

A Study of 1 Peter 4

I. Outline.

1. Value in suffering (1 Peter 4.1-4).
2. Judgment by persecution (5-7).
3. Christian living (8-11).
4. Rejoice in trial (12-19).

II. Summary.

Peter begins by talking to us about a special kind of ARMOR. He tells us to ARM ourselves with the mind of Christ. As we live the Christian life, we will surely be in need of this kind of spiritual armor. We are greatly blessed to have the example of Christ and the teaching He left with His apostles! He tells us that the sins of our past life are sufficient (i.e., we don't need to commit any more)! He raises the distinct possibility that we may be able to influence our former associates in evil by a changed and godly life. He talks about the END being at hand and likely this is a reference to the same subject matter Jesus dealt with in the first part of Matthew 24—the destruction of Jerusalem. He provides many short and easy-to-understand exhortations regarding manner of life which will be a tremendous help to Christians who are facing persecution and of value also to Christians who are not. The interesting idea of rejoicing in being able to participate in the suffering of Christ is also mentioned by Peter (v. 13). He places special emphasis on wearing the name CHRISTIAN!

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Church.

If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

“The First Epistle of Peter was written to Christians who were enduring persecution, not for wrongdoing, but merely because they followed Christ and consequently refused to participate in the immoral practices of the pagan society in which they lived. The suffering brought about by their present persecution was soon to increase dramatically as the Jewish War approached. In A.D. 66, the Jews rebelled against their Roman lords but by A.D. 70 nearly all opposition was crushed. When the Roman army under Titus defeated and destroyed Jerusalem that year, the Jewish people throughout the Empire suffered as mobs took advantage of the general hostility to ridicule, rob, and even to kill Jews. Because Christianity had grown up in the cradle of Judaism, Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, were regarded the same as Jews. Therefore, Christians throughout the Empire suffered along with the Jews in the War and its aftermath. It is against this background that the admonitions of 1 Pet. 4 are given” [Rod Rutherford, “The Call to Duty in the Midst of Persecution,” in *Things Pertaining to Life and Godliness*, edited by Rod Rutherford].

IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- **1 Peter 4:1... HATH CEASED FROM SIN**—“The person who has suffered persecution for his faith in Jesus Christ finds that sin no longer has any appeal to him. Just as fire burns impurities away from precious ore and leaves the pure metal, so the fires of persecution clear away spiritual lethargy and fleshly lusts to leave the Christian stronger with a greater desire for ‘those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God’ (Col. 3:1)” [Rod Rutherford, “The Call to Duty in the Midst of Persecution,” in *Things Pertaining to Life and Godliness*, edited by Rod Rutherford].
- **1 Peter 4.5... WHO SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT**—“This verb means ‘to pay back.’ People who are ‘living in sensuality’ (v. 3) and who ‘malign’ believers (v. 4) are amassing a debt to God that they will

spend all eternity paying back (cf., Matthew 12.36: Romans 14.11-12; Hebrews 4.13)” [ESV MacArthur Study Bible, Kindle Location: 276419].

- **1 Peter 4:6... FOR THIS CAUSE WAS THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM THAT ARE DEAD**—“The expression, ‘for this cause,’ refers to God’s plan for judging the living and the dead. Because all men—whether living or dead—are going to be judged, then the gospel had to be preached to all men. Was the gospel preached to the dead while they were alive or after they died? The tense of the verb suggests the people heard the gospel while they were alive, but they are now dead. Who are the dead Peter had in mind? Are they not the people who are now dead, but who were alive when the gospel was preached unto them? The verse cannot mean that men will have another chance after they die to obey the gospel. The Hebrew writer emphatically stated: ‘And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment’ (Heb 9:27)” [Winford Claiborne, *Divine Relationships*, p. 245].
- **1 Peter 4:7... THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND**—“It must be kept in mind that Peter was writing to Christians in the first century. If he told them that the end was near, meaning the end of the world, he did not tell the truth for the world has continued more than 1,900 years since Peter wrote. There is no substance either in the supposition of the modernists that Peter fully expected Jesus to come in his lifetime as did the other sacred writers but was mistaken. The believer in Peter’s inspiration will take the phrase in the context of the passage and the overall context of the epistle. Remember that Peter was writing just a few short years before the destruction of Jerusalem and with it the final vestiges of the then defunct Old Testament system of sacrifice and ritual. The destruction of this city and its temple which embodied Judaism and (to the non-discerning eye of a heathen), also Christianity, would unleash a severe persecution against the people of God. It must be this of which the inspired penman writes” [Rod Rutherford, “The Call to Duty in the Midst of Persecution,” in *Things Pertaining to Life and Godliness*, edited by Rod Rutherford]. IIII “The destruction of Jerusalem was such a catastrophic event the language Peter used would certainly be appropriate. The Jewish state had been in existence for almost fifteen hundred years. Its destruction could be accurately described as ‘the end of all things.’ Of course, that kind of language could be used in reference to the end of the world, but it does not seem to fit the context of 1 Peter” [Winford Claiborne, *Divine Relationships*, pp. 247-48].
- **1 Peter 4.8... FERVENT**—“‘Earnestly’ means ‘to be stretched,’ ‘to be strained.’ It is used of a runner who is moving at maximum output with taut muscles straining and stretching to the limit (cf., 1 Peter 1.22). This kind of love requires the Christian to put another’s spiritual good ahead of his own desires in spite of being treated unkindly ungraciously or even with hostility (cf., 1 Corinthians 13.4-7; Philippians 2.1-4)” [ESV MacArthur Study Bible, Kindle Location: 276439].
- **1 Peter 4.9... HOSPITALITY**—“The word ‘hospitality’ is the translation of a Greek word meaning literally ‘friendly to strangers.’ Thus the thought in the mind of the apostle is not that of hospitality shown to one’s friends who do not need it, but to Christians who in their travels for the Lord Jesus, or for whatever other reason, may be in need of food and shelter. The persecutions which some of these Christians were enduring deprived them often of the necessities of life, and such an exhortation as this was needed” [Wuest].
- **1 Peter 4.10... THE GIFT**—“chárisma; gen. charísmatos, neut. noun from charízomai (G5483), to show favor. A gift of grace, an undeserved benefit. The suffix -ma, indicates the result of grace. Equivalent to dóron (G1435), gift. In the NT used only of gifts and graces imparted from God, deliverance from peril (2 Corinthians 1:11); the gift of self-control (1 Corinthians 7:7); gifts of Christian knowledge, consolation, confidence (Romans 1:11; 1 Corinthians 1:7); redemption, salvation through Christ (Romans 5:15-16; Romans 6:23; Romans 11:29). Specifically of the gifts imparted to the early Christians and particularly to Christian teachers by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 1 Corinthians 12:9, 1 Corinthians 12:28, 1 Corinthians 12:30-31; 1 Peter 4:10). As communicated with the laying on of hands (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).” [The Complete Word Study Dictionary, an e-Sword Module].

- **1 Peter 4.11... ORACLES**—"Oracles means words spoken. The word came first in oral form, and then was developed in written form. For a while, it was both, and then finally it passed from oral to completely written as far as the revealed word of God. One can still speak the word of God today, but they are not revealed except through the Scriptures" [T.J. Clarke, *Bible Institute of Missouri Notes*, by Bradley Cobb, an e-Sword Module].
- **1 Peter 4.16... IF ANY MAN SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED**—"To suffer 'as a Christian' is to suffer persecution for being a Christian; and those thus suffering are not to be ashamed (because they suffer for this reason) but are to 'blorify God' (praise and honor him) 'in this name' (i.e., in the name Christian). A thrilling example of such will be seen in the conduct of Peter and John in Jerusalem when persecuted for preaching in the name of Christ, and their consequent 'rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name'" [Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude*, Gospel Advocate, 1973, p. 118].
- **1 Peter 4:17... FOR THE TIME IS COME THAT JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN**—"The judgment spoken of in verse seventeen is not the judgment of the last day... One needs to go back to Matthew, chapter 24, and read the first thirty-five verses to find a clear description of the events that would transpire on that perilous occasion as predicted by our Lord himself. Adam Clarke points out that when the Roman army first began the siege of Jerusalem, many Christians were in the city. For some strange and unknown reason, the siege was briefly lifted and the army temporarily withdrew. The Christians remembering Jesus' prophetic words, fled from the city to Pella, east of the Jordan. So far as we know, not a single follower of Jesus died in the destruction of the city although the Christians did suffer in the aftermath of the war" [Rod Rutherford, "The Call to Duty in the Midst of Persecution," in *Things Pertaining to Life and Godliness*, edited by Rod Rutherford]. Cf., Mt 24:22. |||| **AND IF IT FIRST BEGIN AT US**--"The significance is, if the church, which is ever the object of God's care, is soon to fall into trial and sore persecution, how much greater must be the misery and wretchedness of those who do not rely on the Lord, and are thus without the comforting assurances of the gospel?" [Guy N. Woods, p. 119].

V. Lessons & Applications.

ONE: The lessons below are from Rod Rutherford--"The Call to Duty in the Midst of Persecution," in *Things Pertaining to Life and Godliness*, edited by Rod Rutherford].

- Persecution is good for the child of God for it purges his desire to sin and makes him stronger in the faith.
- The Christian life is a changed life. The child of God will put away worldly activities in which he formerly engaged. One's old companions will not understand the change but perhaps this will afford an opportunity to teach them the truth of the gospel.
- Christians should all be bound together in love. This love will prompt a willing, forgiving spirit (Matt. 6:14-15; Eph. 4:32).
- Hospitality is a Christian virtue that brings great blessings, both to the host and to his guests.
- As disciples of Christ, we are privileged to wear his name. We should never bring reproach upon it by evil doing but bring glory to God by our exemplary living. The name "Christian" is the name all believers in Christ can wear in unity. When one hyphenates it, by prefixing human names to it, e.g., "Baptist-Christian," "Methodist-Christian," etc., he has corrupted God's Word and fostered division among professed believers in Christ.
- We can trust in God to keep us through all the trials of life and to give us a home with him at last.

TWO: The lessons below are from an unknown editor, *Companion*, 2000-2001, p. 138.

- Mankind shuns suffering and craves comfort and pleasure, but Peter points out to us that suffering has advantages. It shows us the transitory and shallow nature of lusts of the flesh and weans us from them. The person who suffers knows how easy pleasure can evaporate and

how much we need God. Consequently, he is less likely to be influenced by the sins of the flesh. He realizes that time spent living for the world is wasted time and wants to devote his remaining years to God's service.

- The pastimes of the world do not change much. Peter's reference to "lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties" accurately describes much in our culture that is depicted in media and practiced in the haunts of those who live for the flesh, including, unfortunately, places on some university campuses. The Christian should avoid these activities and also the places where they occur.
- A Christian will encounter those who question that Christians avoid worldly practices and who show wonder and resentment toward them, falsely accusing them out of discomfort at being around holy people. This is when the Christian should kindly but firmly stand for righteousness and defend his brethren against slander.
- Christian living will bring persecution, but Christians in other ages have faced it, and we are in great company when we endure it as well (1 Corinthians 10.13). The life in which we face suffering is short; we will enjoy the rewards with the faithful of all ages for ETERNITY.

THREE: From Dave Phillips, in *The Behavior of Belief*, the 2012 Freed-Hardeman Lectures, pp., 322-24. "I would like to challenge us to look at the traits enumerated by Peter as pieces of armor that prepare us for spiritual warfare. Instead of thinking of outward weaponry, consider the inner, spiritual strength needed to overcome persecution by Satan and other enemies of God. ...

- For example, Peter's first piece of armor is that of *selflessness* (1 Peter 4.1). The faithful Christian is described as having a readiness to suffer for the cause of Christ. This decision to follow the example of Christ will result in subsequent decisions to live for Christ—thus ceasing to sin. ...
- The second piece of armament is that of *usefulness* (1 Peter 4.2-3). The victorious Christian sees himself as having a new life goal—that of achieving God's will for his physical and spiritual existence and being considered as divinely useful. He thinks about his time—and knows that his time is so valuable that he cannot afford to waste it on futile pursuits of worldly-minded men. ...
- The third piece of armament is that of *purposefulness* (1 Peter 4.4-5). The changed man now realizes that he will face new scrutiny and criticism by former companions. Their surprise at the new lifestyle need not discourage the dedicated believer because there is an approaching judgment that will hold every man accountable. ... When we decide to live for the Lord, we should be aware that our sense of purposefulness for the sake of Christ must outweigh our desire to pattern our lives after the example of those who care nothing for Christ. The reality is that there is a Creator who will ultimately be our judge.
- The final piece of armament is that of *blessedness* (1 Peter 4.6). Here is the crowning piece of the spiritual armor that makes the warfare bearable. The gospel, or good news about Jesus Christ, helps explain the physical calamities because there is a promise of a spiritual reward. The choices made by those loyal to Christ may have resulted in severe criticism and ridicule, but each person should know for certain that God has planned an appropriate spiritual reward for those who are faithful to His cause (Matthew 5.12; 2 Timothy 4.8). ...

FOUR: From Roy H. Lanier, Sr., *Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1956, p. 309.

- We should do our best to convince those out of Christ that they have lived long enough in the lusts of the flesh. If one has served Satan one hour or one day, he has given Satan more service than is due him. He ought, therefore, to break away from the dominion of sin and let not sin continue to reign in his mortal flesh.
- Do we condemn the world by godly living? Or do we justify and encourage the world by having fellowship with the world in its worldliness? Have we truly come out of the world to be no more a part of it?

- Do you let people among whom you circulate know that you wear the name of Christ? Do you so wear that name as to let them know you are not ashamed of it? Do you so wear that name as to honor and glorify Christ?

FIVE: From Wilson Adams, *The Present Truth: Studies in 1 and 2 Peter, James and Jude*, Edited by Ferrell Jenkins, 2000, Florida College Annual Lectures, Logos Version, pp., 57-58.

In 1 Peter 4.14-18, Peter says we need to remember four things...

- 1) **We need to remember that suffering allows us to draw upon divine strength** (14).
- 2) **We need to remember that suffering for wrong is deserved** (15).
- 3) **We need to remember that suffering for right is rewarded** (16).
- 4) **We need to remember that suffering for Christ does not compare with suffering without Christ** (17).

SIX: From Mark Dunagan, *Commentary on 1 Peter*, an e-Sword Module, commenting on 1 Peter 4.11--**LET HIM SPEAK AS THE ORACLES OF GOD...**

- 1) When a person assumes the task of teaching or preaching, that person must limit the instruction to what the Word of God states.
- 2) In the work of teaching and preaching there is no room for speculation or human opinion.
- 3) Intellect and rhetorical skills are not a substitute for preaching the Word (2 Timothy 4.2; 1 Corinthians 2.4).
- 4) The phrase AS IT WERE would indicate that this verse governs the actions of non-inspired teachers and preachers. Which means that a non-inspired person can study the Bible and present the truth fully and accurately (2 Timothy 2.15).
- 5) The truth wasn't lost with the cessation of inspired speakers. We must reject the excuse that every preacher is just preaching his opinion.
- 6) Seeing that every Christian who is teaching is to speak as if God were speaking through them, proves that we can all understand the Bible alike.

VI. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Peter speaks of the Creator in 1 Peter 4.
02. _____ Good stewardship is one of Peter's subjects in 1 Peter 4.
03. _____ Former companions of Christians may think them to be strange in their new life.
04. _____ The Lord will judge the living and the dead.
05. _____ It is appropriate to think that the fiery trial is strange.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Because of special circumstances, Peter urges Christians to watch unto prayer and be:
(a) separate; (b) sober; (c) special.
07. _____ Which of the following should Christians NOT suffer as: (a) a murderer; (b) a thief; (c) an evil doer; (d) a busybody; (e) none of these; (f) all of these.
08. _____ Above all things, Christians should have: (a) fervent charity; (b) full consideration; (c) factious spirits.
09. _____ Because of this, the gospel was preached: (a) there will be a judgment; (b) the apostles; (c) the Christians at Jerusalem.

10. _____ Being reproached for the name of Christ should cause us to be: (a) sad; (b) happy; (c) fulfilled.

Fill in the Blanks

11. “And if the _____ scarcely be saved, where shall the _____ and the sinner appear?”
12. When the glory of the Lord is revealed, the faithful Christian will be glad with _____ joy.
13. Christ has suffered _____ _____.
14. We should be good stewards of the _____ grace of _____.
15. “Yet if any man suffer as a _____, let him not be _____; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

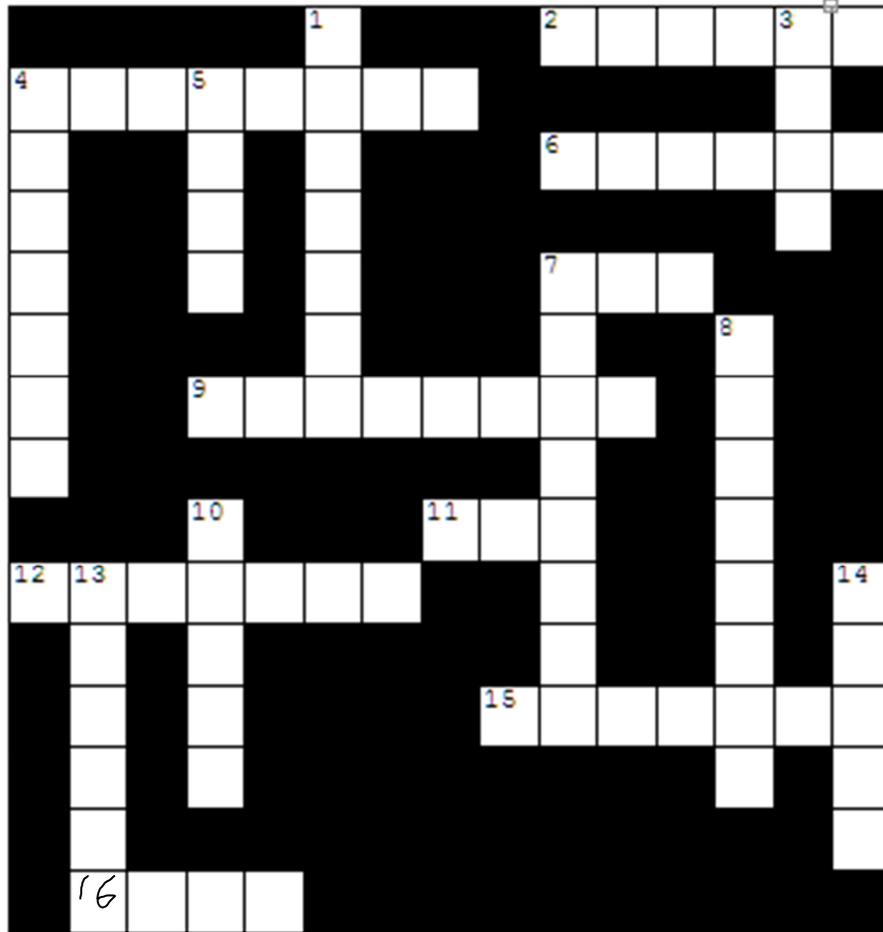
ANSWERS to 1 Peter 3 Questions... **01**—True (21); **02**—True (22); **03**—True (19-20); **04**—True (3.6); **05**—True (7); **06**—a (2); **07**—c (9); **08**—c (12); **09**—a (15); **10**—a (17); **11**—unjust (18); **12**—great. price (4); **13**—brethren, pitiful, courteous (8); **14**—Sarah (6); **15**—mind, compassion (8).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

S A M E C N T E D E A D
 Y X S T R A N G E B L E
 E N G O S P E L E P S V
 V T H I N G L O R Y O E
 I A N O T H E R C H T R
 L C J S P I R I T B V R
 I C U C C S U F F E R A
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 I D E R I S C A S N H T
 M I N I S T E R H C I I
 M N H T T S S T F N N M
 M G M Y D N S P E A K E

ACCORDING	ALSO	ANOTHER	BEGIN	CHARITY
CHRIST	DEAD	EVER	EVIL	EXCESS
FLESH	GLORIFY	GLORY	GOSPEL	JUDGE
LIVE	LUSTS	MINISTER	PART	SAME
SPEAK	SPIRIT	STRANGE	SUFFER	THING
THINK	TIME			

VIII. Crossword Puzzle.



1 Peter 4 (KJV)			
ACROSS		DOWN	
02	Watch unto ____.	01	We should speak as the ____ of God.
04	Be good ____ of the grace of God.	03	Glorified versus ____ spoke of.
06	To God we should ____ the keeping of our souls.	04	The evil of our past, Peter says, will ____.
07	Spoken of here as exceeding.	05	We should spend the rest of our time in the ____ of God
09	Not good to suffer as one of these.	07	Begins at the house of God.
11	We should ____ ourselves with the mind of Christ.	08	We should be hospitable without this.
12	Those who speak evil of faithful Christians will give this.	10	Charity will ____ the multitude of sins.
15	When we quit sinning, former friends may think it ____.	13	Be happy when reproached for this name.
16	____ is come that judgment must begin.	14	Describes the Christian's trial.

IX. EXTRA CREDIT FOR “SUPER” Bible Students...

*Will you please consider answering these **three SIMPLE questions** based on the Bible text of this chapter? I will try to make use of your answers. Bring them with you next week. Tear out this last sheet from the Study Guide and be prepared to put it in a basket. I think it will be a great help to all of those in the class if you will do so. Thank you in advance for your marvelous cooperation!*

W O R D: What word would you like to know more about in this chapter?

W O N D E R: I wonder what this phrase, verse, or series of verses means...

W I S H: I wish myself—or others whom I know or even don’t know—would understand this fact, principle, or concept from this chapter...