

(13) Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

(18) For Christ also suffered once for sins --- the Righteous for the unrighteous --- that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit, in which He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

(21) Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him.

Think on these things:

- 1) Let's answer Peter's first question in v.13. Who is out to get you if your focus in life is doing good? Yet, if you do suffer for doing good, what is the promise?

The implied answer is "no one" goes out of their way to harm do-gooders. The promise is that if this does happen, you will be blessed (by God).

- 2) When should you be ready to share your testimony of belief in Jesus? What are you trying to convey to the listener, in good conscience? What should your demeanor be?

We are ALWAYS to be prepared to share and defend our faith with anyone who asks us about the hope we have as believers. We are to do this with gentleness and respect. In our hearts we are to honor Christ as holy. Then, when we are slandered, those who revile us will be put to shame. Our demeanor should be one of a humble servant, not testy and argumentative.

- 3) Are good living, good-intentioned people ever subjected to suffering and persecution? How should we defend ourselves?

If we are to suffer, let it be for doing good --- if that is God's will. It does not glorify Jesus for a Christian to suffer for doing evil. Our good works should stand by themselves, shaming those who go after us without just cause.

- 4) Why did Jesus suffer for sins --- God's Righteous One for unrighteous people (v.18)?

He did this that He might bring us to God the Father.

- 5) Between His bodily death and bodily resurrection, Jesus didn't just stay in the tomb. There are a few references for this time period that are hard to understand. To begin with, turn to Genesis 6:1-6 to see who in Noah's time disappointed God greatly, and Jude 6 for God's judgment on them. From v.19, what does it say Jesus did with this group? If this is a demonic group, what would you guess is being communicated? Keep in mind, Jesus has just physically died in Israel, and He is yet to arise physically to meet His disciples.

Genesis talks about mankind in general, and the "sons of God" (angels) specifically who came down to earth and bore gigantic children through human women. For mankind, the flood was their punishment, basically a "restart" for humanity through Noah's family. But Jude says He imprisoned these angels in gloomy darkness until Judgment Day for leaving their "proper" dwelling. Peter declares that Jesus proclaimed a message to these in prison, this likely being that God's salvation plan (the Gospel) to redeem and save mankind has been accomplished.

- 6) How many people were saved in Noah's ark? Do you realize that this means today's "humanity" descended only from Noah's lineage back to Adam (through Seth – Genesis 5)?

Eight persons were saved: Noah, his three sons, and the four wives.

- 7) The flood brought death to the world. Noah's ark brought deliverance and new life to his family. V.21 says this event "corresponds" to the concept of baptism, and that baptism is an appeal to God for a good conscience --- based on the resurrection of Jesus. When Christians rise in baptism, what then are we proclaiming (see Colossians 2:12)?

When we rise in baptism, we proclaim the resurrection of Jesus.

- 8) Where is Jesus today? What is subject to Him, and what is not yet subject to Him? See Hebrews 2:6-9.

Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of the Father. Angels, authorities and powers have been subjected to Him, but Hebrews indicates this hasn't been completed yet. (Perhaps this will be finished when Judgment Day arrives.)

People and situations I want to pray for this week: