

**PASTORAL RESPONSE TO A WORLDWIDE SUFFERING OF COVID-19:
A REFLECTION OF 1 PETER 5:8-10.**

By

Dantoro, Davou Mwanvwang

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

**ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
P.O.BOX PRIVATE BAD-00217,
LIMURU CAMPUS, KENYA**

EMAIL: davoum.dantoro@gmail.com

PHONE NUMBER: +254751317114/ +2348069541272

Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 has increasingly incurred unbearable suffering, throwing the whole world into confusion and all hope seems to be lost. 1 Peter 5:8-10 provides a pastoral response that presents God the Son (Jesus Christ) as one who alone has the power to restore and strengthen the suffering people in all their predicaments. The paper from the biblical perspective of suffering argues that God created everything well. Still, Man's fall brought sin and suffering, which the devil, being the initiator of it, uses to inflict severe diseases and pains, including COVID-19 in the world. However, God has the power to overcome the devil's stratagem, and He is faithful and able to deliver His people from all forms of suffering therein. Like the Apostle Peter, Pastors are pillars of hope to the populaces in all situations, even amid Corona virus.

Keywords: Suffering, COVID-19, Sin, Devil, Disease, Pastor, Worldwide, Steadfast.

1.0 Introduction

The paper focuses on understanding the worldwide suffering in 1 Peter 5:8-10 as a reflection on the COVID-19 Pandemic in the world today. It begins with assessing the experience of the COVID-19 Pandemic in contemporary time and its general perception by the Christian faith. Secondly, it provides an overview of suffering from a biblical perspective. Thirdly, the paper analyses the worldwide suffering in 1 Peter 5:8-10 by examining the causes of suffering in the community. Finally, the pastoral response to the worldwide suffering in 1 Peter 5:8-10 in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic and how such can help strengthen and build people's hope in difficult times. The paper assumed that the recommendations were to form valuable resources that will enable the church and her community to have the perspective of suffering that can strengthen one to remain steadfast in God despite the situation.

2.0 Suffering due to Covid-19 Pandemic in the World

Suffering is a phenomenon that cuts across every nationality and religion. It tarnishes the image of people from the reality of life. It is seen generally as an agony, affliction, or distress; intense pain or sorrow that a person experience in life as a result of unexpected calamity. Suffering is not circumscribing to just persecutory suffering like in the case of 1 Peter, but it “involves individual and group experiences of enduring physical, psychological, economic, social, and spiritual pain” (Halder, 2015, p.1). There is no single word for suffering, but there are different forms of pains that every human being experience in life associated with the concept of suffering. Ferdinando explains that “suffering is understood not just as a physical problem but a spiritual one too” (Ferdinando, 2012, p.11). Suffering comes in different forms. It can be an infection by an illness or a disease that constitutes one of the most common experiences humans encounter and is common worldwide. However, the way people perceive health and sickness differ depending on their broader cultural and social contexts and activities. Still, understanding what causes suffering is the key to overcoming it in every society, especially at this time like this that COVID -19 is endangering all facets of life.

The Corona virus outbreak has incurred an indelible and unbearable loss and suffering in the world where the memory cannot be forgotten in the world's history. As first discovered in “Wuhan, Hubei Province of China on 31st December 2019”,¹ the disease has caused a significant setback in all facets of life in the world. The World Health Organization on 11th March 2020 declared COVID-19 as Pandemic due to her being deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity and the disturbing stories of people's inaction on the spread of the virus.² The disease, since its inception, has not left any stones unturned. According to Zaheena Rasheed, the UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres expresses that “the world is facing an unprecedented test. And this is the moment of truth” (2020, p.1). The “virus's spread has brought life and economic activity to a virtual standstill. In the worst-hit regions, hospitals are overwhelmed with the sick and dying, while the

¹ The World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/27-04-2020-who-timeline---covid-19>. 12/5/2020

²Ibid.

poor and vulnerable everywhere face severe food shortages and starvation” (2020, p.1). The increased level of suffering is of great concern in the world today.

The UNDP describes the disease as a “global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War Two.”³ Like other diseases in the past, the virus has claimed many people's lives and affected every sphere of endeavours in the world. COVID-19 Pandemic has made many of the world's communities unrecognizable and turned places into ghost towns. The disease is no respecter of persons nor status or religious affiliation. It has affected all citizenry and “dozens of the world's greatest cities are deserted as people stay indoors, either by choice or by government order. Across the world, shops, theatres, restaurants and bars are closing;”⁴ as well as all religious centres or places of worship. The outbreak of the disease has threatened and is still risking the faith of all people the way the waves of persecution and suffering threatened the Christian community of Asia Minor of Apostle Peter's time due to their faith in Christ Jesus.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused a lot of panic and fear in the mind of many people. Many have asked and are still asking questions about whether the end time has come. Where is God when His people are suffering to death by the hand of Corona virus? Is this a punishment from God due to the high level of atrocity in the world? Is COVID-19 a natural or human-made disease that aims at destroying others due to some people or the country's selfishness and greediness? Etc. It is difficult to find answers to the numerous questions in people's minds at this critical time. The fear of the disease has turned almost every person into confusion. Both the religious and secular leaders are speechless and seem to have lost direction on the way out of the deadly disease. The scientists and all health personnel in the world are trying their best possible to proffer a solution to the Pandemic, but all put abortive. However, all hope is not lost since God is still on the throne and remains in charge of the present and future (Hebrews 13:8). Nothing is impossible for God, no matter how terrible and devilish it might be.

3.0 The Biblical Perspective of Suffering

Biblically, God did not create suffering, but it came from Adam and Eve's fall in the Garden of Eden, which brought sin into the world (Genesis 3:1-12). Since the fall of man, sin has become an impediment to humanity in the world. The book of Romans 5:12 says, “sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all people because all have sinned.” The sin of man brings suffering and death to humanity, and this is because sin is disobedience to God's will, and as such, He held Adam and Eve responsible for their decision. Samuel Waje Kunhiyop (2012) explains that ‘sin is the ultimate cause of all suffering and evil,’ ranges from ‘natural disasters such as earthquakes and the ravages of disease.’ The consequences of the fall make human beings become “fully responsible for the condition of this world and the misery in which they live, including sickness, death, unhappiness, hatred, tribalism, wars, immorality, crime, violence, and even the calamities of nature” (O'Donovan, 1996, p.91). The devil is the initiator of sin to humanity, using all suffering forms to thwart God's plan for creation

³The United Nations Development Programme. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus.html>. 12/5/2020

⁴Ibid.

(Genesis 3:1-15). God promised in Genesis 3:15 to crush the devil and its evil scheming on the entire human race. God purposed to restore humanity to him self if it only obeyed him and shunned the devil and its craftiness in the world. The devil's plan and mission are to separate and turn humanity against her Creator. The devil has no meaningful plan for human beings, and its only ultimate objective is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). Since Adam and Eve's fall, there is a battle between God and Satan, light and darkness.

God is holy and perfect in his dealing in the Bible. He is the "source of all life, goodness and holiness" (O'Donovan, 1996, p.189). God desires humanity to be like him in character, and indeed despite the devastation the devil had caused them. He hates the devil and his cohorts because the devil desires to deceive and destroy all that is good and holy by inflicting suffering, as in 1 Peter 5:8. Adhering to manipulating the kingdom of darkness, which the devil is controlling, is equally inviting God's wrath. God punishes those who deliberately comply with the deception of the devil to draw them to himself. No one who goes against the will of God by following the devil is free of the wrath of God. God's punishment sometimes incurred suffering upon human beings or a nation (Deuteronomy 28:22; Hosea 6:1; Ezekiel 5:13-17).

Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:4 explains that 'the devil is the god of this world.' He has the power and the kingdom in this world. The present world system of "values is not God's will. It is Satan's will" (O'Donovan, 1996, p.191). 1 John 5:19 says the whole world is under the control of the evil one. That is why God admonished us through Apostle John not to love the world and anything in it because it's only centred on things that the enemies desire (1 John 2:15-16). The devil uses different stratagems to lure human being into his kingdom. In opposing the Kingdom of God, the devil causes unbearable suffering in the world to disorganize God's plan for humanity. He is the brain behind every form of suffering in the world today, including COVID-19. The devil is well known for the perpetuation of every malicious activity in the cosmos. He rules the spiritual world of darkness, and Apostle Paul describes him in Ephesians 2:2 'as the ruler of the kingdom of the air.' However, the good news is that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, has power over its evil empire and manipulation (1 John 4:4).

In the Old and New Testaments, people have suffered from one disease to another caused by Satan's kingdom and sometimes due to punishment from God. Satan uses sickness or disease to destroy people or the community for its evil's purposes. For example, Satan brought sickness on Job and destroyed his family and wealth (Job 1 and 2). He caused a thorn of illness and suffering to Apostle Paul's flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7). The devil finds joy when God's creatures are suffering. God chastises and allows diseases with the ultimate goal of drawing people, community and nations to himself. In Exodus 7:14-11:10, God caused the Egyptians to suffer different forms of plagues for not allowing the Israelites to go. Israel as a nation and individuals in the Bible have suffered from one disease to another due to disobedience to God (Deuteronomy 28:22; Hosea 6:1; Isaiah 57:17-19; 2 Chronicles 16:12). Satan has no remedy for any sickness once he inflicts it on human beings. But God has the ultimate power to cure every disease and principality in the world (Deuteronomy 32:39; Job 5:18; Matthew 4:23, 10:1; Luke 5:17). God never rejoices when people are suffering, even at this time of COVID-19.

Jesus is the answer to every problem of sin and disease. F. F. Bosworth explains that when “disease has advanced beyond the power of nature, neither nature, nor the physician, nor even prayer can save the sufferer until he confesses his sins and unless God, for some sovereign purpose of His own, removes the disease. Since the disease is a part of the curse, its true remedy must be the Cross” (2000, p.25). His death on the cross is a firm assurance that the kingdom of Satan cannot have power over God’s will for his people. Jesus encourages us that though we live in the world, we are not of the world (John 17:16). That believers will suffer in this world but being steadfast in the faith in all situations, and nothing will overcome them (1 Peter 5:9-10). Apostle Peter went on to explain why God allows suffering to come into our lives. That suffering in whatever form helps people to purify themselves from sin by living the rest of their lives doing the will of God (1 Peter 4:1-2). So, amid this worldwide suffering of COVID-19, God wants to draw people to Himself.

4.0 The Worldwide Suffering in 1 Peter 5:8-10

Like in the Old Testament, the New Testament reveals that all have sinned and come short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). The sin of Adam affected all people and led to the suffering of all on earth. To avert the power and the shame of evil in human beings, God suffered through the person of Jesus Christ to redeem all creatures to Himself. Apostle Peter wrote to the Christian suffering communities in Asia Minor. He presents God as a suffering God who came to save humanity and has the power to give hope and deliver those who are also suffering. He loves all people (John 3:16-17), and through Christ Jesus, God came, suffered, and died for the sins of all humanity.

1 Peter has been described as an epistle of hope amid suffering because the word ‘suffering’ “occurs 16 times in the epistle of First Peter” (McCain, 2005, p.283). The word ‘suffering’ or the verb ‘suffer’ appears almost in every chapter of the epistle (1:6, 11; 2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17; 4:1, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19; 5:1, 9, 10). Of the 16 passages devoted to suffering, the suffering of Christ appeared six times. Marshall is of the view that “the short letter uses the verbs suffer about twelve times, more than any other book in the New Testament” (Marshall, 2004, p.642). The epistle is predominantly “practical” (Theiessen, 2002, p.279) and “ethical” (Eldon Ladd, 2002:641), giving hope to how Christian believers are to live in the world (community) despite the hostility and pain that they experienced.

In 1 Peter 5:8-10, Apostle Peter acknowledged that suffering is not peculiar to a person or few groups of persons but is a worldwide experience that affects other believers or people worldwide the way COVID -19 is today. The Apostle focused on the cause of suffering and the global notion in it to instil and strengthen the hope of the suffering communities as they face the reality of life.

4.1 The Cause of Suffering (verse 8)

In the previous verses of chapter 5, Apostle Peter admonished his recipients to depend on God by casting all their anxiety on Him because he cares for them. Here in verse 8, he called on them to be aware of the devil because he does not care for them the way God does. Verse 8b reveals the devil as being the leading cause of human suffering in the world. This verse 8b is the only verse in the whole of 1 Peter where that the word *διάβολος* was mention. The Christian suffering community are called upon here to be aware of the stratagem of the *διάβολος*. Byrley (2017) explains that verse 8 represents the climax of Peter's exhortation amid suffering. Due to the suffering of Christians through the apocalyptic lens of Yahweh's conflict with Satan and the demonic realm, it is clear here that the suffering at the hands of the "roaring lion" is closely tied to the suffering described throughout the epistle by the Christians' human opponents.

Since the beginning of creation in Genesis 3, the devil is God's opponent; he is now capable of causing more havoc to humanity. Hence, people need to be *νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε* (sober and keep watch or exercise self-control and be alert). Jobes elucidates that "Spiritual sobriety and alertness are necessary because the threat of destruction is real, and the devil is a true adversary" (2005, p.243). The two imperatives *νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε* hold a lot for the people living in an unbearable situation. Barton and Muddiman (2013) explain that the command to be *νήψατε* recalls 1 Peter 4:7; there the context was eschatological urgency as well as the order to be *γρηγορήσατε* in Mark 13:34-37. The immediate context is that of their spiritual foe, which people should be aware of in the community.

According to Feldmeier (2008), Peter's exhortation toward *νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε* is impressively justified through the reference to the deadly threat by the devil, who is the beast of prey par excellence, the hunting lion, who attacks and devours the inattentive in the Christian community as well in the world. He further explains that the devil is the Satan who, both in the Old and New Testaments, keeps opposing God's mission. Satan is the cause of sin and evil in the world. As a result of that Kunhiyop (2012), Brown et al. (1990) and Feldmeier (2008) hold that Satan means 'accuser,' devil (*διάβολος*) 'slanderer,' Belial 'malice' or 'ruin,' Abaddon or Apollyon 'destroyer,' and the Serpent 'the gleaming,' and this name was later applied to the leader of the fallen angels. The devil is proud, perverse, powerful, and a punisher. He is man's chief adversary. Preston A. describes how the *διάβολος* is and why the people ought to depend on God and rely upon His mighty hand (verse 6). He pinpoints that the devil is "proud, his wisdom, beauty, ability to destroy, plus his uncanny ability to penetrate any environment are some of the reasons for his vanity. He is not meek, weak, and good, but proud and presumptuous and vain. The devil always tries to admire, exalt, and glorify himself" (1982, pp.232–233). The devil is the brain behind the problems in the world, including COVID-19. Apostle Peter wants the congregations and God's people worldwide to understand that the devil is not a friend but an enemy who aims at "stealing, killing and destroying" (John 10:10) the church inflicting suffering on all regardless of religion and nationality.

Consequently, Matt Kimbrough (2015) explains that Peter wants his audience to recognize that their true enemy is the *διάβολος*, but uses people and different avenues to incur suffering in the world. With such, it is clear that any “natural cataclysms or accidents, as well as human actions, qualify as evil insofar as they cause human beings to suffer in the church and community” (Daryl Koehn, 2005:15). So, due to the Devil’s influence and the power to incite unbelievers or even believers sometimes to cause suffering to God’s people, Apostle Paul encouraged the Ephesians not to give the devil a foothold (Ephesians 4:27). According to Jobes (2005), the devil’s lousy image coheres well with the shepherd flock motif in 5:1–5 because when a lion is on the prowl, neither the shepherd nor the sheep sleep, but both are alert and watchful. The *διάβολος* has an opposing goal towards the people in the world. The text reveals that the purpose of the devil is to devour. This purpose of the devil shows a “graphic depiction of his desire to annihilate the Christians and, collectively, the church by assimilating them back to the evil ways of the world” (Jobes, 2005:243). People are called upon to remain steadfast and consciously live to maintain their relationship with God, who cares for them despite their suffering. Callan and Watson say that the recipients are called upon to “remain faithful to Christ, the Chief Shepherd of God’s flock, and not become separate and vulnerable (5:1–4)” (2012, p.121). This is because, with God, they are more than a conqueror.

4.2 The Worldwide Suffering (verse 9)

In verse 9, the call *ᾧ ἀντίστητε* (to resist) the devil, indicates Peter’s view on the fact that the devil is the leading cause of the suffering but uses weak people as machinery to achieve his evil motives. Church and Peterman (1992) describes the devil as the grand persecutor and the deceiver and accuser of the brothers and sisters worldwide. However, in this verse 9, several scholars (Senior and Harrington, 2008; Jobes, 2005:243-244; Callan and Watson, 2012; Green, 2007) have diverse views on Peter’s assertion, they argued that previously the author had placed the cause of the sufferings endured by the community on very human grounds: the abuse and incomprehension of outsiders who resented the different ways of the Christians (2:12, 15; 3:16; 4:4, 16), a non believing husband (3:1), an abusive slave owner (2:18-21). However, Apostle Peter views the world as a dangerous place in which evil prowls, unlike Revelation’s viewpoint, saw the Roman government itself as demonic. Senior and Harrington (2008:43) explain that the reading of evil in the text was undoubtedly fuel by Peter’s conviction that the end time was approaching, a motif that comes strongly to the surface in the latter part of the letter (see 4:7, 12, 17). The end-time was expecting to be a time of travail and the final assault of evil—the book of Revelation’s message on the signs of the end times.

Given the above, Peter urges the communities to recall their communion with God and their fellowship in faith and suffering with their fellow Christians in the whole world. Schreiner explains that the reference to believers suffering across the globe does not signal that the “Roman Empire had promulgated a decree against the Christian faith. It simply reveals that the faith of believers was under threat in the entire Graeco-Roman world. Threats, discrimination, and occasionally loss of life were the lot of Christians everywhere” (2003, p.30). Hence, Peter reminds believers of Asia Minor that their situation is not unique. The consciousness of the ‘worldwide’ church is a unique

glimpse into the dawning consciousness of the early Christian community and its leadership. The “adversity has become the normal experience for Christians throughout the Empire (5:9)” (Goppelt, 1993, p.42). Miller (1993) agrees with Barton and Muddiman (2013) that the suffering Christians were undergoing was referred to the type of verbal abuse, harassment, and social pressure mentioned earlier. They were perhaps, couple with “the sporadic but ever-present threat of more violent local persecution fomented by hostile pagan neighbours” (Barton and Muddiman, 2013, p.1269). Therefore, according to Senior and Harrington, the sufferings endured by the communities addressed in the letter and by their fellow Christians are not “isolated irritants but intrinsic to the experience of being a follower of Jesus. While human agency and the power of evil play their roles, ultimately the vocation to suffer as a Christian (4:16) finds its source in God, who leads the Christians from suffering to new life just as he had brought the suffering Christ to exaltation at his right hand” (2008, p.43). People will only overcome every trial by trusting in God, who is aware of the worldwide church's similar condition. He is also fully aware of the experience of COVID -19 in the world today.

4.3 Steadfastness in suffering (verse 10)

Peter calls on people to put their hope in God, because Ὁ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (the God of all grace who called you into eternal glory in Jesus) will not abandon them if they remain focused on Him. The people of Asia Minor will significantly suffer for a while but soon be strengthened and established as a solid foundation by God of all grace. By using the phrase Ὁ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, Apostle Peter wants to demonstrate to his readers how gracious God is to all, even amid their suffering. The word χάριτος appeared in every chapter of 1 Peter (5:5, 10, 12; 4:10; 3:7; 2:19, 20; and 1:2, 10, 13) to assure the suffering community of God's presence with them. Wiersbe (2010:25) elucidates that χάριτος is God's generous favour to undeserving sinners and needy saints. God's χάριτος enables the suffering Christians or people in the world to endure pain and turn trials into triumphs, it saves human beings, gives strength in times of trials, enables one to serve God despite difficulties, because it leads to glory and perfection through the power of Christ.

Then verse 10 explains God's mind concerning the suffering people and what will be the hope of people if they remain steadfast in God despite their suffering in society. That is why James R. Slaughter (1995) pinpoints that trusting God in all situations is a sign of maturity. If believers encounter unfair circumstances, their behaviour should reflect a spirit of deference in all relationships as they follow Christ's example and anticipate future glory. God is powerful, able, and willing to care for his people in all circumstances, especially at this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

5.0 The Pastoral Response to Worldwide Suffering in the Light of Covid-19 Pandemic

In the Old Testament time when calamity befalls a nation like the worldwide suffering of Apostle Peter's time and the present day COVID-19 pandemic; the kings and leaders in the helm of affairs look for the prophets in the land to enquire from them what the Lord God is saying and what would be the way out (Judges 18:5-6; 1 Samuel 14:36; 1 Kings 22:7; 2 Kings 22:13; Zephaniah 1:6). This is because they need God's direction and conviction on the matter at hand. When calamity befalls a nation, God needs people who will humble themselves, call His name, and pray to God to heal the land (2 Chronicles 6:28-29; 7:13-14). The philosophy behind that is that only God has the power to heal every impediment and calamity in the world. The challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic call for Pastors to take the role of the prophets in the Old Testament, mediating between the people and God, seeking to know what God is saying. COVID-19 is a clear signal for humanity to draw closer to God, just as Apostle Peter called on his audience to cast all their anxiety on God (5:7), rather than only for Pastors and secular leaders advocating for the closing of places of worship and prayers. We need boldness and faith to encourage one another like Apostle Peter to remain steadfast in the Lord because the devil has no power over us nor matter how the situation might be, especially at this critical time of COVID-19 Pandemic in our land.

No Pastor is immune to the health danger of the COVID-19 disease. However, the Apostle Peter was also being persecuted and suffering along with his people. In this, he became a pillar of hope to the populace even to this present generation of God's people. A Pastor's behaviour is clearly viewed from the manner in which he/she leads others in calling and the discharge of the tasks therein. Pastoral service is all about identifying with people in all circumstances. Warren W. Wiersbe (2010) enlightens that times of persecution and suffering (in whatever form) demand that God's people have adequate spiritual leadership. But Pastors who run away in times of difficulty and abandon the flock are only proving that they are hirelings and not true shepherds as Jesus taught in John 10:12-14. This explains why Apostle Peter (5:1-11) wrote this special message to the Pastors of the churches encouraging them to do their work faithfully no matter the condition. Just as some health workers and security personnel are up and doing in rendering hope and saving lives amid this Pandemic in the world today, he identifies himself with the Pastors and members of the churches in Asia Minor (5:1-10). He demonstrates a sense of belonging in the body of Christ because pastoral responsibility in whatever capacity is all about people.

When calamity and confusion are in the land, and people are bitten by the venomous snake-like the present-day COVID-19 or Corona virus, people need to look up to the power of the cross of Christ Jesus who alone can guarantee safety and healings (Numbers 21:9; John 3:14-16; Matthew 4:23). It is not enough only to rely on men's wisdom, which has limitations (Jeremiah 17:5-7; 9:23-24; Isaiah 29:14; 1 Corinthians 2:5). Now, the situation is worsening, but let us rest assured that even if we are all going to die, let us not perish for lack of spiritual knowledge. Let us part as people who know the truth and live by the validity of the word of God (John 8:32) because God did not give us the Spirit of fear; but of power, love, self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7) and grace even to the point of death. Jesus says, let us not fear people, things or diseases that will kill the body, but fear will kill both the body and the soul (Matthew 10:28). These calls for crucial renewal of our mind and soul to Christ that we might be saved at the end.

6.0 Conclusion

God created everything well, but sin brought suffering on human beings, which keeps resurfacing in diverse forms in the world today. The devil capitalizes on suffering to separate people from their creator. Like the worldwide suffering of 1 Peter 5:8-10, COVID-19 Pandemic should not separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:37-39). We can look for the hand of God even amid Corona virus. God is on top of the calamity that befalls us, and nothing is impossible with Him (Mark 10:27). Therefore, with God, we shall soon overcome the catastrophe upon the land, not by might but by my Spirit, says the Lord (Zechariah 4:6). Like in the time of 1 Peter, we need to remain steadfast and wait for the deliverance of the Lord. Then, continue to be strong and faithful in observing the needful in terms of good hygiene, but maintaining a good relationship with God, for all shall be well as long as Christ remains the great Healer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barton, J., & Muddiman, J. (2013). *The Oxford Bible Commentary*. Oxford University Press USA - OSO.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/stpaulslimuru-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3052723>
- Bosworth, F. F. (2000). *Christ the Healer* (9th ed). Fleming H. Revell.
- Byrley, C. (2017). Persecution and the “Adversary” of 1 Peter 5:8. *Southern Equip*, 21(3), 77–98.
- Callan, T. D., & Watson, D. F. (2012). *First and Second Peter* (M. Parsons & C. Talbert, Eds.). Baker Academic.
- Feldmeier, R. (2008). *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Baylor University Press.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/stpaulslimuru-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3002815>
- Ferdinando, K. (2012). *The battle is God's: Reflecting on spiritual warfare for African believers*. African Christian Textbooks.
- Green, J. B. (2007). *1 Peter*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Haldar, D. (2015). *Socio-Economic History of the First Christian Century Graeco-Roman World*. William Carey University, USA.
- Jobes, K. H. (2005). *1 Peter (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)*. Baker Academic.
- Kimbrough, M. (2015). *First Peter Faithful Endurance: Future Glory Commentary*.
- Koehn, D. (2005). Evil as Vice. In D. Koehn (Ed.), *The Nature of Evil* (pp. 15–34). Palgrave Macmillan US.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403979377_2
- Kunhiyop, S. W. (2012). *African Christian theology*. Hippobooks, Zondervan.
- Ladd, G. E. (2002). *A Theology of the New Testament*. William B. Eerdmans publishing company.
- Marshall, I. H. (2004). *New Testament Theology*. Intervarsity Press.
- McCain, D. (2005). *Note on New Testament Introduction*. Africa Christian Textbooks.
- Miller, D. G. (1993). *On This Rock: A Commentary on First Peter*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- O'Donovan, W. (1996). *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*. Nigeria evangelical fellowship.

- Rasheed, Z. (2020). *COVID-19 Pandemic is Testing World Leaders. Who's stepping up?*
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/covid-19-pandemic-testing-world-leaders-stepping-200402201221844.html>
- Schreiner, T. R. (2003). *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. B&H Publishing Group.
- Senior, D., & Harrington, D. J. (2008). *Sacra Pagina: 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*. Michael Glazier.
- Slaughter, J. R. (1995). THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERARY ARGUMENT FOR UNDERSTANDING 1 PETER. *Dallas Theological Seminary, 152*, 72–91.
- Taylor, P. A. (1982). *A letter from Peter: Christ for the World* Pub.
- Theissen, H. C. (2002). *Introduction to New Testament*. Hendrickson Publishers.
- Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Hopeful (1 Peter): How to Make the Best of Times Out of Your Worst of Times*. David C Cook.
- The World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/27-04-2020-who-timeline--covid-19>. 12/5/2020
- The United Nations Development Programme.
<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus.html>. 12/5/2020