

A Study of I Peter

Chapter 4

Suffering As A Christian

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Previously, in 1 Peter 3:8-22 . . .
 - 1. Christians are to be of one mind. v 8-12
 - a. Having compassion
 - b. Love as brothers
 - c. Be tenderhearted
 - d. Be courteous
 - e. Do not return evil for evil
 - f. Return blessings for evil
 - 2. Christians may suffer for the sake of righteousness. v 13-17
 - 3. Jesus suffered so that our sins could be forgiven. The just suffered for the unjust. v 18-22

I. CHRISTIANS SHOULD CEASE FROM SIN. (vs 1-6)

- A. Christ suffered for Christians. (vs 1) Christ suffered in the flesh when He died on the cross of calvary. (1 Peter 3:18) Christ was resurrected so that people can be saved if they will obey.
- B. “. . .he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. . .” (vs 1)
 - 1. When a person is baptized, he is baptized into Christ's death. (Romans 6:3-5)
 - 2. As a result, he is to put to death that old man of sin so that he can be freed from sin. (Romans 6:6-7)
 - 3. By putting to death the old man of sin and choosing a life of righteousness, it is likely that believers will be persecuted by those of the world.
 - a. *“Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:”* (1 Peter 4:4)
 - b. *“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;*

that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:13)

- c. *And . . . "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."* (James 1:2-3)
4. If a Christian's conversion is sincere and he is truly dedicated to putting away sinful practices and embracing absolute service to the Lord, then he will choose not to sin. (Cf. 1 John 3:4-10) However, as has been shown, such choices are not without the consequences of persecution.
- C. Based upon verse 2, and others that we have already shown, a person who is truly converted should live his life in the fulfillment of God's will, not the lust of the flesh of men. (vs 2)
- D. Before a person becomes a Christian, he lives a life that is contrary to God's will. (vs 3)
 1. The actions of a non-Christian can range from simple refusal to be baptized all the way to selfishness, lying, cheating, fornication, murder, etc.
 2. Consider the past actions of some Christians:
 - a. Lasciviousness (lewdness, NKJV) - "aselgeia " {as-elg'-i-a} - "unbridled lust, wantonness, shamelessness, insolence." (Thayer)
 - b. Lusts - -epithumia " {ep-ee-thoo-mee '-ah} - "desire for what is forbidden." (Thayer)
 - c. Excess of wine (drunkenness, NKJV) - "oinophlugia " {oy-nof-loog-ee'-ah} drunkenness.
 - d. Revellings - komos " {ko '-mos} - "a revel, carousal - 1a) a nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honour of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before houses of male and female friends-, hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry." (Thayer)
 - e. Banquetings (drinking parties) - "potos " {pot '-os} or "poton " {pot-on} "1) a drinking, carousing." (Thayer)
 - f. Abominable idolatries - the worshiping of any thing other than the Almighty God.

- E. The people of the world will think that a Christian's godly behavior is strange.
 - 1. A Christian must not be partaking in the evil deeds of the world. (vs 4)
 - 2. Those who speak evil of Christians will give an account to God, who will judge the living and the dead. (vs 5)
 - 3. Since all men will give an account for their lives to God, the gospel is preached so that those who obey it, will live according to God in the spirit. (vs 6)

II. "THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND:"

- A. Peter begins this next section by warning the saints of the "end of all things." (vs 7a)
- B. Since the "end" was coming soon, Peter told the brethren to keep watch over certain areas.
 - 1. They were to be sober (serious) and watchful in their prayers. (vs 7)
 - 2. They were to have fervent love for each other. Proper love will allow a person to continue loving others no matter how much wrong is done to them. (vs 8)
 - 3. They were to be hospitable to each other. This hospitality would be called upon due to the upcoming persecution of the saints. The saints were to be hospitable, without grumbling or complaining. (vs 9)
 - 4. Knowing that there would be brethren in need, it was reasonable to say that a Christian should have been willing to help in any way he could. Peter told the saints that as they have received gifts, so should they minister to others. Christians are stewards of the various (manifold) grace of God. Since God has shown grace to Christians, Christians should be willing to show grace to others, Note: There are two things the "gift" could not be referring to.
 - a. The "gift" could not be referring to miraculous gifts since not every Christian received miraculous gifts.
 - b. The "gift" could not be referring to salvation because Peter was telling Christians to minister this gift to other Christians. Christians are stewards of the grace of God, ministering it to one another as there is need.
 - 5. With the "end" drawing near, it would be crucial that the saints speak as oracles of God and that they minister with the ability which God supplied. When a Christian spoke as an oracle of God and ministered as God supplied, then God was glorified through Jesus Christ. If Christians fail in these

endeavors, then they will cause others not to glorify God.

- C. What was this "end of all things"?
1. This end was not referring to judgement day. It is not likely that Peter would refer to an event being at hand (vs 7) if the event was to be over 2000 years later.
 2. The context of verse 12-19 indicates a suffering that would be endured by the children of God at some point in the near future.
 3. This "end of all things" is referring to the end of the Jewish era or dominance. Nero, in order to put a stop to Christianity, began his attack against the Jews. Titus led the armies against the city of Jerusalem. Jews throughout the Roman empire were persecuted and tried. Once Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, the center of the Jewish way of life was destroyed.
 4. Ironically enough, the very thing the Jews tried to do to Jesus (turn the Roman government against Him) eventually backfired.
 5. The terror against the Jews would impact many of the Christians of that day because many of the Christians were Jews by birth if no longer in religion.
- D. Let us take notice of the attitudes that those Christians were to have regarding the upcoming suffering.
1. They were not to consider the trials as being strange. Since they were living the life of a Christian, having the government turn against them and the trials and persecution would be unavoidable. (vs 12)
 2. They were to rejoice when they partook of Christ's sufferings. When Christ comes again, all those who suffered with Him will be glad with joy. (vs 13)
 3. They were to realize that if they were reproached for the name of Christ, they would be blessed. This is because the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon them. (vs 14) The world would blaspheme God, but Christians should glorify God.
 4. If a Christian suffers as a person of the world, then he should be ashamed; however, if a Christian suffers as a Christian, then he should not be ashamed. If Christians suffer for their service to God, then let them glorify God. (vs 15-16)
- E. The Christians who suffered according to the will of God were to commit their souls to Him in doing good. Consider this: If the righteous one is scarcely saved, (vs 18) then what will happen to those who are ungodly, having not obeyed God's word? Since the judgment begins with the house of God, Christians are to commit their

souls unto God so that they will be found faithful. (vs 17-19)

CONCLUSION.

- A. Knowing that Jesus Christ suffered for us so that we might be saved, we should work to live our lives as faithfully and as holy as possible.
- B. Although we may not be facing an “end of all things” as the first century Christians were, we are facing a judgment day. Let us all make certain that we are prepared for the judgment day by committing our lives to the Lord.

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