

## PETER'S EPISTLES

### **1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture** **III. Experiencing God's Joy Amid Persecution** **(1 Peter 1:6-9)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. Several believers in different states of the nation have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 1:6-9 teaches us believers how we can experience God's joy even amid persecution trials for our faith, so we study this passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

#### **II. Experiencing God's Joy Amid Persecution, 1 Peter 1:6-9.**

- A. When Peter wrote his first epistle, Christianity had not yet been banned by the Roman government to where believers faced widespread martyrdom, but "(p)ersecution took the forms of slander, riots, local police action, and social ostracism" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1757, "Introduction to the First Letter of Peter: Readership"), what believers in our nation may one day face and what many Christians elsewhere experience.
- B. Slander, social ostracism, riots and police action for one's faith are humanly difficult to face, what can make one feel sad and depressed, but Peter teaches how we may react to such trials with great joy in 1 Peter 1:6-9:
  1. Having mentioned the physical salvation believers will experience at Christ's return (1 Peter 1:5b), Peter mentioned that his Christian readers could rejoice in the hope of this future deliverance, 1 Peter 1:6a.
  2. However, there was a hurdle to this experience of rejoicing, that of the current grieving Peter's readers experienced over various persecution trials they faced in their present lives on earth, 1 Peter 1:6b ESV.
  3. Peter then revealed that such trials were being used by God in His grace to produce great eternal glory:
    - a. First, these trials of opposition to their faith tested the genuineness of their faith, and a genuine faith that has stood the tests of severe trials to the contrary is more precious than gold that perishes though that faith be tested by the fiery trials of slander, riots, local police action and social ostracism, 1 Peter 1:7a; Ibid.
    - b. Second, if their faith stood the test of remaining firmly committed to Christ in spite of persecution to the contrary, when these believers were eventually united with the Lord at the rapture of the Church, their sustained faith would result in praise, glory and honor, 1 Peter 1:7b ESV. This praise, glory and honor will be given to Christ, the object of the believers' faith (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 841-842), but since believers will receive rewards for godly works at the Judgment Seat of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15), and believers in Revelation 3:18 can obtain gold tried in the fire, a reference to 1 Peter 1:7, that **they themselves** might be **spiritually rich**, then believers who overcome persecution trials will receive praise, glory and honor from the Lord Himself at His return! (cf. Matt. 5:11-12; 25:21, 23; Rev. 22:12-13)
    - c. Accordingly, such believers whose faith was matured and deepened by their decision to stay true to the Lord regardless of their persecution trials love the Lord though not having seen Him, they believed in Him and they rejoiced with joy that was inexpressible and filled with glory, 1 Peter 1:8 ESV.
    - d. In the end, these believers would receive as a reward (*komizomenoi*) what had been promised, the salvation of their souls in its future tense, 1 Peter 1:9 with 1:5 ESV. "For those who love and believe in Jesus Christ, salvation is past ("He has given us new birth," v. 3), present ("through faith are shielded by God's power," v. 5), and future (it is their "inheritance," v. 4, which will "be revealed in the last time," v. 5, and is "the goal of your faith," v. 9)." (Ibid., p. 842)

***Lesson:*** *Though believers in Christ may experience slander, social ostracism, riots and police action for their faith, making them initially feel humanly sad and/or depressed, if they focus on the hope of their future deliverance at the rapture and realize that such persecutions test the reality of their faith so that when they remain steadfast in their commitment they will be deepened in their relationship with God to the glory of Christ and to the praise, glory and honor of the believer himself in being rewarded for his faith at Christ's judgment seat, then their sadness and depression can be exchanged for an inexpressible joy that is filled with eternal glory!*

***Application:*** *Instead of reacting to persecution trials with sadness and depression, may we stand firm in our faith, and in doing so not only see that faith matured and deepened, but one day see it bring great praise, glory and honor to Christ at His coming along with His reward of praise, glory and honor to us for our faithfulness to Him!*