

The Suffering Of Believers

1 Pet. 3:13 – 5:14

Introduction

Following our outline of Peter's first letter, salvation in Christ leads to submission in all our relationships. The apostle now makes his third & final point: faithful followers of Christ will have to endure suffering at the hands of an unbelieving world (**2 Tim. 3:12**). This last section, the largest in the letter, reminds us that "Christ suffered in the flesh" and teaches us to "arm ourselves with the same purpose" (**4:1**). Peter's letter aids us in overcoming such times when we are maligned for not "running with the crowd" (**4:4**). They also help us not feel ashamed, but rather glorify God (**4:16**). We know in the end, God will be pleased with us if we remain faithful in spite of such treatment from unbelievers (**5:10**).

1. Based upon how God is described in **3:12**, what comfort is offered in **3:13**? Consider these parallel passages: **Mt. 10:28; Rom. 8:28, 31-39**.
2. To guard against saints having false hopes of never experiencing difficulties, what does Peter say in **3:14**? What had Jesus already taught? (**Mt. 5:10**) From what O.T. passage does Peter quote?
3. Instead of being intimidated into inaction, what are we to do? (**3:15**) Define the following terms:
sanctify _____
defense (answer) _____
meekness & fear _____
4. Why the admonition to "keep (have) a good conscience" in conjunction with being ready to answer for our faith? (**3:16a**) What eventually results when we live in harmony with what we believe? (**3:16b**)

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5. How does Peter complete this discussion in **3:17**?

6. As in **2:21-25**, how does the apostle use Christ as an example? (**3:18-19**) What do you think is being taught in **v. 19**? *[Note: this passage has been debated for decades and has been interpreted in numerous ways.]*

7. What seems to be the main idea presented in **3:20**? How might it offer an explanation of **v. 19**? What is the application made in **3:21**? *Thought question:* try to thematically link **3:18-22** in the context of believers suffering for the cause of Christ.

8. "Therefore," what are we encouraged to do? (**4:1a**) What do you think is the meaning of **4:1b**? (cp. **Rom. 6:7**)

9. How is **4:2-3** connected to the exhortation in **4:1**? *Thought question:* in what particular way can we use **1 Pet. 4:3b**?

10. For what specific reality does Peter prepare believers in **4:4**? What words of comfort enable us to endure unbelievers? (**4:5**) Regarding "the dead", what reminder does he give in **4:6**?

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11. To what event does Peter reference in **4:7a**? What were his readers instructed to do as a result? (**4:7b-11**) How would these "duties" and "gifts" help Christians with the trials to come? What was to result from this? (**4:11b**)

12. What encouragement does Peter offer in **4:12**? (**cp. 1 Jn. 3:13**) Why are Christians subjected to such? Why is such treatment not "strange"? (**cp. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:12**)

13. Why are we to rejoice at such sufferings? (**4:13**) Be able to explain, "To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ,..." [*NASV*] Does **4:14** offer any proof that we are living acceptably before God in the face of such trials?

14. What kind of suffering is prohibited, and what kind of suffering is encouraged? (**4:15-16**) How would Peter personally know the "joy" behind this? (**cp. Acts 5:40-41**)

15. How does Peter style the present trials upon the early Christians? (**4:17**) If they were undergoing such, what is implied about those outside the kingdom of Christ? How does he illustrate his point? (**4:18**)

16. How does Peter encourage disciples of Christ to endure such trials? (**4:19; cp. 2:23**)

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17. Whom does Peter address in **5:1a**? Upon what 3-fold basis does he address them? **(5:1b)** What is his admonition to them? **(5:2-4)** Do you see any connection to the previous verses or to the theme of endurance in the face of sufferings?
18. *Thought question*: how is the "sponsoring church" arrangement practiced among our institutional brethren a violation of **1 Pet. 5:2**?
19. Who else is addressed in **5:5**, and how are they encouraged? Why are we instructed to be humble? From where does Peter quote? What results from showing humility in this life? **(5:6)** When suffering brings anxious moments, what should believers do? **(5:7)**
20. Besides being humble, what else should suffering saints do and why? **(5:8)** What does Peter instruct us to do about the devil? **(5:9; cp. Jas. 4:7)** What will it take to resist him? **(cp. Eph. 6:10-18)** What comforts us when we try to resist him?
21. How does Peter describe the saints' sufferings? **(5:10a)** What will happen after we have been tested? **(5:10b)** Because God is the Source of all that sustains us in enduring our trials, what is ascribed to Him? **(5:11)**
22. How does Peter close out his first letter? **(5:12-14)**