

LESSON FIVE

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER (Continued)

TEXT: I Peter Chapters 3, 4 & 5.

A. **THE DUTY OF WIVES AND HUSBANDS: (I Peter 3:1-7).**

1. VERSES 1 & 2:

Wives are to be in submission to their husbands. If the husbands are not obeying the Word of God, they may be won to the Lord not by argument but by respectful, pure behavior. The godly lives of the wives will speak better than words.

2. VERSES 3 - 5:

Wives are not to be concerned with outward beauty that depends on jewelry, beautiful clothes or elaborate hair arrangements. They are to be beautiful within their hearts with the charm of a gentle spirit, which is precious to God.

3. VERSE 6:

Sarah is given as an example of honoring her husband as the head of the house. She called Abraham "lord" or "master." As daughters of Sarah, Christian wives should follow her example and need not fear of offending their husbands.

4. VERSE 7:

Husbands are admonished to be gentle with their wives, honoring them as the weaker partner. If they do not treat their wives, as they should, their prayers will not be answered.

B. **HOW TO SEE GOOD DAYS: (I Peter 3:8-17).**

1. VERSES 8 - 14:

In this Scripture Peter exhorted his readers to be one happy family, loving one another with tender hearts. They were never to return insult for insult, but rather blessing. Here Peter gave a formula for enjoying life and seeing good days. They were to keep control of their tongues and keep their lips from deceit. Wickedness should be shunned and peace should be desired. Not only should peace be desired, but also it must be pursued. Generally no one will harm a person wanting to do good. However, if that happens, you are to be envied for God will reward you.

2. VERSE 15:

There is a throne in the heart of every man. Jesus is to be crowned Lord and King. Jesus must be set apart from all profane desires and thoughts. He must be the center of love and devotion within the heart.

3. VERSES 16 & 17:

If men falsely accuse you, they will become ashamed if you do what is right. Keep your conscience clear. It is better to suffer for well-doing rather than evil doing.

C. PREACHING TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON: (I Peter 3:18-22).

The true interpretation of the Scripture regarding Christ preaching to the spirits in prison is difficult. The meaning here is somewhat obscure. We shall give two interpretations, either one of, which may be correct.

1. Preaching through Noah. One common interpretation is that the Spirit of Christ was in Noah preaching to the antediluvians. Noah did this preaching while the people were alive and while the ark was being built.
2. Preaching in Hades. This interpretation states that the prison is Hades. Jesus visited Hades and Paradise during the time between His death and resurrection. There are Scriptures that teach that Jesus did visit Hades during this period of time. The spirits of the lost of Noah's generation would certainly be there. The presence of Jesus in that dreadful place would be the most powerful of sermons.

If the first interpretation is correct, there were none saved except the eight souls in the ark. If the second interpretation were correct, there is no inference that this was giving these lost souls a second chance. Hell is everlasting and there is no deliverance from that awful abode.

D. SUFFERING IN THE FLESH: (I Peter 4:1-6).

1. VERSES 1 - 4:

Since Christ suffered in the flesh, be prepared to suffer also. He who has shared Christ's cross is no longer alive to the pull of sin through human desire, but is only alive to the desire of doing God's will. Such a person has had enough of the evil things, which the godless enjoy. Of course, former friends will be surprised that they are not eagerly joined and will scorn the Christian for not entering into the same expresses of dissipation.

2. VERSE 5:

Jesus is the judge of the living (quick) and the dead.

3. VERSE 6:

This is not an easy verse to explain. It certainly does not mean that the dead is given a second chance. Here Peter is referring to the gospel being preached to Christians before they died. They were judged as men while they were alive but now they will enjoy eternal life.

E. GOOD STEWARDS OF THE GRACE OF GOD: (I Peter 4:7 - 11).

Since judgment is at hand, they had better have self control and be prayerful. They are to have deep love one for another. Love makes up for many of your faults. Cheerfully share your

home and food with visitors. They are to be good stewards of the grace of God. If one is preaching let him preach as if God is speaking through him. If one is called to help others, let him do it with all the energy, which God supplies. Minister in such a way that the glory will always be given to God.

F. FIERY TRIALS: (I Peter 4:12-19).

The fiery trials may be a reference to the human torches that Nero had in his gardens. He would set the Christians on fire and light his gardens. At any rate, one is not to be bewildered by the fiery ordeal, which may come. The Christian is to rejoice that he can share in the sufferings of Christ.

The Christian is to be happy if he is abused for the Name of Jesus. The Bible student should note that this again might become real. Real persecution may come because of the Name of Jesus. If it does, happy are we.

Four things are mentioned that we are not to suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer and a busybody in other men's matters. It is significant that being a busybody is listed with murder and theft. However, if we suffer as a Christian, we are never to be ashamed.

Judgment begins with the people of God. The question is asked, "What will become of the godless and wicked if the righteous are barely saved?"

G. AN EXHORTATION TO THE ELDERS: (I Peter 5:1-4).

1. VERSE 1:

This verse proves that Peter was at Calvary and was a witness of Christ's sufferings.

2. VERSES 2-4:

Three times the Lord had told Peter to "feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). Peter now handed this instruction on to the elders. The main work of the shepherd is to feed the flock and take care of the sheep. This ministry is not done because of financial remuneration nor is the spirit of the shepherd that of a dictator. He goes before the sheep and leads the way. Love and self-sacrifice always control his ministry. He sees that the sheep are always well fed.

H. AN EXHORTATION TO HUMILITY: (I Peter 5:5-6).

These two verses should be noted carefully. God sets Himself against the proud. The principle to be remembered is that if a person will humble himself; God eventually will lift him up.

I. AN EXHORTATION TO VIGILANCE: (I Peter 5:7-9).

Satan is our enemy and he is prowling about like a hungry, roaring lion: vigilance is absolutely essential. We are to stand firm when he attacks and remember that other Christians are also going through these sufferings. During such times, we are to cast our worries and cares upon Jesus for He cares for us!

J. BENEDECTION: (I Peter 5:10-14).

The epistle closes with a beautiful benediction. After you have suffered awhile, the God of all grace will perfect, stablish, strengthen and set you firmly in place.

This letter is carried by Silvanus, a faithful brother. Peter also wrote that Mark, his son, sent his greetings.

They were to greet one another with a kiss of love.

LESSON FIVE

SELF HELP TEST

A. Write a full explanation of the meaning of I Peter 3:18-22.

B. How do we know that Peter was a witness of Calvary?

C. Name FOUR things a Christian is not to suffer for.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

D. Why is a Christian always to be vigilant?

E. What instructions did Peter give wives and husbands?