



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The First Catholic Epistle of St. Peter

Chapter 3

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Introduction

- St. Peter describes the duties of Christians living as sojourners and pilgrims in this world
- He counsels wives to be submissive to their husbands and to focus their adornment on the development of a meek and quiet spirit
- Husbands are then instructed to live with their wives in an understanding way, honoring them as the weaker vessel and as fellow heirs of the grace of life (1-7)



Introduction

- Duties toward brethren are summarized, stressing unity, compassion, love, kindness, and courtesy
- When mistreated by brethren, the proper response is to extend a blessing to be blessed
- The key is to turn from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it (8-12)
- St. Peter then turns to the theme of suffering for righteousness' sake



Introduction

- To prepare for persecution, one should sanctify the Lord God in their heart and be ready to meekly provide the reason for their hope (13-17)
- To appreciate how suffering for righteousness' sake can be for good, St. Peter relates how Jesus suffered for our sins
- Referring to Noah's salvation, St. Peter says baptism now saves us as an appeal for a good conscience, through Christ's resurrection (18-22)



Submission to Husbands (3:1-6)

- There were many cases in which the wife became Christian while the husband refuses to convert
- St. Paul instructed them not to leave their husbands unless the unbelieving husband left
- St. Peter teaches here that the wife shows her obedience in order to win her husband
- This even to those refuse to listen to word of God
- Unbelievers may be quietly won by the Christian lives of their wives



Submission to Husbands (3:1-6)

- While they behold your pure lives
- Fear: fear of God and respect to husbands
- While urging those pure and holy lives which will preach Christ, St. Peter cannot pass by a bad habit of the mere outward adorning
- St. Peter condemns the unrestrained indulgences and excesses of women
- The important part is to keep the heart right and the spirit adorned with all the graces of holy life



Submission to Husbands (3:1-6)

- Seek the incorruptible adorning of gentleness and quietness rather than the outward adorning
- God sees us all the time, and such adorning is of great worth in His sight
- The holy women trusted in God, and therefore did not act thus from fear
- They adorned themselves by the submitting to their husbands (quiet and gentle spirit)



Submission to Husbands (3:1-6)

- This designation showed respect and submission. Gen 18:12 and 1 Sam 1:15
- Women should follow the example of Sarah, who is the mother of those who are Abraham's children
- The fear might result from not doing well or lack of faith
- They were to be quiet, submissive, loving wives, but were not to be kept from Christian duty by any fear because of their heathen surroundings



A Word to Husbands (3:7)

- Husbands are to dwell with them (no divorce)
- A knowledge that shows judgment, moderation and gentleness as toward one fragile than himself
- Hence one in Christ Jesus. The home life is to be regulated according to that knowledge
- Mutual prayer is difficult unless there is mutual love and forbearance
- Nor can the husband's prayers be acceptable unless he treats his wife aright



Called to Blessing (3:8-12)

- He commends harmony and things pertain to the maintenance of peace and mutual love
- Courtesy is such a behavior toward equals and inferiors as shows respect mixed with love
- St. Peter enjoins good deeds for evil, and blessing for reviling, to be consistent with the Christianity
- Called to a heritage of blessing they must live lives of blessing, for as a man sows so also shall he reap (Gal 6:7)



Called to Blessing (3:8-12)

- If you desire to inherit blessing, you must abstain from evil
- The conditions are stated by the Psalmist, Ps 34:13-17, from which 1 Pet 3:10-12 are quoted
- Let him live peaceably with all men even when it seems to flee from him
- God ceases not to regard His righteous servants
- He not only sees, but hears when they cry to Him
- He is turned in displeasure upon evil doers



Suffering for Right and Wrong (3:13-17)

- If you are zealous for good who can inflict real harm upon you?
God is with you
- You may be called to suffer for Christ
- That is the lot of Christians, but instead of calling this an evil, happy are you (Mt 5:10)
- Great is the reward. It is only sowing in tears to reap in joy
- With the fear of the wicked when danger comes, neither be troubled because you are persecuted



Suffering for Right and Wrong (3:13-17)

- Let Christ be honored and revered
- Fear not man but the Lord but be ready to confess Christ as the ground of your hope
- The answer is to be made, not with arrogance and indignation, but modestly, meekly, reverentially
- Having a good conscience before God
- This is the element of strength when accused
- They may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good behavior in Christ



Suffering for Right and Wrong (3:13-17)

- A life holy and pure is the best answer to false accusers
- If God wills that we should suffer, for the Father sometimes chastens children (Heb 12:6,7)
- Those who honor God's will as their highest law (1 Pet 2:15) have the comfort to know that suffering is God's appointment (1 Pet 4:19)
- It is better to suffer for well doing, than for evil doing, for righteousness, than for evil (2 Tim 3:12)

Christ's Suffering and Ours (3:18-22)



- Even Christ, the Holy One, our example, once suffered on the cross, once only
- He suffered not for the good but for those who have transgressed any of the commands of God
- He suffered to bring us to the presence of God
- He was put to death by the wounds inflicted on his fleshly body
- His natural, earthly life was ended
- Being put to death in the flesh, as man, but raised to life by the Spirit

Christ's Suffering and Ours (3:18-22)



- The facts stated are:
- That Christ, put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, went and preached (announced)
- This preaching of Christ was to spirits in prisons
- The Greek word, denotes a place of custody, not a place of punishment (Hades)
- These spirits at one time were disobedient
- This states why they were held in prison

Christ's Suffering and Ours (3:18-22)



- The time of their disobedience is stated
- It was while the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah
- They had then refused to obey the call to repentance
- It is stated in Gen 6:3 that the long suffering of God waited 120 years
- Only eight souls out of a great multitude were saved; these were saved by water (the ark)



Conclusion

- If God already knows how we will stand under trial, why does He choose to test our faith?
- What did the Old Testament prophets search carefully to find?
- How can the statement, “Be holy, for I am holy,” be understood as both a command and a promise?
- What does it mean to conduct ourselves in fear?
- What is the incorruptible seed through which we are born again? In what way are we born again?