

## ***First Peter – Then and Now*** **(Lesson # 9 – The Great Reversal)**

### **Introduction**

- A. Peter now returns to the theme of 1 Peter 3:18:

*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

- B. The problem among the first readers: how to understand and how to respond to trials. It's a universal problem among all of us. In some way, we face trials almost every day.

### **I. Suffering for Doing Right – Helps Deliver Us from Sin. 1 Peter 4:1,2**

- A. The Pattern: *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body --*

1. The emphasis upon the historical work of Christ – doing God's will – as Redeemer.
2. Reminder: doing God's will involves decisions as to what is right or wrong.

- B. The Instruction: *Arm yourselves also with the same attitude –*

1. The attitude of the Lord Jesus was a determination to do what was right – the will of God – in spite of serious opposition from unbelievers, religious leaders, and Satan.
2. The word, *arm* – shows the relevance of Peter's instruction. In that day – armor in battle was essential. Note Ephesians 6:10-18. (1)
3. Consider the control of *attitude*. What can you do for one who has the wrong attitude? Name some good and some wrong attitudes.

- C. The Explanation: *Because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.*

1. Peter's referring to the theme of 3:14, 16-18 and particularly V 17 (2)
2. His thought is – suffering to do right sets us free from the evil of a wrong choice
3. Note the spiritual benefits of choosing to do right; 1 Peter 1:22; Romans 6:16-18 (3)

- D. The Promise: *As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

1. Peter's referring to the experience every true believer understands. The determination to obey God – no matter what – sets us free from the sin we were tempted to commit.
2. We also know the devastation of compromise, vacillation, indecision, and wrong decisions. Name some who made good decisions and some who made bad decisions.

## II. Recognizing Grace – Confirms a Believer’s Correct Attitude.

*For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do--living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. 1 Peter 4:3,4*

A. Peter calls for a definite and decisive break with their past behavior.

1. Such decisions are in harmony with the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. Note 1 Peter 1:13-19; Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-10 (4)
2. Honest decisions to obey God – brings the discernment and power of God to us. Note Philippians 2:12,13; Titus 2:9-14; 1 Peter 1:22 (5)

B. The response of non-Christians often displays the power of the grace of God.

1. Abraham Kuyper spoke of “two kinds of people,” (believers and unbelievers)
2. For Peter’s readers – many of their trials were due to being “out of step” with unbelievers and the culture of the day. Note Galatians 1:4, 6:14; 1 John 2:15-17 (6)

## III. The Reminder of Present Accountability and Future Judgment

*But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. 1 Peter 4:5,6*

A. The Character of God, Creation itself, and the will of God defines accountability. Note Romans 1:18-20; 2:11-16; Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 Peter 1:13-19 (7)

B. Every person and every angel – will, in the future, be judged according to their works. Note Matthew 11:21-24; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3: 11-15, 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:9,10; Revelation 20:11-13. (8)

## Conclusion

A. Let’s hold up our lives alongside this passage – and accept our responsibility.

B. Believers who are not willing to make hard choices – are often characterized by confusion, criticism, murmuring, complaining and lack of spiritual growth.