

# "SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE"

## INTRODUCTION

I. The world is FULL of "suffering."

A. Suffering in the world is the result of SIN, directly or indirectly.

1. When Adam and Eve sinned in Eden, they opened the door to human suffering.

a. Virtually every human being will suffer in some form while upon earth.

b. The word "suffer" suggests **pain**, and all who suffer pain need encouragement.

2. God is not the author of pain and suffering, but Satan is it 's author.

a. Some turn against God because suffering exists in the world, saying "God allows it."

b. God knows that suffering exists, and He HAS done something about it, as He put in motion a plan to END all suffering, for those who follow His plan.

c. That plan is to bring the righteous to heaven where suffering will not exist. Rev. 21:4

B. The apostle Peter wrote a lot about human suffering. (Read 1 Pet. 3:13-22) The title of our lesson is "*Suffer For Righteousness' Sake*" which comes from verse 14 of this reading, as Peter said, "*Suffer For Righteousness' sake.*"

II. Now, let's examine these verses more closely.

## DISCUSSION

### I. 1<sup>st</sup>, we MAY SUFFER FOR DOING GOOD.

A. Christ suffered for doing good, and if WE do good, we partake of His sufferings. vs. 13-14; 4:13

1. When WE suffer for righteousness' sake, we know that we need not fear, for it is only temporary. Matt. 10:28; 5:10-12

2. We can sanctify God in our hearts and demonstrate why we can endure suffering. 1 Pet. 3:13-15

B. God's will is that **IF** we are going to suffer, let it be for good rather than evil, for such will be ultimately be worthwhile. vs. 16-17

1. Some suffering comes because of physical pain, or causes that come upon them because of varied circumstances in life.

2. Then some suffering is a result of involvement in sin. 1 Pet. 4:15

3. It is better to suffer for good, because we are Christians. v. 16

4. The final result of proper suffering is "shame" for accusers, and "glory" for the "accused." 3:16; 4:13

### II. 2<sup>nd</sup>, for our benefit, we have the EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

A. Christ inspires us through His supreme example of suffering. 3:18; cf Matt. 16:21; Luke 24:46; Heb. 5:7-9

1. Now let's analyze 1 Pet. 4:18, as Peter gives details of Christ's suffering.

a. Christ suffered only "*once*," for He will never have to do it again. (*text*)

b. He suffered "*for sins*" because of man's sins, and as a "sin offering", to enable man to end his suffering by following Christ's example. (*text*)

c. Jesus suffered as the "*just for the unjust.*" (*text*) cf Rom. 5:6

d. Jesus suffered to "*bring us to God.*" (*text*)

e. Jesus was "*put to death*" on the cruel cross. (*text*)

f. Jesus' suffering ENDED by His being "*quicken*" or made alive by the Spirit when He was raised from the dead. (*text*). Cf Rom. 1:4

2. Since the Spirit was active in Jesus' resurrection, Peter goes on to describe another function of the Spirit that occurred centuries before. 1 Pet. 3:19

- B. Peter says “*by which also*” (referring to the Spirit which raised Him from the dead) “he went and preached” to certain people.
1. When did this occur?
    - a. Some believe that Jesus preached to the lost souls in Hades during the 3 days He was in Hades before His resurrection.
    - b. IF so, what good would it have done—could they NOW repent and be saved?
      - 1) Would not this be a “second chance after death?” cf Heb. 9:27
      - 2) Peter states that they were “*reserved unto judgment,*” and NOT reserved for a second chance. Cf 2 Pet. 2:4-5
  2. This **preaching** appears to be **TO** people who were alive when the preaching occurred, who are **NOW** “imprisoned in Hades.”
  3. The text tells us “*when*” the preaching took place, “*IN the days of Noah.*” 1 Pet. 3:20; cf Gen. 6:1-3
    - a. The text says “*he went*”--it was the Holy Spirit striving with man to repent, in the words Noah proclaimed.
    - b. The spirits “were” alive when the preaching occurred, but are NOW in prison.
    - c. Before they were “spirits” in prison, they were **fully human** (body and soul) “**in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.**” cf 4:5-6 (an *example* of how preaching took place to people who were alive but now dead).

#### **CONCLUSION**

- I. The final result of proper suffering will be “shame” for the persecutors, but “joy” and “glory” for the persecuted, which is incentive for people in **ANY AGE** who are in any way persecuted because of their faith in an unbelieving world.
  - A. For this reason, it is good to suffer (if need be) according to the will of God. Matt. 5:12
    - B. A hymn we sometimes hear and sing is entitled “READY”.  
 “*Ready to suffer grief or pain, Ready to stand the test; Ready to stay at home and send others if He sees best. Ready to speak, ready to warn, Ready o’er souls to yearn; Ready in life, Ready in death, Ready for His return.*”
- II. Being ready to suffer for the Lord involves a deep faith and faithfulness to God as one who has confessed faith in Jesus and put Him on in baptism for the remission of sins.

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