

CHAPTER FIVE OF FIRST PETER

I. THERE ARE FOUR BASIC PREMISES IN CHAPTER FIVE:

A. First, Peter Gives Some Important Advice To The Elders In These Provincial Churches.

1. Verses 1-4 "So, then as your fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as a sharer in the glory which is going to be revealed, I urge the elders who are among you, shepherd the flock of God which is in your charge, not because you are coerced into doing so, but of your own free-will as God would have you to do, not to make a shameful profit out of it, but with enthusiasm, not as if you aimed to be petty tyrants over those allotted to your care, but as being under the obligation to be examples to the flock; and, when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." (Barclay)

"Now may I who am myself an elder say a word to you my fellow elders? I speak as one who actually say Christ suffer, and as one who will share with you the glories that are to be unfolded to us. I urge you then to see that your "flock of God" is properly fed and cared for. Accept the responsibility of looking after them willingly and not because you can't get out of it, doing your work not for what you can make, but because you are really concerned for their well-being. You should aim not at being "little tin gods" but as examples of Christian living in the eyes of the flock committed to your charge. And then, when the Chief Shepherd reveals Himself, you will receive that crown of glory which cannot fade." (Phillips)

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (KJV)

2. Few Passages Show More Clearly The Importance Of The Eldership In The Church.

(a) It Is Noteworthy To Look At The Background And History Of The Eldership.

1. The Eldership has a Jewish Background.

- a. The Jews traced the beginning of the eldership to the days when the children of Israel were journeying through the wilderness to the Promised Land. There came a time when Moses felt the burdens of leadership to heavy for him to bear by himself alone, and to help him seventy elders were set apart and granted a share of the spirit of God (Num. 11:16-30). Thereafter the elders became a permanent feature of Jewish life. We find the elders as the friends of the prophets (2 Kg.6:3 as the advisers of kings; as the colleagues of the princes (Ezra 10:8). Every village and city had its elders; they met at the gate of the village or city and dispensed justice to the people (Deut. 25:7). The elders were the administrators of the synagogue; they did not preach, but they saw to the good government and the order of the synagogue, and they exercised discipline over its members. The elders formed a large section of the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews, and they are regularly mentioned along with the Chief Priests and the rulers and the Scribes and the Pharisees (Matthew 16:21; 21:33; 26:3,57; 27:1,3; Luke 7:3; Acts 4:5; 6:11; 24:1). In the vision of the Revelation in the heavenly places that there are twenty-four elders around the throne. It is clear that the elders are woven into the very structure of Judaism, both in its civil and its religious affairs.

2. The Eldership Had A Greek Background.

- (a) Especially in Egyptian communities we find that elders are the leaders of the community and they are responsible for the conduct of public affairs, much as town councillors are today responsible for the affairs of the community....In Asia Minor, also the members of councils and corporations were called elders. Even in the religious communities of the pagan world we find "elder priests" mentioned who were responsible for discipline.

\* We can see that long before Christianity took over the title the title of elder was a title of honour both in the Jewish and in the Graeco-Roman world.

3. In the New Testament Church The Eldership Is A Well-Established Function.

- (a) Acts 14:23 On the First Missionary Journey Paul ordained elders in every church.
- (b) Titus 1:5 Titus was left in Crete to appoint elders in every city.
- (c) Acts 11:30 Money from the church at Antioch to Jerusalem to relieve the poor saints was to the elders.
- (d) Acts 15:2 The apostles and elders were working in close relationship at Jerusalem.
- (e) Acts 21:18-25 Elders at Jerusalem suggested to Paul some course he should follow in placating some of the Jews at Jerusalem.
- (f) Acts 20:28 Paul has a moving experience with the Elders who had come over to Miletus from Ephesus.
- (g) James 5:14 Elders were to be called for to pray and to minister to the sick.
- (h) I Tim. 5:17 Worthy of double honour - or double pay. No doubt, the elders were paid for their work in New Testament times.

1. This passage teaches that:

- (a) That elders were to feed the flock.
- (b) That they were to feed the flock which had be allotted (ton kleron) "the charge allotted to you" - Robertson. This is the word we get out English word clergy from and Peter applies it to the congregation and not to a few officials
- (c) They were to take the oversight - superintendence of it.
- (d) This was to be done willingly and not as a result of coercion.
- (e) The elders were to be examples of the flock in Godly living and to lead them by such and not as being Lords or rulers.
- (f) When Christ the chief shepherd appeared they would receive a crown of glory which would not fade away.

B. Secondly, Peter Admonishes The Brethren To Practice Humility

1. Verses 5-7 "In the ~~same~~ way, you younger people must be submissive to those who are older. In your relationships with one another you must clothe yourselves with the garment of humility, because God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. So then, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, ~~that~~ that in His good time He may exalt you. Cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you." (Barclay

a. Prov. 3:34 "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

2. Peter Affirms That The Denial Of Self Must Be The Mark Of The Christian.

- a. Peter tells his people that they must clothe themselves with a garment of humility. The word he uses for "to clothe oneself" is a very unusual word; it is the word egkombousthai; this word is derived from the word kombos which describes anything tied on with a knot; and connected with it there is the word egkomboma. An egkomboma was a garment tied on with a knot. It was commonly used for protective

clothing; it was used for a pair of sleeves drawn over the sleeves of a robe and tied behind the neck. And it was used for a slave's apron. There was a time when Jesus had put upon Himself just such an apron. At the Last Supper John says of Jesus that He took a towel and girded Himself, and that He took water and began to wash His disciples' feet (John 13:4-5) Jesus girded Himself with the apron of humility; and so must His followers.

It so happens that this word egkombousthai is used of another kind of garment. It is also used of putting on a long, flowing stole-like garment which was the sign of honour and pre-eminence.

So, to complete the picture, we must put both pictures together. Jesus once put on the slave's apron and undertook the humblest of all duties, the duty of washing His disciples' feet; so we too must put on the apron of humility in the service of Christ and of our fellow-men; but that very apron of humility will become the garment of honour for us, for it is he who is the servant of all who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

C. Thirdly, Peter Admonishes These Early Christ<sup>ians</sup> To Constantly Resist The Devil.

1. Verses 8-9 "Be sober; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Stand up to him, staunch in the faith, knowing how to pay the same tax of suffering as your brethren in the world." (Barclay)

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (KJV)

2. In This Admonition Peter Must Have Remembered Two Things:

- a. He Must Have Remembered That In Stead Of Being Vigilant in the Garden of Gethsemane that he had gone to sleep. It isn't easy to be constantly on the guard - sober and watchful.
- b. He Must Have Remembered That He Had Permitted Satan To Overcome Him as he fled with the rest of the apostles and as he denied his Lord three times.

(1) He could surely give these Christians undergoing trials in their lives how easy it is ~~to~~ be overcome by the Devil.

3. Peter Suggests To Them That The Brethren In Other Parts of the Empire Were Suffering Also And They Should Remain Constant.

D. Finally, Peter Points Out To Them That He Is Sending This Letter By Silvanus From Babylon and Send His Regards.

1. Verses 10-11 "And after you have borne these sufferings a little while, God Himself (from Whom we receive all grace and who has called you to share His Eternal Splendor through Christ) will make you whole and secure and strong. All power is His for ever and ever, Amen.' I am sending this short letter by Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother, to stimulate your faith and assure you that the above words represent the true grace of God. See that you stand fast in that grace. Your sister-church here in "Babylon" sends your greetings, and so does my son Mark. Give one another a handshake all round as a sign of love. Peace be to all true Christians." (Phillips)

2. "He says that he has written through Silvanus. The Greek phrase dia Silouanou means that Silvanus was his agent and instrument in writing. Silvanus is the full form of the name Silas, and he is almost certainly to be identified with the Silvanus of Paul's letters and the Silas of the story of Acts. When we gather up the references to Silas or Silvanus we find that he was indeed one of the leaders and pillars of the early Church.

Quote

"Along with Judas Barsabas, Silvanus was sent to Antioch with the epoch-making decision of the Council of Jerusalem that the doors of church were to be opened to the Gentiles; and in the account of that mission Silvanus and Judas are called chief men among the brethren (Acts 15:22,27). Not only did he bring the message simply as the bearer of it, but he commended it in powerful words for Silvanus was also a prophet (Acts 15:32). During the first missionary journey Mark had left Paul and Barnabas and had returned home from Pamphylia (Acts 13:13) in preparing for the second missionary journey Paul had refused to have Mark with him again: the result was that Barnabas had taken Mark as his companion, and that Paul had taken Silvanus (Acts 15:37-40). From that time forward Silvanus was for long Paul's right-hand man. He was with Paul in Philippi, and there he was arrested and imprisoned with Paul (Acts 16:19,25,29). He rejoined Paul in Corinth, and with him preached the gospel there (Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 1:19). So closely was he associated with Paul that in both letters to the Thessalonians he is joined with Paul and Timothy as the senders of the letters (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). It is clear that Silvanus was a most notable man in the early church. (BARCLAY

"As we have seen in the introduction, it is most probable that Silvanus was far more than merely the scribe who wrote this letter for Peter, and the bearer who delivered it. One of the difficulties of I Peter is the excellence of the Greek. It is Greek with such a classical tinge that it seems impossible that Peter the Galilean fisherman should have written it for himself. Now Silvanus was not only a man of weight in the Church; he was also a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37), and he would be much better educated than Peter was. Most probably Silvanus had a share in the writing of this letter.....He either gave his letter to Silvanus to polish into excellent Greek, or else he told Silvanus what he wished said and left Silvanus to say it, and then added these last three verses as his personal greeting.

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"Silvanus was one of these men whom the church can never do without. He was content to be only a name, content to take the second place, content to serve almost in the background so long as God's work was done. For Silvanus it was enough that he was the assistant of Paul, even if Paul for ever overshadowed him. For Silvanus it was enough to be the penman of Peter, even if it meant only a bare mention of his name at the end of the letter. But for all that it is something to go down to history as the faithful henchmen on whom both Peter and Paul depended. In ancient and in modern times we need Silvanus in the church, and many who cannot be a Peter or a Paul can still be a faithful Silvanus without whom Peter and Paul could not have done their work.

3. "She who is at Babylon, and who has been chosen as you have been chosen, greets you, and so does Mark my son.

(A) From Which Babylon Was This Epistle Written?

(1) Babylon In Egypt. It was near Cairo, and it had been founded by Babylonian refugees from Assyria, and was called by the name of their ancestral city. But by this time it was almost exclusively a great military camp; and in any event the name of Peter is never connected with Egypt; and this Babylon may be disregarded.

(2) Babylon On The Euphrates River In The East. To this Babylon the Jews had been taken in captivity. Many had never come back. It was indeed a centre of Jewish scholarship. The great commentary on the Jewish Law is called the Babylonian Talmud. So important were the Jews of Babylon that Josephus had issued a special edition of his histories for them. There is no doubt that there was a large and important colony of Jews there; and it would have been quite natural for Peter, the apostle of the Jews, to preach and to work there. But we do not find the name of Peter ever connected with Babylon; there is neither trace nor tradition of him ever having been there.

(3) Rome Was Called Babylon Both By The Jews And The Christians  
That is undoubtedly the case in the Revelation where Babylon  
is the great harlot, drunk with the blood of the saints and  
martyrs (Revelation 17 and 18). The distinctiveness, the  
Godlessness, the lust and luxury of ancient Babylon were,  
so to speak, reincarnated in Rome. Now Peter is definitely  
connected in tradition with Rome and the likelihood is that  
it was from there that the letter was written.

(B) Who Is The Mark Of This Passage?

"Tradition has always closely connected Peter and Mark, and has  
always handed down the story that Peter was intimately  
connected with Mark's gospel. Papias, who lived towards the  
end of the second century, and who was a great collector  
of early traditions, describes Mark's gospel in this way:  
Mark, who was Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately though  
not in order, all that he recollected of what Christ had  
said or done. For he was not a hearer of the Lord or a  
follower of His; he followed Peter, as I have said, at  
a later date, and Peter adapted his instructions to practical  
needs, without any attempt to give the Lord's words systematically.  
So that Mark was not wrong in writing down some things in  
this way from memory, for his one concern was neither to  
omit nor to falsify anything he had heard."

*Quote*  
↓  
*Perhaps there  
is some  
truth in the  
quotation*

According to Papias, Mark's gospel is nothing other than the  
preaching material of Peter. In the same way Irenaeus says  
that after the death of Peter and Paul at Rome, Mark, the  
disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in  
writing what had been preached by Peter." It is the  
consistent story of tradition that Mark was indeed son to  
Peter, and all the likelihood is that these greetings are from  
him. But it is more likely to be Mark, the writer of the  
gospel, who was to Peter as a son.