

1 PETER 3:8 – 4:19
GRIN AND BEAR IT!
A Symposium on Suffering

Blessings, No Cursing! 3:8-12

- * Live in HARMONY! How do we harmonize? (NKJV – Be of ONE MIND)
 - > Major Chords:
 - > Minor Chords:
 - > Transitional Chords:
 - > Alternative Chords:

- * In 2:21, believers were “called” to what? To what are we “called” this time, in v.9?
 - > To repay evil & insult with BLESSING
 - > Why are we called to do this? So we’ll INHERIT A BLESSING
 - > What is this blessing? (see v.10)
 - * LIFE THAT YOU LOVE * GOOD DAYS

To Every Man an Answer 3:13-16

- * Radio Show: this verse is usually used as a proof-text for **apologetics**.
 - > While true, considering this verse from that standpoint alone misses the context.

- * A Contrast:
 - Fearing “what they fear” & being “frightened” vs Setting apart Christ as Lord in your heart

 - > Fearing what they fear – Isaiah 8:12-13
 - Israel wanted an alliance with Assyria, because they feared its military might. Isaiah warned against such an alliance even though everyone jumped on the Assyrian bandwagon.

 - > So ... when faced with suffering or difficulty, we are to be DIFFERENT. How?
 - Our hope and trust is the LORDSHIP (Control) of Christ!
 - If He is “Lord,” I trust that He is in *complete control* of the situation ... and I won’t fear!

- * This is the context of v.15!!! It’s not merely having an answer to every Biblical question ... but it is being willing to answer why you are different when faced with suffering!

- * When they ask why, answer with ...
 - (1) GENTLENESS: Don’t make a person FEEL BAD for not having faith!
 - > if someone asks, he/she is already in a vulnerable state ... tread confidently, but carefully!
 - (2) RESPECT: Lack of faith doesn’t mean lack of INTELLIGENCE
 - > Respecting a person isn’t the same as respecting what a person believes!
 - (3) A CLEAR CONSCIENCE: maintain personal holiness or your witness is DISARMED!

How to interpret this tough passage:

The issues: (1) Who are the spirits in prison?

- unbelievers who have died?
- OT believers who have died?
- fallen angels?

(2) What did Christ preach?

- second chance at repentance?
- completion of redemptive work?
- final condemnation?
- repentance?

(3) When did he preach?

- in the days of Noah?
- between His death and resurrection?
- after His resurrection?

Different Interpretations:

- (1) When Noah was building the ark, Christ “in spirit” was in Noah preaching repentance and righteousness through him to *unbelievers who were on earth then but are now ‘spirits in prison’ (people in hell)*.
- (2) After Christ died, He went and preached to *people in hell*, offering them a second chance at salvation.
- (3) After Christ died, He went and preached to *people in hell*, proclaiming to them that He had triumphed over them and their condemnation was final.
- (4) After Christ died, He proclaimed release to *people who repented just before they died in the flood*, and led them out of their imprisonment (in Purgatory) into heaven.
- (5) Between the resurrection and ascension, Christ traveled to hell and proclaimed triumph over the *fallen angels* who had sinned by marrying human women before the flood.

Reasons I opt for interpretation (1):

- * 1:11 – Peter speaks of the Spirit of Christ at work through OT prophets.
- * 3:20 – God waited patiently ... implies He was waiting for repentance. Angels can’t be redeemed.
- * The idea of a 2nd chance at salvation disagrees with the rest of Scripture – and would make Peter’s message meaningless. (Why all the warnings if you simply get a 2nd chance??)
- * People who “disobeyed long ago” while Noah built the ark – especially when you read the Genesis acct. – doesn’t describe OT saints waiting for a triumphant proclamation from Christ .
- * 4:6 -- similar syntax referring to preaching to people while they lived but who are now dead.

* Conclusion: The spirit of Christ (1:11) worked through Noah as he preached to people who responded with jeers, insults, and disbelief. (These are those who have since died and are now “spirits in prison” – in hell.) Noah stayed true to his calling, even though he “stuck out!” In doing so, he was blessed – saved through the waters of judgment. Today, the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) preaches through us and we must “stick out” so that our voices will be heard. As our faith is in Christ, we, too, are saved through the waters of judgment (baptism).

Armed with Attitude 4:1-11

- * How does suffering impact sin?
 - Suffering doesn't automatically make you SINLESS
 - When we reach the place where we willingly submit to unjust suffering, we show that we aren't living for our own PLEASURE.

- * How does the rest of the world take to our pursuit of holiness? (4:4)
 - > They think it's STRANGE that we don't join them. (See, we are "STRANGE-ers")
 - > They HEAP ABUSE on us.

- * 4:6 – Difficult wording.
Paraphrase: *This is why the Gospel was preached to people when they were alive but have since died: even though they had to face death (as all men do), they still enjoy eternal life.*

Are We At the End? 4:7-11

- * What are the "last days?" The CHURCH AGE: the end can come AT ANY TIME!
- * Ways to be prepared:
 - > Clear minded and self-controlled. Why?
 - > Love each other deeply. Why? "Love covers ..." What does this mean?
(an elbow from Jeff Sapp)
 - > Hospitality without grumbling (implies being hospitable even when you don't want to)
 - > Using your gifts to serve others
 - * Speaking: As if your words are the words of God (i.e. Take it SERIOUSLY)
 - * Serving: Go beyond your own strength – to the limit!
 - > See Col. 3:16-17

Suffering Statutes 4:12-19

- * EXPECT suffering (4:12) – "I can't believe this is happening to me!!!" Well ... why not??

- * REJOICE in your suffering (4:12) – Why?

- * Don't be ASHAMED of your suffering (4:16) – How can bad theology make us feel shame when suffering?

- * DO GOOD in spite of suffering (4:19)

- * Don't DESIRE suffering – Inviting suffering is out of balance. It won't make you holier.
Don't get a martyr complex!

- * Don't FEAR suffering (3:14)