

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH BIBLE STUDY INSTITUTE
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“ FACTS ABOUT THE FURNACES “

I PETER 4 VS 12-19

INTRO TO LESSON : EVERY CHRISTIAN WHO LIVES A GODLY LIFE EXPERIENCES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PERSECUTION. ON THE JOB, IN THE SCHOOL, IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, PERHAPS EVEN IN THE FAMILY, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO RESIST THE TRUTH AND OPPOSE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. NO MATTER WHAT A BELIEVER SAYS OR DOES, THESE PEOPLE FIND FAULT AND CRITICISE. PETER DEALT WITH THIS KIND OF “**NORMAL PERSECUTION**” IN THE PREVIOUS PART OF HIS LETTER. BUT IN THIS SECTION, PETER EXPLAINED ABOUT A SPECIAL KIND OF PERSECUTION- “**A FIERY TRIAL**” – THAT WAS ABOUT TO OVERTAKE THE ENTIRE CHURCH. IT WOULD NOT BE OCCASIONAL PERSONAL PERSECUTION FROM THOSE AROUND THEM, BUT OFFICIAL PERSECUTION FROM THEM ABOVE THEM. THUS FAR, CHRISTIANITY HAD BEEN TOLERATED BY ROME BECAUSE IT WAS CONSIDERED A “ SECT “ OF JUDAISM, AND THE JEWS WERE PERMITTED TO WORSHIP FREELY. THAT ATTITUDE WOULD CHANGE AND THE FIRES OF PERSECUTION WOULD BE IGNITED, FIRST BY NERO, AND THEN BY THE EMPERORS THAT WOULD FOLLOW.

IN VERSES NUMBER 12 -19, PETER GIVES US FOUR INSTRUCTIONS TO FOLLOW AS WE SEE PERSECUTION APPROACHING :

I. EXPECT SUFFERING (VS 12) - DEAR FRIENDS, DO NOT BE SURPRISED AT THE PAINFUL TRIAL YOU ARE SUFFERING, AS THOUGH SOMETHING STRANGE WERE HAPPENING TO YOU. PERSECUTION IS NOT SOMETHING THAT IS ALIEN TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE . THROUGHOUT HISTORY THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE UNBELIEVING WORLD.

QUESTION : WHY ?

1. CHRISTIANS ARE DIFFERENT THAN UNBELIEVERS (2 COR 6 VS 14 – 18) – THIS DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE PRODUCES A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFESTYLE.

CHRISTIAN – **BUILDS HIS LIFE ON TRUTH, HUMILITY , HOLINESS AND DESIRE TO GLORIFY GOD**
WORLD – **DEPENDS ON LIES, PRIDE , PLEASURES AND DESIRE TO “ GET MORE “**

CONFLICT ILLUSTRATED IN THE WORD OF GOD

EXAMPLE # 1 CAIN AND ABLE (GEN 4 VS 1-8) THE WORLD DOES NOT PERSECUTE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE , IT PERSECUTES RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE

JOH N 3 VS 12... TELLS US WHY THIS HAPPENED .

EXAMPLE # 2 THE PHARISEES /THE JEWISH LEADERS AND JESUS -(**MATHEW 10 VS 17)**

EXAMPLE # 3 GOD AND SATAN (GEN 3 VS 15)

NOTE : CHRISTIANS ARE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS IN AN ALIEN WORLD WHERE SATAN IS THE GOD AND PRINCE (JOHN 14 VS 30; 2 COR 4 VS 3-4)WHAT EVER GLORIFIES GOD WILL ANGER THE ENEMY, AND HE WILL ATTACK. FOR BELIEVERS, PERSECUTION IS NOT A STRANGE THING. THE ABSENCE OF SATANIC OPPOSITION WOULD BE STRANGE!

II. REJOICE IN SUFFERING (13-14) “**BE GLAD WITH EXCEEDING JOY**” – THE WORLD CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES CAN PRODUCE EXCEEDING JOY, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED THE GRACE OF GOD (2 COR 8 VS 1-5). PETER

NAMES SEVERAL PRIVILEGES WE SHARE THAT ENCOURAGE US TO REJOICE IN THE MIDST OF THE FIERY TRIAL !

A. OUR SUFFERING MEANS FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST (13) IT IS AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE TO SUFFER WITH CHRIST AND TO BE TREATED BY THE WORLD THE WAY IT TREATED HIM. **PHIL 1 VS 29** THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS IS A GIFT FROM GOD. NOT EVERY BELIEVER GROWS TO THE POINT WHERE GOD CAN TRUST HIM WITH THIS KIND OF EXPERIENCE, SO WE OUGHT TO REJOICE WHEN THE PRIVILEGE COMES TO US . EXAMPLE (ACTS 5 VS 41)

WE MUST REMEMBER THAT CHRIST IS WITH US IN THE FIERY FURNACE OF PERSECUTION (ISA 41 VS 10; 43 VS 2)

DANIEL DAN 3 VS 23 -25

PAUL ACTS 23 VS 11; 21 VS 21-25; 2 TIM 4 VS 9-18

HE PROMISE TO BE WITH US UNTIL THE END OF THE AGE (**MAT 28 VS 20**) WHEN SINNERS PERSECUTE US THEY ARE REALLY PERSECUTING JESUS CHRIST ! (**ACTS 9 VS 4**)

B. OUR SUFFERING MEANS GLORY IN THE FUTURE (13) – WHEN YOU LOOK AT PETERS LETTER YOU WILL FIND THAT **SUFFERING** AND **GLORY** ARE TWIN TRUTHS THAT ARE WOVEN TOGETHER INTO THE FABRIC OF THIS LETTER.

WORLDS POINT OF VIEW..... **ABSENCE OF SUFFERING MEANS GLORY**

CHRISTIANS POINT OF VIEW..... **THE TRIAL OF OUR FAITH TODAY IS THE ASSURANCE OF GLORY WHEN JESUS RETURNS (I PETER 1 VS 7 -8)**

THIS WAS THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR LORD AND SAVOIR JESUS CHRIST (**I PETER 5 VS 1**) AND IT SHALL ALSO BE OUR EXPERIENCE

NOTE : WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT GOD IS NOT GOING TO **REPLACE** SUFFERING WITH GLORY – HE WILL TRANSFORM SUFFERING INTO GLORY

EXAMPLE 1. (JOHN 16 VS 20-22) **SAME BABY THAT GAVE HER PAIN ALSO GAVE HER JOY**

EXAMPLE 2. (2 COR 12 VS 7-10) **THORN GAVE PAUL DIFFICULTY BUT ALSO POWER AND GLORY**

EXAMPLE 3. (PHIL) **THE CROSS GAVE JESUS PAIN BUT IT ALSO BROUGHT POWER AND GLORY**

NOTE: MATURE CHRISTIANS KNOW THAT LIFE INCLUDES SOME **POSTPONE PLEASURES** WE PAY THE PRICE TODAY AND IN ORDER TO HAVE ENJOYMENT IN THE FUTURE. FEW EXAPLES

PIANO PLAYER – MAY NOT ENJOY PRACTICING FOR HOURS BUT HE LOOKS FORWARD TO THE PLEASURE OF PLAYING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC ONE DAY.

ATHELETE – MAY NOT ENJOY EXERCISING – BUT HE LOOKS FORWARD TO WINNING HIS GAME

CHRISTIANS – HAVE IT THE BEST ! OUR VERY SUFFERINGS WILL BE TRANSFORMED INTO GLORY, AND WE WILL BE GLAD ALSO WITH EXCEEDING JOY (**ROM 8 VS 17; 2 TIM 3 VS 11**)

C. OUR SUFFERINGS BRING TO US THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (14) HE IS THE SPIRIT OF GLORY AND HE HAS A SPECIAL MINISTRY TO THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS REFERENCE IS TO THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD THAT DWELT IN THE TABERNACLE AND IN THE TEMPLE (EX 40 VS 34; I KINGS 8 VS 10-11). WHEN THE PEOPLE STONED STEPHEN HE SAW JESUS IN HEAVEN AND EXPERIENCED GOD’S GLORY (ACTS 6 VS 15; 7 VS 54-60) IN OTHER WORDS CHRISTIANS DO NOT HAVE TO WAIT FOR HEAVEN IN ORDER TO EXPERIENCE HIS GLORY. THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT THEY CAN HAVE THE GLORY NOW. THIS EXPLAINS HOW MARTYRS COULD SING PRAISES TO GOD WHILE BOUND IN THE MIDST OF BLAZING FIRES. IT ALSO EXPLAINS HOW PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS CAN GO TO PRISON AND TO DEATH WITHOUT COMPLAINING OR RESISTING THEIR CAPTORS.

D. OUR SUFFERING ENABLES US TO GLORY IN HIS NAME (14) WE SUFFER BECAUSE OF HIS NAME (JOHN 15 VS 21) YOU CAN TELL YOUR UNSAVED FRIENDS THAT YOU ARE A BAPTIST, PRESBYTERIAN, A METHODIST OR EVEN A AGNOSTIC, AND THERE WILL BE NO OPPOSITION ; BUT TELL THEM YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN – BRING CHRIST 'S NAME INTO THE CONVERSATION – AND THINGS WILL START TO HAPPEN. OUR AUTHORITY IS IN THE NAME OF JESUS, SATAN HATE THAT NAME. EVERY TIME WE ARE REPROACHED FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST, WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING GLORY TO THAT NAME. THE WORLD MAY SPEAK AGAINST HIS NAME, BUT WE WILL SPEAK AND LIVE THAT HIS NAME WILL BE HONORED AND GOD WILL BE PLEASED.