

Peter continues to urge us to remain faithful in doing good even when it results in persecution. Additionally, we should always be ready to give a respectful answer to those who would question why we are willing to suffer for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, the One Who suffered for us.

Peter has just quoted Psa. 34:12-16 in the three prior verses:

1 Peter 3:10-12 ¹⁰ *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: ¹¹ Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

¹³ And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? ¹⁴ But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

“And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” - After the quote from Psa. 34 that speaks of the LORD being for the righteous and against those that do evil, Peter asks the question: “Who would dare to harm any of you that would be God’s righteous ones?” Anyone who would dare harm the righteous do so at their own peril, for the LORD will stand up for the righteous and is against all who do evil.

“But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy [blessed; happy] are ye” - Despite the foolishness of defying God, there will be some who would dare to cause the righteous to suffer. So if we do have to suffer for righteousness' sake we are a blessed people for God will take up our cause. Peter further describes this blessedness in the next chapter (1 Peter 4:13, 14, 16).

“and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled” - Peter quotes from Isa. 8:12-13 here (and possibly the first part of v. 15) where the LORD tells Isaiah not to be afraid of those who don’t want to hear the message He’s given to Isaiah to preach.

Isa. 8:12-13 ¹² *Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. ¹³ Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*

Peter is using the quotation to encourage his readers in the face of the persecution they are enduring. If they do have to suffer for Christ then they need not fear because God is greater than anyone who would persecute us.

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

“But sanctify [consecrate; set apart] the Lord God in your hearts” - Peter apparently is pulling this from the Isaiah quote. He’s encouraging his readers to place the Lord in a special place in their hearts, prioritizing Him above all their other concerns/priorities.

“and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you” - When they see you giving Jesus Christ priority in your life even though it would be much easier on you if you abandoned Him, they are inevitably going to ask why you are remaining faithful to Christ. We should be ready to answer such questions with the hope that we have in Christ.

“with meekness [gentleness] and fear [reverence; respect]” - We are not to answer such questions with a hateful or sarcastic attitude, but with a humble, gentle and respectful spirit.

¹⁶ Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

“Having a good conscience” - You should answer their questions in such a way that you can have a clear conscience, knowing that you have done no wrong and have represented the Lord well.

“that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation [conduct; behavior] in Christ” - We should always take the high road so that no one can legitimately accuse us of wrong doing for we are obeying our Lord. Anyone who does would have to be ashamed because they cannot make their false accusations stick. Their shame will only intensify at the judgment when Christ their judge will condemn them for persecuting His children for their obedience to Him.

¹⁷ For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

If God allows us to suffer, it will be better to be suffering for obeying Him rather than suffering for any evil we’ve done. There will be no blessing for suffering for our own evil doing.

¹⁸ For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins” - We are not alone in our suffering, because Christ Himself had to suffer for sins that were not His own. His death was also a one-time sacrifice, unlike the OT sacrifices which had to be offered continually. **Heb 10:11-12** ¹¹ *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: ¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;”*

“the just for the unjust” - Christ was the innocent, sinless Son of God dying for guilty sinners.

“that he might bring us to God” - Jesus was not a victim of circumstances but He intentionally died in order to reconcile us to God.

“being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit” - Commentators do not agree in their interpretation of this line. Some read this as Christ being resurrected by the Holy Spirit, others as this being Christ’s spirit being alive, and in that way He preached to the spirits in prison (next verse). Either way, it seems Peter’s point is that Christ died for us physically but remained alive spiritually.

¹⁹ By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; ²⁰ Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

“By which also he went and preached [heralded] unto the spirits in prison” - During the time His body was in the grave, Jesus in the spirit heralded His victory to the “spirits in prison.” Who are these spirits? Commentators are also divided on these verses, but the interpretation with most scriptural support seems to be that these spirits are fallen angels (men are never referred to as “spirits” in the scripture). These angels apparently committed a sin so grievous that God has confined them until the day of judgment, unlike the other fallen angels (including even Satan) who are currently still allowed to roam freely on the earth.

Jude 6 “And the angels which kept [attended] not their first estate [place of origin], but left their own habitation [abode], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

2 Peter 2:4 “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”

“Which sometime [formerly; at some time in the past] were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing” - This tells us that these fallen angels committed their sin during the time when God was postponing judging the earth with the flood while Noah was building the ark. If we look at the appropriate passage in Genesis, we read:

Genesis 6:1-6 “¹ And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, ² That the **sons of God** saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. ³ And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. ⁴ There were **giants** [Nephilim] in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the **sons of God** came in unto the daughters of men, and **they bare children to them**, the same became **mighty men** which were of old, **men of renown**. ⁵ And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

It seems that the “sons of God” took wives and their children were “giants” and mighty men “of renown” (they made a name for themselves). The word for “giants” is “Nephilim” which refers to mighty men that dominated others. Commentators again are divided, but many believe that the “sons of God” refer to fallen angels who took human women as wives and the resulting children became mighty men that were known for their power and influence as well as their great evil. They were giants in their fierceness and power and were corrupting the human race through their evil influence.

“wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by [through] water” - Only Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives were saved during the flood. They passed through the water by means of the ark.

²¹ The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: ²² Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” - Like Noah and his family passed through the water, being preserved by the ark, so we now passed through the water of baptism, being preserved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,)” - So we don’t get the wrong idea and think that water baptism saves us, Peter clarifies what he means. Baptism does not save us by washing away our sins (“the filth of the flesh”), but rather it is the response of faith to what Christ has done for us (“the answer of a good conscience”). We don’t get baptized to get saved; rather we get baptized because we are saved.

“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God” - Jesus has taken His place of power and glory that He had before He came into the world.

John 17:5 “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

Heb. 1:3 (speaking of Christ) “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

“angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” - Jesus Christ has power and authority over all other powers and authorities, whether angelic, demonic, or human. They are all subject to Him. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Matt. 28:18 (after His resurrection) “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Heb. 10:12-13 (speaking of Christ) “¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; ¹³ From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.”

Eph. 1:20-22 (speaking of God demonstrating His power) “²⁰ Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²² And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church...”

Phil. 2:9-11 “⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”