

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 24 January 2022

Greetings,

This past Thursday (20 January) marked the anniversary of the date in AD 250 when Fabian, the bishop of Rome, was arrested, tried, and martyred.

Briefly, the background is as follows.

When Decius, the thirty-sixth Roman emperor, became ruler in AD 249, the Empire was weakening. Barbarians were threatening its northern borders and morale was low.

Conscious of the weakness of the Empire, Decius attempted to restore its strength by uniting its forces through enforcing universal sacrificing to the gods of Rome.

But the widespread organisation of the Christian Church and the power of their leaders provided him with no small challenge.

And so, in 'the first systematic Christian persecution', Decius published edicts against the Christian Church. Historians believe that there were two main phases to the persecution, the first phase taking place soon after his entry to Rome as emperor towards the close of AD 249.

Special attention was to be paid to the leaders of the Church, under the belief 'that if he removed all the heads the entire fabric would dissolve'. This resulted in the arrest of many of the senior clergy.

At Rome, the zealous and active Fabian was seized, tried before Decius himself and executed—as I said—on the 20th of January in AD 250.

These measures were followed by a universal command to the governors and magistrates in all provinces to ensure that everybody (men, women and children) sacrificed to the gods of Rome and tasted the sacrificial meat. The penalty for refusing was death. So severe was the ensuing persecution that no successor to Fabian was appointed for fourteen months. He was the first of very many martyrs.

(Main sources: Herbert B. Workman, *'Persecution in the Early Church'*, page 108-109, and W. H. C. Frend, *'Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church'*, pages 405-407.)

And the sequel?

(a) Well, for his part, Decius didn't last long. He was killed in battle with the Goths less than 18 months after the execution of Fabian.

(b) And the Roman Empire itself has long since disappeared; the Empire in the West finally collapsing in AD 476 and that in the East ending in AD 1453.

(c) But what, we ask, of the persecuted Christian Church? Ah, that is a very different story! For, as we know well, Someone once said, 'I will build my church'. And nothing, but nothing, can frustrate His purpose or prevent His church from reaching its blessed consummation.

Let me now run the video back to almost two hundred years earlier than the martyrdom of Fabian.

It was then that the apostle Peter wrote two epistles (since incorporated into our New Testament) which are set against the background of the mounting opposition and persecution which the early church faced from the Roman state.

The 'Musings' meditation comprises the first of two somewhat unconventional meditations on the last chapter of the so-called First Epistle of Peter. (The second—and concluding—meditation will follow, God willing, next Monday.)

I use the word, 'unconventional', because, as the meditation itself makes clear, in it we shall attempt to view the chapter 'through the eyes of the man who wrote it'. We shall, that is, 'let the apostle himself talk us through the key points of the chapter, and, in so doing, to share with us some of his personal reminiscences'.

For now, here are a few 'tasters':

1. 'The "chief shepherd" was the overseer of the shepherds when a flock was too large to be attended well by one. The elders are not simply to follow the example of Christ as independent agents when

shepherding God's people; instead, they are to recognize themselves as underlings of Christ the Chief Shepherd, to whom they will be held responsible'.

2. '(i) His title of 'Good Shepherd' is associated particularly with **His death**, when He laid down His life for His sheep';

'(ii) His title of 'Great Shepherd' is associated particularly with **His resurrection**, when the God of peace brought Him out of the dead;

'(iii) His title of 'Chief Shepherd' is associated particularly with **His second coming**, when He will 'appear'—will 'be manifested'—to recompense His faithful 'under-shepherds'.

3. 'As the Good Shepherd, He had the **cross**; as the Great Shepherd, He has the **crook**; as the Chief Shepherd, He will have the **crown** and give crowns'.

4. 'May they not well trample on base gain and vain applause, who have this (unfading crown of glory) to look to? They that will be content with those, let them be; but they have their reward, and it is done and gone, when faithful followers are to receive theirs'.

5. 'Lowliness of mind in classical Greek would denote a mean-spirited or grovelling attitude of mind. It is only in Christian phraseology that humility is recognized as a virtue'.

6. 'God has provided a garment that fits all sizes, the garment of humility'.

7. 'The way, therefore, to attain true greatness, to be exalted in God's good time, is to humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, submitting patiently to whatever trials He sends you; casting all the burden of your anxiety upon Him in full assurance of His loving care for you'

Happy reading.

God willing, we will meet again next Monday, when I will have the second half of the meditation on 1 Peter 5 for you.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

1 PETER 5

SCRIPTURE

Therefore I exhort the elders who are among you, who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory about to be revealed:

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; nor for sordid gain but eagerly; nor as lording it over those allotted to you, but being examples to the flock.

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Likewise you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders.

And gird yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another, for

'God sets Himself against the proud,
But gives grace to the humble'.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the appropriate time, casting all your care ('all your anxiety') upon Him, for He cares for you.

Be sober-minded, be watchful; because your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

But the God of all grace,¹ who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.

To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.

Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In all likelihood, the apostle was writing in either AD 63 or early AD 64.² And the storm clouds were already gathering for the churches of Asia Minor,³ and indeed for the Christian Church in general.⁴

In the first few decades of its existence, the church encountered little or no opposition from the Roman state. Apart from isolated outbursts of persecution from Gentile interests,⁵ the opposition suffered by the church came from the Jewish synagogue.⁶ And, at that early stage, the Book of Acts depicts the representatives of the Roman government at worst as indifferent⁷ and at best as positively sympathetic and helpful.

As a so-called 'Licensed Religion', Judaism was guaranteed certain privileges and rights. And initially the followers of Jesus were regarded as simply one among the many sects of the Jews.⁸ But, as time passed, their sustained persecution by the synagogue, together with the steadfast refusal of Gentile converts to be circumcised, finally convinced the Roman power that the opposition of the synagogue represented more than some internal, domestic quarrel. The Roman authorities were compelled, therefore, to ask themselves who and what the Christian community was. And, partly due to misunderstandings,⁹ they did not like what they saw.

By the time that Peter wrote, believers were already suffering ... not as murderers, thieves, wrongdoers or mischief-makers but for no other reason than that they were Christians.¹⁰ Not that this name was something new for them. Believers had been labelled such for some twenty years.¹¹ What was new was that the name, in and of itself, was regarded by many as furnishing sufficient ground for persecution. And the apostle could speak, therefore, of 'the fiery trial' as something to which Christians were already exposed.¹²

But, if things were already bad, they were about to get worse ... a whole lot worse.

Already, both Peter and his readers could sense that a storm was about to break.¹³ Nor were they wrong. Within a few months of Peter's writing his two letters, the storm broke.

On the evening of 19th July AD 64, a great fire destroyed many of the congested districts of Rome, which fire Nero, the then Emperor, chose to blame on the early Christians. As one of the Roman historians of the time expressed it, 'Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class ... called Christians ... Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt'.¹⁴

Ancient tradition records that the apostle Peter was among the many martyrs at that time,¹⁵ something which, on account of our Lord's earlier forewarning, would have come as no surprise to him.¹⁶

And the church's present experience, together with its future expectation, casts a dark and ominous shadow over much of our chapter.¹⁷

And we can hardly miss that our chapter begins with the word 'Therefore', linking us back directly to what Peter had written earlier.¹⁸

For the apostle didn't need to be told that, in the light of the present 'fiery trial',¹⁹ which the Christian communities of Asia Minor were already facing, together with the future increased pressures which they were soon going to face,²⁰ they were each going to need a number of godly elders.

They were going to need committed, willing, properly-motivated, zealous,²¹ humble and exemplary²² leaders—true spiritual shepherds who were not constrained into doing the work as some irksome duty²³ ... who were not lured into the work by coveting mercenary gain²⁴ ... and who were not performing the work in a domineering and high-handed manner.²⁵

MEMORIES

There are *many* ways in which we can approach our chapter. One way would, of course, be for me to attempt a detailed, verse-by-verse exposition.

But I believe that, for the present purpose, the most helpful will be for you and me to **view the chapter**, as best we are able, **through the eyes of the man who wrote it**.

And I don't think we will find it difficult to detect some very clear echoes of Peter's earlier experiences as a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

With that in mind, and doing my utmost to avoid being fanciful and reading too much into what the text says, I want to let the apostle himself talk us through the key points of the chapter, and, in so doing, to let him to share with us some of his personal reminiscences.

We shall, that is, attempt to trace some of *the memories of the man* who wrote two epistles, in which he aimed to bring spiritual truths back to *the memories of his readers*.²⁶

1 PETER 5. 1

And, when I read verse 1, I hear Peter saying to the elders:

Though I have the authority to do so,²⁷ I do not 'pull rank' and command you as an apostle, but I exhort you – I plead with you – as one of yourselves, as a 'fellow-elder'.²⁸ As you may well know, I am familiar with many of the letters written by my 'beloved brother Paul',²⁹ and I can tell you that I very much share the sentiment he expressed in his short letter to his fellow-worker Philemon, 'though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to exhort you'.³⁰

And, what is more, I write to you as one who is 'a witness of the sufferings of Christ', not only in the sense that in my preaching I testify to these sufferings³¹ but also that I personally observed many of them.³²

By way of example only, I can never forget:

(a) what I witnessed when with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane³³ ... His agony and sweat,³⁴ and His cries and tears,³⁵ nor

(b) what I know took place not far from me in the High Priest's quarters, when He was spat on and when men covered His face, beat Him, and struck Him with the palms of their hands.³⁶

'The sufferings of Christ', did I say. No doubt you have gathered from what I have already written how I love to link those two words: 'Christ' and 'sufferings' (or 'suffered').³⁷

Yes, but, alas for me, it was not always so. For I remember well—I remember all too well—how, when in the region of Caesarea Philippi, I reacted (how I *violently* reacted) to His saying that 'He must go to Jerusalem and suffer ... and be killed'.³⁸

Frankly, I was horrified at His words! So much so, that I actually had the temerity to take Him—to take the Lord!—aside and begin to rebuke Him.³⁹

My problem at that time was that, although I certainly did not share the popular view of *His identity*⁴⁰ (its having been revealed to me—directly by God the Father, no less—that He was indeed the Messiah (the 'Christ'),⁴¹ I most certainly shared the popular view of *what that Messiahship meant* and of the imminent kingly destiny which it was believed lay before Him. And, I can tell you that, at that time, 'suffering' definitely wasn't on the agenda!⁴²

And I will never forget the dressing-down which I then received, when the Lord Jesus addressed Satan through me, and told me candidly that my mind wasn't set on the things of God, but on the things of man.⁴³

I know that, (a) on a previous occasion, in a wilderness, the tempter had offered Him the kingdom of the Messiah on the cheap, without His having to endure any suffering,⁴⁴ and (b) now, at Caesarea Philippi, in effect, he again attempted to deflect Him from death and the cross ... and, what is more, he sought to do it *through my mouth!*⁴⁵

Just a short time before, following my momentous confession that He was 'the Christ, the Son of the living God',⁴⁶ the Lord Jesus told me that I was 'Peter' ('the rock/stone-like one'), and that 'on this rock' He would build His church.⁴⁷ Sadly, the devil was now responding, 'Oh, a rock/stone-like man is

he? Well, I can tell you that rocks and stones are good, not only for building with but also for stumbling over!⁴⁸

But, thankfully, I have long since learnt that those very 'sufferings' of the 'Christ', to which I then so strongly objected, were absolutely necessary, not only to fulfil Old Testament prophecy⁴⁹ but also to 'bring us to God'⁵⁰

Yet, I speak to you elders now, not only as 'a witness of the sufferings of Christ' but also as 'a partaker of the glory about to be revealed'.⁵¹

And my memory bears witness that our common hope of sharing that 'glory' is no fairy-tale ... is no 'make-believe' work of fiction ... is no 'cleverly devised myth'.⁵² For I was personally on that 'holy mount' (the so-called 'Mount of Transfiguration')⁵³ that night⁵⁴ when, together with two other highly favoured apostles, I was given a foretaste and preview of our Lord's second advent, when He is to be manifested in power and in glory.⁵⁵

Oh, no, I will never forget that wondrous night 'when we were eyewitnesses of His majesty'.

Thank you, Peter. So much for verse 1.

1 PETER 5. 2

And then, when I read verse 2, I hear Peter saying:

I told you just now that our Lord stood in the quarters of the High Priest. Well, when He did so, I stood below, in the courtyard,⁵⁶ warming myself at a fire of coals.⁵⁷

And I can recollect—just as if it were yesterday—another fire of coals,⁵⁸ not long after the first⁵⁹ but on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee).⁶⁰

Before He made His way to the cross, the Lord told us that, in accordance with Old Testament prophecy, He, 'the Shepherd', would be smitten, and the sheep scattered.⁶¹ But He added that, after He was risen, He would 'go before' us (just as we would expect any shepherd worth the name to do for his sheep) into Galilee.⁶²

Following His resurrection, the angel who rolled back the great stone⁶³ from His tomb instructed some of our womenfolk who visited there about dawn on the first day of the week to remind us that He was going before us to Galilee and that there we would see Him.⁶⁴

We went as instructed. But it is not in my nature to sit doing nothing and, so, while we waited in Galilee, returning to my former employment, I led six of the other disciples on a fishing trip.⁶⁵ As fishing trips go, it was a disaster!⁶⁶ Well, it was a disaster, until, directed by a Stranger on the shore, we netted no less than one hundred and fifty-three 'large fish'!⁶⁷

My close friend, John, was the first to recognise the Stranger ... it was none other than the Lord Himself!

Well, as you know, I'm a man of action. I didn't need to be told twice! First, I threw on *my outer coat*, and then I threw myself into the sea to go to Him.⁶⁸ We weren't very far from land,⁶⁹ so, on this occasion, I didn't need any help walking on the water!⁷⁰

And it was there, at that second fire of coals,⁷¹ that

- (i) not only did I receive confirmation that I had been fully forgiven by the Lord, but also
- (ii) I was challenged as to the reality of my love for the Lord.

Also, to my utter amazement,

- (iii) I was given the assurance that I was to be re-employed in His service.

I could hardly believe it when the Saviour told me that He was entrusting His lambs and sheep to my care,⁷² and this in spite of my earlier grievous fall,

'Shepherd⁷³ my sheep', He said to me.⁷⁴ And with those words still ringing in my ears, I now give you—my fellow-elders—what is in effect, the same charge which the newly Risen Lord gave to me then ... 'Shepherd⁷⁵ the flock of God'.⁷⁶

1 PETER 5. 3

When I reach verse 3, I hear Peter saying:

At the very outset, I made it clear to you, elders, that, although I certainly have the authority to command you as an apostle,⁷⁷ I have chosen rather to exhort you as one of yourselves, as a 'fellow-elder'.⁷⁸

And, indeed, when writing to you in this way, I am in reality myself giving you a model—an example—for you to follow. Because, at all costs, you must avoid 'lording it over' ('domineering over')⁷⁹ those whom God has allotted to your care.

And, speaking personally, I will never forget our Lord's words, spoken following an outrageously ambitious request made by two fellow-apostles, James and John,⁸⁰ but addressed not to them only but to all of us apostles:⁸¹

'You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles *lord it over* them ... But it shall not be so among you'.⁸²

And with those words etched on my memory, I now say to you, my brethren, 'exercising oversight, not ... as lording it over those allotted to you, but by being examples to the flock'.

1 PETER 5. 4

At verse 4, I hear Peter saying:

I have told you that an elder is to be both 'willing' and 'eager' to serve, and not to be motivated by 'sordid gain'⁸³... not, that is, to undertake the work of an overseer for any cash benefit which may be in it for him,⁸⁴ something stressed also, I know, by my 'beloved brother Paul'.⁸⁵

But this does *not* mean that the elder should not expect to receive an appropriate reward for all service performed well.⁸⁶ For an appropriate reward he shall most certainly receive.⁸⁷

But the 'under-shepherd' must wait for his pay-back until 'the Chief Shepherd'⁸⁸ appears, when each faithful 'under-shepherd' will receive, not a temporal and corruptible reward, but one which is as 'unfading'⁸⁹ as the inheritance laid up for us in heaven.⁹⁰

And I can still hear the Lord Jesus speaking on one occasion of Himself *twice* as a 'shepherd'—not then as 'the Chief Shepherd', but as 'the Good Shepherd'.⁹¹ And I know, too, that it would be accurate to speak of Him as the 'Great Shepherd'.⁹²

And what a thought that is!

(i) His title of 'Good Shepherd' is associated particularly with His death, when He laid down His life for His sheep';⁹³

(ii) His title of 'Great Shepherd' is associated particularly with His resurrection, when the God of peace brought Him out of the dead;⁹⁴ and

(iii) His title of 'Chief Shepherd' is associated particularly with His second coming, when He will 'appear'—will 'be manifested'—to recompense His faithful 'under-shepherds'⁹⁵ as they give account to Him of their service, sacrifice and stewardship which they have discharged on behalf of the sheep He entrusted to their care.⁹⁶

Perhaps I could sum this up by saying, 'As the Good Shepherd, He had the **cross**; as the Great Shepherd, He has the **crook**; as the Chief Shepherd, He will have the **crown** and give crowns'.⁹⁷

As you know from earlier in my Epistle, when I think of our Lord's first 'appearing'—His first 'manifestation'—I think of Him as the sacrificial lamb.⁹⁸ But, when I think of our Lord's second 'appearing'—His second 'manifestation'—I think of Him rather as the Chief Shepherd.⁹⁹

1 PETER 5. 5

And when I read verse 5, I hear Peter saying:¹⁰⁰

Although I know that the word 'gird' which I have used can refer to any garment which is tied,¹⁰¹ I have in mind, particularly, its use to describe the short linen apron or overall worn by a slave.¹⁰²

And my mind flies back instinctively to that time in the Upper Room, when our 'Lord and Teacher' laid aside His outer garments and, taking such an apron, wrapped it around Himself.¹⁰³ And suddenly I

found myself looking down on the head of the Lord Jesus, who took my feet into His hands and proceeded to wash them in the water which He had poured into a basin.¹⁰⁴

As you might expect, at first, I refused point blank to let Him do it.

I recall my protest as if were yesterday ... 'never' was word that I used.¹⁰⁵ Well, I mean! I wasn't going to let the Lord Himself perform for me a task so lowly and menial that nobody else in the room would have ever dreamt of performing.¹⁰⁶

It was only when He made it clear, that, if He didn't wash my feet, I could have no part with Him that I relented ... although, me being me, foolishly I then swung to the opposite extreme¹⁰⁷ ... which earned me a second correction!¹⁰⁸

And it was there (in the Upper Room) that I learnt—from the supreme 'Example' Himself—what it means to gird oneself with humility.¹⁰⁹

But my memory takes me back, not only to that evening in the Upper Room, but also to a verse which I have read in the Book of Proverbs. The verse declares graphically that God hates pride so much that it motivates Him to call out His army and to set Himself in battle array against those who are proud and haughty,¹¹⁰ while pouring out His grace upon those who are humble.¹¹¹

1 PETER 5. 6

When I reach verse 6, I hear Peter saying:

Let me extend the requirement for humble submission (i) beyond the deference due from the younger to the elder,¹¹² and (ii) beyond its application to mutual Christian relationships in general,¹¹³ to the way in which it relates to our relationship with God—when we allow ourselves to be humbled under His 'mighty hand',¹¹⁴ by which I mean to be humbled under the suffering and hardship through which He sees fit in His good providence to let us pass.¹¹⁵

For we can rest assured that, in so humbly submitting to our divinely-permitted trials, in God's own good time (in all likelihood, when our Lord Himself shall come again¹¹⁶), God will lift us up ... He will exalt us.¹¹⁷

And, even as I write these words to you, I cannot but recall the repeated teaching of our Lord Jesus, that 'everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted'.¹¹⁸

To be concluded.

Notes

¹ 'Grace sufficient for every occasion and need', E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, page 239.

Truly, the Lord who gives 'grace' will also give 'glory', 1 Pet. 5. 10, as it is written, 'the Lord will give grace and glory', Psa. 84. 11.

² See, for example, (i) D. B. Wallace at <https://bible.org/seriespage/first-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline>, (ii) D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, page 796, and (iii) E. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter*, page 23.

³ 1 Pet. 1. 1.

⁴ 1 Pet. 5. 9.

⁵ For example, Acts 16. 19-24; 19. 24-29.

⁶ See Acts 9. 23; 13. 50; 14. 19; 17. 5, 13; 18. 12; 20. 3; 21. 27; 23. 12; 25. 7; 26. 21; 2 Cor. 11. 24; 1 Thess. 2. 14.

⁷ For example, Acts 18. 17.

⁸ For example, Acts 24. 5.

⁹ 1 Pet. 2. 12, 15.

¹⁰ 1 Pet. 4. 16.

¹¹ Acts 11. 26.

¹² 1 Pet. 4. 12.

¹³ 1 Pet. 4. 17.

¹⁴ Cornelius Tacitus, '*The Annals*', Book 15, Chapter 44.

¹⁵ See, for example, Tertullian, '*Scorpiace*', Chapter 15.

¹⁶ John 21. 18; 2 Pet. 1. 14.

¹⁷ For example, 1 Pet. 5. 9.

¹⁸ Especially 1 Pet. 4. 12-19.

¹⁹ 1 Pet. 4. 12 ... with its temptations to apostasy.

²⁰ 1 Pet. 4. 17.

²¹ 1 Pet. 5. 2.

²² 1 Pet. 5. 3.

²³ 1 Pet. 5. 2b.

²⁴ 1 Pet. 5. 2c.

²⁵ 1 Pet. 5. 3; cf. 2 Cor. 1. 24.

²⁶ 'This is now, beloved, *the second epistle* that I write unto you; and *in both of them* I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in *remembrance*', 2 Pet. 3. 1.

Cf. 'I think it right ... to stir you up by putting you in *remembrance* ... Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to *remembrance*', 2 Pet. 1. 13-15.

²⁷ 1 Pet. 1. 1.

²⁸ 'His injunction not to "lord it over" others would lose much of its force if he himself asserted his own apostolic authority. He therefore deliberately couples himself with those to whom he appeals', G. W. Blenkin, *The First Epistle General of Peter (Cambridge Greek Testament)*, page 112.

'The term "fellow-elder" is unique in the New Testament, but it is similar to a number of compound terms Paul used for the men and women who worked with him in his mission: fellow-worker (Rom. 16. 3, 9, 21; Phil. 2. 5; 4. 3; Col. 4. 11; 1 Thess. 3. 2; Philem. 1, 24), fellow-soldier (Phil. 2. 25; Philem. 2), fellow-slave (Col. 1. 7; 4. 7), and, with a somewhat different meaning, fellow-prisoner (Rom. 16. 7; Col. 4. 10; Philem. 23). It is clear, then, that this is an inclusive term that, rather than stressing his authority, stresses his empathy with the elders in their task, either because he like Paul has "concern for all the churches" with which he has worked (2 Cor. 11. 28) or because, in writing to churches with which he has not had personal contact, an empathetic approach is the only one appropriate', Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*, on 1 Pet. 5. 1.

²⁹ 2 Pet. 3. 15-16.

³⁰ Philemon 8-9.

³¹ Acts 2. 23; 4. 10; 10. 39.

³² **Note the quotations:**

(i) 'There is good reason to doubt that Peter directly witnessed Jesus's crucifixion (cf. Mark 14. 72; 15. 40–41; 16. 7). Peter experienced enough of Jesus's passion, however (not least the beginning of the passion narrative [Mark 14. 29, 33, 37, 54, 66–72]), and was close enough to the original events, to be able to testify authoritatively about them (cf. Acts 1. 22; 2. 32; 3. 15; 4. 33; 5. 32; 1 Cor. 15. 5)', Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary*, Baker Academic, on 1 Pet. 5. 1.

(ii) 'From the time that Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah and heard Him predict his own rejection and death in Jerusalem, he was a witness of the sufferings of Jesus (Matt. 16. 13–23; Mark 8. 27–33; Luke 9. 18–22). Peter witnessed the tide of popular support turn against Jesus. He saw how Jesus' ministry alienated Him from His earthly family. Peter witnessed how the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus' claims, and he knew of the plots against Jesus, ate the last Passover meal with Him, and observed His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, the betrayal of Judas, the arrest, and the questioning before the high priest, which led to His execution. The penetration of the nails was the final, lethal blow, but whether Peter witnessed the precise moment of crucifixion or not, he could legitimately claim to be a witness to the sufferings of the Messiah', Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter (Baker Exegetical Commentary)*, page 301.

For an alternative view, see: 'the term "witness" also included those who proclaimed the true gospel and their experience of the risen Christ according to that gospel ... It seems to be this latter sense that our author is using', Davids, *op. cit.*, on 1 Pet. 5. 1.

³³ Mark 14. 32-33.

³⁴ Luke 22. 44.

³⁵ Heb. 5. 7.

³⁶ Mark 14. 65.

³⁷ 1 Pet. 1. 11; 2. 21; 3. 18; 4. 1, 13; 5. 1 – the combination occurs in every chapter! Cf. Acts 3. 18.

³⁸ Matt. 16. 21.

³⁹ Matt. 16. 22.

⁴⁰ Matt. 16. 13-16.

⁴¹ Matt. 16. 17.

⁴² Matt. 16. 22.

⁴³ Matt. 16. 23.

⁴⁴ Matt. 4. 8-9.

⁴⁵ Matt. 16. 22.

⁴⁶ Matt. 16. 16.

⁴⁷ See D. A. Carson, '*Matthew (Expositor's Bible Commentary)*' and R. T France, '*Matthew (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*', on Matt. 16. 18.

⁴⁸ See Matt. 16. 23 RV.

⁴⁹ 1 Pet. 1. 11.

⁵⁰ 1 Pet. 3. 18.

⁵¹ Cf. 'when His glory shall be revealed', 1 Pet. 4. 13.

⁵² 2 Pet. 1. 16.

⁵³ 2 Pet. 1. 18.

⁵⁴ It is clear from Luke's account that the event took place at night. Luke says that Jesus 'took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He prayed' (Luke 9. 28-29). And we know from elsewhere in Luke's gospel that it was the Lord's practice to spend much time at night in prayer. For example, 'in those days He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God' (Luke 6. 12). This explains why, as Luke noted, 'Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep' (Luke 9. 32), and why, as again noted by Luke, 'they came down from the mountain ... the next day' (Luke 9. 37).

⁵⁵ 'We made known to you the power and coming (*παρουσία*) of our Lord Jesus Christ ... we were eyewitnesses of His majesty ('His magnificence')', 2 Pet. 1. 16. It is clear that the whole Transfiguration scene portrays the Lord Jesus in something of the glory of His second advent.

'A partaker of the glory that shall be revealed' ... 'Both Estius and Alford ... allude to the view held by some scholars that the reference here is to St. Peter's experience at the Transfiguration; and I cannot doubt that this view is correct ... He had experienced, and was known to have experienced, a special revelation of the glory which had been restored to Jesus at the ascension (1 Pet. 1. 21) and would be manifested to all when He came again at the End', Selwyn, *op. cit.*, pages 228-229.

See also G. H. Boobyer, '*St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story*', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1940, Volume: 41, Issue: 162, pages: 119-140.

⁵⁶ Mark 14. 66.

⁵⁷ John 18. 18.

⁵⁸ John 21. 9.

- ⁵⁹ It must have occurred during the thirty-two-day period between Thomas' confession, John 20. 28, and the Lord's ascension, Acts 1. 9. See Acts 1. 3.
- ⁶⁰ John 21. 1, 9.
- ⁶¹ Mark 14. 27; cf. Zech. 13. 7.
- ⁶² Mark 14. 28.
- ⁶³ Matt. 27. 60.
- ⁶⁴ Matt. 28. 1, 7.
- ⁶⁵ John 21. 2-3.
- ⁶⁶ '...that night they caught nothing', John 21. 3..
- ⁶⁷ John 21. 5-11.
- ⁶⁸ John 21. 7.
- ⁶⁹ John 21. 4.
- ⁷⁰ Matt. 14. 24, 28-31.
- ⁷¹ John 21. 9.
- ⁷² John 21. 15-17. Truly, 'To those who fall, how kind Thou art!' (quoted from the hymn, 'Jesus, the very thought of Thee' by Bernard of Clairvaux).
- ⁷³ The Greek verb, 'ποιμαίνω'.
- ⁷⁴ John 21. 16.
- ⁷⁵ Again, the Greek verb, 'ποιμαίνω'. Only the Lord Jesus 'rules/shepherds (ποιμαίνω) with a rod of iron', Rev. 2. 27; 9. 15; 12. 5; contrast that which is said of under-shepherds: 'nor as lording it over', 1 Pet. 5. 3.
- ⁷⁶ It is not man's flock, but God's; cf. 'we are His people, and the sheep of *His pasture*', Psa. 100. 3.
- ⁷⁷ 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ', 1 Pet. 1. 1.
- ⁷⁸ 1 Pet. 5. 1.
- ⁷⁹ 'The term (κατακυριεύω) means "forcefully ruling over, subduing", and can carry the nuance of a harsh or excessive use of authority (note its use in Matt. 20. 25; Mark 10. 42; Acts 19. 16; also (the Greek Old Testament) Gen. 1. 28; 9. 1; and, in the context of military conquests, Num. 21. 24; 32. 22, 29; Psa. 110. 2, etc.). The word always seems to involve bringing something into subjection by the use of force, whether physical, military, or political', Wayne A. Grudem, '1 Peter (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)', page 189.

⁸⁰ Mark 10. 37.

⁸¹ Mark 10. 41-42a.

⁸² Mark 10. 42b. The way of world at large was for leaders to domineer over others.

⁸³ 1 Pet. 5. 2.

⁸⁴ **Note the quotations:**

(i) This suggests that elders were supported financially for their work; cf. 1 Tim. 5. 17-18. There was also the possibility of elders misappropriating local church funds for themselves; cf. the reference to the ex-elder, Valens, in *'Polycarp to the Philippians'*, 11. 1-4, and see Acts 11. 30.

(ii) 'The practice of financially compensating church leadership in some form apparently arose early in the church (e.g., 1 Cor. 9. 7; Gal. 6. 6) but abuse of the privilege also arose with it (1 Tim. 3. 3; 6. 5; Tit. 1. 11; 2 Pet. 2. 3; Jude 11)', Jobes, *op. cit.*, page 305.

⁸⁵ 1 Tim. 3. 3; Tit. 1. 7; Cf. 1 Sam. 2. 36. 'As our *beloved brother Paul* also has written to you according to the wisdom given to him', 2 Pet. 3. 15.

⁸⁶ The same is true of all believers: 'I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be', Rev. 22. 12.

⁸⁷ **Note the quotations:**

(i) 'The term "receive" is often used for receiving pay or wages', Davids, *op. cit.*, on 1 Pet. 5. 4..

(ii) 'When Jesus comes again, faithful shepherds will receive their reward. What we would call "wreathes" (made either of leaves or other vegetation, or of gold or silver), were commonly awarded to show honour, not only to athletes, but for virtually any area of endeavour (for military success, government service, making contributions as a benefactor, etc.)', A. Black, *'1 Peter (College Press NIV Commentary)'*, on 1 Pet. 5. 4.

⁸⁸ 'The noun "ἀρχιποίμενος" (Chief Shepherd) is attested at least twice in extant texts from the Roman period and was a title that apparently would have been familiar to Peter's readers (Adolf Deissmann, *'Light from the Ancient East'*, pages 99–100). The "ἀρχιποίμενο" was the overseer of the shepherds when a flock was too large to be attended well by one. The elders are not simply to follow the example of Christ as independent agents when shepherding God's people; instead, they are to recognize themselves as underlings of Christ the Chief Shepherd, to whom they will be held responsible', Jobes, *op. cit.*, page 306.

⁸⁹ **Note the quotations:**

(i) 'Peter uses a similar word for unfading in 1 Pet. 1. 4; here, their victors' wreath of honour, like their inheritance, will never fade away. This imperishability contrasts with the perishable wreaths awarded physical athletes; Paul had offered a similar and more explicit contrast (1 Cor. 9. 25)', Keener, *op. cit.*, on 1 Pet. 5. 4.

(ii) 'This image of a crown of unfading flowers contrasts with the withering and falling flowers of all human glory acquired apart from Christ (1 Pet. 1. 24)', Jobes, *op. cit.*, page 307.

⁹⁰ 1 Pet. 1. 4.

⁹¹ John 10. 11, 14.

⁹² Heb. 10. 20.

⁹³ John 10. 11.

⁹⁴ Heb. 13. 20.

⁹⁵ 'May they not well trample on base gain and vain applause, who have this Crown to look to? They that will be content with those, let them be; but they have their reward, and it is done and gone, when faithful followers are to receive theirs', Robert Leighton, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, volume 2, page 412.

⁹⁶ Heb. 13. 17. This verse does not teach that the leaders will have to give account of the souls over which they are to watch. But rather that they will have to give account of their own conduct.

⁹⁷ Quoted from A. E. Phillips, *Day by Day through the New Testament*, Precious Seed Publications, page 349 – referencing John 10. 11; Heb. 13. 20; 1 Pet. 5. 4).

⁹⁸ 1 Pet. 1. 19-20; 'made manifest (*φανερῶω*) in the last times for your sake'.

⁹⁹ 1 Pet. 5. 4; 'when the Chief Shepherd appears (*φανερῶω*)'.

¹⁰⁰ Note the following parallels between 1 Pet. 5. 5-9 and James 4. 6-10:

(i) 1 Pet. 5. 5: God "stands against the arrogant, but bestows grace on the humble" (quoting Prov. 3. 34);

James 4. 6: God "stands against the arrogant, but bestows grace on the humble" (quoting Prov. 3. 34).

(ii) 1 Pet. 5. 6a: 'Humble yourselves (*tapeinōthēte*) under God's powerful hand";

James 4. 10a: 'Humble yourselves (*tapeinōthēte*) before the Lord'.

(iii) 1 Pet. 5. 6b: 'So that he may exalt you (*humas hupsōsē*) at the right time';

James 4. 10b: 'And he will exalt you (*hupsōsei humas*).

(iv) 1 Pet. 5. 8-9: 'The devil ... whom resist';

James 4. 7b: 'Resist the devil'.

(Adapted from Keener, *op. cit.* on 1 Pet. 5. 6.)

'In James, the test is poverty and oppression tempting people to retaliate. In 1 Peter, it is persecution tempting believers to fall away', Keener, *'1 Peter (IVP Background Commentary)'*, page 697.

¹⁰¹ Note the quotations:

(i) 'This is the only occurrence of this word in the New Testament. It comes from two words: in and tie with a knot, roll band or towel. It means to "engird yourselves"', G. C. Richison, *'First Epistle of Peter'*, page 248.

(ii) 'The word translated "clothe yourselves" signifies "binding firmly on and wearing constantly", and maybe Peter in using it had in mind the towel wherewith Jesus girded Himself in John 13. 4', G. J. Polkinghorne, *'1 Peter (Zondervan Bible Commentary)'*, on 1 Pet. 5. 1-5.

(iii) 'We have already heard about humility in 1 Pet. 3. 8. The word translated "gird" ... means "to tie on securely", and it is probable that the substantive formed from it referred specially to the apron worn by slaves. It seems likely that Peter has in mind the memorable occasion when Jesus had girded Himself to wash His disciples' feet', C. E. B. Cranfield, *'I & II Peter and Jude (Torch Bible Commentaries)'*, page 132.

¹⁰² **Note the quotations:**

(i) 'A short white garment which slaves wore over their sleeveless vests', Julius Pollux, *Onomasticon*, iv. 18.

(ii) 'Nor was he any more respectful or temperate in his dealings with Senators, forcing some of the most senior to run behind his chariot for miles, clad in their togas; or wait on him, dressed in the short linen tunics of slaves, at the head or foot of his dining-couch', Suetonius, *'The Twelve Caesars: Gaius Caligula'*, paragraph 26.

¹⁰³ John 13. 4.

¹⁰⁴ John 13. 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ John 13. 6-8.

¹⁰⁶ That the washing of somebody else's feet was an action often performed by a slave is clear from the words of the recently-bereaved Abigail, when David proposed marriage to her: 'let your handmaid', she replied, 'be a bondswoman to wash the feet of the servants of my lord', 1 Sam. 25. 40-41.

Indeed, according to the teaching of the Jewish Rabbis, the washing of a master's feet was so menial and so degrading a task that it was not required of a Jewish slave. This was something a Gentile slave was expected to do, but not a Jewish slave.

Note the quotations:

(a) 'The washing of a master's feet was a menial task which was not required of a Jewish slave', C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to John, an Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, page 366.

(b) 'The task was reserved for Gentile slaves', G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John (Word Biblical Commentary)*, page 233.

(c) 'Scripture says, "you shall not make him serve as a slave", Lev. 25. 39. Hence the sages said, "A Hebrew slave must not wash the feet of his master, nor put his shoes on him, nor carry his things before him when going to the bathhouse ... for it is said, 'But over your brethren the children of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with rigour, Lev. 25. 46. But one's son or pupil (disciple) may do so"', Rabbi Ishmael, *Tractate Nezikin*, Babylonian Talmud, on Exodus 21. 2.

¹⁰⁷ John 13. 9.

¹⁰⁸ John 13. 10.

¹⁰⁹ **Note the quotations:**

(i) 'Lowliness of mind (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*) in classical Greek would denote a mean-spirited or grovelling attitude of mind. It is only in Christian phraseology that humility is recognized as a virtue', Blenkin, *op. cit.*, page 116.

(ii) 'God has provided a garment that fits all sizes, the garment of humility', J. B. Nicholson, *'1 Peter to Jude (What the Bible Teaches series)'*, page 116.

¹¹⁰ 'God singles pride out for His grand enemy, and sets Himself in battle array against it: so the word is ... He orders His forces against it', Leighton, *op. cit.*, page 422.

¹¹¹ Prov. 3. 34. 'Why does God act this way? Apparently because the proud (those who are haughty or arrogant, thinking of themselves as more important than everyone else) trust in themselves, while the humble trust in God, and God delights in being trusted', Grudem, *op. cit.*, page 194.

¹¹² 'You who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders', 1 Pet. 5. 5a.

¹¹³ 'Gird yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another', 1 Pet. 5. 5b.

¹¹⁴ 1 Pet. 5. 6. Humility bows to God's will, even in suffering.

'The verb translated "humble yourselves" is not in the aorist middle but the passive voice, which means that the subject of the verb is passive in the hands of God and is acted upon by Him. The exhortation is, "Be humbled" or "Suffer yourselves to be humbled". The humbling process which God was using was the persecution and suffering through which these Christians were passing', K. Wuest, *'Word Studies in the Greek New Testament'*, on 1 Pet. 5. 6.

¹¹⁵ **Note the quotations:**

(i) 'The recipients of 1 Peter are to submit to the authority of God, especially as expressed in God's sovereign control of the circumstances of suffering in which they find themselves', Mark Dubis., '1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text', page 166.

(ii) 'Peter has repeatedly indicated that God has a purpose in allowing their situation (1 Pet. 1. 6-7; 3. 17; 4. 19), so that there is a sense in which their situation is an expression of God's will. They must humbly accept His will knowing that their humiliation will lead to exaltation', Black, *op. cit.*, on 1 Pet. 5. 6.

(iii) 'The way, therefore, to attain true greatness, to be exalted in God's good time, is to humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, submitting patiently to whatever trials He sends you; casting all the burden of your anxiety upon Him in full assurance of His loving care for you', Blenkin, *op. cit.*, page 117.

¹¹⁶ **Note the quotations:**

(i) 'At the appropriate time' (Greek, *έν καιρῶ*). We can compare the *έν καιρῶ* ('in due time', King James Version) of our Lord's return here with the *έν καιρῶ* ('in due time', King James Version) of our Lord's death, Rom. 5. 6.

(ii) 'In classical Greek *έν καιρῶ* means "at the propitious time" (Thuc. iv. 59, vi. 9), and therefore frequently, in relation to particular actions or events, "in good time" (Aesch. P. V. 381, Thuc. v. 61). In Thuc. i. 121 *έν καιρῶ* means "in due course", or "in our own good time" ... in the context of the thought pervading this section of the Epistle, God's good time is the Parousia, described in 1 Pet. 1. 5 as *καιρῶ έσχάτω* and in 1 Peter 2. 12 as *ήμέρα έπισκοπής*', Selwyn, *op. cit.*, page 236.

For an alternative interpretation of *έν καιρῶ*, see 'Neither the specific time nor the kind of 'exaltation' are specified, so it is best to understand the statement generally: 'that in the time God deems best, whether in this life or in the life to come, He may lift you up from your humble conditions and 'exalt' you in the way that seems best to Him', Grudem, *op. cit.*, page 194.

¹¹⁷ The New English Translation ('The NET Bible') connects the two verses: "And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under His mighty hand by casting all your cares on Him because He cares for you".

¹¹⁸ Luke 14. 11; 18. 14; Matt. 23. 12.

'Gentiles sometimes spoke of deities exalting the lowly; Scripture and Jewish tradition highlight God's exaltation of the lowly more consistently and emphatically.

- Aesop allegedly described Zeus's activity at the time as "humbling the proud and exalting the humble" (Diogenes Laertius, Lives 1. 69).
- A pre-Christian Jewish sage declared that there is really one who humbles and exalts (Sir. 7:11) and Wisdom exalts the head of the lowly (Sir. 11:1).
- Another pre-Christian sage advises a ruler to remind himself of his humanity; "And God humbles the proud, and the gentle and humble he exalts" (Let. Aristeas 262-263).
- A later rabbi insists: "Get down to come up and up to come down: Whoever exalts himself above the words of the Torah is in the end degraded; and whoever degrades himself for the sake of the words of the Torah is in the end exalted" ('Abot R. Nat. 11 A).

'Here it fits the divine pattern of God exalting those who humble themselves, whether in the Old Testament (e.g., Psa. 18. 27; 138: 6; Isa. 2. 11-12, 17; 57. 15; Ezek. 21. 26) or in early Christian texts (Luke 1. 52; 14. 11; 18. 14; cf. Acts 7. 9-10; 13. 17; Phil. 2: 8-9)', Keener, *op. cit.*, on 1 Pet. 5. 6.