



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Peter 5:6-14

1 Peter

“Spiritual Warfare”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] This is our last lesson in 1 Peter. Text is 1 Peter 5:6-14. Let’s begin with a word of prayer and then we’ll read our text.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for this time together this evening and the opportunity that we have to study the Scriptures and finish up this great epistle that Peter wrote. Bless us as we do that and give us understanding, guide us in our thinking, teach us.

We thank you that you’ve blessed us abundantly. You have given us new hearts. You have given us the faculties spiritually to comprehend your truth. You have given us a divine teacher in the Holy Spirit who guides us and directs our thinking, who opens up the text for us, who illuminates the page of scripture for us.

We pray that his ministry would go unhindered this evening. That you would teach us and bless us and enable us to make the proper applications of this text to our lives. May we take away from this time together truth and a desire to serve you. So conform us to the image of Christ this evening, advance us in the process of sanctification and we pray that not only for this group, but for the others that are meeting tonight, the young people. Bless them as well. Then bless our time as we, again, approach the throne of grace and intercede for those who have asked for our prayers.

We look to you to bless us now and we pray these things in Christ’s name. Amen.

[Message] 1 Peter 5 beginning with verse 6, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you at the proper time casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, but resist him firm in your faith knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your

brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Through Sylvanus, our faithful brother, for so 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 chosen together with you sends you greetings and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.”

The apostle Paul concluded his epistle to the Ephesians with a passage on spiritual warfare. Peter does the same with his epistle of 1 Peter, which is a reasonable subject on which to conclude a book that deals in large measure with suffering and spiritual conflict. We face an enemy within, which is pride, and we face an enemy without, which is the devil. Peter gives advice in these last verses on how to fight and overcome them.

It is really a continuation, our text is, of the previous passage on humility. The editors of the text make a new paragraph beginning with verse 6, but really there’s no break at that point. Peter begins verse 6 with the word therefore, which shows he’s drawing an inference, he’s drawing a conclusion from what he stated in verse 5. So the thought continues.

There in verse 5 he stated that everyone is to clothe himself or herself with humility toward one another. God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. “Therefore”, he says, “humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you at the proper time.” Now that is the last thing that people want to do; humble themselves.

Our problems began because man didn’t want to do that. When he was placed in the garden and given one rule to govern him, one prohibition, he resisted that, he rebelled against that. He did not want to be in subjection to God. Ever since, man has been trying to throw off God’s yoke. “Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us” is the statement of the rebels in Psalm 2 in verse 3. That is mankind. That is the natural man. That particular text finds fulfillment in Christ and his crucifixion, but it is endemic to man in every generation. It is the natural man. That is his attitude toward the Lord and his instruction and his hand.

But we’re different. The believer in Jesus Christ is a child of God and he or she knows that God’s rule over us, God’s hand upon us is always for our good. So we are to submit to it. We are to bow to God’s providence, to his will for our lives, accepting what

life brings to us and entrusting ourselves, entrusting all of our concerns to him. Now that takes faith. That takes patience. That takes great faith because it may mean that we're deprived of things in this life. That certainly was the case with those people to whom Peter was writing or what he was forewarning them of and it's true of the saints all through the New Testament where suffering is experienced and all through the history of the church.

People live lives of **privation** and sometimes what that means is we are deprived of the things that are rightfully ours, but the command that Peter gives, while it may be difficult and it goes against our natural inclination, the command that he gives has a great promise. He says God will exalt you.

So it is in our interest to obey what he says. To humble ourselves. To submit to God. Now God doesn't take anything from us that he doesn't repay abundantly. The humility or the lowliness is not proportional to the exaltation. The gain is far greater than the loss and we need to believe that. We need to understand that. We need to rest in that.

Now Peter doesn't say when the exaltation will take place. Just that it will take place at the proper time, at the right time, at God's time. Now that may be in this life or that may be in the life to come, but the promise is our humble circumstances will be reversed and will be greatly reversed.

Now Peter doesn't define the reversal or the exaltation. It probably is different for different people. We might naturally think that we'll humble ourselves in this life and in this life we will experience this exaltation. Perhaps if there's a reverse in our material fortunes that will be reversed at some point. So if we lose a lot we'll gain a lot. That is certainly, I would imagine – I say certainly – I would think that is the case with some individuals, but it may be not a material exaltation at all. It may be something of a spiritual nature. It may have to do with fellowship with God that humility leads to something else in terms of God's service.

So through the trials that we experience we're drawn closer to the Lord and through the submission that we must learn and the training that we must go through and the difficulties of life, we are caused to become more mature and the consequence of that is exaltation because we are then able to be more useful to the Lord and to his people. We know him better. We understand life better. We understand the things of God better and we are through that process exalted and made useful to him.

Whatever it is, whatever it will be, it will be best and as we come to understand that we will marvel at God’s wisdom and God’s grace and God’s power in doing the very thing that Peter says that he will do.

But as I say, having that attitude takes great faith because the natural tendency is not to do that. It’s not to submit. It’s to resist that and it’s to wonder well, what will happen to me in these circumstances. What will happen to me if I do submit, if I do simply yield to this and wait upon the Lord and trust him to bless. Now that’s not an all together illegitimate concern.

In fact, that’s a very natural concern that we have. We wonder about our future when we submit to a hard, a difficult and unfair circumstance. It’s natural to ask ourselves when we put others ahead of ourselves what’s going to happen to us. If I take care of others, if I consider them as more important than myself, who will take care of me. Well we may not articulate it like that, we may not say those exact words, but we have that sense about it. We have a concern. So Peter gives us the answer in verse 7.

Who will take care of me? Well, he says God will take care of you. This is not a new sentence that he begins in verse 7. It is a participial phrase which tells us how we do what he tells us to do. How it is that we humble ourselves. We do it by looking to the Lord. Casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. What a great promise that is.

I like the way the King James Version put it. It’s a little easier to memorize. Casting all your cares upon him for he cares for you. There can’t be any greater comfort in the world than that knowing that God cares for us because his is not the care of some weak, ineffectual being. He’s not a great deity who really doesn’t control everything, may know basically what’s going on and cares a great deal for us, but really can’t do anything about it. That’s not the case at all.

God is almighty. It is under his right hand, Peter says, that we are to submit. He’s omnipotent. He’s all powerful. There’s no limit to God’s power. He’s omniscient. He knows everything. There’s no limit to anything that he knows. He knows everything. He’s all knowing. He’s all wise. He’s all good. He’s all powerful. So he is well able to take care of us.

He asks us to trust him. I don’t know that Peter had this in mind, but Peter’s experience on the Sea of Galilee where he sees the Lord walking to them and he wants to go out to the Lord and so he goes. He walks on the water. As he looks at the Lord he

walks. As he takes his eyes off him, he sinks. Even though he sank the Lord reached down and pulled him out.

Well the Lord is one who can make us walk on the water if that be his will. There is no obstacle to his care for us. There’s no reason to not trust in him, to submit to him under his mighty hand, but as I say, it takes faith to receive that truth. It takes understanding.

We need to understand the great doctrines of God in order to have that faith, in order to be obedient. That’s why it is paramount for the church to know the word of God, to know the doctrines of the faith. That’s why Paul when he spoke to the Ephesian elders, we referred to that last week I believe, told them that he was not guilty of the blood of any man. He had preached to them the whole purpose of God. He’d gone through all of it. He’d given them good training in the word of God. He didn’t just preach the things that they wanted to hear. He preached the whole doctrine of God.

That’s what we need. We need to understand who God is. That’s what engenders confidence, trust in the Lord. The obedience that follows this kind of instruction to submit ourselves to the mighty hand of God. Now this is how we deal with the monsters within; pride and self. We humble ourselves under God’s hand and give him our concerns when we have the confidence that we should have in him and we have that confidence when we understand who he is.

The word that Peter uses here, cast, means to throw something on to another. Peter probably has Psalm 55:22 in mind. “Cast your burden upon the Lord and he will sustain you.” Life has its burdens. One reason it has its burdens for us is to remind us that this life isn’t all that there is and we’re not to be building our lives in this world, but looking for what’s to come, but those burdens are not easy. Ultimately they come from the hand of the Lord. He puts them upon us and he does that for our training, for our maturity, but he puts nothing on us that he will not carry for us. So we should cast them all on him. That’s what he tells us to do.

Anxiety is an enemy just as selfishness and pride are enemies, but there is another enemy in the world who knows how to provoke our pride and play upon our selfish desires and make us worry, produce anxiety and that’s the devil. Peter gives the right response to him in verse 8. He takes up this other enemy, the enemy without there. This is a new section, which has to do with spiritual alertness. Be careful he’s saying. There’s more

going on in this world than meets the eye; verse 8. “Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.”

The opposite of alertness or watchfulness is indifference or apathy. Now Peter has urged us, urged his readers to submission to God’s hand. Submission doesn’t mean indifference. Doesn’t mean passivity. It doesn’t mean doing nothing. Saying God’s in control; I’ll just do nothing. I’ll just submit and let what happens happen. That’s not Peter’s instruction at all. That’s not the sense of it.

We are to trust God. We are to be alert. We are to be watching. We are to be very active. We live in enemy territory. Or it’s probably better to put it this way. We live in occupied territory because the world belongs to us. It belongs to the redeemed. This is where our future will be. In a new Heavens and a new earth, but in the present situation, it is occupied by a foreign army, spiritually speaking.

Now often times our lives in this world, which is not our home, we’re passing through, it will be our home in a glorified state, but often times we live in peaceful circumstances. God blesses us with comfort in this life and abundance. Always blessing us and often times the blessings are not in terms of affliction. They’re in terms of the opposite. So our lives become rather peaceful and there’s no hint of danger in our circumstance. Well those are times when we can become spiritually drowsy. When we can begin to drift and that is when the enemy can overtake us.

So we are to be sober. We are to be alert. The enemy is real and the enemy is dangerous. Peter describes him in that way. Describes him as our adversary who’s like a roaring lion prowling around looking for some food. He wants to make a meal out of us. It’s a vivid metaphor and quite apt because it describes how the enemy attacks, how this occurs. It is swift. It is a powerful attack. It’s a vicious attack. This enemy is like a lion. Lies in wait in the brush in the tall grass waiting for us to come by and waiting to pounce and to devour.

This word devour _____ the Hebrew equivalent or the Greek word here that’s used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint is the word that’s used in Jonah 1:17. It’s 117 in the English text. It’s the word that’s used of the great fish swallowing Jonah. They swallowed him in one gulp. That’s the idea here that the devil would like to do. He’d like to devour us swiftly, quickly; just like that.

Now the enemy as he identifies him here is the devil and that’s a word that means slanderer, false accuser. That’s one way in which the devil attacks us. That it not only

defines Satan’s activity. He does that before the throne of God day and night we’re told, accusing the saints. We see him doing that with Job. He prowls around the earth doing reconnaissance evidently. Searching out information to gather and bring before the throne of God to accuse the saints.

That’s the idea in the word devil here, but it not only defines his activity, it identifies him as a real personality. This is what a person does. So the devil is real. He’s not a metaphor for evil. He is an intelligent, purposeful being who has malevolent intent, evil intent.

Revelation 12:9 describes him as, “The serpent of old who deceives the world.” That tells us something more about his activity. He’s a deceiver. It states that he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. So Satan is a leader of a host of angels of demons who follow his plan of evil of the deception of the world and of attack upon the church. He is finite. He’s a great being. Far greater than any one of us.

He’s powerful. He’s wise. He can change himself into what appears to be an angel of light. He is cunning, all of that, but he’s a finite being. He cannot do everything. He cannot be everywhere. He can only be in one place at one time, but he has other beings under his command who operate as surrogates who do his bidding. He has other agents as well besides the spiritual beings, the angels.

In Revelation 2:10, John warns the church of Smyrna not to fear what they’re about to suffer. “Behold” he says, “the devil is about to cast some of you into prison.” Now how is the devil going to cast them into prison. He wasn’t going to approach them and seize them and throw them into prison.

He was going to do that through the agencies of men. He was going to do that through human authorities; pagan governors, pagan authorities. Those men, officers, soldiers, whoever they were, would be used of him to carry that out. So these two are the agents of Satan. He works in those ways. Those people are unwitting servants of his, but he uses them as well.

In John 12:31, the Lord called him the ruler of this world. He works through the places of power in this world. In Ephesians 2:2, he is the prince of the power of the air. In Ephesians 6:12, his minions are listed; rulers, powers, the world forces of this darkness, the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Probably we’re to understand Peter’s reference here to the devil as not only a reference to Satan himself, the individual, but also

as a term that refers to his network of agents, his whole kingdom, his realm. They represent him. They carry out his work and they are dangerous.

So this is what we face. Paul deals with it at length in Ephesians 6. Wayne Grudem in his commentary has given what he calls a survey of the results of demonic influence in the New Testament that indicates the things that a sober Christian should look for as demonic. These are the things that he lists: bizarre or violent, irrational, evil behavior, especially in opposition to the gospel or to the Christian. He cites as a reference to that Mark 1:24 where Jesus goes into the synagogue to preach and there's a man there who's possessed of a demon who cries out against him in this kind of frenetic, bizarre behavior.

Then another reference is Mark 5:2 that Gerasene or the Gadarene demoniac who also has this bizarre behavior. Next he gives as an indication of this kind of behavior, malicious slander and falsehood in speech. John 8:44 is a text that he lists where Jesus tells the Jews that they are of their father, the devil, who is a liar and the father of lies. So those who lie, those who slander, they do the work of the devil. That would indicate some kind of demonic or devilish activity.

He lists increasing bondage to self-destructive behavior. Again, Mark 5, the Gerasene demoniac is a text for that. Stubborn advocacy of false doctrine. 1 John 4:1-4 where John warns Christians to not believe every spirit, but test the spirits. The reason is because many false prophets are in the world. They are ministers of Satan. So we can detect satanic activity, demonic activity in the pulpit with distinguished ministers who don't preach the word of God who deceive others.

Another is the stubborn and unexplained onslaughts of emotions, like fear, hatred, depression, anxiety, anger, which are both contrary to God's will and inappropriate in one's situation. I take it there that he's referring to demonic or satanic kind of activity against the believer because he cites for his proof text Ephesians 6:16, which is the devil's flaming darts.

So we do experience those things. Paul doesn't define them, but that may be a good definition of the flaming darts. There are various things that attack us; anxiety. Why do we feel uneasy about something. Why do we have a particular fear or depression or something like that. That can come from the devil.

Then he gives us a final characteristic. Simply deep spiritual uneasiness, which might be called the discernment of spiritual evil. He cites 1 Corinthians 12:10 where Paul

gives us one of the gifts of the spirit, distinguishing spirits. In other words, being able to discern the Holy Spirit from a demonic spirit.

Well, that’s a good list. That’s helpful I think, but he also has a helpful correction also. That is that we need to be careful about all of this and be careful about how we distinguish what’s going on because the reality is there is enough evil in the world outside of Satan to account for what takes place. There is enough sin within each one of us as children of God to account for a great many problems that we face.

Paul deals with that quite thoroughly in Romans 7:14 on where he speaks of the struggles that he had. He attributes the failures that we have, the defeats that we have spiritually being overcome by sin and temptation as being the sin that’s within us. So, it’s proper to keep these things in perspective. We do fight a spiritual warfare. We deal with the devil and his agents, but we deal with sin that’s within us, too. That needs to be born in mind. That is a great enemy that we face; the sin that’s in us.

It seems to me for all of this that Peter has written here, for all that Paul writes in Ephesians 6 and for as significant a being as Satan is, remarkably little is said about him in the Bible. Now this is my opinion. I’m not drawing from any commentator or theologian on this, but it has just struck me that that seems to be the case. When you consider as much as is recorded in the Bible and as important as the devil seems to be, he occupies a relatively small amount of space.

You might think if a popular writer were going to develop the theme of the devil in the Bible, we’d have a whole book on it. We’d have all kinds of stories about him. All kinds of analyses of him, but we really don’t have a great deal of information. We have, it seems, all the information about Satan that we need to know. We don’t know everything about him. There’s a lot we don’t know about him, but we know everything that God wants us to know.

He doesn’t want us, it seems to me, to be fixated on the devil and demons and all of that because in reality he’s a minor figure. God’s desire for us is not to be intrigued with him and not to cower from him. We know enough to not become intrigued and we know enough not to cower before him.

The word that John gave to the church in Smyrna I think is very informative. God knows what’s going to happen. God tells the church what’s going to happen. John informs them of what’s going to take place. That Satan is going to cast some of them in prison. He knows what the devil’s going to do before he does it. The devil cannot do anything to

circumvent the work of God or his power. He is on God’s chain so to speak. God is in complete control of Satan.

So, we don’t need to fear him and we don’t need to think too much about it. We need to know about him. We know about what he’s doing. That he’s there. That he’s a danger. That he is after us. That’s about all we need to know. We don’t need to fixate on the devil or the occult or any of those kinds of things. Rather we’re to focus our eyes on Christ, the author and perfecter of faith.

But as I say, we are to be aware of him and his activity. Not be passive. Not be drowsy, but be alert and be watchful. Resist him, Peter writes in verse 9, “Firm in your faith.” Now what that means is resist him firm in your faith because you can beat him. You can resist him successfully.

James said much the same thing in James 4:7, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” That is very important to notice that, first of all, we are to submit to God. We are first to be firm in our faith. It’s not we ourselves who have the ability to defeat the devil. We have the power within us to do so. Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world.

We do it by faith, by walking by faith and obedience and fixing our eyes on Christ, but we are to submit to God. We are to be firm in our faith and I take that to mean well-grounded in the word of God. Believing the word of God and obeying it. If we live a loose life and I don’t necessarily mean a blatantly sinful life. A careless life. If we live that kind of life. If we live a casual kind of life, we’ll probably not stand before the onslaught of the devil. If we’re lax in prayer, if we’re careless in our associations, we will probably not stand before the devil.

The Christian life calls for discipline. It calls for holiness. Paul tells us to put on the whole armor of God, have faith, have hope, have knowledge, know how to use it. It’s our sword. It’s our weapon.

So we face a terrible enemy. We face a fearful foe, but not one that is unbeatable. We should not fear the devil. It’s already been defeated. It was defeated at Calvary. So we should resist him and we should enter into the conflict with him knowing that as we enter into it by faith, we will succeed.

Now that conflict is not an unusual conflict. That’s the assurance that Peter gives when he writes that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. The encouragement that he gives there is this is not unusual.

Others are going through it and others are succeeding. This is not unusual. This is to be expected. So, guard yourselves with the armor of God. Be on the alert. Be sober. Be watching and resist. Resist and he will flee from you.

But Peter adds in verse 10, the suffering that results from the attacks of the devil while they will be difficult and that I think is suggested in the word resist and the struggle that will go through, while they will produce suffering, they will not last long. The end of it will be for our good. That’s the promise that he gives in verse 10. “After you have suffered for a little while the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”

Now it’s good to know that there’s an end to the conflict. When a runner is running a long race and he gets an extra boost of energy when he sees there’s the end he’s nearing the end and it is encouraging, particularly if one is suffering, to know it’s going to be for a little while. It’s not permanent. This is not what you’ve been called to, a permanent life of suffering. It is going to be short and it’s encouraging to know that we are blessed through the conflict. That it’s not wasted. We may not understand the purpose of it, but it is for good. It makes us strong. It is by this means that God establishes us.

Ultimately that happens for all eternity, but we are fit and fashioned for all eternity. Eternal glory is what we have been promised. Not permanent suffering. Temporary suffering, which will be replaced with eternal glory. That’s what Peter says. “The God who called you to his eternal glory.” That’s what lasts. That’s what counts. So that’s what we should be living for and that’s what we should have in our minds as we go through the struggles and the hardships. They were facing a fiery ordeal. The encouragement is it’s short-lived and what is on the other side is eternal glory. So stand firm, resist the obedient, submit to the mighty hand of God.

Peter then ends this portion, the main part of the book, on a doxology. “To him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.” He has dominion and will have dominion. The present enemies of sin within and the devil without are temporary. They are, as I said, occupying forces that will be vanquished ultimately. Christ will come again. Christ will establish his kingdom. That kingdom will ultimately be transformed into the new heavens and the new earth.

Peter ends the letter with a closing greeting in verses 12 through 14, “Through Sylvanus, our faithful brother or so I regard him, I have written to you briefly exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.” Sylvanus is Syllas. We know

him from his mission with Paul, the second missionary journey. He is evidently Peter’s secretary or is a amanuensis. That is the one who wrote the letter. There’s some dispute about that.

It can be understood as simply the one who delivered the letter, but it seems to me that what he’s saying here is that he wrote this letter through Sylvanus. Apostles would do that sometimes. They would have one to whom they would dictate and who would write things down. Paul, for example, dictated the letter of Romans to **Tercius**. We come to the end of the book in Roman 16:22 and we read, “I Tercius who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.” Evidently that’s what Sylvanus did. He wrote the letter that Peter dictated to him and gives his greetings.

Peter summarizes his letter I think with these words exhorting and testifying. Now that’s what he’s done all through this book. He has exhorted with moral commands and much of the book is characterized by that, but it’s also a book with theology testifying that is giving doctrinal teaching. All the moral exhortations are based upon the doctrinal teaching. It’s all about grace. That’s what Peter says. This is the true grace of God.

The entire Christian life from beginning to end is the story of grace. He chose us for himself. He called us out of death into life. He bestows grace upon us daily. At every moment of our lives we are receiving from him strength and help, forgiveness, fellowship. That is God’s work within us. It’s constant.

That fact should give us confidence and earnestness in the Christian life. Not indolence. Not slackness. Just the opposite. That’s how Peter concludes with an exhortation to be earnest in the faith. To stand firm in it. Don’t be moved from it. Resist all of those forces, all of those influences that would seek to move you away from it, whether it be the threats of physical harm or the deceptions of false teaching. Stand firm in this truth that has been given.

Verse 13, “She who is in Babylon chosen together with you sends you greetings and so does my son Mark.” It’s disputed whether Babylon here is the city on the Euphrates or the city on the Tiber. Many feel that this is a cryptic reference to Rome and they feel that way because the tradition is that Peter went to Rome and was a minister and martyr there. That’s where he, according to tradition, died.

While first century Babylon was not a significant city. It was small. There’s no evidence of a church there from tradition. No evidence that Peter visited there from tradition. Of course, if we take Babylon literally, then that’s the evidence that there was a

church there and that Peter visited. There was a community of Jews there. Some say it was a large community at this time. It later became the seat of Judaism after 70 A.D. and the fall of Jerusalem. The major community, Jewish community in the world was there in Babylon. Since Peter was an apostle to the Jews, it is reasonable to think that he visited that city.

Also, we probably shouldn't assume that apostles only went to big, important cities. That seems to be a very contemporary idea to me. That's one of the arguments against seeing Babylon as the city from which Peter wrote this letter because it was not significant and Rome was significant. Well, maybe it wasn't a significant city, but if it had Jews and it was God's will that he go there, then it's reasonable to think that he did.

But as I say, many people take this as Rome. Wayne Grudem believes that Peter identifies Rome here as Babylon because it recalls Israel's captivity in Babylon and it's his view that this is Peter's way of signaling that the church is the true Israel, but the New Testament nowhere calls the church Israel.

In Galatians 6:16 Paul does write, “Peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God.” A number of Bible commentators take the Israel of God as Paul's description of the church, but as I say, the term Israel is never applied to the church unless that's the exception, but it's not necessary to explain it that way at all.

In fact, it fits very well with the context to understand Paul as saying, “A blessing upon you in Galatia who follow after what I'm saying and upon the Israel of God.” Meaning Peter, John, the apostles, those who are truly believing Jews as opposed to these Judaizers who claim to be the Israel of God. It's a way of saying they are not and those such as Peter and Paul himself are the Israel of God.

A better reason for calling Rome Babylon as many do is because Babylon, of course, becomes the representative worldly power and opposition to God's people in the Old Testament and Rome to some extent became that. Certainly became that later, but that was really after Peter's time. At the time of the apostles, Rome was an unwitting protector of the church. It was the synagogue that was attacking the church. The Roman Empire really protected it.

So I'm not personally convinced that this is Rome. I really lean favorably toward Babylon being the place where this letter originated. Peter at the beginning uses a number of place names. They're all literal. Why wouldn't this be. It would seem to be consistent with his style and his usage of the names of places to take it literally, but wherever the

church is that he’s sending greetings from, whether it’s in Rome or Babylon, Peter describes it as chosen because the church, wherever it is, is made up of God’s elect ones. People who are saved by grace.

Gordon Clark wrote – some of you don’t know who Gordon Clark is. It’s the late Gordon Clark, but he was a Christian philosopher and theologian and in fact, he spoke here back in the 70s. He was I think in his mid-80s at that time, but he was a prolific writer and wrote a nice commentary on 1 Peter.

He wrote, following this statement about the chosen, describing the church as the chosen or the elect, “Alas how this essential note is missing from the disobedient preaching of the 20th Century.” I think we could add to that. Alas, the church has started the 21st Century on the same wrong foot ‘cause it’s still not preaching this great doctrine of divine election. Peter did. He preached grace. He preached unconditional election.

It is in that doctrine that we have the assurance of salvation. We have the confidence that the God who saves us, who has saved us out of the world, keeps us saved, keeps us from the devil, from all of the attacks and all of the temptations that we face.

If the power to choose God and make myself elect rested with me, if that was my power and my doing, then once I had chosen him, the power to reject God and become unelect would be mine as well. There’d be no assurance of eternal salvation if that were the case. The Bible doesn’t teach that. It teaches no such thing.

It teaches what Peter wrote in verses 1 through 5 at the beginning of the book. He states that we are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God. Not meaning the _____ of God. Not chosen according to what God foresaw from all eternity, but chosen according to the fore love of God. Chosen according to his eternal, unconditional love. That’s the meaning of foreknowledge. “We are protected”, he writes, “by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.” That’s grace. That’s the encouragement of election.

It wasn’t encouragement to Peter who had failed the Lord miserably. Denied him three times, but was restored, was lifted back up and made useful. It was the encouragement of Mark who also sends greetings here in verse 13. Mark had failed miserably as well. He failed Paul on that first missionary journey when he defected and went back home, but here we see him restored serving Peter in Babylon.

God who begins a good work in us will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. That’s the assurance we have. That’s the assurance that election gives us. That the

sovereign grace of God gives us. It gives us peace. That’s how Peter concludes. He says, “Peace to all who are in Christ.” It gives joy and it should make us praise God and serve him faithfully. Waiting eagerly, as Peter tells us to do, for the salvation to be revealed and that may be soon. So whatever we face in this life we’re to do so with hope, with joy, with peace because of God’s grace.

Well our time is up. So let’s conclude with a word of prayer and ask God to do that. To give us that peace and that earnest desire to serve him.

[Prayer] Father, we do pray for that. We pray that you bless us with your peace, the peace that comes with understanding your grace and give us the strength to live faithful lives, to resist the devil, to resist all the temptation we face, to stand firm in the faith. We can do that only by your grace. So we ask for that and we thank you for the grace that you’ve given and what you will give. We thank you most of all for your son. It’s in his name we pray. Amen.