



## **LESSON TWELVE**

### **The Mighty Hand of God and Its Goal**

Scripture Reading:

#### **1 Peter 5**

- 5:1** Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- 5:2** Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 5:3** Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- 5:4** And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 5:5** In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- 5:6** Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- 5:7** Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
- 5:8** Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour.
- 5:9** Him withstand, being firm in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished among your brotherhood in the world.
- 5:10** But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.
- 5:11** To Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
- 5:12** Through Silvanus, the faithful brother, as I account him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying fully that this is the true grace of God; enter into this grace and stand in it.
- 5:13** The co-chosen in Babylon and Mark my son greet you.
- 5:14** Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.

## **QUESTIONS:**

### **Section 1:**

1. What is the meaning of 'gird' and why should we gird ourselves with humility?
2. How can we "be humbled"?
3. What does it mean to cast our anxiety upon God?

### **Section 2:**

1. Give some examples of things that can be the source of anxiety.
2. What does it mean to 'watch' in 1 Peter 5:8? And what are we to watch out for?
3. How is anxiety related to the devil?

### **Section 3:**

1. What is the proper understanding of 'the mighty hand of God' in 1 Peter 5:6? What do we need to do to experience this?
2. What does 'all grace' in verse 10 refers to?
3. Why did Peter say that God has called us into His glory in Christ in verse 10?

### **Section 4:**

1. What is the progress of the divine acts of grace in verse 10?
2. Why did Peter use 'true grace' in verse 12?
3. How does this book conclude? What is the result of grace?

## **YOUNGER MEN SUBJECT TO ELDERS**

Verse 5 says, “In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders, and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Once again Peter uses the phrase “in like manner.” In this verse “in like manner” must refer to what Peter has already spoken concerning submission or subjection (2:18; 3:1). Wives are to be subject to their husbands, and servants, to their masters. As we have pointed out, to some extent at least, husbands should subject themselves to their wives. Now in 5:5 Peter goes on to say that in the church life the younger men should be subject to elders.

Although the Greek word rendered “elders” in verse 5 is the same as that used in verse 1, here it should, in principle, refer to all older men. This means that the younger men should be subject not only to the elders of the church, but to all older brothers. I believe that the principle is the same concerning the younger sisters subjecting themselves to older sisters.

### **GIRDING WITH HUMILITY**

In 5:5 Peter says that all of us should gird ourselves with humility toward one another. Everyone in the church, including the elders, should gird himself with humility. In 1:13 Peter charges us to gird up the loins of our mind, but here he indicates that our entire being needs to be girded.

The Greek word for “gird” here is derived from a noun meaning a slave’s apron, which girds up his loose garments in the service. It is used here as a figure of speech, signifying the putting on of humility as a virtue in service. This figure comes evidently from Peter’s impression of how the Lord girded Himself with a towel when He humbled Himself to wash the disciples’ feet, especially Peter’s (John 13:4-7).

Today carpenters and printers often wear aprons while they are working. In ancient times the people wore clothing that was loose. Therefore, because this loose clothing made it difficult to work, the slaves wore an apron to bind up their loose clothing. Peter uses this as a metaphor to indicate that in the church life we all must learn how to gird up ourselves. We should not be loose in any way. If we are loose, we may automatically become proud. We need to gird ourselves with humility. If we are girded with

humility, we shall become humble, careful persons. We shall not be loose or careless. In the church life we all should put on the apron of humility.

### **THE PROUD RESISTED BY GOD**

According to Peter’s word, we should be girded with humility “because God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” The Greek word translated “resist” is a strong word for an army preparing to resist the enemy. Peter uses this word to show how strong God is in resisting those who are proud.

The Greek word rendered “proud” in verse 5 literally means showing above (others). To be proud is to show ourselves above others. God resists the one who lifts himself above others and regards himself as better than others. Instead of being proud and showing ourselves above others, we should gird ourselves with the apron of humility. Putting on such an apron will always bring us down and cause us to be lowly.

### **GRACE GIVEN TO THE HUMBLE**

Peter says that God not only resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Strictly speaking, this grace refers to the Triune God Himself as the life supply being multiplied in the humble believer. We have seen that the multiplied grace (1:2) corresponds to the varied grace (4:10) and all grace (5:10). The believers have received the initial grace, yet this grace needs to be multiplied in them that they may participate in all grace. The varied grace of God, as the all grace in 5:10, is the rich supply of life, which is the Triune God ministered into us in many aspects (2 Cor. 13:14; 12:9). God gives Himself as grace, as life supply, to humble believers.

The Greek word for “humble” in 5:5 also means lowly, as in Matthew 11:29, where the Lord Jesus says, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” To be proud is to be high, but to be humble is to be low. If we would humble ourselves in the church life, we need to become lowly. Instead of uplifting ourselves, we should always keep ourselves low. Then we shall be in a position to receive the Triune God as our life supply. We shall receive the grace God gives to humble believers.

### **HUMBLED UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD**

In verse 6 Peter says, “Therefore, be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” The words “be humbled” here are passive voice, indicating to be made humble

by God, mostly through the sufferings of persecutions (v. 10). This, however, needs our cooperation with God's operation. We must be willing to be made humble, lowly, under the mighty hand of God. Hence, *be* humbled. We may say that "humbled" is passive, but "be" is active. While God is acting to operate on us, we need to take the initiative to be operated on by Him. To take the initiative is active; to be operated on is passive. This is our willingness to be under the hand of God, which is mighty to do everything for us.

Persecution may be used by God to humble us. Actually, any kind of suffering may be used by God for this purpose. When good things happen to us, we may become proud. But suffering or persecution may help us to be humble. For example, a brother may be humbled as a result of losing his job. A student may be humbled by receiving a lower grade than he expected. If this student receives a high grade, he may be somewhat uplifted. But if he receives a lower grade, he may be humbled.

We may also experience being humbled in our family life. If the children of a certain brother and sister are outstanding, the parents may become proud. But if the children cause them problems or difficulty, this will make the parents lowly. Likewise, if a young brother's father has a very high position in his work, this brother may be proud. Suppose his father is the president of a corporation or the chancellor of a great university. Surely this brother would be proud of his father's position. But suppose his father were a janitor with a very limited education. Knowing that his father had such a lowly position may cause this young brother to be lowly. He is humbled by the fact that his father does not have a high position.

I would like to emphasize the fact that in verse 6 Peter tells us to "be humbled." We cannot make ourselves humble. Rather, we need to be made humble by God. Nevertheless, God's humbling of us requires our cooperation with God's operation. This means that we must be willing to be made humble, lowly, under the mighty hand of God.

We may say that "be humbled" is active-passive: "be" is active, pointing to our initiative to be humbled, and "humbled" is passive, pointing to God's operation to humble us. Although God's hand is mighty to do whatever is necessary for us, His hand still needs our cooperation. God's

operation needs our cooperation. Therefore, we need to be humbled.

### EXALTED IN DUE TIME

Peter says that if we are humbled under the mighty hand of God, He will exalt us in due time. To be submissive to God's mighty hand, willing to be made lowly, is to take the God-honoring way that gives Him the ground to exalt us in His time. Willing to be made low by God's humbling hand in His discipline is a prerequisite to being made high by God's exalting hand in His glorification. Here we have the God-honoring way, God's humbling hand, and God's exalting hand. Whether God will humble us or exalt us depends on our attitude. We may take a way that forces God to humble us, or we may take another way, the God-honoring way, that helps God to exalt us in due time. The words "due time" in verse 6 refer to the time God considers right to exalt us.

### CASTING OUR ANXIETY ON GOD

In verse 7 Peter goes on to say, "Casting all your anxiety on Him, because it matters to Him concerning you." The word casting here means throwing upon, that is, committing to, giving up to. The verb denotes a once-for-all act. The words "all your anxiety" indicate that the whole lot of our anxiety throughout our entire life, our whole life with all its anxiety, should be cast on the Lord. We need to learn how to throw the burden of our anxiety upon God. It may now be on our own shoulder, but we should cast it from our shoulder to God.

Although the verb "casting" indicates a once-for-all act, because we are weak, we may need to cast our anxieties upon God again and again. Sometimes we cast our anxieties upon Him only to secretly take them back a while later. This has been my experience. I may cast my anxiety upon the Lord. But a few days later I may realize that I have taken this anxiety back upon myself, and therefore I need to pray, "O Lord, forgive me for taking this anxiety back from You. Once again, I would cast my anxieties upon You."

Sometimes I have said to the Lord, "Lord, I cast not only today's anxiety upon You, but all the anxieties I expect to have in the future. Lord, I anticipate that much anxiety will be coming. All this coming anxiety I will now give to You."

The Greek word for "anxiety" also means worry or care. In persecution the believers' sufferings cause worry and anxiety to them. They need not

only to be humbled, to be brought low from their pride, their haughtiness, but also to throw their life with its care upon God; for He is not only mighty and just, but also loving and faithful concerning them.

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We may use the landing of airplanes at a busy airport as an illustration of the coming of anxiety upon us. If you watch the airplanes making their approach to land, you will see that they usually come in one after another. But sometimes they come in pairs or even in a parade. Anxiety may circle around us like an airplane circling an airport, waiting for the time to land.

Those who are involved with people will usually have more anxiety than those who live alone. For example, an unmarried brother will probably have much less anxiety than a married brother with several children. The married brother's concern for his wife and children causes him to become anxious. First his wife becomes a source of anxiety. Then as each child is born, he has another reason to be anxious. The causes of anxiety may increase as the children grow up, get married, and have children of their own, for then the grandchildren become a source of anxiety.

Likewise, the property or possessions we have may cause anxiety. If you are the owner of one house, you may be anxious concerning the care of that house. But if you own a second house, you will also be anxious about that house. The same is true about your bank deposits. The money you have in the bank may also become a source of anxiety. From experience I can testify that the more things I have, the more anxiety I have, the more the "airplanes" of anxiety circle above my head.

We all must learn to cast all our anxiety upon the Lord. If we do not cast our anxiety upon Him, we shall not have peace. Perhaps little children under the age of four do not have any anxiety. But the older we are, the more anxiety we have, because more airplanes of anxiety are waiting to land at our "airport." What, then, shall we do? Although it is not easy, we need to cast our anxiety upon the Lord. If we find that we take back the very anxiety we have given the Lord, we need to cast it upon Him again.

The reason we may cast all our anxiety on the Lord is that "it matters to Him" concerning us. The words "it matters to Him concerning you" may also be rendered, "He cares for you." The disciplining and judging God has a loving

concern for the believers, especially the persecuted ones. He cares for them faithfully. They can cast their care upon Him, especially in their persecution.

### **SOBER AND WATCHFUL**

In verse 8 Peter continues, "Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion walks about, seeking someone to devour." To be sober is to have a clear mind of sobriety and self-control so that we may know, especially as disclosed in this chapter, God's purpose in disciplining us and His enemy's scheme to destroy us.

If we do not cast all our anxiety on the Lord, it will be difficult for us to be sober. Many saints become confused because of anxiety. If we hold on to our anxiety, our mind will not be sober. Instead of being sober, we may be under a thick cloud of confusion and have no sense of direction. If our mind is disturbed by anxiety, we cannot be sober. Our thinking will not be clear, but will be confused, mixed up. If our mind is in such a condition, it will be difficult for us to hear the Lord's speaking. Anxiety may also cause us to speak in a nonsensical manner. Therefore, if we would be sober, we must cast our anxiety on the Lord.

According to what Peter says in 5:8, we also need to watch. To watch is to be vigilant as in warfare, as soldiers on the frontier. Anxiety is a subtle enemy. Many times anxiety is Satan's incarnation. We need to be watchful and not allow anxiety to invade us. A country's defense requires watchfulness. Those in the defense department are always watchful lest an enemy invade the country. This is also Peter's concept when he urges us to be sober and watchful.

Peter wrote verse 8 according to his experience. Peter may have been lacking in schooling, but he was rich in experience. When he was a young man, he was called by the Lord. After the Lord's resurrection, Peter learned much in the Spirit. Before the resurrection of Christ, Peter had heard and seen many things. However, he did not have the proper interpretation and understanding of those things. But after the Lord's resurrection, the Spirit came to be within Peter and upon him, and he began to understand what he had experienced during the three and a half years he was with the Lord. Peter, therefore, was a man full of experience. His writings are based not merely on doctrine, but also on experience.

Because of his experience Peter could charge the saints to be sober and watchful.

As we have indicated, the word “watch” implies fighting. We are involved in a warfare, and we need to be vigilant. Do not let the enemy come in. Anxiety is a subtle enemy. Often the Devil is concealed within anxiety or lurks behind it. If you welcome anxiety, you will welcome Satan, the Devil. Therefore, you need to be watchful. The Lord Jesus also charged His disciples to watch and pray (Matt. 26:41). We need to watch, to be on the alert.

### **OUR ADVERSARY, THE DEVIL**

The reason we need to be watchful is that our adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion walks about, seeking someone to devour. Literally, the word “adversary” in Greek means an opponent (in a lawsuit). Here this word refers to Satan, who is our accuser (Rev. 12:9-10). The Greek word for Devil, *diabolos*, means accuser, slanderer. The Devil, who is Satan, accuses us before God and slanders us before men.

The Devil, the adversary, in verse 8 is related to the anxiety in verse 7. If we give way to anxiety, we shall also give way to the adversary, the Devil. We may even say that the anxiety in verse 7 is the adversary in verse 8.

An adversary is different from an enemy. An enemy is an opponent who is objective to us, outside of us. An adversary is a subjective opponent, an opponent within us. Satan is not only the enemy outside of us; he is also the adversary within us. Anxiety is a form of the Devil as our adversary. Whenever we are anxious or worried, we should say, “Satan, you are exposed. This anxiety is really you. Don’t cover yourself with a cloak. I know who you are. This is not anxiety—this is you, the Devil. Satan, get away from me!”

According to the context, anxiety is actually the Devil. The Devil comes to us to attack under the cloak of anxiety. He pretends to be anxiety. Therefore, we need to be watchful, vigilant.

### **A ROARING LION SEEKING SOMEONE TO DEVOUR**

In verse 8 Peter also says that the Devil is as a roaring lion walking about, seeking someone to devour. The word “roaring” indicates that this lion, the Devil, is howling in hunger. The words “walks about” indicate the Devil’s constant and aggressive activity in seeking prey. There is a proverb which says that the Devil never sleeps.

He is always busy and aggressive, seeking someone to devour.

Here Peter warns the suffering believers in persecution. If they would not be humbled under God’s mighty hand and cast their anxiety on God, they will be devoured by the roaring lion, the Devil, their adversary. This teaches us that pride and anxiety make us delicious prey to fill the hunger of the roaring lion. In this respect Peter no doubt could not forget the Lord’s warning to him regarding the Devil’s desire (Luke 22:31).

Peter’s writing in verse 8 is simple, short, and to the point. We all have something to learn of him, especially in the giving of testimonies. Certain testimonies are long stories, filled with unnecessary details. Instead of long stories in the meetings, we need testimonies that are brief and to the point. Often this kind of testimony is most effective.

### **STANDING FIRMLY IN THE FAITH**

In verse 9 Peter says, “Whom withstand, firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished in your brotherhood in the world.” To withstand here does not mean to resist nor to struggle against. It is to stand firmly as a rock on the ground of our faith before the roaring Devil. In this verse “the faith” actually means our faith. It refers to the believers’ subjective faith, their faith in God’s protecting power and loving concern.

In verse 9 Peter says that the same sufferings are accomplished in our brotherhood in the world. According to the context of this chapter and the preceding one, these sufferings are sufferings in persecution. We have seen that the brotherhood is the aggregate of the brothers, the family of the brothers, the brothers in the feeling of brotherliness (2:17).

The anxiety spoken of in 5:7 is related to persecution. When saints are under persecution, they are anxious, not knowing what will happen to them. This anxiety, this worry, may cause them to doubt the gospel they have heard. This may have a negative effect on their faith. For this reason, Peter charges the believers to withstand the Devil by remaining firm in the faith, that is, firm in their faith. Instead of doubting what we believe, we need to be firm in our faith, knowing that the same sufferings of persecution are being accomplished in the brotherhood throughout the world.

## THE HAND OF GOD IN HIS JUDGMENT

In 5:6 Peter says, “Therefore, be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” Preachers and teachers often quote the phrase “the mighty hand of God” without regard to what it means in the book of 1 Peter as a whole. As a result, this verse concerning the mighty hand of God has been misused.

We have seen that the entire book of 1 Peter is on God’s government, and that God’s government is administrated through His judgment. God’s judgment is carried out in the environment arranged according to His sovereignty. For example, in order to judge Noah’s generation, God arranged a great catastrophe, the flood. Only God could have done such a thing. The flood that terminated the human race at the time of Noah was brought about by the mighty hand of God. In 5:6 the mighty hand of God refers to God’s administrating hand seen especially in His judgment.

God’s hand is more mighty in His judgment than in His salvation. Of course, in saving us, God’s hand is mighty. But we see much more of the might of His hand in His judgment. Suppose a certain brother continues to enjoy worldly entertainment long after he has been saved. Although he has truly been saved, he still loves the world. But one day he has a car accident, an accident arranged by the mighty hand of God, and that accident causes him to seek the Lord in a deeper way than he ever did before. This is an illustration of God’s hand exercised in judgment.

## THREE MATTERS RELATED TO GOD’S MIGHTY HAND

According to Peter’s word in 5:6-8, we need to do three things that are related to our experience of the mighty hand of God. First, we should humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand. Second, we should cast all our anxiety on Him. Third, we need to be sober and watch. Everything that happens to us is under God’s mighty hand. There is no need for us to worry or be anxious. We should simply humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand and not resist it. Then we should cast all the troubles that cause our anxiety upon the Lord. Along with this, we need to be sober and watchful. If we cast all our anxiety on God, we shall have a sober mind, and we shall be clear about our situation. Furthermore, we shall be watchful regarding our adversary, the Devil, who walks about as a roaring lion, seeking someone

to devour. If we are watchful, we shall not be deceived when Satan incarnates himself in the form of anxiety. On the contrary, the adversary, the roaring lion, will be defeated by us. This is the proper understanding of this portion of the Word.

## THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

In 5:10 Peter goes on to say, “But the God of all grace, who called you into His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.” “But,” indicating a contrast, brings in comfort and encouragement to the suffering believers. The contrast is between the sufferings in verse 9 and the God of all grace in verse 10. If we had verse 9 without verse 10, we would be lacking in hope and encouragement. However, in 5:10 Peter seems to be saying to the suffering believers, “You and your brotherhood are suffering your adversary’s threatening, the Devil’s lion-roar, only for a little while. But the God of all grace, of the bountiful and gracious supply of life that exceeds all your need, will perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.”

In this verse all grace refers to the riches of the bountiful supply of the divine life in many aspects ministered to us in many steps of the divine operation on and in us in God’s economy. The initial step is to call us, and the consummate one is to glorify us, as mentioned here, “who called you into His eternal glory.” Between these two steps are His loving care while He is disciplining us, and His perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding work in us. In all these divine acts, the bountiful supply of the divine life is ministered to us as grace in varied experiences. The God of such grace will perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground the persecuted believers after they suffer a little while.

The term “the God of all grace” is unique, found in the New Testament only in 5:10. It may be common for Christians to speak of the God of mercy. But do you know of anyone who uses the expression the God of all grace? Peter does not say merely that God is the God of grace; he says that God is the God of *all* grace. In this expression once again Peter shows his characteristic use of adjectives. The suffering believers should be encouraged by the fact that, although they are suffering, their God is the God of all grace. Furthermore, He has called us into eternal glory, a glory that is unlimited in both space and time.

## **CALLED INTO ETERNAL GLORY IN CHRIST**

Peter says that God has called us into His eternal glory in Christ. “In Christ” indicates that the God of all grace has gone through all the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to accomplish the complete and full redemption so that He may bring His redeemed people into an organic union with Himself. Thus they may participate in the riches of the Triune God as their enjoyment. All the steps of the divine operation are in Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God becoming the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as the bountiful life supply to us. It is in this Christ, through His all-inclusive redemption and based on all His achievements, that God can be the God of all grace to call us into His eternal glory and to perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us in the Triune God (1:1-2) as the solid foundation, thus enabling us to attain unto His glorious goal. What a miracle that fallen sinners can be brought into God’s eternal glory! And how excellent is His perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding work in us! This is all accomplished through His “all grace” which is the “true grace” (5:12).

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According to what Peter says in 5:10, our sufferings are only for a little while, but God’s glory is eternal. After we have suffered a little while, the God of all grace will personally perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us.

The word “Himself” indicates God’s personal activity in the work of grace. The Greek word rendered “perfect” literally means restore. It implies repairing, adjusting, putting in order again, mending, perfectly joining together, thoroughly equipping, well furnishing, and, thus, perfecting, completing, educating. In Greek the word “establish” literally means to set fast, to confirm. The same word was used by the Lord in His charge to Peter in Luke 22:32. The meaning of “strengthen” is very close to that of establish. Literally, the Greek word rendered “ground” means to lay a basis for. It is a derivation of the word that means foundation. Hence, it is to ground solidly, as in Matthew 7:25, Ephesians 3:17, and Hebrews 1:10.

There is a progress in the four divine acts of grace. Perfecting leads to establishing, establishing to strengthening, and strengthening to grounding in the God of all grace—the Triune

God in His dispensation (1:1-2) as the solid foundation.

First God perfects us. Through the suffering of persecution we are perfected. Then after perfecting us, God establishes us. When we are established, we no longer wander, and we are no longer changeable. After God establishes us, He strengthens us, empowers us, and eventually, He grounds us in Himself as the Triune God.

In 5:11 Peter says, “To Him be the glory and the might unto the ages of the ages. Amen.” To the God of all grace, the One who perfects, establishes, strengthens, and grounds us, be glory and might.

In 5:12-14 we have the conclusion of this Epistle. In verse 12 we have the testimony of the true grace of God, and in verses 13 and 14 we have Peter’s greetings.

### **THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD**

First Peter 5:12 says, “Through Silvanus, the faithful brother, as I account him, I wrote to you briefly, entreating and fully testifying that this is the true grace of God; in which stand.” Peter was an eyewitness (5:1), testifying what he had seen and experienced. He testifies that what he has written in his Epistle as an account of God’s grace is true.

Peter wrote this Epistle to pilgrim believers in order to entreat them and testify to them of the grace of God. In 5:12 he indicates that what he has written positively concerning God’s doings is the true grace. We have seen that Peter speaks of grace being multiplied, of varied grace, of all grace, and here, of true grace. Furthermore, regarding the excellent manner of life, Peter twice says that this is the true grace of God (2:19-20). In 5:12 Peter entreats the believers to stand in the true grace. We need to stand in the true grace of God and withstand the Devil.

The true grace in this verse refers to the “all grace” in verse 10, in which the apostle charged the believers to stand. This book was written mainly to show the persecuted believers God’s governmental purpose in their sufferings. That they may pass through those sufferings, God will supply them with all the multiplied, varied, and true grace (5:10; 1:2; 4:10), which is sufficient to enable them to participate in the sufferings of Christ and for Christ (2:21; 3:14-17; 4:12-16), and will perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground them in the Triune God and bring them into His eternal glory.



## **THE CO-CHOSEN IN BABYLON**

In 5:13 Peter says, “The co-chosen in Babylon and Mark my son greet you.” The Greek word rendered “the co-chosen” and its article are feminine. It may refer to Peter’s wife, who traveled with him (1 Cor. 9:5), or to a prominent sister in the Lord, who had been co-chosen by God not only with the receivers of this Epistle, but also with Peter and all the other believers. Some suppose that it refers to the church.

Through the centuries the great teachers have held two different interpretations of the name Babylon as used in 5:13: one is figurative, referring to Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire; the other literal, referring to Babylon, a large city on the Euphrates. The reasons for the latter are more logical than for the former. First, it seems that Peter had no reason to use a figurative name to hide the city of his whereabouts. Second, all the names he used for the places in the address of his Epistle (1:1) were literal. Third, in the New Testament the name Rome is clearly mentioned (Acts 19:21; 28:14, 16; Rom. 1:7, 15), at least up to the time when Paul’s last Epistle, 2 Timothy, was written (2 Tim. 1:17), probably after 1 Peter. It is when John’s Revelation, a book of figures, was written, about A.D. 90, that the figurative name Babylon the Great was used for the city of Rome (Rev. 17:5; 18:2).

## **MARK, PETER’S SON**

The name Mark in verse 13 refers to John Mark (Acts 12:12, 25), the writer of the Gospel of Mark. As Peter’s spiritual son, he was there in Babylon with him. Later he was taken to Paul by Timothy (2 Tim. 4:11).

## **PETER’S GREETINGS**

In 5:14 Peter concludes, “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.” At the beginning of this Epistle Peter says, “Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” At the end he says, “Peace to you all who are in Christ.” Peace results from grace; it issues from the enjoyment of the Triune God. Such enjoyment of God as the multiplying and multiplied grace (1:2), the varied grace (4:10), the all grace (5:10), and the true grace (5:12) as the reality of the contents of the Christian life under the government of God issues and results in a condition of peace with both God and man.

Peter’s writing is not at all superficial. It is deep in truth and very experiential. We see this even in

what Peter says regarding peace. Peter’s understanding of peace is deep. However, most Christians today think of peace in a very shallow way.

According to 5:14, Peter’s desire is that peace be with all who are in Christ. Peter stresses the fact that the believers are in Christ (3:16; 5:10). It is of God and through our faith and baptism that we are in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; John 3:5; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3). This results in an organic union with the Triune God (Matt. 28:19) and makes us one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17).