

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

## The Holy Life Doesn't Change When Suffering

**INTRODUCTION**; Peter has exhorted his readers to live holy lives, in peace with all, and doing good for all, to the good and the bad. However, in today's scripture he explains that they will still experience persecutions, trials and suffering, but should continue to do good while suffering, and God will bless their efforts. He gives this **principle** in **3:13-17** and an **example** in **3:18-22**.

For today's study I will divide our scripture into parts and then discuss each part.

**(vs 3:13)** “And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?”

- ❑ We ended last week's study with this verse as the **conclusion** of Peter's teachings on personal relations between believers. The point of **vs 13** being that as we treat others by doing good to and for them, as well as striving for peace with them, one reduces the probability that ill feelings or harm will result. Solomon taught something similar;

**Prob. 16:7**, “When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

- ❑ Recall also that regarding **vs 3:13**, I stated that some use it to **begin** Peter's teaching on **suffering** and it does accomplish that purpose as well. So, in that context, it leads directly into **vs 3:14** which implies that doing good is **no guarantee** of not experiencing suffering.

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

(vs 3:14, 16-17) Please note that I am leaving **verse 15** for later; the reason will become apparent then.

**14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."\* ...  
**16** having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. **17** For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

- Here in **vs 14**, Peter makes a statement that is the opposite from what one might expect. One's first thought might be; "suffer and be blessed". But notice the criteria for the blessing is "suffer for righteousness' sake". It is possible that Peter heard Jesus say the very same thing when He was teaching a crowd on the mountain in Galilee;

**Matt. 5:10-11**, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."

\* A quote from **Isa. 8:12**.

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

(vs 3:14, 16-17 ) con't

- ❑ James teaches something similar and identifies some of the “blessings”;  
**James 1:2-4**, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of you faith produces patience, but let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”
- ❑ Let’s not miss this lesson for the believer who is trying to live the holy life that Peter has been describing in the first 2 ½ chapters of his letter. That lesson is that the holy life does not change whether one is in good times or bad.
- ❑ In **verse 3:16**, Peter states that when believers lives this way, they have a good conscience since they have done what is good, and what’s more, when some claim that you have done evil, but then see your good conduct, they will themselves be ashamed. Indeed, **vs 2:12** suggests that they may even “glorify God”.
  - Having a good conscience is what every Christian should be able to claim---it comes from an active striving for holy living as the author of **Hebrews** states;  
**Heb. 13:18**, “Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things **desiring** to live honorably.”

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

(vs 3:14, 16-17) con't

- ❑ In **verse 3:17** Peter makes what might appear as a “duh” statement. He points out the 2 situations in which suffering can occur; (1) when acting according to God’s will through doing good, and (2) by rejecting God’s will and doing evil. Which is “better”? “Duh”; number (1). Sounds like a needless statement, but remember Peter is teaching other Christians just like me and you. Peter is serious, he just taught the same thing in **vs 12!** Read it and see if you feel the same.
- ❑ Now let’s bring in **vs 3:15** and **3:18**.

**(vs 3:15)** “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;”

- ❑ Let’s first make sure we understand this verse which is key for every Christian.
  - Sanctify means to “set apart”, such that God is upper-most in one’s heart; above all else in priority and allegiance. But not set apart in one’s life; He is to be part of all parts of our lives!
  - Defense means to give witness, to explain, etc.
  - “The hope that is in you”; as in one’s expectations of eternal life;

**Titus 3:7**, “that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

(vs 3:15) con't

- Meekness / gentleness; I feel that Paul best explains how this is done in his letter to the church at Colosse;

**Colos. 4:6**, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

- ❖ I suspect that Paul says “always” because this should be the normal speech for a believer, and if normal, it will be automatic when witnessing to someone.
- ❖ The why for gentleness in witnessing should be obvious. We were in that person’s shoe’s before coming to Christ; lost, without hope, an enemy of God, and needing all the grace we could get! Someone had to witness to us first, whether by an individual, a preacher, or evangelist. Read how Paul described our condition at that time in the same letter; **Colos. 1:21-22**.
- And in “fear”; that is the how; the why is that when you are witnessing to someone of the love of God for them, you are on holy ground, because it is the Spirit of God that is speaking to and through you. Consider Moses at the “burning bush”. (**Exo. 3:5**)

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

(vs 15) con't

- Now that we understand all the key terminology in this verse, I want you to see something that I found to be a real blessing to me. Recall that in vs 2:21 and as we will see in vs 3:18, later, Peter used Jesus as the example for his readers (that includes us) regarding how they should react to periods of suffering. The blessing I got from these two verses came about in comparing what Peter said about us and his example. So I want to set up the parameters for comparison of the two. First will be the situation in each; second will be the purpose of each; and third will be the blessings each received. Using these parameters for comparison, the following are what we find for believers from vs 3:15;
  - Situation; While suffering according to the plan and will of God; (from the connection with vs 3:14.)
  - Purpose; to witness to others to bring them to Christ.(vs 3:15)
  - Blessing received; Good life now and eternal life with Christ. (vs 3:10,15)
- Now we are ready for vs 3:18 which describes our example in Jesus.

**(vs 3:18)** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”

- This verse is quite similar to vs 2:21 which points to Jesus as the example of the correct response to suffering unjustly. Let's identify the parameters for this verse and compare them to those identified above for us.

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

(vs 3:18) con't

- ❑ Situation; While suffering according to the plan and will of God.
- ❑ Purpose; “That He might bring us to God”

**II Cor. 5:21**, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

- ❑ Blessing received; Resurrected to life; ascended up to Heaven;  
**I Peter 3:22**, “Who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.”

- Notice the subtle way I worked **vs 3:22** into the study.

- ❑ Observe the 1-on-1 comparison. That old fisherman, Peter, had to have been inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit to put this together, as was all of the Bible! That is why we must always read it, study it, meditate on it. The parts we understand are so logical, so;

“profitable for...instruction in righteousness, that the man (person) of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (**II Tim. 3:16**)

- ❑ To conclude this part, Peter’s point is that one is blessed living God’s way.

# 1 PETER 3:13-22

The following portion of scripture in this week's study is not well understood, by me of course, but apparently by many commentators as well, certainly all that I read. So I will provide some thoughts from my study and pray that the Holy Spirit will not let us stray too far from the inspired thoughts.

**(vs 3:19-20)** “by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls were saved through water.”

- ❑ My summary of a “possible interpretation” from my study and primary input from “The Bible Knowledge Commentary”, New Testament edition.
  - The “whom” refers back to the “Spirit” of vs 3:18, and it was by and through Him that Christ was said to have preached (proclaimed---NAS).
  - The “Spirit” preached through Noah to the evil people of his day during the time he was preparing the ark.
    - ❖ Concluding that Noah was indeed the Spirit-led “preacher” comes from Peter’s calling him a preacher in **II Peter 2:4-5**, as well as the statement here in **1 Peter 1:11**, that the Spirit of Christ had been in the O.T. prophets.
  - Those who ignored Noah’s preaching died in the flood, and their “spirits” were in the “prison” of hell at the time of Peter’s writing of this letter.
  - Noah and family were saved from the flood (“saved through water”).
  - How these 2 verses complement this study still eludes me.
- ❑ Now to another problematic verse, this time from a doctrinal point of view.

## 1 PETER 3:13-22

**(vs 3:21)** “There is also an antitype which now saves us---baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

- ❑ To be honest, I find that Peter’s teaching here is fairly clear. He is referring back to the word “water” ,found at the end of **vs 3:20**, from which Noah and family had been saved.
- ❑ He uses the word baptism to symbolize their saving by water. This is clear from the meaning of baptize; to emmerge in water for cleansing.
- ❑ Peter states baptism as the symbol, then immediately clarifies that he is not speaking of cleansing of the flesh, which is the secular use of the word.
- ❑ Rather, he is speaking of having a good conscience toward God (one’s sins forgiven) through the (death, burial, and ) resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this he is stating the true source of one’s salvation , as he did earlier in **vs 1:3**.
- ❑ Thus, he is not claiming that being baptized is the basis of salvation.

Let’s end our study with prayer; Father, it’s clear to us and I’m certain to You, that we are in need of help from Your Spirit to understand what Your thoughts were in giving these words to the original recipients and to us. We count on You for this help and trust You for it, when we also give our best efforts to it. Amen.

And may He bless us all.

## NEXT WEEK

### 1 Peter 4:1-?