

1 PET. 4:7 – 5:14

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E. Living in light of Christ having brought the end near (4:7-11) – ⁷*The end of all things has drawn near. Therefore, be clear thinking and self-controlled for prayers.*

⁸*Above all, have earnest love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*

⁹*[Be] hospitable to one another without grumbling.* ¹⁰*As each has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of [the] diverse grace of God.* ¹¹*If anyone speaks, [do it] as [speaking] words of God. If anyone ministers, [do it] as from [the] strength God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power, forever and ever, amen.*

1. With the Christ event, the end has drawn near in that the *necessary grounds or basis* for the final eternal state has occurred. The victory has been won by Christ; his atoning death purchased not only our reconciliation but that of all creation. As Paul says in Eph. 1:7-10, God's will for the handling of the end of history is to unify heaven and earth in Christ. In other words, his will is to "heavenize" creation, to create that state called the new heavens and new earth. From the time of Christ's redemptive work, the final state has been, as we might say, "a done deal." All that remains is for the consequence of Christ's achievement to play out.

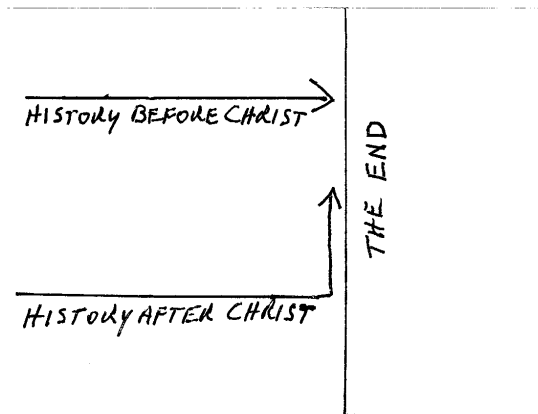
a. Christ's work was essential for the victory, for the redemption of creation, because it is the only means by which God forgives sin consistently with his holiness and righteousness. When the victory that has already been won by Christ will be "cashed out" or fully expressed, when God will send the Christ to consummate the kingdom, to bring history to a close with the eternal state, is a matter of God's unknown timing.

(1) As Jesus says in Mk. 13:32 (also Mat. 24:36) (ESV), "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

(2) Peter specifically cautions his readers in 2 Pet. 3:8-10 not to allow the apparent slowness of Christ's return to become a cause for doubting the certainty of it. He tells them that God operates in his own dimension of time – with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day – so that he cannot be judged by human perceptions of slowness.

b. Since Christ's achievement, creation has been on the verge of the end. This (poorly drawn) diagram may help you in conceptualize the idea. It's from J. H. Newman, a 19th-century pastor, and was cited in the commentaries on 1 John by F. F. Bruce, I. Howard Marshall, and Gary Burge. As long as this reality, history as we know it, continues, it does so on the brink of Christ's return and the consummation of all things.

However long God in his purposes extends the time since Christ, Christ's coming is ever at our door.



c. Further illustrating the concept

(1) To use a mundane analogy, it is as if all the defenders in a football play had been blocked so hard as to be unconscious. When the last defender is knocked out, the touchdown is already secured at that point; the only question is how long the runner will choose to take before crossing the goal line.

(2) Or think of a will that calls for the executor to bestow on the heirs an inheritance at whatever time the executor chooses. Once the testator dies, the inheritance draws near in the sense it now may come at any time. With the testator's death, what is necessary for the exercise of the executor's discretion has occurred. From the testator's death on, the heirs live on the brink of their inheritance but without knowing when it would arrive.

(3) Now imagine that the will calls for the executor to bestow the inheritance at such time as the executor allows weeds to sprout by removing his protection against them. The inheritance will not be bestowed until the weeds sprout, but that *set of events*, the bestowal of the inheritance and the sprouting weeds with which it is associated, has drawn near with the testator's death because they both can occur in a short period of time at the executor's discretion.

(4) Similarly, the Christian inheritance in the eternal state will not be bestowed until God allows Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, to appear by removing his protection against him, but that set of events has drawn near with Christ's redemptive work because they both can occur swiftly, in a short *period* of time, at God's discretion.

(a) As Douglas Moo explains in Gleason Archer and others, *The Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulational* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 209-210:

Within the New Testament there are indications that suggest that New Testament authors could not have intended to portray the Parousia as an event that could happen "at any moment." . . .

Therefore, it does not appear that the imminence of the return of Christ can be understood in an "any-moment" sense. . . . It is better to define *imminency* as the possibility of Jesus' coming for His people *at any time* – 'time' being understood broadly as a short *period* of time. It is in light of that 'any-time' coming that the church is called upon to live out its calling.

(b) After pointing out that the N.T. specifies certain precursors to the second coming, Millard Erickson likewise states in *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 1194, "This is not to say it is inappropriate to speak of imminence. It is, however, the complex of events surrounding the second coming, rather than the single event itself, that is imminent. Perhaps we should speak of this complex as imminent and the second coming itself as 'impending.'"

d. Here's how Douglas Moo puts the general point in *The Letter of James*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 224:

With the death and resurrection of Jesus and pouring out of the Spirit, the "last days" have been inaugurated. This final age of salvation will find its climax in the return of Christ in glory. But – and here is the crucial point – the length of the age is unknown. Not even Jesus knew how long the "last days" would last (cf. Mark 13:32). What this means is that the return of Christ, as the next event in the salvation-historical timetable, is, from the time of the early church to our own day, "near," or "imminent." Every generation of Christians lives (or should live!) with the consciousness that the *parousia* could occur at any time and that one needs to make decisions and choose values based on that realization. So it was as true in James's day as it is in ours: we need to *be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near*.

e. Some claim that the N.T. writers erred in saying that the end had drawn near or that Jesus was returning "soon" because history revealed that he did *not* come soon. But in the sense explained above, Christ's coming was "soon" in every generation. Robert Shank writes in *Until: The Coming of Messiah and His Kingdom* (Springfield, MO: Westcott Publishers, 1982), 395-396:

Said a professor of theology whom I know

The apostolic Church believed Christ would return in their day. He did not, and they were wrong. Other generations of the Church believed that Christ would come in their day, but time proved them all wrong. If we expect Christ to return in our day, time will no doubt prove us wrong.

Not at all. In every generation of the Church, all who expected Christ to return in their time were right, and all who did not were wrong, terribly *wrong*. Christ, the apostles, and the entire NT enjoin upon us no other attitude than to expect Jesus to return in our time. Whether he returns in our day is God's responsibility; whether we expect his return is our responsibility, for which we must give account. Whether he returns in our generation or not, we are wrong if we fail to expect him. In every generation of the Church, "the Lord is at hand." This is the time frame of the NT, including the Revelation.

2. Given that life is always lived on the verge of Christ's return, Peter commands them to be clear thinking and self-controlled for prayers. We need to see life in accordance with God's revelation and have the self-control to bring to God prayers that are informed by that perception. We are to pray as spiritually enlightened people.

3. Above all, we are to love one another sincerely – let that "above all" sink in – and we are to do so because love covers a multitude of sins in the sense it makes us more forgiving of and more patient with the sins of our brothers and sisters. Love inclines toward healing, reconciliation, peace, and fellowship, whereas hatred inclines toward conflict and retribution. As Solomon wrote in Prov. 10:12 (ESV), Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses. Job's remarks (p. 278), "love that covers sins is probably best understood as a forbearance that does not let wrongs done within the Christian community come to their fullest and most virulent expression."

4. He commands them to be hospitable to one another without grumbling. Schreiner comments (p. 213):

Hospitality was one of the marks of the Christian community (cf. Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8; Heb 13:2). Hospitality was particularly crucial for the Christian mission in a day when lodging could not be afforded, and hence the advance of the mission depended on the willingness of believers to provide bed and board for those visiting (Matt 10:11, 40; Acts 16:15; 3 John 7-11). The early church was aware that such hospitality could be abused (cf. Did. 11:3-6). Furthermore, hospitality was necessary in order for the church to meet in various homes (cf. Rom 16:3-5, 23; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15 Phlm 2). The words "without grumbling" acknowledge that those who open their homes may grow tired of the service. Hence, they are exhorted to be hospitable gladly, not caving in to the temptation to begrudge their charity to others.

5. Peter says in v. 10 that each Christian has received a gift from the diverse grace of God, meaning the nature of the gifts varies, and that each Christian is to be a good steward of that gift by using it in service of others.

a. God blesses Christians with differing abilities so that they may use those abilities to convey his blessings to others. In other words, spiritual gifts are

given to enable us to be vehicles of God's blessings to our brothers and sisters. "Paul emphasized the same theme, reminding believers that gifts are given to build up and edify others, not to edify oneself (1 Cor 12:7, 26-26; 14:1-19, 26; Eph 4:11-12)" (Schreiner, 214).

b. Implicit in the fact we are "stewards" of these gifts is the truth that they are not self-executing. God has entrusted us with them, and it is our duty to use them or manage them in accordance with his will.

6. Those who have been given a speaking gift, which in the first-century would include not only teaching, evangelism, and exhortation but also prophesying, tongue-speaking, and interpreting, are to exercise that gift with an understanding that they are speaking on God's behalf. Even those speakers not delivering inspired revelations from God are representing him to the community. Jobes states (p. 282):

Therefore, those who speak must understand that they are engaged in serious business that restrains them from positing merely their own human speculation. Instead, they must speak in accordance with the revelation that God has given in the OT and through the apostles of Christ. As Goppelt (1993: 304) explains, "Whoever passes on the gospel should be intentional about speaking not from narrow individuality, but from a posture of having listened to God. . . ."

7. Those who exercise one of the multitude of non-speaking gifts that God bestows are to do so without reservation, with the kind of energy and effort that is worthy of the fact God supplies the strength (as well as the ability) to serve in that capacity. Refusing to exert great strength in exercising these gifts is to refuse to serve as from God's strength.

8. The purpose of using God's gifts in the way we should use them is that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. As God's blessings flow to people through our proper stewardship of his spiritual gifts, he is glorified as the giver of those gifts, as the one who has enabled and empowered his saints for ministry, and is glorified through the maturation of the saints that results from the proper exercise of the gifts. He is glorified through Jesus Christ because Christ's redeeming work is the overarching context of the entire discussion and the entire letter.

9. The doxology in the last clause of v. 11 could refer either to God the Father or Jesus Christ. As Jobes notes (p. 283), "the apparent ambiguity of the antecedent of the relative pronoun does not seem to trouble the author as much as it does modern interpreters, perhaps because he understands Christ and the Father share such praiseworthy attributes." She adds, "Even though Peter's readers may feel powerless within the hostile situations they face, the doxology reminds them that all power belongs to the God they serve in the name of Christ."

IV. Comfort and Instruction for Their Suffering (4:12 – 5:11)

A. The right attitude in persecution (4:12-19) – ¹²*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery [ordeal] among you, occurring to you as a test, as though a strange thing were happening to you,* ¹³*but in so far as you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that you also may rejoice at the revelation of his glory, being overjoyed.* ¹⁴*If you are insulted for [the] name of Christ, [you are] blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God is resting on you.* ¹⁵*For let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler,* ¹⁶*but if [anyone suffers] as a Christian let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in this name.* ¹⁷*For [it is] time for judgment to begin from the house of God; and if it is first from us, what [will be] the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?* ¹⁸*And, "If the righteous person is saved with difficulty, where will the godless and sinner appear?"* ¹⁹*So then, let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.*

1. Peter tells them not to be surprised at the persecution they are suffering, which he refers to as a fiery ordeal that serves to test or purify them. Christians suffering is not a strange thing. Our Lord suffered, and he told the disciples in Jn. 15:18-19 (ESV), ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." Paul said in 2 Tim. 3:12 that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

2. Rather than be surprised at their suffering, they should, to the extent that suffering is persecution for the faith and thus a sharing in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice in it. They should rejoice in that persecution so that they also may rejoice, indeed be overjoyed, when Christ returns in glory on the day of judgment. The two are linked in that rejoicing in suffering for Jesus is a reflection of one's faith in his greatness, one's faith in him as Lord and Christ, and those who have such faith will be blessed on, and thus also will rejoice on, the day of his return. Acts 5:41 tells us that when the apostles were beaten by the Sanhedrin they left rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

3. In being insulted for the name of Christ they actually are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God is resting on them.

a. Insults motivated by their Christian living are in fact tributes that the transformative Spirit is at work in their lives, the Spirit who is divine and who is from glory and who marks those bound for glory.

b. I suspect Peter says the Spirit "rests on" them rather than "dwells in" them because he is alluding to the LXX of Isa. 11:1-2, which is a messianic prophecy that says the Spirit of God "shall rest on" the root of Jesse. He is encouraging them by saying that the same Spirit predicted to rest on the Messiah is resting on them, implying that they therefore can be confident that their endurance of suffering will be a prelude to glory as Christ's endurance of suffering was a prelude to his glory.

4. None of them should suffer in being punished for wrongdoing, but if they suffer because of being a Christian, a follower of Christ, they are not to be ashamed but rather are to glorify God in the name Christian. Instead of denying Christ or abandoning faith in him in the face of pressure, they are to hold fast to the faith, confessing and praising his name.

5. In the persecution of Christians, God is beginning his judgment of humanity starting from his temple, the church. The purpose of that judgment in terms of the church is to test it (v. 12, 1:6-7), to allow the genuineness and purity of its faith to come forth, whereas the purpose of that judgment when it later falls on unbelievers will be to condemn and punish them.

a. If it is difficult for the righteous, for Christians, to be saved in the sense there is suffering for them to endure en route to that salvation, their eternal inheritance, one can only imagine the suffering that awaits the godless and sinner in the judgment. If the saints suffer in this judgment, albeit for the positive purpose of testing, how much more will the unbeliever suffer in punishment for his sin?

b. Achtemeier states (p. 316), "the thrust of the verse [v. 17] is to warn Christians facing situations where denial of their faith could appear to alleviate their suffering that such denial will in fact only guarantee that their eventual end will involve suffering far worse than any they must now endure."

c. Jobes likewise states (p. 295):

In 4:16, the motivation to faithfulness was positive, pointing out the opportunity Christians have to glorify God by remaining faithful to Christ in the midst of suffering and thereby demonstrating that God is worthy of their suffering. Here in 4:17b-18, Peter makes the negative point that those who reject the gospel of God will suffer much more than anything the Christian will endure during the hardships and persecution of this life. Therefore, it is better to suffer a little now as a Christian than to become one of those who reject Christ and will suffer much more later.

6. Given the dreadful consequence of abandoning Christ as implied in vv. 17-18, Peter concludes in v. 19 with an exhortation to those suffering persecution to keep trusting in the faithful Creator and to keep doing good.

B. Exhortation to the elders and the community (5:1-11)

1. Exhortations for elders and younger ones (5:1-5) – *Therefore, I urge [the] elders among you, [I] who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a sharer in the glory that is going to be revealed: ²shepherd the flock of God that is with you, [exercising oversight], not under compulsion but willingly, according to God, not with greed for material gain but eagerly, ³not as being lords over*

the allotted ones but being examples for the flock;⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

⁵Likewise, younger ones, be subject to [the] elders. And everyone clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for "God opposes [the] proud, but gives grace to [the] humble."

a. Because of the persecution these Christians are facing and the dreadful consequences of succumbing to the pressure of that persecution (Therefore), Peter exhorts the elders to fulfill their leadership role.

(1) They must help the saints to maintain their trust in God and to continue living faithful lives in the face of persecution by modeling trust and faithfulness in their own lives. The flock must see its leaders standing up to the pressure of the society, being willing to suffer themselves in Jesus' name. If the elders simply order the saints to stand strong from their position as elders, it will have little or no effect on the saints' strength and courage to do so. To embolden the brothers and sisters, to encourage them, the elders must be willing to be out front "taking arrows."

(2) Peter, himself an elder, refers to the sufferings of Christ and the glory in which Christians will participate at the time of Christ's return. He thus encourages them through Christ's example and the eternal blessings that await the faithful. (Verses 1:7 and 4:13 make clear that revelation and glory refer to the future coming of Christ.)

(3) He commands them to shepherd the flock that is with them, exercising oversight. They are to care for the wellbeing of the Christians in their congregations, which requires them to be alert to situations and circumstances in their lives.

(4) They are to serve in this capacity not under compulsion but willingly, even eagerly as he says at the end of the verse. It is not always easy to identify the line between compulsion and encouragement, but to serve rightly a man needs to have some inner desire and motivation to assume that role. As Schreiner states (p. 234), "Those who serve only because they feel they must will lose their joy, and the church will suffer as a consequence."

(5) An elder is not to serve from a motivation of greed for material gain, seeing the position as a means to financial gain. Rather, he is to serve eagerly, meaning he is to serve because he wants to give of himself in that role.

(6) When Christ, the Chief Shepherd, returns those who served faithfully as under-shepherds, as elders, will receive their share in the eternal glory of the consummated kingdom of God.

b. In v . 5a Peter urges the younger members of the congregations to be subject to the elders, presumably because they were in special need of such

instruction. Schreiner remarks (p. 238), "They should not be resisting the initiatives of leaders and complaining about the direction of the church." Grudem states (p. 192-193):

[T]he question remains why Peter spoke only to *you that are younger*, and not to the whole church, in commanding submission to the elders. It is probably because the younger people were generally those who would most need a reminder to be submissive to authority within the church . . . This would not imply that the others were free to rebel against the elders, but quite the opposite: if those who are likely to be most independent-minded and even at times rebellious against church leaders are commanded to *be subject to the elders*, then it follows that certainly everyone else must be subject to the elders as well.

c. In v. 5b Peter urges all the saints to be humble toward one another. Schreiner comments (p. 238), "Humility is the oil that allows relationships within the church to run smoothly and lovingly. Pride gets upset when another does not follow our own suggestions." Peter supports his admonition with a reference to Prov. 3:34: God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

2. Closing exhortations and assurance (5:6-11) – ⁶*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in [due] time, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because it matters to him about you. ⁸Be sober; be alert. Your enemy [the] devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing the same sufferings are being endured by your brotherhood in the world. ¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ [Jesus], after you have suffered a little, will himself prepare, establish, strengthen, [and] secure [you]. ¹¹To him be the power forever, amen.*

a. Given that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (therefore), Peter calls them to humble themselves under God's mighty hand, meaning they are bow before his right to bring his testing judgment on them in the form of suffering. They are to accept his sovereignty in the matter without resenting or rebelling against him because of it.

b. They are to maintain this submissive spirit before the Almighty that he may exalt them on the day of Christ's return. Schreiner states (p. 239-240):

Peter was not promising vindication and exaltation in this life. The point is not . . . that such vindication occurs occasionally in this life. The time in view is the day of judgment and salvation, what Peter called "the last time" (*en kairō eschatō*) in [1:5], or "the day of visitation" (RSV, *en hemera episkopēs*) in 2:12. That the exaltation would occur on the last day fits with the eschatological focus in 1 Peter and draws us back into the orbit of the first verses of the letter (1:3-12), where the salvation envisioned is an end-time salvation.

c. Their humbling of themselves before God is to include their casting their anxieties on him. This is a humbling because it is an acknowledgement that one cannot solve the problems in one's life in one's own strength. Schreiner states (p. 241), "When believers throw their worries upon God, they express their trust in his mighty hand, acknowledging that he is Lord and Sovereign over all of life."

d. They are to cast their anxieties on God because he cares about them. "He has compassion on his children and will sustain them in every distress" (Schreiner, 241). Peter may be alluding to Ps. 55:22 (54:23, LXX). In the context of anguish caused by opposition from the wicked, the psalmist states in v. 22 (ESV), "Cast your burden (anxiety in LXX) on the LORD, and he will sustain you."

e. Peter commands them in v. 8 to be sober and alert, to be vigilant, because the devil is seeking to destroy their faith. He is seeking to push them to apostasy through persecution, to strike fear in their hearts as does the roar of a lion, but they are to resist his effort by standing firm in the faith. And as encouragement to do so, they are to know that Christians throughout the Greco-Roman world were enduring the same kind of discrimination and abuse. They were experiencing it and standing firm through it.

f. After they have resisted and held fast to the faith through their *relatively* light or brief suffering (see Rom. 8:18 and 2 Cor. 4:17), the God of all grace, who called them to his eternal glory in their identification with Christ through repentance and baptism, will exalt them.

(1) The word "little" in the clause "after you have suffered a little" can mean either that their suffering will be small in amount or small in duration, but either way Peter is speaking relatively, speaking in comparison to the eternal glory God has promised.

(a) Achtemeier states (p. 345), "The ὀλίγον [little] may refer to quality as well as quantity, that is, compared to the glory to come, any suffering, of whatever length, is minor when seen from the perspective of that glory." Schreiner states (p. 245), "The sufferings of this life will seem as if they lasted a little while when compared to the eternal glory that endures forever (cf. 2 Cor 4:16-18)." Jobes states (p. 316), "Peter is more likely saying here that in light of the eternal (αἰώνιον, *aiōnion*) glory, which believers have in Christ, a lifetime in this body is but a little while (*oligon*)."

(b) This is Paul's perspective in Rom. 8:18 and 2 Cor. 4:17. He says in the former (ESV), "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." He says in the latter (ESV), "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison."

(2) Regarding God's preparing, establishing, strengthening, and securing them, I think Achtemeier is correct in stating (p. 346), "The point of the

future verbs here is that subsequent to the suffering, God will give the Christians an unshakable grounding by including them in his eschatological glory." Similarly, Jobes states (p. 316), "Peter uses four nearly synonymous verbs to describe what God himself will do for the benefit of faithful Christians after that little while [of suffering] has passed . . . Peter probably uses these four as a rhetorical crescendo to refer to the complete act of God at the consummation of all things."

(3) Peter describes their eschatological exaltation in terms of God preparing, establishing, strengthening, and securing them. (The words he uses have a broad range of meanings that overlap. I take them in the way stated.)

(a) They will be equipped or made ready for life in eternal glory at the resurrection, will be set firmly in that reality, will be strengthened in their conviction of the gospel as their faith becomes sight, and will be set on the secure foundation of an unshakeable reality, an existence that is eternal.

(b) Peter may describe their eschatological exaltation in these terms because such imagery would have great appeal to those buffeted by persecution. To those whose doubts, weaknesses, fears, and insecurities have been magnified in the turmoil of suffering, God promises he will bring them home to an eternal dwelling for which they have been completely equipped, in which there will be no threats, and from which they cannot be moved.

(c) Knowledge of this promise not only comforts the saints but also "provides strength for them to endure whatever hardships a hostile culture may visit on" them (Achtmeier, 346).

g. Having spoken of God's plans for the faithful, Peter in v. 11 praises God as the one with the power to fulfill such a grand promise.

V. Concluding Words (5:12-14) – ¹²*Through Silvanus, the faithful brother, as I think, I have written briefly to you, encouraging [you] and testifying that this is the true grace of God, in which you must stand.* ¹³*She who is in Babylon, chosen with you, greets you, also [does] Mark, my son.* ¹⁴*Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.*

A. In saying that he wrote "through Silvanus," Peter most likely is saying that Silvanus was the one designated to carry the letter to them. That is how the phrase was used in the first century (see e.g., Schreiner, 248; Jobes 320).

1. He offers a typical commendation of a person bearing a letter by saying he regards Silvanus as a faithful brother.

2. Silvanus is most likely an alternate (Latinized) form of the name Silas, which was probably the Greek form of an Aramaic name. Luke refers repeatedly in Acts to Silas who was Paul's partner in ministry (Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 40; 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4,

10, 14-15; 18:5), and Paul refers to Silvanus as one who accompanied him and Timothy in their travels in Asia Minor and Greece (2 Cor. 1:19). Silvanus also is named with Paul and Timothy in the opening of both letters to the Thessalonians.

B. Peter identified the purpose of his letter as encouraging them and as testifying about the true grace of God in which they must stand. They must not abandon Christ in the face of their suffering because to do so is to abandon the grace of God.

C. "She who is in Babylon, chosen with you" refers to the church in the locale from which Peter is writing, which I understand, with the vast majority of scholars, to be Rome. Peter probably refers to the city this way because it conjures up the image of exile under Babylonian dominion and thus bookends the reference to them in the opening verse as "sojourners of the Dispersion."

D. Mark is John Mark, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25). He was the author of the Gospel of Mark, which historically credible early tradition says was based on information provided to Mark by Peter.

E. Paul in four places (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26) tells the saints to greet one another with a *holy kiss*, and Peter here tells them to greet one another with a *kiss of love*. Notice that neither Paul nor Peter says simply "Greet one another with a *kiss*." Rather, they both specify the attitude behind the kiss, and that is the focus of the command.

1. Given that kissing was the standard way of greeting family and friends in first-century Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures,¹ what is being commanded is not that they greet by kissing – that was assumed – but that *when* they greet by kissing it not be duplicitous, that the kiss not mask unholy or unloving attitudes toward the recipient as was done in the kiss that betrayed Christ.

2. If, for example, Miss Manners charged Americans to "toast brides and grooms with sincerity," it would be missing the point to think that she was insisting on wedding toasts. The practice of toasting newlyweds would be the unaddressed cultural backdrop not the subject of the command. The command should be understood along the lines, "Given the practice of toasting, do not use it as an occasion for duplicity."

F. Peter closes with a prayer for peace for all Christians. Schreiner states (p. 252):

Believers in the Petrine churches were buffeted by trials and persecutions. The stress of life was significant. What believers need in such a situation is God's peace and strength, a peace that will enable them to stand (5:12) amidst the pressures of the present evil age. Such peace will fortify

¹ See, e.g., Craig Keener, "Kissing" in Craig Evans and Stanley Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 628-629.

believers so they can endure opposition and persevere to the end, so that they will receive an eschatological reward.