

1 Peter – Then and Now **(Lesson 5 – Instruction for Times of Trial)**

Introduction

- A. Historical background: A time when believers were suffering trials from non-Christians who were predominate and who (humanly speaking), controlled the environment.
- B. Peter often referred to trials: (1 Peter 1:6,7; 2:19-23; 3:9,10, 14-18; 4:1-4, 13-19 and 5:9,10). We can expect trials for a number of reasons.

I. The Context Related to Peter’s Instruction

- A. The implications related to free will. Note Genesis 1:26-28, 2:16,17. God created us with free will and therefore had to allow us to make wrong choices and to allow the bad effects of the wrong choices do their devastating work. God does not do evil – He is good and all He does is goodness. (See Psalm 119:68, etc.)
- B. The implications related to the effects of sin and the resultant judgment of God.
 - 1. The wrong choice of Adam and Eve. Note Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12 (Due to our fallen nature we continue to make wrong choices – from a wrong thought to a world war). *Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the LORD your God when he led you in the way? "Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart!"* Jeremiah 2:17; 4:18
 - 2. The resultant effects of sin and the judgment of God.
(Keep in mind “cursing” means banishment from divine blessing.)
 - a. Genesis 3:14 – the judgment on Satan and his endeavors of anger and pride.
 - b. Genesis 3:15 – the enmity between Satan and women (women representing birth of children – for fear a Deliverer would be born) Is this the reason for sacrificing children in the OT and today? Also an enmity placed between the woman’s seed (believers) and Satan’s seed (unbelievers). Note the prophecy regarding the Lord Jesus and His redemptive victory over Satan.
 - c. Genesis 3:16 – the “pain,” and “childbearing” relates to the physical and emotional trauma children can cause women. “Desire” relates to women being in a position where men would be necessary for her success – and she would be susceptible of being dominated. (See 1 Peter 3:7 “weaker partner”).
 - d. Genesis 3:17-19 – Ground (how men earn a living) deprived of God’s blessing. As a result – men (and women if they do men’s work) earn a living only by “painful toil.” Note Romans 8:18-23

II. Instruction Regarding Preparing for Trials.

A. *Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?* 1 Peter 3:13

1. Doing good will cut down the amount of trials.
2. Doing good will usually outweigh what bad there may be.
3. Doing good brings divine blessing and protects from sin, the world, evil people, and the enemy.

B. *But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."* 1 Peter 3:14

1. Note how “good” is now given content by use of word “right.”
Read 1 Peter 2:11,12, 14,15; Genesis 4:7; Romans 12:17.
2. We won’t go far astray if we do what we know is “right.”
3. “Blessing” through trials comes from God’s presence. He’s in control of life. By doing what’s “right” we open the door to His control and blessing. If we don’t ??
4. Peter reminds us we do not have to fear what unbelievers fear.

C. *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.* 1 Peter 3:15

1. The word “answer” (defense) was used for the case of the defense in law courts.
2. We’re reminded we have an “answer,” as to why we believe and live as we do. The work of God in our life – the great reversal – has made that difference.
3. The first step is choosing to surrender to the control of the Lord Jesus. (Many have debated if we can be a Christian without this. We all know how easy it is to neglect surrendering more and more as we live and grow.
4. Giving “an answer” may be some of the most important words another could hear.
5. Peter makes use of “answer” as “gospel,” and “hope,” as our salvation.

D. *Keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.* 1 Peter 3:16

1. Peter interprets the word “malicious” as “slander,” (words planned damage).
2. A clear conscience – is the result of doing what is “good,” and “right.”
3. Note how Paul emphasized a clear conscience. Acts 23:1; 24:16
4. A conscience is due to the law being written on our hearts by being created in the image and likeness of God. It is a good rule – but not infallible. We must train and test our conscience with the Bible and advice of godly people.

E. *It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

1. Note Peter’s use of “good” as contrasted with “evil.” The emphasis is on the believers ability to know what to do, the ability and responsibility to do it.
2. Trials may be “God’s will for us.” Note 1 Peter 1:6-9.

