

# I Peter: The Gospel of Hope

## Chapter 4

- 1-6** Call to holy living in light of Christ's suffering and coming judgment.  
**7-11** From the approaching end, and exhortation to duties of godliness for saints.  
**12-16** Suffering is a cause for joy, if understood and caused by faithfulness to Christ.  
**17-19** If God allows His children pain, how much more the wicked; He will save believers.

***1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;***

*Forasmuch then.*

- A. **Forasmuch.** In consideration that, seeing that, inasmuch. Compare I Pet 1:18 and Heb 2:14.
- B. Peter returned to Christ's sufferings to encourage his persecuted readers (I Pet 2:21-24; 3:18).
- C. He had taken a rabbit trail about Noah preaching by the Spirit and baptism (I Peter 3:18-22).
- D. Though Jesus Christ had suffered indeed, there is comfort in seeing His glorification (3:22).

*As Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh.*

- A. The flesh here is the human nature Jesus Christ had of flesh and blood body (3:18; Heb 2:14).
- B. The suffering here is body pain and death by the adverbial *forasmuch then as* (2:21-24; 3:18).
- C. Jesus Christ suffered physical pain and death for our sins, but it also created a great example.
- D. Though already stated several times, Peter will use the Lord's suffering again shortly (4:13).
- E. The *as ... likewise* construction here draws a tight comparison for us to follow His example.

*Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.*

- A. The Christian life is constant warfare against indwelling sin, the world, and/or the devil.
  - 1. Peter had already introduced this military terminology about your own lusts (I Pet 2:11).
  - 2. In a dangerous war with hostile foes, Peter's readers needed to prepare for the conflict.
  - 3. Peter's audience faced many enemies with persecution and suffering – in each chapter.
- B. Peter had used this argument twice before, but this application is somewhat different here.
  - 1. His first two uses were Christ's example suffering mistreatment by sinners (2:21; 3:18).
  - 2. But the suffering here is more self-denial of fleshly lusts than mistreatment by sinners.
  - 3. We make this the emphasis here by virtue of the following verses stressing self-denial.
- C. The same mind is submission to the will of God to endure suffering (Mat 26:39; John 18:11).
  - 1. The Christian religion is one of mental discipline, which Peter introduced earlier (1:13).
  - 2. If mental preparation was not made, arrest, captivity, torture, or death might overwhelm.
  - 3. Jesus had set the supreme example by suffering for them, so they could suffer for Him.
  - 4. Compare Jesus suffering in obedience to the will of God and Peter's soon call to it (4:2).
- D. Hearers must count up the cost to see if they will pay the price of discipleship (Lu 14:25-33).
- E. Paul exhorted to take the whole armor of God to stand against all kinds of evil (Eph 6:10-18).

*For he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*

- A. With Jesus Christ's mind, we count ourselves dead indeed to sin and alive to righteousness.
  - 1. This is Paul's message about the practical phase of salvation (Ro 6:1-13; Gal 2:20; 5:24).
  - 2. Jesus actually and literally suffered in His flesh body; we suffer by denying fleshly lusts.
  - 3. If a man has the mind of Christ, he denies himself and ceases from the practice of sin.
  - 4. The next verses describe a person that has ceased former behavior and is now strange.
- B. This could mean that a person that suffered death like Jesus would no longer be able to sin.
  - 1. There is no doubt such a mindset is true and would do well at time of a martyr's death.
  - 2. However, this requires understanding *suffering* as death exclusively rather than *suffering*.
  - 3. However, this overlooks the next verses that describe continuing to live, but differently.
  - 4. However, this interpretation may actually provide less reason to stop sinning while living.
  - 5. The suffering in the approaching context is one of persecution without certain death.
  - 6. Ceasing from sin is something the elect can do by Bible usage (I John 3:6-9; II Cor 5:17).
  - 7. Though there is no absolute cessation of sinning for any (I John 1:8,10; Romans 7:7-25).
- C. We suffer in the body, our flesh existence, when we deny bodily cravings for the will of God.
- D. If we do not have any suffering in the body, then we are allowing ourselves too much liberty.

## ***2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.***

*That he no longer should live the rest of his time.*

- A. This second verse explains what it truly means to suffer in the body and cease from sin (4:1).
- B. Conversion is coming to knowledge of Christ that changes lives (I Thes 1:9-10; Tit 2:11-15).
- C. The mind of Christ sets affection on things above and denies self the pleasures of sin here.
- D. Christians must have changed lives – a new creature with sin passed away and all things new.
- E. He rejects the way he had been living and instead chooses the Lord's way of righteousness.
- F. A man with a right view of Christ's suffering in His body will be willing to so suffer himself.

*In the flesh to the lusts of men.*

- A. Flesh here is the human, physical body of man's earthly existence, not the fleshly sin nature.
  - 1. The word *flesh* had just been used twice in 4:1 of Jesus Christ's body and also our bodies.
  - 2. *Flesh* here is the body, for the will of God is done in it, which is not true of the sin nature.
  - 3. Compare flesh here to *in the days of his flesh, abide in the flesh, and at home in the body*.
- B. You have a period of time in the body, around 70-80 years, in which you make daily choices.
- C. The natural man defaults to sinful living – fulfilling the desires of flesh and mind (Ep 2:1-3).
- D. This change is the essence of conversion – rejecting what you want for what God wants.

*But to the will of God.*

- A. There are two wills you choose between daily – the lifestyle of the world and that of God!
  - 1. So great is the chasm between that friendship with the world is spiritual adultery (Ja 4:4).
  - 2. Antagonism between the two will certainly lead to persecution (Pr 29:27; II Tim 3:12).
- A. Obedient Christians reject their lusts and choose to rather live according to the will of God.
- B. Men have corrupted and violated the will of God since our first parents (Gen 3:6; 4:3; 6:12).
- C. Paul appealed to the mercies of God to make His will a reasonable service (Rom 12:1-2).

- D. So many fuss and worry about God's will in the sense of spouse, house, career, etc., but God's will that counts is the one calling you to godliness and virtue against a sinful world.

### ***3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:***

*For the time past of our life may suffice us.*

- A. Christians should be satisfied that their past sinful living is plenty enough for them. No more!
- B. Christianity changes men's lives; they should be content at not returning to that sinful life.
- C. Is your life changed? Others can tell. True conversion has no further interest in sinful living.
- D. Christian! You already tried the world's pigpen and found it to be utterly vain and vexing.
- E. For those that want to fuss about Paul's use of *our* here, see *us* and *we* following closely!
- F. As a new year approaches (2015), what an opportunity to apply these words to the new year: what will you do differently in the future to let your past life of excessive liberty suffice you?

*To have wrought the will of the Gentiles.*

- A. There are two wills you choose between daily – the lifestyle of the world and that of God!
- B. The will of the Gentiles refers to the general lifestyle of Gentiles with little restraint from sin.
- C. Here is one of those places that confirms the audience is scattered Jews, as indicated (1:1).
- D. Moses' law had restrained the Jews in general from the gross excesses of profane Gentiles.
- E. For maximum perspective of the list of sins following, they are clearly opposite of suffering.
- F. For help with some of the listed sins following: <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/forgotten-sins.pdf>.

*When we walked in lasciviousness.*

- A. **Lascivious.** Inclined to lust, lewd, wanton. **Lewd.** Lascivious, Unchaste. **Wanton.** Of persons: undisciplined, ungoverned; not amenable to control, unmanageable, rebellious.
- B. Paul charged the Ephesian Gentiles not to live the lifestyle of other Gentiles (Eph 4:17-19).
- C. America in 2014 is guilty of such a description for their hedonistic obsession for sinful lusts.
  - 1. The world says to follow your heart and do what feels right for you regardless of others.
  - 2. They hate the Bible and Bible Christians and Bible preachers for its restriction of lusts.
- D. Lasciviousness is a work of the flesh; those that live that way will go to hell (Gal 5:19-21).

*Lusts.*

- A. Your lusts here are those cravings and desires within you for things that God has prohibited.
- B. John described them as the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life (I Jn 2:15-17).
- C. The Bible uses covet and desire as synonyms for lusts to help you (Exodus 20:17; Deu 5:21).
- D. Lusts crave food, wine, or sex (Rom 1:24) or envy (Jas 4:5) or hatred and murder (John 8:44) or money and promotion (I Tim 6:9) or sleep (II Tim 2:22) or false doctrine (II Ti 4:3), etc.
- E. Those that are truly Jesus Christ's reject lusts and their fulfillment (Rom 13:14; Gal 5:24).

*Excess of wine.*

- A. Drunkenness, which involves excessive use of wine, is what scripture condemns (Eph 5:18).
- B. When a man's lusts are not ruled, he drinks too much and does most everything overmuch.
  - 1. God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions, or perversions (Eccl 7:29).

2. If you have trained yourself to think you need four glasses of wine, you scoff at only one.
  3. If you trained yourself to think drunkenness a merry heart, you scoff at only gladness.
- C. The moderate use of wine or strong drink is entirely approved and commended by God (Gen 14:18; Deut 14:26; II Sam 6:19; Ps 104:14-15; Prov 31:6-7; Luke 7:33-34; I Tim 5:23; etc.).
- D. Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven (I Cor 6:10; Gal 5:21; Romans 13:13).
- E. For much more of moderate use of wine ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/wine-seminar-92.pdf>.

### *Revellings.*

- A. **Revelling.** Riotous or disorderly merry-making or festivity. See also rioting, banqueting, surfeiting. **Riotous.** Given to wantonness, revelry, or dissolute life; prodigal, extravagant.
- B. Revellers will not go to heaven, because this is a sin of the flesh against God (Gal 5:19-21).
- C. This is partying in the modern sense. It includes and intends an excessive approach to eating, entertainment, recreation, amusement, drinking, carousing, and other works of the flesh and world. Life is sober, and reveling is treating life as a giant party with excessive drinking, playing, fighting, gaming, and similar things.

### *Banquetings.*

- A. **Banquetings.** Indulgence in luxurious entertainment, feasting, carousel. See also revelling, surfeiting, gluttony. **Surfeiting.** Excessive taking of food or drink; gluttonous indulgence in eating or drinking.
- B. Compare these scriptures: II Tim 3:4; Luke 12:19-20,42-46; 15:13; 17:26-30; 21:34-35; Job 1:4-5; Matt 24:37-39; Daniel 5:1-6; I Thess 5:3-8; Romans 13:13-14; I Cor 7:29-31; Prov 23:20-21; Eccl 7:1-6; Isaiah 22:12-14; 56:9-12; Ezek 16:49-50; Amos 6:1-7; James 4:9.
- C. Today's addiction to revelry, eating, and entertainment fits this prohibition. Consider modern partying, food buffets, spectator sports, amusement parks, etc. Why are most birthday parties built on insanity and stupidity? Is there a good reason? While some of these things can be done virtuously, they tend toward ungodliness and are often sinful, which is how the world uses them. The warning is against excess (I Pet 4:4). And a Christian's life is to be marked by sober godliness (Tit 2:11-14). Appearing "strange" to the world is not evidence of being extreme, but likely of being holy (I Pet 4:4).

### *And abominable idolatries.*

- A. Jews were usually monotheistic worshippers of Jehovah, but these lived with Gentile pagans.
- B. Remember, God considered Gentile worship of idols to be worship of devils (I Cor 10:20).
- C. We cannot exclude Christmas and Easter and their abominable customs from this prohibition.
  1. Christ's mass at the winter solstice with evergreen trees and revelry is obviously idolatry.
  2. Sunrise services after fish for Lent and followed by bunnies laying eggs is also idolatry.

## ***4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:***

### *Wherein they think it strange.*

- A. When you change or the world sees your different conduct, they will think you strange for it.
- B. Since the world is given to excess, they will think your sobriety to be Amish or Mennonite.
- C. The world has infected most believers, so godliness will be strange to them also (II Ti 3:12).

- D. The world does not know God and has been programmed to think their lifestyle the only one.
- E. They think it very foolish and weird for you to deny yourself here in light of unseen heaven.
- F. We think them strange for stupidity to ignore their Creator, righteousness, or life after death!

*That ye run not with them to the same excess of riot.*

- A. The world expects everyone to agree and participate with them for a variety of evil reasons.
  - 1. They do not want the irritation of their itty-bitty conscience by you choosing to differ.
  - 2. They have devilish motivation from their wicked hearts to destroy believers' temperance.
  - 3. They want the larger numbers to accomplish their wicked designs in partying or violence.
- B. Socialization when used by the world typically means getting everyone to think just alike.
- C. This kind of change is what Paul meant by his warning of suffering persecution (II Ti 3:12).
- D. We should guard against any excess of life activities, except for holiness and worship, thus even bodily exercise is understood to have little profit compared to godliness (I Tim 4:7-8).

*Speaking evil of you.*

- A. These wicked abusers of God's gifts, instead of self-examination, will hurl invectives at you.
- B. Consider the profane charges they brought against John the Baptist and Jesus (Luke 7:33-34).
- C. They will accuse of sedition, if you call Jesus King; they will call you Amish, if you dress modestly; they will call you miserly, if you save money; they will call you cruel, if you have rules for charity; they will call you impotent, if you do not fornicate.
- D. Enoch had already prophesied of God's judgment for their harsh speeches (Jude 1:14-15).
- E. The world is not worthy of the holy saints that they ridicule for being different from them.
- F. What wickedness! Speaking evil of those who will not think, speak, or commit evil!

## ***5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.***

*Who shall give account.*

- A. Who shall give account? The most obvious answer is the wicked persecuting the righteous.
  - 1. The context describes those living righteously, so there is no need for threat of judgment.
  - 2. In comfort to saints and their suffering, Peter reminds them of the fearful end of sinners.
- B. The lascivious and intemperate lives of the wicked show no fear, but fear shall take them all!

*To him that is ready.*

- A. This phrase right here is important, because it will help you rightly interpret 3:7 coming up.
- B. How did Peter view the second coming of Jesus Christ? As very far off or certainly coming?
  - 1. When timing the second coming, he gave the one day as a thousand years rule (II Pe 3:8).
  - 2. When warning of the second coming, he made it very personal for his audience (3:10-14).
- C. How is God *ready* to judge the quick and the dead? There are no impediments to the work.
  - 1. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ put the Judge in place (Acts 17:30-31).
  - 2. The sacrifice had been made for the elect, so they could be judged righteous before God.
- D. James, writing a like audience of scattered Jews, said the Judge was at the door (Jas 1:1; 5:9).

*To judge the quick and the dead.*

- A. The quick and the dead are those living or dead physically, for God will surely judge all men.
  - 1. Paul used the same terms charging Timothy to faithfulness (II Timothy 4:1; Acts 10:42).
  - 2. The two modes of existence – in the body or the spirit – are continued in the next verse.
  - 3. This is a place in the Bible that can help you define quickened (Ep 2:1,5) for the ignorant.
- B. It is a common mistake to forget that the wicked will be resurrected along with the righteous.
  - 1. Jesus said the coming resurrection would raise both righteous and wicked (John 5:28-29).
  - 2. Paul told Felix that the resurrection of both dead elect and dead reprobates (Acts 24:15).
  - 3. The wicked will get their bodies back as well to suffer with them for eternity (Re 20:13).

***6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.***

*For for this cause.*

- A. The compound, double conjunction *for for* is used two other times (Prov 28:21; Rom 13:6).
  - 1. If the most accepted interpretation of 4:6 is taken, it covers dead believers lumped into 4:5, who heard the gospel and lived holy lives that brought bodily death but eternal glory.
  - 2. If the antediluvian interpretation of 4:6 is taken, it appeals back to the judgment of the flood and the coming judgment of those wicked men again, who are now spirits in prison.
- B. This is one of the most obscure verses in the New Testament with a Legion of interpretations.
  - 1. Some ... the gospel was preached to those dead in trespasses and sins: those remaining in the flesh are judged by God, but those that embrace Christ are quickened to spiritual life.
  - 2. Some ... the gospel was preached to those dead in trespasses and sins: the wise ones judge their fleshly existence and choose instead by the gospel to live a life in the spirit.
  - 3. Some ... the gospel was preached to dead saints like Stephen: they were judged by wicked men with fleshly natures, but the saints thus judged live with God in heaven.
  - 4. Some ... the gospel was preached to the antediluvians: they may have drowned in their flesh bodies, but by repenting when they saw rain they are alive with God in heaven.
  - 5. Some ... the gospel was preached to the antediluvians while in hell: though they had all died in the flesh by drowning, those that took this second chance live eternally with God.
  - 6. Some ... the gospel has been preached to all men under its pale: thus they shall be judged the same as the living, based on what they did with the gospel, to damnation or salvation.
  - 7. Some ... the gospel was preached to all men under its pale: some were judged by its precepts to mortify their sin natures, but in their spiritual new men they lived unto God.
  - 8. Some ... the gospel was preached to men that are physically dead: they are judged by God in Fatherly chastening (I Cor 11:32), but they live eternally with Christ in heaven.
  - 9. Some ... the gospel was preached to all men that it was preached to: those that rejected it were left in their natural flesh state, and those who believed it were quickened into life.
  - 10. Some ... the gospel was preached to all men: those who believed the gospel were judged by their wicked neighbors to be condemned to death, but they rather lived unto God.
  - 11. Some ... the gospel was preached to all men: those who believed it ended up dying like other men, but they had eternal life and their spirits would live forever.
  - 12. Some ... the gospel was preached to those dead in hell by Jesus or special missionaries: they were judged by death in the flesh, but they could be saved with this second chance.

13. Some ... the gospel was preached to dead martyrs like Stephen: they were judged by wicked men with a fleshly death, but they have a spiritual life in heaven by God's grace.

- C. There are a number of decision points that must be properly chosen for a right interpretation.
1. Is the cause for preaching the gospel a reason before (*for for*) or after (*that*) this verse?
  2. What death is in the first clause? Spiritual death in trespasses and sins, or physical death?
  3. Does preaching the gospel include creation, providence, and conscience, to get all men?
  4. To which subset of men was it preached, since it has surely not been preached to all men?
  5. What is the comparison being made by the use of *also* indicating two things compared?
  6. Is the second clause a possibility of gospel preaching or a result of the gospel preaching?
  7. Are there two groups in the second clause, *they* being judged and the *men* judging them?
  8. Does *in the flesh* modify those judging or those being judged or the judgment itself?
  9. Is *in the flesh* parallel to *in the spirit*, both applying to *they* that had heard the gospel?
  10. What does *but* that opens up the next verse create a disjunctive comparison against?
  11. What about a group of folks in context now dead that had the gospel preached by Noah?

*Was the gospel preached also to them that are dead.*

- A. The dead in this clause are the physically dead by the connection to the previous verse (4:5).
1. There is no context for spiritual death in trespasses and sins, but rather physical death.
  2. From the opening of the chapter the issue is the flesh, or body, of Jesus and of the saints.
  3. Jesus Christ's return will judge the physically alive and dead (Acts 10:42; II Tim 4:1).
  4. The doctrine of those living and already dead at His coming is settled (I Thes 4:13-18).
- B. The gospel was preached to a subset of the dead: we choose dead saints over antediluvians.
1. It was not preached to all men of either kind of death, but to only some men of either.
  2. Since we have chosen physical death rather than spiritual death, we choose dead saints.
  3. The gospel was the good news of Christ and how His children should live in the spirit.
- C. The contrast developed in this chapter and maintained to the end are righteous vs. wicked.
1. The wicked think the righteous *strange* for not running to their previous excesses (4:3-4).
  2. The wicked bring fiery persecution against the righteous, who will be saved (4:12-19).
  3. Though the righteous may lose lives, their future is far superior to that of the wicked.
- D. These believers, like those dead at Corinth, were alive and with the Lord (I Thess 4:13-18).
1. They were judged in their flesh – their flesh bodies – by the wicked men of this world.
  2. They lived in their spiritual new men and with Christ in heaven in spirit after their deaths.
- E. The *gospel preached* made them different, which brought physical death by their holy living.
- F. The *cause* for the gospel being preached to them is in clauses 2-3 by the direction of *that*.
- G. The *for for* opening the verse isolates and preserves their dead brethren in Christ's judgment.
- H. The *also* compares and adds the dead brethren to those that were living and had heard it.

*That they might be judged according to men in the flesh.*

- A. This judgment is bodily and physical death by virtue of the previous clause, *quick and dead*.
- B. The wicked kill the body, but they cannot do any more after that to a believer (Luke 12:4-5).
- C. Wicked men of this world judged earlier believers as the context 4:1-5 and context 4:12-19.
- D. They were judged in the flesh, for they died bodily, but their spirits lived on earth and after.
- E. *That* indicating the cause for why the gospel was preached to them extends to clauses 2-3.
- F. *In the flesh* and *in the spirit* should apply to men, otherwise *in the spirit* applies to God.

*But live according to God in the spirit.*

- A. Peter had already introduced the spirit/soul of man living apart from a body (I Peter 3:18).
- B. When the spirit departs, the body dies, and the spirit is with the Lord (II Cor 5:8; Heb 12:23).
- C. Jesus committed His spirit to God at death, and so did Stephen (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59-60).
- D. Death for Jesus was victory over His enemies and suffering of persecution and reproaches.
- E. Death for His followers is also a victory ... especially to the degree they suffered for Him.
- F. If the *dead* of 4:5 is the physically dead, then these dead must be alive to be judged again.
- G. Context (4:12-19) helps confirm 4:6 by the difference of righteous and wicked and suffering persecution by the wicked does not hinder a faithful Creator from preserving each believer.

## ***7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.***

*But the end of all things is at hand.*

- A. Preterists leap at clauses like this and never even consider allowing it to extend past 70 A.D.
- B. But 4:5 showed the second coming and judgment, and so does the chapter's end (4:17-19).
- C. There are numerous good reasons as to why this must be the distant future second coming.
  - 1. The context following indicates suffering as a Christian rather than suffering as a Jew.
  - 2. On what basis could the destruction of Jerusalem by Romans cause Jews in Asia worry?
  - 3. Jerusalem was 600 miles from Galatia (a flight) and separated by the Mediterranean Sea.
  - 4. The things ending (Jerusalem and temple) were of little value to these Christian Jews.
  - 5. The advice is not to flee to the mountains or send money to Judea – nothing of the sort.
  - 6. There is no specific advice for them save themselves from that generation as in Acts 2:40.
  - 7. The consequential advice is church duties as Christians without regard to political danger.
- D. Peter's use of *at hand* is from a very different perspective than Paul's denial of it *at hand*.
  - 1. Paul pushed it off to save the Thessalonians from fear and sin (II Thess 2:1-3; 3:6-15).
  - 2. Peter pulled it near to provoke to carefulness and diligence in their spiritual duties.
  - 3. Peter viewed time very differently about Christ's coming and wrote about it (II Pet 3:8).
  - 4. This *at hand* should be seen in light of God *ready to judge* the quick and the dead (4:5).
  - 5. The epistle opened with salvation's final phase and inheritance ready to be revealed (1:5).
- E. *But* could indicate that those living (contrasted with dead brethren in 4:6) could also soon die.

*Be ye therefore sober.*

- A. Peter had already taught the same message about conduct in light of second coming (1:13).
- B. He will warn again about sobriety in light of the devil seeking to devour saints (I Pet 5:8).
- C. We are preppers – those who fear a coming disaster and take needed preparations for it.
- D. But we are not at all like the foolish preppers that have existed in the US since WWII.
- E. An important remedy is to be sober in light of general wickedness and coming judgment.
- F. Paul taught the same to the Thessalonians and to Titus (I Thess 5:6-8; Titus 2:11-15).

*And watch unto prayer.*

- A. The activity of Christians in full armor is standing and persevering in prayer (Eph 6:10-18).
- B. Peter will exhort with a similar argument in his second epistle to these saints (II Pet 3:10-14).
- C. Paul used a similar argument concluding a description of the Christian life (Phil 3:18-21).
- D. As baptized believers we should set our affection above where Christ is seated (Col 3:1-4).

- E. When we read this exhortation – this request – you should think Gethsemane (Mat 26:38-41).
- F. A watch can never be given up, lest at that time the thief break in (Col 4:2; Romans 12:12).

## ***8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.***

### *And above all things.*

- A. If you want to get ready for the end of the world, it is not becoming a prepper like some nuts.
- B. We cannot overestimate the importance of charity and love, which God Himself has exalted.
- C. Paul said the same high thing about charity, which is the bond of perfectness (Col 3:14).
- D. The importance of affection, concern, forgiveness, mercy, and service cannot be overstated.
- E. If you do not love brethren in deed and truth (hospitality coming up), you do not love God.
- F. For more about *Love is the Greatest* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/love-is-the-greatest.pdf>.

### *Have fervent charity.*

- A. Peter had already established this as evidence of a true work of grace in a life (I Pet 1:22).
- B. Ordinary friendship or love is unacceptable for believers, for the bond is Christ's blood.
- C. Christians have a greater example of love than any, and they ought to emulate it easily.
- D. Christians have received greater love than any, for Jesus Christ died for them as enemies.
- E. Christians have a greater commandment than any, for the Creator God demands such love.
- F. And he will finish his list of good works for assurance of eternal life with two (II Pet 1:8).
- G. Charity is the basis of forgiveness and mercy, which are the basis for real peacemaking.

### *Among yourselves.*

- A. This is another way of stating the *one another* duty of each loving every other individual.
- B. There is no room for cliques or divisions or schisms in the body – love should control all.
- C. For more about *one another* duties ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/one-another/sermon.php>.

### *For charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

- A. The benevolent and merciful aspect of love – charity – will cover the many certain sins.
- B. The charity or love here is not praying; it is not giving; it is not assembling; it is forgiving.
- C. What hinders covering sins? Cruelty, envy, hatred, pride, revenge, selfishness, wickedness.
- D. Any congregation or assembly of sinners will have many personal sins or transgressions.
- E. These are not public sins against God to be exposed ... yet they are forgiven after repentance.
- F. Charity and love are committed to forgiveness and mercy in personal offences against you.
- G. The definition of charity has several propositions for forgiveness or mercy (I Cor 13:4-7).
- H. Glorious men simply pass over (Ps 19:11); inglorious men resolve it privately (Matt 18:15).
- I. Proverbs 10:12 commentary ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/10\\_12.php](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/10_12.php).
- J. Proverbs 17:9 commentary ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/17\\_09.php](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/17_09.php).
- K. Proverbs 19:11 commentary ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/19\\_11.php](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/19_11.php).

## ***9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.***

### *Use hospitality.*

- A. **Hospitality.** The act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.
- B. The saints of God are to be given to it (Rom 12:13) – *inclined, disposed, addicted, prone.*
- C. The ministers of God are to be given to it, so they should set the example (I Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8).
- D. It means to have brothers to your house for meals and/or take them to restaurants for meals.
- E. It is chiefly for those that cannot repay you – family or friends do not count (Luke 14:12-14).
- F. Families spend time together eating and loving; friends do the same; why not all brethren?
- G. We are a band of blood brothers separate from the world that should be tighter than others.
- H. It does not matter that you assemble, pray, or give to others, for that is not the duty here.

### *One to another.*

- A. Each person in the church should show hospitality to every other person in the church.
- B. It is a one-on-one duty, so you cannot justify yourself hiding in a crowd of a friendly church.
- C. One way to get over any coldness with another person is to entertain them with a great meal.
- D. It is only expensive if you forget your place and let pride cause you to overspend a budget.

### *Without grudging.*

- A. Why would anyone begrudge hospitality? Lazy, fearful, selfish, proud, hateful, or vengeful.
- B. Your little life with its little schedule does not matter to God or men. Grow up and entertain!
- C. Your personality faults and selfish habits from childhood can be overcome if you love Christ.
- D. Can a new year motivate you to give more attention, time, and money to this Christian duty?
- E. There is also the matter of entertaining strangers that could very well be angels (Heb 13:2).
- F. So serious is this matter that widows indeed being careless here are rejected (I Tim 5:10).
- G. If there is ever an occasion for liberality, it is not for yourself, but for others (Isaiah 32:8).

## ***10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.***

### *As every man hath received the gift.*

- A. The singular *gift* here is a collective noun standing for many gifts by virtue of *manifold*.
- B. Compare how the plural women is reduced to the singular the woman in I Timothy 2:9-15.
- C. The following verse has two gifts that are not the same and may be mutually exclusive.
- D. All supernatural gifts are gone; official gifts are few; ordinary and unofficial gifts are many.

### *Even so minister the same one to another.*

- A. Whatever ability or gifts, of any kind, are given to you, faithfully use them for benefit of all.
- B. Whatever gifts a man has, he should be content with them and not reach beyond his gift.
- C. Whatever gifts a man has, he should be zealous with them and not put any up in a napkin.
- D. For details of Romans 12:3-8 as a cross-reference ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/romans-twelve.pdf>
- E. Here we see *one another* duties again ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/one-another/sermon.php>.

*As good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

- A. **Manifold.** Varied or diverse in appearance, form, or character; having various forms, features, relations, applications, etc. Compare its earlier use in I Peter 1:6.
- B. God gave the varying gifts by His grace for the benefit of others, so use them all faithfully.
- C. You do not want to use your gift beyond its value or intent, and you do not want to be short.
- D. No one should take their gift and lay it up in a napkin, like the slothful servant profanely did.
- E. Paul used the example of a human body – every part has a role and should be esteemed for it.

***11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.***

*If any man speak.*

- A. This verse has two examples of gifts and how they are to be used for the benefit of others.
- B. This is not mere talking or speaking in public or private, this is public preaching by calling.
- C. This is the gift of the ministry and their public preaching, which is no ordinary mouth use.

*Let him speak as the oracles of God.*

- A. **Oracle.** The instrumentality, agency, or medium, by which a god was supposed to speak or make known his will; the mouthpiece of the deity.
- B. Compare usage of *oracle* or *oracles* in II Chr 16:23; Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12.
- C. Speaking as the oracles of God is as His representative and according to His revealed word.
- D. Ministers are to *preach the word* (II Tim 4:2), and nothing else should ever compete with it.
- E. Scripture makes the man of God perfect in preaching, and nothing else can (II Tim 3:16-17).
- F. The man of God must not go beyond nor should he come up short of God's written word.
- G. He must declare the whole counsel of God and hold back nothing profitable (Acts 20:20,27).
- H. He should do it with authority, with boldness, and with great plainness of speech for profit.
- I. He should do it with all reverence and godly fear, as the ambassador of Christ (II Cor 5:20).
- J. He should preach it with all authority and without any fear of man (Tit 2:15; Jer 1:8,17-19).
- K. He is the messenger of the Lord of hosts, and God meets men by him (Mal 2:7; Psalm 68:18).
- L. For more about magnifying the office ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/magnify-the-office.pdf>.
- M. For a review of Miriam and Korah ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/miriam-and-korah.pdf>.

*If any man minister.*

- A. This word means service, and in context here we see both pastors and deacons serving.
- B. However, any man or woman may at times be charged with serving others for the church.

*Let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.*

- A. No man should ever pretend he is something that he is not, including pastors playing apostle.
- B. No man properly qualified and called should excuse himself from performing less than best.
- C. Any lame body part that does not perform hinders the whole body from proper performance.
- D. No man should compare himself to another man but to the grace of the gift given to him.

*That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*

- A. Every exercise of every gift, official or unofficial, public or private, is done for God's glory.
- B. Jesus Christ gave the gifts to the church, and they should be used as He glorified His Father.
- C. The grace of Jesus Christ in our lives should result in a serving church that is of glory to God.
- D. This is our destiny ... this is why we are alive ... this is why we are in a church relationship.

*To whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

- A. This is the sum and substance of our faith – a sovereign God that created all for His glory!
- B. Your destiny is to either actively or passively give this glorious God praise and dominion!
- C. For a commentary of Proverbs 16:4 ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/16\\_04.php](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/16_04.php).
- D. For details of God's dominion ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/god/dominion-of-god/sermon.php>.

***12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:***

*Beloved.*

- A. If this affectionate title was Peter's love, you know God's love was much earlier and greater.
- B. If this affectionate title was God's love, you know that what follows was sent wrapped in it.
- C. It is wisdom to introduce a negative subject with a term of endearment and/or of affection.
- D. Peter repeats suffering often to this audience (I Pet 1:6; 2:12,20; 3:14-18; 4:1-4,12-19; 5:10).
- E. The topic is the right mindset Christians should have toward suffering for Him (1:13; 4:1).

*Think it not strange.*

- A. You must gird up your mind to avoid thinking contrary to God's will for you (I Pe 1:13; 4:1).
- B. Suffering is part of the Christian experience, and we should guard our thoughts concerning it.
  - 1. There will be tribulation to get to heaven (Acts 14:22; Matthew 10:21-25; 34-37; 16:24).
  - 2. If you are not suffering, then you are not living a godly life in Christ Jesus (II Tim 3:12).
  - 3. It is part of gospel preaching to warn and prepare God's people for it (I Thess 3:2-4).
  - 4. Jesus suffered in this world, and you should not think you are better than Him (Jn 15:20).
  - 5. They are false teachers and enemies of truth that preach about prosperity without pain, treasure without trouble, salvation without suffering, and pleasure without problems.
  - 6. The Christian life will have adversity, difficulties, pain, and trouble, so be looking for it.
  - 7. You err by thinking there is no trouble with Jesus or by falling down when trouble hits.
  - 8. It is okay to be cast down when things are tough, but you cannot be destroyed from walking with God and fulfilling public and private duties with joy to God (II Cor 4:8-10).
  - 9. For your last antidote to discouragement, remember Jesus overcame the world (Jn 16:33)!
- C. These saints had our family, health, financial, and other troubles, *and* they had persecution.
  - 1. What they did not have was a large majority of Christians around them rejecting Christ.
  - 2. We must take the lessons of this section and apply them to our own combination of trials.
  - 3. We should be humbled by the fact we do not experience anything close to their trouble.
- D. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, if you take warnings and prepare yourself for trouble.
  - 1. If you prepare by believing these promises, you will not be surprised when they come.
  - 2. If you prepare and God in mercy does not send it, it is good labor well lost in His love.
  - 3. If you prepare and God sends them in faithfulness, the good labor will make them easier.
  - 4. If you do not prepare, trials will find you secure, make you miserable, and cause despair.
  - 5. How do you know God has not chosen this passage to prepare us for coming tribulation?

*Concerning the fiery trial.*

- A. Fire is one of our most dreaded enemies, and the Bible uses it literally and metaphorically.
  - 1. It is used literally, for Jesus did have the Romans burn the city of Jerusalem (Matt 22:7).
  - 2. The martyrs of God have been burned literally at stakes during the last two millennia.
  - 3. Even one second with a finger tip over a match will cause you to appreciate fire's pain.
- B. This tribulation experience would burn Peter's audience, and they needed to be ready for it.
  - 1. It is used metaphorically, for it takes a refiner's fires to purge gold and silver of dross.
  - 2. In this case we understand it primarily metaphorically by the use of *trial* and *try you*.
  - 3. You will suffer persecution and trouble if you follow Jesus Christ, so be looking for it.
- C. If you do not want such fiery trials in your life, then do not follow Bible Christianity.
  - 1. Jesus Himself taught you to count up the cost before following Him (Luke 14:25-33).
  - 2. It is better to quit now and admit you are a loser than to do so in the heat of the battle.
  - 3. But far better than quitting because you are so carnally minded is to run to the flames!

*Which is to try you.*

- A. It had not come yet, but it was coming; Peter knew their sufferings were about to increase.
- B. The issue Peter will identify shortly is reproach and suffering for following Christ (4:13-19).
- C. Bad things happen to Christians for four reasons, and perfecting their faith is one (1:6-7).
- D. Recall the definition of patience and why trials come, so you will rejoice (Ja 1:2-4; Ro 5:3-5).
- E. For more about bad things to Christians ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf>.

*As though some strange thing happened unto you.*

- A. This word had already been used once to describe *abnormal, different, queer, or weird* (4:4).
- B. Pain, persecution, suffering, and trouble should not be considered foreign to following Jesus.
- C. As explained in greater detail above for the first clause of this verse, it is part of Christianity.
- D. Do not think you are Job under trial, unless God makes clear your sins of self-righteousness.
- E. Consider how believers are poorly prepared for His trials under prosperity gospel ministers.

***13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.***

*But rejoice.*

- A. This exhortation, this duty, this suggestion is totally contrary to human nature and life today.
  - 1. Very few can grasp any positive benefit for joy in the face of pain, suffering, or trouble.
  - 2. They do everything in their power, including compromise, to avoid any such tribulation.
- B. But this joyful response to persecution and tribulation is consistent throughout the N.T. (Matt 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23; Acts 5:41; 16:25; Rom 5:3-5; Phil 2:17; Col 2:14; James 1:2-4).
  - 1. One reason for joy is that perfection depends on temptations (Jas 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5).
  - 2. One reason for joy is that it puts you in company with great men (Matt 5:12; Luke 6:23).
  - 3. One reason for joy is that it allows you to demonstrate God's grace best (II Cor 12:9-10).
  - 4. The reason here is that suffering now leads to glory later (II Ti 3:12; Mat 5:12; Lu 6:23).
- C. Persecution now indicates eternal life later (Mark 10:30; Rom 8:17; Phil 1:28; II Thes 1:4-8).
- D. Peter will further lift up joy for suffering to glorify God for the privilege of suffering (4:16)!

*Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.*

- A. Here is a glorious concept – suffering for Christ's sake is participating in His own sufferings.
  - 1. Your suffering will never approach His real sufferings, because He helps us (II Cor 1:5).
  - 2. Your suffering will never approach His for the combination of things He had to endure.
  - 3. For a detailed description of His suffering ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/glory-of-the-cross-2.pdf>
- B. Jesus told Paul that he would suffer great things for the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:15-16).
- C. You put yourself in fellowship and company with Jesus when you suffer for Him (Phil 3:10).
- D. If you want to really be like Jesus, then look forward to suffering for Him and doing it gladly.

*That, when his glory shall be revealed.*

- A. Jesus has been glorified 1,984 years (in 2014), but it has not been revealed to the world yet.
- B. In His times He shall show Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate (I Tim 6:13-16). Glory!
- C. Jesus is coming in glory with His angels (Matt 25:31; II Thes 1:7-10; I Thes 4:16; Tit 2:13).

*Ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

- A. Those who suffered will be glad, for they get eternal life in the event (Rom 8:17; II Co 4:17).
- B. Those who suffered will be glad, for they honored Him by suffering for Him (I John 2:28).
- C. Those who suffered will be glad, for they will see their enemies destroyed (II Thess 1:7-10).
- D. Those who suffered will be glad, for their suffering for Him will be over forever (Rev 21:4).

***14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.***

*If ye be reproached for the name of Christ.*

- A. None was reproached like Jesus Himself (Ps 69:9,20; Isaiah 53:3; Matt 27:39; Mark 15:32).
- B. The name of Christ back then was presumed to be a dead Jewish false prophet and imposter.
  - 1. **Reproach.** To upbraid, reprove, or rebuke (a person); to revile, abuse. (Luke 1:25; 6:22).
  - 2. Paul and the early Christians were all despised and mocked (Acts 17:18,32; John 9:28).
  - 3. The majority around these believers were pagan Gentiles with a few Christ-denying Jews.
  - 4. Both groups hated Jesus and would have had nothing good to say of Him or His doctrine.
  - 5. Some say Jesus was the result of a German soldier impregnating a poor Jewish prostitute.
  - 6. Believers were called Christians as a negative term and were part of a cult of Nazarenes.
  - 7. Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem, believers were to bear His reproach (Heb 13:13).
- C. The only reproach that counts for anything is to be despised or reviled for the name of Jesus.
  - 1. As Peter wrote in the next verses, if you have any other faults, reproach does not count.
  - 2. The only suffering with real value in this context is for Jesus or His doctrine (Matt 5:11).
- D. We will be reproached by those who say they are Christians, which makes our case difficult.
  - 1. There are so many aberrant forms of Christianity today to make a person sick and angry.
  - 2. These heresies began quickly, but were held by few, until Christian nations like America.
  - 3. Of course, Roman Catholicism dominated Europe for around 1200 years from 600-1800.
  - 4. We live in perilous times of the last days when even conservative Christians compromise.
  - 5. But the fact is the same, as Paul identified in his prophetic warning of this (II Tim 3:12).
  - 6. Many of those reproaching and reviling us will be yapping loud about the name of Jesus.
  - 7. But Jesus knew this and included persecution for only righteousness' sake (Matt 5:10).

8. But there is another Jesus, spirit, and gospel that are not apostolic (II Cor 11:3-4,13-15).
  9. We must stand for every aspect of true doctrine and practice, and this will cause differences and bring opposition and reproach by those with a manmade Christianity.
- E. To be reproached for being a Christian or for being like Christ is the world's highest honor.

*Happy are ye.*

- A. The present tense and indicative mood are used here, though the case future and subjunctive!
  1. If verb tenses contradict context or doctrine, we help them fit, as we must (Ps 27:13-14).
  2. Sometimes verb tenses are used incorrectly for our learning (Gen 17:4-6; Ro 4:17; 8:30).
  3. If a Christian is reproached for Christ's sake, he should rejoice and be exceeding glad.
- B. This is a Christian mind – rejoicing at tribulation (Jas 1:2-4) and persecution (Mat 5:10-12).
- C. Once we know the right response, we should respond that way (James 1:2-4; II Cor 12:9-10).
- D. Knowing this instruction ahead of time, we should be ready to be glad under fiery trials.

*For the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.*

- A. This is the Holy Spirit of the living God, the Comforter promised by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. As the symbolic Dove descended and rested on Jesus, the Spirit is on and in true believers.
- C. The Holy Spirit causes men to speak and live for Christ, thus a present Cause of reproach.
- D. The Holy Spirit strengthens men under reproach, thus a very present Comforter (Ac 6:8-15).
- E. Jesus promised great power and wisdom to the apostles under persecution (Matt 10:19-20).
- F. The testimony of the martyrs show fortitude and grace the likes of which is not of this world!

*On their part he is evil spoken of.*

- A. Since unbelievers, especially pagans, know nothing of the Holy Spirit, we understand Jesus.
- B. The cause of reproach is Jesus name (see first clause), used by Christians, not the Holy Spirit.
- C. Those baptized unto John's baptism knew anything at all about the Holy Ghost (Acts 19:1-3).
- D. James wrote, *Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called* (Jas 2:7)?
- E. To test this, stop talking about God and replace that talk with proper praise of Jesus Christ.

*But on your part he is glorified.*

- A. Jesus Christ is glorified by His true followers ignoring reproach or torture for loyalty to Him.
- B. You glorify Jesus Christ when you hold to Him and His least teachings without compromise.
- C. You cannot glorify Jesus Christ in this way until you are suffering pain or loss for His sake.

***15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.***

*But let none of you suffer as a murderer.*

- A. If you are despised, reproached, or punished – make sure it is for Jesus Christ, not for crimes.
  1. The wicked will make up stuff, so your life must be perfectly clean (Mat 5:11; Ac 17:7).
  2. So far from justifying any charges, your life should do the opposite (I Peter 2:12; 3:16).
- B. Civil rulers do not bear the sword in vain – God sent them to cause suffering (Rom 13:3-5)!
  1. Every nation in the world has had more or less severe penalties for the crime of murder.
  2. Christians were often punished by death; he began with a capital crime deserving death.
  3. Christians should keep their lives clear from any crime again society: here it is murder.

- C. If a church's members were all arrested, there should be nothing to accuse even a single one.
  1. With modern means of surveillance, inquiry, discovery, vetting, Christians must be holy.
  2. If they want to take us down for the cause of Jesus Christ, so be it, but not for any crimes.
  3. Do not do anything even questionable in legal issues, for it may come back to bite Christ!
  4. Paul told a court that he was not afraid to die if guilty of any capital crime (Acts 25:11).
  5. When tried by rabid foes, he was innocent of crime (Acts 23:29; 24:23-27; 25:25; 26:31).
- D. If you are feeling some arrogance and self-righteousness, see if you make it through the list!
  1. The Holy Ghost began with a crime deserving death that few Christians would commit.
  2. However, if you are honest before the Holy Ghost, you are already guilty (Matt 5:21-26)!
  3. Rather than apply murder downward to hate, apply it sideways to other similar crimes.

*Or as a thief.*

- A. If you are despised, reproached, or punished – make sure it is for Jesus Christ, not for crimes.
  1. The wicked will make up stuff, so your life must be perfectly clean (Mat 5:11; Ac 17:7).
  2. So far from justifying any charges, your life should do the opposite (I Peter 2:12; 3:16).
- B. Christians must not be shoplifters, fraudulent businessmen, or compromise property rights.
  1. We do not even want to debate the value of a thing and then boast about it (Prov 20:14).
  2. We must fulfill every term of business dealings and file accurate and honest tax returns.
  3. Let every economic transaction have all things honest in the sight of all men (Ro 12:17).
- C. If you are feeling some arrogance and self-righteousness, see if you make it through the list!
  1. The Spirit moved to a crime deserving fines or imprisonment that few Christians commit.
  2. However, if you are honest before the Holy Ghost, are you already guilty (Titus 2:9-10)?

*Or as an evildoer.*

- A. If you are despised, reproached, or punished – make sure it is for Jesus Christ, not for crimes.
  1. The wicked will make up stuff, so your life must be perfectly clean (Mat 5:11; Ac 17:7).
  2. So far from justifying any charges, your life should do the opposite (I Peter 2:12; 3:16).
- B. What should we do with this vague term for crimes or sins? We should not limit its reach.
  1. Since the context is crimes against civil law or society, we will place our emphasis there.
  2. Paul admitted that he was in Rome as an evildoer for disturbing the peace (II Tim 2:9).
  3. We want to be knowledgeable of our nation's laws and do what we can to be guiltless.
  4. Is there a difference between one speeding ticket in ten years and ten in the last year?
  5. We want to avoid anything that could be construed as sedition or rebellion against them.
  6. When vetted, let us be known for *God Bless the IRS* rather than defrauding the IRS.
- C. The Jews did not have a good reputation, but rather a byword and proverb, around the world.

*Or as a busybody in other men's matters.*

- A. If you are despised, reproached, or punished – make sure it is for Jesus Christ, not for crimes.
  1. The wicked will make up stuff, so your life must be perfectly clean (Mat 5:11; Ac 17:7).
  2. So far from justifying any charges, your life should do the opposite (I Peter 2:12; 3:16).
- B. This slight sin, as many could think, is not slight by its inclusion here, but allows many more.
  1. **Busybody.** An officious or meddlesome person; one who is improperly busy in other people's affairs. **Officious.** Unduly forward in proffering services or taking business upon oneself; doing, or prone to do, more than is asked or required; interfering with what is not one's concern; pragmatical, meddlesome.
  2. God hates this sin and wants such persons out of His churches (II Thes 3:11; I Tim 5:13).

3. Some nations may have punished such idleness and curiosity as a crime; but if not, then its existence in a Christian could make them odious and evoke strong reproaches for it.
  4. It is a duty of Christians to be quiet and to pursue their own business (I Thess 4:11-12).
  5. They should work so hard they do not have time left over for curiosity (II Thess 3:6-15).
  6. Christians, in sinful self-righteousness, might do so by intruding on and correcting others.
  7. Some, due to nosy parents or lack of character, continue the sin of nosiness about others.
  8. If the Holy Spirit worked down to this from murder, you must be scrupulous in all things.
  9. When examined by the world, Christians should be scrupulously clean from any offence.
- C. We want to be free from offence in things civil, criminal, legal, professional, social, etc., etc.

***16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.***

*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian.*

- A. Peter returned to the argument of 4:14 after condemning any crimes leading to their suffering.
- B. We want to suffer at the hands of men for only one reason – loyalty to Jesus Christ the Lord.
- C. To be reproached for being a Christian or for being like Christ is the world’s highest honor.
- D. We should be so blessed to have the world hate us like it did Christ our Master (Jn 15:19-21).
- E. If you live godly in Christ, you will suffer persecution, in or out of the church (II Tim 3:12).

*Let him not be ashamed.*

- A. There is no shame at all suffering as a Christian for being loyal to Jesus’ name or doctrine.
- B. Paul told Timothy not to be ashamed of his bonds but to embrace afflictions (II Tim 1:8).
- C. The cause of Christ is very great, as Paul elaborated to encourage Timothy (II Tim 1:9-14).
- D. Consider David’s, “Is There Not a Cause” ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/is-there-not-a-cause.pdf>.
- E. Consider, “Great Men by Great Cause” ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/greatness-by-a-great-cause.pdf>.

*But let him glorify God on this behalf.*

- A. Suffering tribulations or persecution is a blessed privilege to you to show Christ greater love.
- B. You cannot fully demonstrate the religion of your Master to its fullest until suffering for it.
- C. The apostles left the council of the Jews rejoicing for getting beat for Jesus’ name (Ac 5:41).
- D. For reasons given above (4:12-15) and more, suffering is a privilege for which to thank God.

***17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?***

*For the time is come.*

- A. Peter was an apostle, which meant he had the gift of prophecy and inspiration in these words.
- B. There have been persecutions through history in various places, and Nero was no exception.
- C. Your times are in His hand; nothing happens anywhere outside the will of God (Ps 31:15).
- D. Peter had already introduced the fact he knew what was coming against them (4:12,14; 1:6).
- E. This matter of fiery trials was not distant to them, though such of the same kind may be to us.

### *That judgment must begin.*

- A. Paul called chastening, which is God's love, both damnation and judgment (I Cor 11:29-32).
  - 1. He set Corinthian judgment in stark contrast to condemnation of the wicked in that place.
  - 2. Paul was consistent in teaching that men enter the kingdom via tribulation (Acts 14:22).
- B. This *judgment*, in its context, is not punishment or chastening, but persecution and suffering.
  - 1. Context dictates definition of words more than common or dictionary senses e.g. *board*.
  - 2. The context surrounding this verse demands a sense other than punishment or chastening.
  - 3. It is far less than the judgment implied by the references to the destruction of the wicked.
  - 4. It is between verses of suffering (4:12-16,19), where God sends trials to glorify Christ.
  - 5. It is not even truly chastening, but rather the perfection of Christian faith through trials.
  - 6. It should be understood as a trial (4:12) to cause rejoicing without any shame (4:13-16).
  - 7. It happened to righteous Christians without any guilt for wrongdoing before God or men.
  - 8. As partakers in Christ's suffering, it is innocent suffering, for He had no sins of His own.
  - 9. It is described as reproach by wicked men that would speak evil of the Lord Jesus Christ, which puts the onus of guilt upon them, not upon those suffering at their wicked hands.
  - 10. It was an event of *judgment* that produced a greater ministry of the Holy Spirit of God.
  - 11. It was *judgment* upon men that were not guilty and should not be guilty of any offences.
  - 12. These and other evidences from the context determine the meaning of the *judgment* here.
  - 13. When chastening is described of believers for sin, it is very obvious and different from this passage (I Cor 11:29-32; Heb 12:5-15; Rev 2:5,14-16,20-23; 3:3,19; II Pet 2:20-22).
  - 14. The word *judged* is in the context to describe what wicked men do to the righteous (4:6), and the time had arrived when God would allow the wicked to increase the persecution.
  - 15. The audience is many churches in five regions of Turkey, which rules out chastening for some particular offence like Corinth or John's individual churches of Asia (I Peter 1:1).
  - 16. Paul called the suffering of saints a token of God's judgment (II Thess 3:4-6; Phil 1:28).
  - 17. God chose Paul to suffer many things for His sake; why could it not be called judgment?
  - 18. All God's saints are sinners to various degrees, even after conversion, deserving some judgment, which is first, far inferior, and much gentler than judgment of the wicked.
  - 19. Since the Holy Spirit is comparing the pain of righteous versus wicked, and the word for what will happen to the wicked in the future is *judgment*, it is right to use it here.
- C. This *judgment* was a determination, trial, or proving of those calling themselves Christians.
  - 1. Peter opened this epistle by describing the manifold temptations to try the Jews (1:6-7).
  - 2. Peter opened this passage by describing it as a *trying trial* and here as *judgment* (4:12).
  - 3. Their response was to submit and continue in well doing, rather than to repent (4:19).
- D. Those "judged" are Christians (4:16), God's house (4:17), righteous (4:18), kept souls (4:19).

### *At the house of God.*

- A. The house of God is God's church, especially in local churches (I Tim 3:15; Heb 3:6; 10:21).
- B. God has His church, and He has in infinite wisdom chosen to try them at times by fiery trials.
- C. God's harsh dealings with children come first in this world, torture of the wicked in the next.

### *And if it first begin at us.*

- A. God allowed the wicked to persecute and trouble His children before bringing vengeance.
- B. Take delight in the *us versus them* of this verse and passage (Ps 139:21-22; Prov 29:27)!
- C. The martyrs show that against numerous religious opponents they were tortured and killed.
- D. John taught believers must overcome tribulation before salvation (Rev 1:9; 2:9-10,22; 7:14).

- E. The judgment begins with the church, in this life, for the wicked it comes last, for eternity!
  1. The closest thing to heaven the wicked will ever know is this life (Psalm 17:14; 73:12).
  2. The closest thing to hell the righteous will ever know is this life (I Cor 15:19; Lu 16:25).

*What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God.*

- A. If God allowed His children to be hurt, even to death, what will He do in fury to the wicked?
- B. There is a huge difference! The righteous suffer a little now; the wicked are damned forever!
- C. God uses the wicked to try His people, and then He crushes the wicked (Is 10:12; Jer 25:29).
- D. Compare them! Pulled apart slowly on racks with excruciating pain ... to something worse!

## ***18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?***

*And if the righteous scarcely be saved.*

- A. Here is a two-step means of Bible interpretation – what can it not mean; what does it mean?
- B. For any that tremble, thinking salvation is doubtful or can be lost, it says they shall be saved!
  1. There is no fear of losing salvation here, a faithful Creator is right in the context (4:19).
  2. The elect are absolutely secure in Christ without doubt of future destination (Ro 8:28-39).
  3. They are complete in Him (Col 3:10), and He saves them to the uttermost (Heb 7:25).
  4. The faithfulness of God and the merit of Jesus Christ and His death guarantee each one.
  5. For much more about assurance ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/assurance-of-eternal-life.pdf>.
- C. The righteous are scarcely saved due to much suffering on this side of eternity (4:12-16,19).
  1. They end up in heaven, but they endure a great fight of afflictions here (Hebrews 10:32).
  2. This strait gate and narrow way leads to life by tribulation (Matt 7:13-14; Acts 14:22).
  3. In this life, ignoring their resurrection and heaven, they are most miserable (I Cor 15:19).
  4. It appears that God has forsaken them by their suffering, like men saw Jesus (Is 53:4).
  5. They are *scarcely saved* in that their lives are often quite miserable with harsh suffering.
  6. By outward appearances, the judgment of men, and their fearful hearts, we see *scarcely!*
- D. If the righteous appear to be forsaken by God and under His wrath, what of the ungodly?!

*Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear.*

- A. This arrangement justifies God saving you and condemning them (Phil 1:28; II Thess 1:4-6).
  1. The wicked must be punished eternally for stark and great contrast to believers' suffering.
  2. These are in contrast to righteous souls of God's house, whose souls He Himself keeps.
- B. Men do not disappear! Let the annihilationists and soul sleep heretics prepare to meet God.
  1. It is appointed for men once to die and then to face their judgment (Heb 9:27; II Co 5:10).
  2. Peter declares all men appearing somewhere, but the wicked shall not stand (Ps 1:5; 5:5).
  3. The horrible sight of the final judgment should cause all to tremble and run to the Lamb!

***19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.***

*Wherefore let them that suffer.*

- A. Peter concluded his arguments about Christian suffering to this point by the use of *wherefore*.
- B. On the basis of these verses (4:12-18), Peter's readers should submit to their fiery tribulation.
  - 1. If this were eternal judgment, He would have exhorted them to run to Christ for salvation.
  - 2. If it were chastening, He would have exhorted to repentance (Job 36:15-19; He 12:5-17).
- C. This verse clarifies the *judgment* of 4:17 was not punishment, but rather trials, as 4:12-16.
- D. The lesson's summary is a further statement of the proper mindset of suffering Christians.
- E. Here is how Christians should view and respond to persecution and other harsh tribulations.

*According to the will of God.*

- A. Sometimes, as this case, God's will is for His dear children to suffer persecution (3:17; 1:6).
- B. God's sovereignty is not dry doctrine for monasteries or seminaries, but for holy perspective.
- C. No temptation has occurred to a man outside God's will and a way to escape (I Cor 10:13).
- D. God's will is always for His glory and our profit, if we respond to His circumstances rightly.
- E. Everything must be submitted, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas 4:15).

*Commit the keeping of their souls to him.*

- A. Here is the Christian mindset – trust God and give up your soul/spirit to Him for safekeeping.
- B. Paul did this and was persuaded his faithful Creator could keep him very safe (II Tim 1:12).
- C. But far greater yet, Jesus did this on the cross, when God had forsaken Him (Luke 23:46).
- D. Stephen also did this, in spite of painful thudding of fatal stones on his body (Acts 7:59-60).
- E. Can you, will you, trust the God that created you to take care of your soul/spirit after death?

*In well doing.*

- A. The character of the righteous here and of the martyrs is one of *well doing* defined by God.
  - 1. Doing well is not what the world thinks is good, but rather what God and the Bible say.
  - 2. What a great test of men to continue to *do well* even while greatly suffering for doing it.
  - 3. Stephen, like Jesus, prayed forgiveness for his enemies to the very end (Acts 7:59-60).
- B. You should not and dare not trust God to deliver you to heaven while living in any iniquity.
  - 1. You can commit your soul to Him all you want, but righteousness is best (I Tim 6:17-19).
  - 2. Not all those calling on Him will be saved, but the obedient (Matthew 5:20; 7:21-23).
  - 3. If you want to read the character of those that appear before God (Ps 15:1-5; 24:1-6).
- C. The Jews did not have a good reputation, but rather a byword and proverb, around the world.

*As unto a faithful Creator.*

- A. The Bible commonly references and appeals to God as Creator (Acts 4:24; Heb 1:2; etc., etc).
- B. As Creator, He has power to save your soul to the uttermost in every dimension of existence.
- C. As Jehovah, He is a Creator that keeps His promises, yea, His oaths, to save all His children.
  - 1. He is I AM THAT I AM, the self-existent and independent God that sustains all others.
  - 2. Your future depends on His character, which depends on his existence, which is the First Cause and Source of all things and infinitely incapable of violation of any kind.
  - 3. He has promised and sworn, and He cannot lie or repent of any promise or oath (Tit 1:2).

- D. Our Lord Jesus, though forsaken by this Creator, at the end commended His spirit to Him.
- E. When sun and seasons change, you may remember that His Creator faithfulness is for you.
- F. The keeping of your soul depends on His faithfulness, not on yours at some altar or in life.