

1 Peter 3:13 – 22

(1Pe 3:13) And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

(1Pe 3:14) But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

(1Pe 3:15) 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:

(1Pe 3:16) 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.

(1Pe 3:17) For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

(1Pe 3:18) 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:

(1Pe 3:19) By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

(1Pe 3:20) 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.

(1Pe 3:21) 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:

(1Pe 3:22) Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Exposition

(1Pe 3:13) And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

(1Pe 3:14) But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

- So, Peter is moving into a new section in his letter.
 - Now, He will talk about suffering, and for the most part
 - ◆ Wrongfully suffering. Suffering for righteousness' sake.
- Remember, Peter was arrested for preaching the Gospel Acts 4
 - And they told him not to preach anymore
 - ◆ In the Name of Jesus Christ. And Peter and his friends
 - Went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy
 - Enough to suffer that kind of persecution for Jesus.
- Peter isn't preaching something he didn't do himself.
 - Jesus had actually taught His disciples this in the beatitudes,

(Mat 5:10) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 5:11) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

(Mat 5:12) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

- ◆ In verse 14 when it says happy are ye, the Greek word for
 - Happy is Makarios, which means Extremely Blessed.
- There is a privilege for those who are suffering for
 - Righteousness sake.
 - ◆ 1. You are Blessed
 - ◆ 2. Your suffering is better than that of those who suffer for
 - wrongdoing.
 - ◆ 3. Their suffering brings them into intimate fellowship

- with Christ.
- and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;
 - Christian courage in not being sinfully afraid of those evils
 - ◆ which men may threaten us with, for righteousness sake,
 - is a duty frequently recommended to us in scripture,

❖ (Isa 8:11) For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

❖ (Isa 8:12) Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them to* whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

❖ (Isa 8:13) Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let* him *be* your fear, and *let* him *be* your dread.

❖ (Eze 2:6) And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns *be* with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house.

(1Pe 3:15) 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:

- ❖ Sanctify: To make Holy
 - “Sanctifying the Lord God” means, not making Him holy, for He is
 - already most holy, but regarding Him as holy, treating Him, the
 - idea of Him, and all that is His, sacredly, and in a manner
 - ◆ different from that in which we regard all other things
 - and ideas.
- Give a special place for God in your life.
 - So live the kind of a life that is an example that will

- provoke people to question you. What makes you
 - ◆ different? Why is it that you are not upset over this?
 - "Be ready to give to every man an answer for that
 - hope that you have."
- ❖ This speaks about the manner in which we must be a witness.
 - Witnessing can be an effort. Peter speaks about being prepared
 - to give an answer, which suggests a spontaneous and natural
 - kind of giving our testimony. Our testimony ought to be an
 - ◆ answer to people who ask.
- ❖ This means that our life must be such that it raises questions in the
 - hearts of others making them curious to the point of wanting to
 - know what kind of hope we cherish. There appears to be a double
 - feature in witnessing: there is the ambiance we create which
 - evokes the question and there is our answer to the
 - ◆ question. Someone once said: "Be a witness of Christ; use words if needed."
- ❖ " It is obvious that the first part of the testimony is the more
 - important one. Everyone can talk about Jesus; living with Jesus is
 - for those who are serious in their search.
- ❖ The spirit in which we speak is also important. Gentleness is the
 - opposite of arrogance. We must not have an attitude that says: "I
 - have it, you don't." We must have a longing to draw others to
 - the Lord in order for them to be saved.
- ❖ The New International Version uses the word "respect." The Greek
 - word is phobos, which literally means "fear." The English word
 - "phobia" is derived from it. This fear is not panic but the
 - respect and awe we have toward the Lord, as expressed in
 - ◆ the term "the fear of the Lord." It is the awareness of

- people who know that they stand, not because of
 - personal achievement but because of God's grace.

(1Pe 3:16) 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.

- We must keep our conscience clear. We must make sure that our
 - behavior is such that others are drawn to the Lord because of
 - us. A true Christian will evoke a feeling of shame in others.
 - ◆ Everyone knows deep inside how he ought to live.
- We must lead such a life that other people will think: "That is the
 - way I ought to be, but I am not."
- What is a good conscience?
 - Conscience is that faculty of the human mind by which rational
 - creatures endeavor to form an estimate of their own
 - ◆ principles and practices, so as to determine whether they
 - are good or evil.
- It is universally admitted to be one of the most valuable of those
 - powers which our all-wise and ever-gracious Creator has been
 - pleased to impart to us.
- But it, like every other faculty of the mind, has been exposed to all
 - the baneful effects of the Fall. It is by nature-in common with
 - the human heart-ignorant, and perverse, and polluted.
- It must, before it can fully accomplish the purposes for which it is
 - intended, be instructed, and purified by the Holy Ghost.
- ❖ What, it may now be asked, is, in the scriptural sense of the term, a good conscience?
 - **1.** It is a conscience renewed by Divine grace.

- ❖ 2. It is a conscience regulated by the holy Scriptures.
 - Even after holy principles are implanted within us, the conscience
 - is liable to err unless a standard is provided by which its
 - decisions may be governed.
- ❖ That standard the Word of God supplies.
 - To it we must appeal in every situation in which we are placed.
 - From it we must derive all that instruction in righteousness
 - which we need.
- ❖ How do we keep a good conscience?
 - By simply living by:
- ❖ (1Jn 4:4) Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.
- ❖ A good conscience sets a man free from all unworthy motives.
 - Whether those around him persecute or approve, to him doesn't.
 - matter. He does not derive his principles of belief and conduct
 - from any censure or approval of theirs.
- ❖ He feels that he need conceal nothing. He can afford, in every sense,
 - to "walk in the light." How much anxiety and inward disquietude is
 - saved by this; how much perilous maneuvering is made
 - needless!
- ❖ (1Pe 3:17) For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.
- ❖ (1Pe 2:20) For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

- ❖ That is, if God sees it to be necessary for your good that you should
 - suffer, it is better that you should suffer for doing well than for
 - crime. God often sees it to be necessary that his people should
 - suffer. There are effects to be accomplished by affliction
 - ◆ which can be secured in no other way;
 - and some of the happiest results on the soul of a
 - Christian, some of the brightest traits of character,
 - are the effect of trials.
- ❖ If we are to suffer, let it be by the direct hand of God, and not by any
 - fault of our own.

❖ (1Pe 3:18) 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:

- Here, Peter is trying to put the reader at ease so to speak.
 - By telling us that even Christ had suffered.
 - We aren't alone in this endeavor. Peter is trying to
 - ◆ Encourage and comfort in our sufferings by His example.
- ❖ The expression, "hath once suffered," in the New Testament, means
 - once for all; once, in the sense that it is not to occur again.
- ❖ (Heb 7:27) Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.
- ❖ The particular point here, however, is not that he once suffered;
 - it is that he had in fact suffered, and that in doing it he had left an
 - example for them to follow.

- ❖ The one who was just, (δίκαιος dikaios,) on account of, or in the
 - place of, those who were unjust, (ὕπὲρ ἀδίκων huper adikōn;) or
 - one who was righteous, on account of those who were wicked.

- ❖ (2Co 5:21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

(Heb 9:28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

- ❖ **That he might bring us to God** - That his death might be the means
 - of reconciling sinners to God.
- ❖ **being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit**
- ❖ Quickened ζωοποιηθεὶς zoōpoiētheis. *dzo-op-oy-eh'-o* This does not mean “kept alive,” but “made alive.

- ❖ (1Pe 3:19) By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
- ❖ (1Pe 3:20) 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.

- ❖ Now we will take these two passages together.

- This is a very perplexing pair of verses. Martin Luther had this to
 - say about these verses:
 - “A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage
 - ◆ perhaps than any other in the New Testament, so that I
 - do not know for a certainty just what Peter means”!
- Too many times today, teachers want to add stuff to the scriptures
 - That aren’t really there. There are many books that some
 - Claim are part of the scriptures, but aren’t. The book
 - ◆ Of Enoch for example. The scriptures we have today,
 - The Bible we have today are the complete scriptures.
- You have to be careful with commentaries that you read.
 - Many if not most of them are written by folks that do NOT
 - Have the Holy Ghost.
- Doing research on these scriptures, I came across many saying
 - That this is proof that Jesus went to Hell and preached to those
 - In hell during the time in His tomb. There are absolutely
 - ◆ NO scriptures to back this idea up.
- I will never claim to be smarter than Martin Luther,
 - So as to what Peter meant exactly, we may never know.
 - But, we can piece things together based on what
 - ◆ We KNOW to be true, and the things that we
 - KNOW NOT to be true.
- We KNOW that the final judgement has yet to happen.
 - We KNOW that the Bible does NOT contradict itself.
 - “By which (or in which) also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison”.
 - Let’s go step by step.
 -
 - The first two words –“by which” or “in which”- to what are
 - ◆ they alluding? They reference back to the subject of the

- final clause of the previous verse (v. 18), namely, the
 - Holy Spirit. The whole clause reads, “Being put to
 - death in the flesh, but quickened (or made alive)
 - ◆ by the Spirit: by which also He went...”
- So the “by which” or the “in which” would be best translated
 - ◆ as “by whom” or “in whom” given the personal nature of
 - the Spirit of God. Jesus, according to v. 19, “went and
 - preached” by the Spirit of God or in the Spirit of
 - God.
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- So far, so good! But now the problems start. Jesus went and
 - ◆ preached in the Spirit unto “the spirits in prison”.
 - What is Peter talking about here? We’ll have to fast
 - forward to verse 20.
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- III.- Verse 20
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- “Which sometime (in another time) were disobedient, when
 - ◆ once the longsuffering (patience) of God waited in the
 - days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, that is,
 - eight souls were saved by water”.
-
- So, “the spirits in prison” in v. 19 were those who were
 - ◆ “disobedient” in the days of Noah. Who was disobedient
 - in the days of Noah? Everybody except for the eight
 - folk that were saved in the ark! Noah preached the
 - Word of God unto them as a good old-fashioned
 - ◆ “preacher of righteousness” but no-one
 - ◆ listened.

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- What happened to the disobedient? They were drowned in
 - ◆ the great flood that the Lord sent.
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- Peter's first epistle is written a few thousand years after the
 - ◆ flood. Those who disobeyed the Word of God in Noah's
 - day were no longer alive in the flesh. Therefore, Peter
 - –in the first century AD- has no qualms in speaking
 - of them as “the spirits in prison”.
-
- The disobedient once walked the earth in their human
 - ◆ bodies; but now, as they await the great Final Day of the
 - resurrection of the just and the unjust, they are bound
 - and abide under the hot wrath of the Almighty.
-
- But how could Jesus go and preach to them if they had died
 - ◆ thousands of years before His incarnation?
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- Well, Peter never says that Christ preached in the flesh. He
 - ◆ states the Lord did so by means of the Spirit. According to
 - 1 Peter 1:11, the Spirit of Christ announced,
 - “beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory
 - that should follow”.
 - ◆ In other words, Christ spoke through the
 - ◆ prophets by means of His Spirit.
 -
 - 2 Peter 1:21 tells us the same story: “The prophecy came not
 - ◆ in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke
 - as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”.

- In each case, Peter is telling us that although Jesus had not yet
 - come to earth in physical form, He spoke repeatedly by means
 - of the prophets.
 - ◆ And this is exactly what is happening in our verse (v. 20).
 - ◆
- ❖ How did Jesus speak to the disobedient men and women in the days
 - of the ark? By means of Noah, of course! Noah was the
 - mouthpiece of the Spirit of God.
 -
 - “And the Lord said: My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for
 - that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be 120 years” (Genesis
 - 6:3). Perhaps this text means that the Lord used Noah to
 - ◆ preach repentance for 120 years before sending the
 - flood. But what is crystal clear is that the Spirit of the
 - Lord was at work in the days of Noah the prophet.
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 - A natural way to interpret these couple of verses, then, would be
 - that the Lord Jesus preached through Noah to the sinners
 - before the flood came.
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 - All this makes sense when we hop back into the immediate
 - context of the verses. Peter is encouraging persecuted saints to
 - be strong in the Lord. By means of the example of Noah, the
 - ◆ people of God in Asia Minor could understand that their
 - tough situation was by no means new.
 -
 -
 - ❖ They were not the first folk on earth to suffer for preaching the Word
 - of God.
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- God's people are always a remnant. Only eight were saved in
 - Noah's day. And so it should come as no surprise to true
 - Christians to realize that the vast majority of Adam's
 - ◆ children are going to reject the Word of the Lord.

❖ (1Pe 3:21) 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:

❖ (1Pe 3:22) Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

