

## 1 Peter 5

Written by K B Napier  
Thursday, 25 August 2016 15:53

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The devil is like a roaring lion. He stalks this earth looking for prey. In the African plains a lion will stalk an animal and, with a frightening burst of speed, will run after it and pounce. Both front paws will clamp down on the rear with extended razor-sharp claws, the weight of the massive lion bringing the beast down. Then comes the death strike, when the jaws bite down on the neck and throttle the victim, before it is torn apart.

It is no different from the devil. When he pounces it is too late. You are already a victim. Lions usually choose animals that are very young, very old, infirm or simply away from the herd. Christians who are not spiritually strong, too young and untaught to know, so mature they think they are okay, or are living a life apart from the healthy influence of the Lord and His people, will soon be brought down and know the terrifying frenzy of a devil who knows his last days are nigh. He attacks because he has nothing to lose. Human beings may repent, but this life-giving answer is not available to Satan or his fellow demons. So, he is finished already. That is why he will not spare anyone who appears in his sight.

From the way many Christians act, think and speak, it is obvious they have no genuine understanding of this. Pastors speak of the devil, and his going about looking for those he can devour, but ordinary lives show the people do not really believe it. For them the devil is somewhere 'out there' (rather like God). But he isn't; He is around the corner, or right next to you. He is watching for an entry point to your soul, and when he finds it he will exploit it fully.

When your life is going well. When you earn a goodly amount of money. When you are enjoying peace and quiet. That's when Satan begins his cat-like manoeuvres. And, it is highly possible that if this is your desire in life, you will get it. In this case you will not notice the devil has already throttled you because, by your inward beliefs and desires, you have inadvertently invited him to take over. And he will. The signs will not be that evident or even uncomfortable, because you are seeking wealth, you will get it; if you seek this or that earthly object, you will get it. But, your life with God ebbs away until it is almost a distant memory... you will bleed spiritually until you pass out, to be devoured.

Another entry point is the opposite, and mayhem ensues. Bad health might send you into a downward spiral of depression or inward-looking; loss of income might put you in a position of frantically looking for money; loss of personal prestige or power will send you into rebellion or bitterness... The devil can use all and any access points to your life.

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The answer is simple – hand over your entire life to God. Let Him send you here or there, and do with you what He will. Give Him your anxieties. Indeed, do as scripture says: throw them at Him so that you will retain His presence! In humility, just rest in His hand.

### Verses 1-4

1.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2.

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;

3.

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

Peter now speaks to the ‘elders’ in the local churches. These are the *presbuteros*. A number of interpretations are possible, but here the meaning is that of men who ‘preside over assemblies’. The term ‘*presbuteros*’ is used interchangeably with bishop, presbyter and pastor. The majority of meanings for this word include the idea of being elderly or older.

I would suggest, and this is only my opinion, that a mature Christian, in both age and spiritual experience, tends to be a more appropriate elder. On the one hand, this is not truly conducive with the notion of predestination. This is because a man's age does not determine any gifts given to him by God. A younger man may well have depth of knowledge and maturity not found in a man twice his age. This is because it all depends on God. Yet, on the other hand, generally,

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God chooses older men of spiritual maturity to preside over local churches, because they have had many years not just in the faith, but also in general life.

Overall, an elder should be recognised as such by his demeanour and spiritual stature, regardless of age. Note that a woman can be a deacon, because the 'qualification' is a God-given 'natural' ability or talent, whereas only a man may be an elder/pastor, because the qualification is a God-given spiritual gift and office. (Sadly, few churches recognise true elders and choose using inadequate reasons).

Note that Peter refers to himself as an elder. By this time he was probably in his 60's, so he was older in years. He reminds his readers that he actually witnessed the sufferings of Christ, both legally and historically. That is, he is telling the truth about the sufferings of Christ; he was there and saw what happened: *martus*. Thus, historically, he was a true and valid witness, speaking as an onlooker. The 'suffering' Peter refers to, *pathema*, is both outward and inward.

Peter says he is also a participant in the 'glory that shall be revealed', or, the majesty that will be made known (that is, when Christ returns). He will be there, as we shall be! Peter gives this opening statement as a kind of stamp of his authority to speak, just as Paul did with his readers.

The elders have a particular duty: to "*feed the flock*". Sheep require a shepherd to keep them safe and to give them sustenance. The shepherd must protect those sheep in his care, as a sub- or under-shepherd ordained to the role by the chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Thus, the elder or pastor must protect and feed the saved people in the local church in which he is a fellow member. This involves fighting for their spiritual safety, keeping bad influences away as far as he is able, and teaching ONLY what God gives him to teach, i.e. His word, scripture. A sub-shepherd who fails in any of these aspects is really an enemy of Christ.

To 'feed', *poimaino*, is to find good pasture, that is, proper spiritual sustenance. Logically, he may not feed them poison... occult or heretical material. It is his task to cherish the local church and to serve it. He is not a manager or a boss, but a fellow servant, for each member should serve the other, in whatever way ordained by God. In this case the pastor or elder feeds the soul with whatever it needs to survive and grow. He is a *poimen*, one who

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has a certain 'control' over the local church, but only insofar as he is himself under Christ. That is, fellow members may only follow him so long as he follows Christ; they may imbibe from him only those spiritual things given by God.

A part of the elders' task is to watch out for enemies and to warn the flock. How many elders do this? Very few! He must help to heal the broken-hearted and those who are weak of spirit. He must go after sheep who travel unwisely alone and into trouble, and bring them back to safety. He must love them and share their lives, so that they can trust him. Note: During World War Two a 'shepherd' was a pilot who went out to bring another pilot home by flying alongside when his 'plane was disabled, and sometimes even supporting the disabled 'plane by placing his wing under the one needing help. He remained with him until he landed safely. That is an elder!

The 'flock' only refers to those who are saved, the *poimnion*, the disciples of Christ, Christians. This is because Christ recognises only His own sheep, the *poimne*

. Thus, if unbelievers attend a local church, strictly speaking the pastor has no direct mandate to look after them, or to feed them, because they are as yet spiritually dead and unrecognised by Christ. They may be looked after as a common courtesy, but no more. An analogy is for a shepherd to look after a wolf in the fold, or for a doctor to nurture a dead body.

The elder or pastor must "*take the oversight*", *episkopeo*. That is, he must constantly watch-over and examine the flock, that they do not suffer any spiritual damage (the deacons should be overlooking their physical needs, discovering the need before the member is forced to declare it), and are not in danger from enemies.

You will note that no pastor or elder may take over lives by force or constraint, *anagkastos*. That is, by way of

*anagkazo*:

threats, intimidation, without permission. Many so-called pastors derive their power not from Christ but from their own bitter or sinful nature. There are many forms of this:

"God told me to tell you...", "You **MUST** obey me, because I am the agent of Christ", "If you don't do as I say you will be punished..."

and so on. No, a man cannot take over a local church by force. His only authority is derived from Christ; he has no authority of his own! If he imposes his own will upon the people, he does so without divine warrant, but solely by

*anagke*,

by distress and straits. This is neither love for the brethren nor truth.



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Frankly, to have dominion over others is very easy, especially if those others are weaker in faith, or have a less powerful personality. It is also easy for those who are deceitful; they will manipulate and secretly gain power over lives in many ways, making those who are his 'subjects' think they cannot function without him. Many pastors do this without realising it. If those in our own small church were unable to function as believers just because I am not there, then I have failed in my duty to God.

These people, the members of local churches, do not belong to the pastors but to God. They are *His* 'heritage'! That is why we must always leave end results to God, and not be fooled into thinking the kingdom of God relies on what *we* do! Saved men and women, then, are His heritage, *kleros*: inheritance, those who are saved and belong to God. Elders or presbyters merely look after them for God, just as gardeners look after a mighty man's estate. Can you imagine what would happen if an earthly lord found out that his gardener was not only selling all his vegetables and fruit and flowers for his own profit, but he was also slothful, causing many plants to die of neglect?

Rather, we who are elders must be "ensamples to the flock", *tupos*, be an example, provide an image or impression, a person to be imitated. Not for his own sake, or because he is 'something', but because he is following Christ. Therefore, when you follow a godly man's example, you are following not the man, but Christ.

Then (verse 4), when Jesus Christ comes again the pastor will not be ashamed of what he has done (or not done), but he will be praised by the Lord for well-doing. The pastor will then receive a crown of glory that will last forever. This 'crown', *stephanos*, is something akin to a champion's wreath or garland, as in early Olympic games, given as a prize to a winner. In spiritual terms it is eternal blessedness given by God to those who are genuine servants.

We do not really know what this crown is, but it is certain to be like the 'corona' (Latin), a sign of worth. From this we can say that servants of God may never receive a crown whilst on this earth. They may have to wait until they are taken up to be with the Lord. But, if they *expect* praise on this earth, it is a sure sign they have a wrong attitude toward their calling. (Note; Every Believer will receive a crown, or several crowns, if they are faithful).

### Verses 5-7

1.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to

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another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

2.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

3.

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

‘Likewise’, or, in similar manner as a pastor must yield to God, so younger people must submit to the elder. In this verse, *presbuteros* refers not just to pastors, but to all in the local church who are older and spiritually mature. Thus, ‘elder’ has a dual meaning, just as ‘younger’ has a dual meaning: *neos*; youthful or new. Youth refers to the person’s age, and ‘new’ can refer to his spiritual state... a comparatively new Christian.

Throughout scripture young people must pay proper deference to older people, not just their parents. This is right and proper, and expected of us by God. Also, new Christians, who need tuition, must listen to those who are older in the faith. Not, of course, if they are older in time, but if they are mature in faith, and are able to pass on a vast pool of knowledge and spiritual assistance. Younger Christians should never follow those who claim maturity but who do not display a distinct lack of truth or Christian character.

Younger Christians, then, must be subordinate to older Christians, if those older ones are truly spiritually mature. However, every Christian is subject to every other Christian, regardless of age or spiritual experience. Even mature/older Christians may need rebuke or exhortation at times. And this may very well come to them via a younger Christian. If you really understand the doctrinal teaching of predestination you will understand what I am saying. It is up to God who He gives gifts and maturity to, not us. Therefore, at any one time any one of us can be used to teach or help another Christian.

All of us must be “clothed with humility” (not that feigned type often displayed by ‘ever-so-humble’ Christians who wring their hands with superficial humility but who feel far from

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humble within!). We must be 'clothed' with humility, *egkomboomai*. This means to show everybody that we are subject to each other. It has nothing at all to do with shutting up and pretending not to have your own views. Its origin is in the white scarf or apron worn by slaves. It was fastened to a belt to show they were slaves and not freemen. It can also refer to a kind of overalls worn by slaves when doing menial tasks, showing their humble status. It also means to be knotted together. We are, then, bound to each other as each other's servant. Many I know would loathe to accept this! Nevertheless, this is how God sees it.

And what is 'humility'? It is *tapeinophrosune*, meaning not to think highly of ourselves and to know just how small we really are. Thus, modesty and lowliness of mind should be our constant feature. Of a truth, I have no option but to think like this... continual battles and attacks show me just how small I am! I know I am sinful and know I fail many times. This does nothing for my pride but everything for my Christian walk! It is also why, though I fight what is wrong, I know I am no better than those I argue against. Really, I pray that we all could resolve to see ourselves in this way, so that we could all, at last, be humble together, in truth.

Note that being humble does not mean we must be cowards or silent. It does not mean we must always scrape the floor with our knees, in obeisance to everyone else. It does not mean we obey evil men. It simple means to know that our strength and everything we have, including intelligence, riches and power, are all from God and are not our own. It means knowing we are sinners saved by grace and not some kind of super-beings. We are nothing outside of the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is as well to learn all this first as last, for "*God resisteth the proud*". Whatever you do, do not be proud, *huperephanos*, for it means you have an inflated view of yourself, thinking (whether openly or secretly) that you are something special. It means you expect others to pat you on the back and shower you with praise. With it naturally comes treating others with contempt, despising them, if only in your mind. This is very evident throughout our churches, in the form of those infernal little groups, where some are 'in' and others are just ignored.

The ones who encourage these groups are proud, make no mistake! They despise everyone else... that is why they reject others or keep them outside their main group. Just remember – God resists you! That is, He *antitassomai*, opposes you and will enter battle against you. It gives substance to the saying, "Who the devil do you think you are!" Be very afraid to be proud.

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On the other hand stay humble, because God gives grace to you, and this includes the notion of thriving and rejoicing (*chairō*). Before we can be humble before men, we must humble ourselves before God (verse 6). What does this mean? It means to *tapeinoo*, make ourselves low. I can tell you from many communications that there are high-minded theologians out there who reckon on being my superior! They tell me so! What they really mean is that my views do not fit their own. Some of them have an immense intellect, but this does not mean they are better than anyone else, whether it is a fellow theologian or the lowliest garbage collector.

Don't seek the limelight, friends. No matter how much others praise you, or how much you do for the Lord, stay in the shadows. By all means push the truth you discover so that others might benefit, but don't think more of yourself than you should. Remain quietly humble so that God receives the praise. Be unassuming so that *God's* light shines through your life, not your own with its failing batteries! However, it is also sinful to lower yourself to the point of making yourself lay flat in the dirt! No Christian may be servile.

The Christian who humbles himself will not be humbled by God in a penalty sense, for his mind and heart will always be toward God. Many think they are humble and even tell others they are... but time will tell. Those who remain humble will be exalted when Christ comes again. If you don't want to wait that long, then drop the pretence and show your real colours. My friends, there is nothing in this world to make you exalted by your own efforts. The older I get the more I see this to be true. All my efforts and achievements are as nothing, because when I die it will all go with me. Nothing will be left. So, why fight to retain it?

Being falsely humble takes a lot of work! Just drop it and be normal. Usually, those who are proud or who pretend to be humble will have many secret but powerful things running through their heads and hearts. It is far from good or nice. Just cast your care on Him. You must need to do so if you are always trying to impress others and trying to make yourself out to be something! It means you have an inward fear; you have cares. Cares are anxieties, *merimna*. And anxiety is sin because it takes us away from God, dividing our attentions,

*merizo*

. We are to 'cast' our cares on God,

*epirrhipto*,

literally throw them at Him. Don't worry – He can catch!

To throw away our cares is an act of immediacy and urgency. We must do it straight away when the anxiety starts. Don't wait until it makes you depressed, angry or bitter. And throw it *all* at God, not just the anxieties you choose. Do it because He has commanded you to do so, and because He

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*cares*

for you. If you do not cast your anxieties on Him, it shows you do not reciprocate and care for Him

. Go on, drop your guard for one instant and come to know real joy.

### Verses 8-11

1.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

2.

Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

3.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

4.

To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

When we cast all our cares on God, it is, in itself, the protection we need. If we are resting in His hands, then He will ward off the devil. But, if we don't and we are too lazy, the devil will find us. So, we must be sober, *nepho*, calm and careful in our worldly dealings and in our spiritual lives. And we must be vigilant, *gregoreuo*; watchful, cautious, always ready to run to Christ when the enemy approaches. When we allow anxiety to rule, we become targets of Satan, for we show ourselves to be mentally, emotionally and spiritually unstable.

Many Christians hate my kind of ministry, because it is all to do with that 'distasteful' matter of war, battles, attack and defence. They speak as though I enjoy it all. They have no idea that I am my Lord commander's servant, and must do His bidding! My route in life was not planned by myself – if I chose the route I would be in the countryside enjoying peace and solitude! But, God

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has other ideas and I must follow. This has at least one singular effect... I generally know my enemy! Those who cannot be bothered to fight, or are too afraid, will fall back and hide. I tried that and it does not work!

We must face the facts. Satan is out there and he is ready to make mincemeat of you. By 'the devil' is meant either Satan himself or his many henchmen, demons. The devil himself, *diabolos*, is your enemy; he will accuse you of all kinds of unattractive things, whether or not you are guilty of them. He will spread slander about you (I know a lot about that).

*Diabolos*

, once the chief prince of angels, has immense power and might. He can bring you down and raise you up – not for God's good or for your own, but to serve his foul purposes.

He can give you diseases, and even cure them of a sort. He can arrange events and people so that you gain the world, but lose your soul. He can throw an entire army of evil men at you, to bring you down. He can make you a man of status, so that you will forget God. He is *diabolos*. And if you allow it, he will get you. He can even fill a man with demons, possess him, if he is not Christ's. And even if he is Christ's he can heavily influence him if he is not true to God.

That is why we must always be sober and vigilant. Satan is our adversary, our *antidikos*, our opponent and enemy. It is his self-imposed task to harm God's people, as acts of vengeance and spite. And he does his job to perfection. Any human being who thinks he can face-down Satan is a fool, deceived. Even the archangel dared not face-down Satan! Yet, charismatics think it is a matter of ease and confidence. As such, they are indeed fools, and in grave danger.

Only the Lord can fight the devil. That is why we hand over all our cares to Him. When Satan attacks, as he does many times, we must give it all to God, knowing that he will take care of us. We must obey God and all will be well with our souls, even in the midst of all-out war.

In his role as attacker of God's people, Satan will make a massive din. He will roar in anger and hatred, *oruomai*. Like a wounded lion (which is what he is) he will roar in blind vileness and hit out at whoever is in his way. Satan is not likened to a lion, or *leon*, for nothing. Both he and Christ are referred to as lions, because of their respective great strength. Forget the strength of Satan and you will lose your soul; forget the strength of Christ, which is greater, and you will fail to gain His power over your life, and His safety.

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The devil seeks whom he may devour. He actively carries out his mission day and night, *zeteo* ... he is constantly looking for victims, some of whom are willing. Many great and evil movements are afoot today. All are Satan's victims, yet they are willingly so. They will suffer because of it, but they do not yet realise it. But, they

*will*

be devoured,

*katapino*

, destroyed.

In our own strength we cannot stand against the devil. We can, however, stand against him in faith, and trust in God. This is because faith is a gift from God and not part of our natural sinful selves. We must resist with divine resolve, *stereos*; be strong, immovable, solid and even rigid. How many times do human beings tell us we are 'too rigid' because we refuse to give in to sin or those who are sinful? Then remain so, for if we falter we are lost.

We are not alone. All Believers who stand firm will be persecuted and attacked. The days are coming when all true Christians will be made fun of, or defamed. Some will also be physically attacked. It is already happening, so expect it to continue. Afflictions, then, will be commonplace in the churches. (2016 note: Is this not so today, throughout the world?).

Most Christians, however, will only suffer 'a while', *oligos*, for a relatively short time. Of course, we can lengthen this period by ignoring God's grace or sinning. But, generally, He will give us respite. After all, we are His children and it is not His purpose to allow us to continually suffer without some rest. Like any other trial, suffering will make us 'perfect',

*katartizo*

; make us complete and sound, equipped with suitable spiritual armour and fit to do God's bidding. Never think we suffer or are deprived for no reason!

He will 'stablish' us, *sterizo*; make us stable, firm, strong, and constant in our minds and hearts. When we are strong in our minds we are also strong in our resolve, because we trust God. He will strengthen us, *sthenoo*; give our souls divine strength, and He will settle us, *themelioo*; establish us as Believers, with a solid foundation. This is why doctrine is so important. We suffer because God wants us to be strong. It gives us strength to face Satan and his evils. No matter what happens, to Him be all glory and dominion eternally. It is almost amusing to see charismatics rushing about trying to 'claim dominion' for God and themselves! Dominion,

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*kratos*

,

*already*

belongs to God! Dominion is part of His character! It is His strength and force, His mighty power. He rules everything, whether we like it or not. Amen!

### Verses 12-14

1.

“By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

2.

The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

3.

Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

Peter tells his readers that a Christian named Silvanus (*Silas* or *Silouanos*, ‘woody’) acted as scribe for him. He was a Roman citizen and accompanied Paul on several of his missionary journeys. Evidently, he is also here helping Peter. This man was a ‘faithful brother’ to all Christians. How many are faithful to their brethren nowadays? How many will stand firmly at your side, no matter what happens, even if you make errors of judgement? Very few, if any.

Peter says his letter was just a short piece of correspondence. It is very likely that, like the other Apostles, he wrote many more letters we know nothing of. On this occasion Peter has written to remind and encourage the Christians in Turkey that the grace he talks about is genuine and active. His letter was a testimony, *epimartureo*, a witness to what Peter actually saw and heard when with Christ. The scattered Christians should take heart that what Peter was saying is true. The same applicability is for us today, for Peter was an eye-witness.

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Because he was absolutely sure of what he saw and heard, he was able to exhort his readers, *parakeleo*

; summon them to action, admonish if they rejected God's word, console those who were heavy of heart, encourage them to go on, and instruct them in the truth of God. Today, many pastors do not discipline in the right attitude. They think it means to just tell people off. But it is not that. To rebuke or admonish is to bring a man to the word of God afresh, and encourage him to follow it. Only if he continually rejects it and acts publicly against it, can we give harder rebuke. This is not going easy on sin, it is just reminding ourselves that we are just as susceptible to fall as the one we are rebuking.

Peter then closes his letter by sending greetings from those with him in 'Babylon'. It can be used allegorically of Rome, but as there is no reason to suppose Peter had ever been to Rome and no record to say he had been there, we must assume Peter, like the others, had also been scattered by the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Thus, he may very well have written from the actual Babylon which, by that time, was a mere skeleton of its former glory.

Importantly, we have a direct reference to the fact of predestination: "*elected together with you*",

*suneklektos*;

chosen by God to eternal life, along with others, also elected. From this we see that the elect are a different people, a different class.

Marcus is also with him in Babylon, being his 'son'. He was Mark the evangelist and fellow Apostle. In this letter Peter gives him his Latin surname, but his Jewish name was John. Mark was a cousin of Barnabas. Like Silvanus, Mark accompanied both Paul and Peter at various times.

Finally, Peter urges these scattered Christians to always think well of each other and to greet each other with a "kiss of charity". That is, wish each other well and greet each other with a kiss, probably on the cheek, to show affection. This was customary in those days and should also be part of our own manner, even if, in the West, we are less open about affection. He then leaves them with a call to peace, *eirene*, tranquillity and harmony, not just between each other, but with God. None of us can truly love his neighbour or brethren if we do not firstly love God.

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