, earning the high praise of being called "son" by that great apostle (1Pet.5:13b).

Our God is a God of forgiveness, a God of redemption. We all make mistakes in this life. Sometimes, like Mark's, they are huge, seemingly putting us past the point of any sort of spiritual come-back. But if, like John Mark, we persevere in doing what is right thereafter, we will find a gracious God waiting patiently to take us back into His loving fellowship as in the parable of the prodigal son. Paul took Mark back. Peter took him back as well. John Mark was given to be of great service and a blessing to two of the greatest believers who have ever lived, and therefore we may say for certain that his eternal reward will be comparably great. And something even more than that – Mark was even granted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to write part of the eternal and everlasting Word of God: the Gospel of Mark.

Kiss of Love (v.14):

Greet each other [for me] with a kiss of *agape*-love.

1st Peter 5:14a

It is a very common thing in Mediterranean cultures for people to express themselves in tactile ways such as this, ways which are not the norm in, say, this country today. There is nothing untoward about a kiss of greeting placed on the cheek when that is the custom of the day, nor is

there anything wrong with a handshake instead, if that is the practice in the country where believers meet. In any case, we should understand that this charge is given by Peter here merely to express his Christian love of all those believers to whom he ministered and who were receiving this epistle (i.e., he did not expect them to actually kiss each other in his place when they read this).

As believers in Jesus Christ, whether or not we have met, and whether or not we have ever seen each other face to face, or have instead only had the opportunity to commune through letters or electronic media, it is right and proper for us to feel and to express joy at belonging to each other as part of the Bride of Jesus Christ nonetheless. Though many miles and other barriers may separate us today, we all have the Holy Spirit and we all ought to have the same dedication and devotion to the truth and to the expansion and edification of the Church of Jesus Christ through that truth. We can also rejoice in the sure and certain hope of standing together as one united Church in resurrection on that glorious day to come, singing together in perfect harmony the praises of the dear Savior who delivered us from death as we bask in the glory of His presence. This is the heritage of us all – and we rejoice to be part of each other both now and forevermore.

(15) For we tell you this by the Lord's own Word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord (i.e., the Second Advent which brings the Great Tribulation to a close) will not precede those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with the archangel's blast on the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first (in resurrection), (17) then we who are alive and remain will be snatched up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and in this way we shall always be with the Lord.

1st Thessalonians 4:15-17

Peace to those in Jesus Christ (v.14):

May there be peace unto you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1st Peter 5:14b

As we have mentioned many times in the past, the Church Age's fulfillment of the fourth commandment comes not through a one day a week devotion to rituals described in the Law, but in an all day every day adherence to the peace of Jesus Christ, a peace that is to dominate our lives and way of thinking, empowered by the Holy Spirit and fortified by the truth of the Word of God in which we grow and to which we pay ever greater attention in every step forward of our Christian walk. When we cease from our own works and trust the Lord instead – being diligent to do what it is *we* are supposed to do even as we leave it to the Lord to do the things that only He can do – we enter into this rest of faith, this peace, which is the true fulfillment of honoring every day we live in this world for Jesus Christ as a Sabbath holy unto Him.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His *rest*, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:1 NKJV

(9) There remains therefore a *rest* (*Sabbatismos*, "Sabbath-rest" < Sabbath) for the people

of God. (10) For he who has entered His *rest* has himself also *ceased from his works* as God did from His. (11) Let us therefore be diligent to enter that *rest*, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Hebrews 4:9-11 NKJV

This "peace perspective", not only understood intellectually but aggressively put into action in our daily lives through our holding onto the Lord with an ever tighter grip of faith each step of the way, is absolutely essential for weathering difficult trails and challenging tests. Peter, we recall from our introduction to this series, wrote this letter with a primary purpose of encouraging believers throughout the Roman world to stand fast in their faith in spite of the growing opposition from unbelievers and from the Roman state. Absolutely essential to successful negotiation of undeserved suffering in particular is the godly habit of casting our cares on the Lord (Ps.55:22; 1Pet.5:7), trusting Him to deliver us through tribulations over which we have little or no control, ceasing from our own work – not from our efforts to earn our daily bread nor still less from our efforts to continue in spiritual growth, progress and production, but from all efforts designed to deliver ourselves when only the Lord can help us.

This "faith rest" was a very necessary principle for believers of that time to master, necessary too for believers at all times, today included, and it will be of overarching importance during the Tribulation soon to come. As those who belong to Jesus Christ, as those who are His Bride, His Body, His Church, as those who are the sheep under His direct and loving care, we have a right, an obligation to trust in Him at all times, to rely on His deliverance, to rest in Him through faith . . . to have the peace which Peter wishes for us in this final verse. This is the heritage of all who are "in Christ Jesus".

"Peace I leave for you; **peace** I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you."

John 14:27

(1) So now that we have been justified by faith, let us take hold of **the peace** [we have] with God [the Father] through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom we have also obtained our access into this grace in which we stand, and let us boast in the hope of the glory of God (i.e., in anticipation of our resurrection).

Romans 5:1-2

You will keep him in **perfect peace**,
Whose mind is stayed on You,
Because he **trusts** in You.

Isaiah 26:3 NKJV