

# 1 Peter

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1 Peter 4:12-19

Vss. 12-13

- For the Jewish Christians in the churches Peter is writing to, persecution is nothing new. The Jews seem to have always been the most persecuted people on earth. But to the Gentile Christians, persecution was something completely new. Common people may have suffered during the petty wars between small kingdoms prior to Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, but the lives of Gentiles in the eastern Mediterranean had been mostly peaceful and quiet for well over 300 years!
- What Peter is telling them is something that they probably intuitively already knew: being a Christian is never easy living in a non-Christian world and often invites persecution. In fact Peter says not to think of it as something strange, but rather as something inevitable. Even the goodness of Christians, which Peter is counting on as a defense against persecution, can be an offence to a world that regards goodness as a weakness.
- Peter says to look upon such difficulties as a test, just as Jesus was tested in the wilderness when He was hungry and thirsty. Persecution will end for the Christian who is willing to turn his back on Jesus and compromise with the world. “Bob, if you don’t fix these reports the way we tell you to, you’re fired.” So Bob is being tested. He has a choice. Be unethical in his work (if not immoral and illegal) or be true to his faith and trust that whatever happens, His Father in Heaven will neither forget him nor forsake him.
- In these tests, we also come close to the glory of Christ. We are sharing in His sufferings. Through all of this, He is drawing us closer to Himself because we are sharing in His sufferings.

## Vss. 14-16

- Peter goes as far to say that if you suffer FOR Christ, the very presence of His glory rests on you. There is a light, a glow about a person who is in the presence of God's glory. And there is a power to it. All through Exodus, Scripture speaks of the glory of God on Sinai (Ex. 24:16), or in the tabernacle built for the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 40:34). Peter had seen this himself with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3) and Luke tells us that just before Stephen died from stoning his face looked like that of an angel (Acts 6:15).
- So Peter wants his people to be sure that if they are going to suffer, be sure to for the right reasons. Don't suffer as a murderer, thief, or some doer of evil. But he also says not to be a "troublesome meddler". That may be translated as "busybody" or something else in your Bible. It's a funny word. It seems not to appear anywhere else in ancient Greek. Peter and Silvanus, his secretary, may have made it up. It seems to literally means "looking into that which does not belong to you". So do not be coveting that life which is not yours. Now you belong to Christ. You are His slave, bought with the price of His blood. Forget about any other life. Live for Christ, suffer for Him and with Him, and you will never regret a moment and you will know His glory.

## Vss. 17-19

- To Peter's mind, it was all the more pressing to be sure you were living for Christ, because the judgement is upon us. Ezekiel 9:6 says that judgement will start with God's people. Where blessing has been the greatest, judgement will be at a high standard.
- Peter quotes from Proverbs 11:31, asking if the righteous are to be judged harshly, how much more so for the godless and the sinner? It is good that we looked at John's Revelation before we looked here at 1 Peter. Perhaps we thought too lightly of The Judgement. But when one looks closely at The Revelation, you have to tremble at the thought of the Judgement on the godless and the sinner.

- So suffering will come all, the saint and the sinner. Just be sure you are suffering as a saint. Do good. Live a Christ-like life. And whatever happens – trust God. Indeed, “entrust” your life to God. The word here is ***paratithesthai***. It is a banking word for depositing money with a trusted friend. There were no banks as we know them, but there were people who were known to be worthy of great trust. So as one might perhaps leave town, so their house would not be robbed and all their money taken, they would leave their money with such a trusted friend. What Peter is saying here then, is to entrust your life to God. He will not fail you. This is exactly what Jesus is saying when He quotes Psalms 31:5 from the cross, “Father into thy hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Jesus went to the cross, wholly trusting in the Father. We are to do the same. Trust God, live like Christ, and though the heavens Fall, keep trusting God.