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By Dan Maines

1 Peter 4

1 Peter 4:1-2

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human lusts, but for the will of God.

† Believers are to imitate Christ's willingness to suffer, showing that suffering purifies and separates us from sin.

† Suffering for righteousness reveals a life surrendered to God's will.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 55) urged believers to endure suffering as Christ did, showing their obedience to God.

1 Peter 4:3-4

For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of indecent behavior, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries. In all this they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of debauchery, and they slander you.

† Peter reminds them of their former sins, urging separation from Gentile excesses.

† Tacitus (Annals 14.15) describes drunken feasts and parties common in the Roman world, reflecting the context of Peter's warning.

† Their refusal to participate made believers targets of slander and suspicion.

1 Peter 4:5

But they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

† Those who mock believers will answer to Christ, the Judge of all.

† Acts 10:42 confirms that Christ was appointed by God to judge the living and the dead.

† Josephus (Wars 6.5.3) speaks of Jerusalem's leaders being judged for their corruption, reflecting how divine justice falls on the unrepentant.

1 Peter 4:6

For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as

people, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

† The gospel reached those who had already died, showing God's justice and mercy extended even to them.

† This demonstrates the universality of Christ's reign, where the dead are not beyond His reach.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that this passage refers to Christ's victory over death, ensuring no one was excluded from His judgment and mercy.

1 Peter 4:7

The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

† Peter emphasizes the nearness of the end, referring to the imminent close of the old covenant age and the destruction of Jerusalem.

† Jesus had warned in **Matthew 24:33-34** that these things would happen within that generation.

† Tacitus (Histories 5.13) wrote of portents and signs before Jerusalem's fall, confirming the sense of urgency.

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

† Love is the greatest command, for it restores relationships and maintains unity.

† Proverbs 10:12 says love covers all offenses, which Peter echoes.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 49) reminded believers that brotherly love reflects God's forgiveness.

1 Peter 4:9

Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

† Hospitality was vital for the scattered church, especially when persecution made travel dangerous.

† Josephus (Antiquities 20.2.3) notes how hospitality was honored in Jewish culture, and Peter ties this to Christian love.

1 Peter 4:10-11

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God. Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking actual words of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

† Every gift is to be used for service, not self. Speaking must reflect God's word, and serving must reflect His strength.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 8.9-10) describe community members as stewards of God's gifts, paralleling Peter's teaching.

† All is to bring glory to Christ, whose dominion is eternal.

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed.

† Trials are not strange but part of the believer's calling, sharing in Christ's sufferings.

† Tacitus (Annals 15.44) details fiery ordeals endured by Christians in Rome under Nero.

† Those who endured could rejoice, knowing that glory would soon be revealed.

1 Peter 4:14

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed,

because the Spirit of glory, and of God, rests upon you.

† Insults for Christ's sake are marks of blessing, for they show God's Spirit resting on the faithful.

† Jesus promised in **Matthew 5:11-12** that those insulted for His name are blessed and rewarded.

1 Peter 4:15-16

Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

† Suffering must not come from wrongdoing but from faithfulness to Christ.

† The term "Christian" was originally used in mockery, yet Peter tells them to embrace it for God's glory.

† Tacitus (Annals 15.44) records "Christian" as a name of reproach, yet believers carried it with honor.

1 Peter 4:17-18

For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless person and the sinner?

† Judgment began with God's household, meaning the first-century church endured trials first.

† Jesus foretold in **Matthew 24:9-13** that His followers would face tribulation before judgment fell on the world.

† Josephus (Wars 4.5.2) wrote of purges and trials within Jerusalem before the city's destruction, echoing Peter's warning.

1 Peter 4:19

Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God

are to entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

† Final exhortation: suffering believers must entrust their souls to God, their faithful Creator.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 55) called on the church to entrust themselves to God in persecution, echoing Peter's words.

How it applies to us today

† 1 Peter 4 teaches us that suffering is part of faithfulness to Christ. Love, hospitality, and service must define God's people.

† The nearness of the end in Peter's day reminds us that God kept His word, bringing judgment on Jerusalem.

† For us, the lesson is to remain faithful, enduring trials with trust in the faithful Creator.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus, Wars 4.5.2 – purges and trials in Jerusalem

† Josephus, Wars 6.5.3 – judgment on corrupt leaders

† Josephus, Antiquities 20.2.3 – hospitality honored

† Philo, On the Virtues 19 – vanity of adornment condemned

† Tacitus, Annals 14.15 – drunken Roman feasts

† Tacitus, Annals 15.44 – fiery ordeals and slander of Christians

† Tacitus, Histories 5.13 – signs and portents before Jerusalem's fall

† Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 8.9-10 – stewardship of God's gifts

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 49 – love covering sins

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 55 – endurance in suffering

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 55-56 – entrusting to God in persecution

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 6.6 – Christ's victory over death

† Isaiah 8:12-13 – do not fear men, fear God

- † Proverbs 10:12 – love covers offenses
- † Psalm 34:8 – taste and see the Lord is good
- † Matthew 5:11-12 – blessed when insulted for Christ
- † Matthew 24:9-13, 33-34 – tribulation before judgment in that generation
- † Acts 10:42 – Christ appointed Judge
- † Hebrews 12:14 – pursuit of peace and holiness

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