

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture **XIV. Wise Living In Tension With The World** **(1 Peter 3:13-17)**

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 3:13-17 calls us to wise living in tension with the world, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. Wise Living In Tension With The World, 1 Peter 3:13-17.

- A. Jesus predicted that His disciples would be hated by the world because they were not of the world, that they had been chosen out of it, John 15:18-19. We thus need wisdom in knowing how to relate to the lost world.
- B. First, we Christians can do much to live peaceably with the unsaved world by our conduct, 1 Peter 3:13:
 - 1. Peter asked who would "mistreat" (*kakoo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 399) his believing readers if they "became" (*ginomai*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 797; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 157-159) "zealots" (*zelotes*, *Ibid.*, p. 338) of "what is good" (*agathon*, *Ibid.*, p. 3), 1 Pet. 3:13.
 - 2. In the context, this question is almost a rhetorical one that expects the negative answer, "No one!" (*Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 850), so we believers can do much to avoid being mistreated by unsaved people if we are zealous for doing what is "good," and the context at 1 Peter 3:10-12 reveals that "good" here means not verbally abusing or deceiving others, but turning from evil to do good and to seek peace.
- C. However, persecution may occur for the sake of righteousness, for taking a righteous stand or holding to a righteous belief, but if that occurs, God directs us how to handle such a situation in 1 Peter 3:14-17 as follows:
 - 1. If we ever "might suffer" (*paschoite*, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T. [*optative*, mood of **possibility**, Dana & Mantey, A Man. Gram. of the Grk. N. T., 1957, p. 172], The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 312; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 639-640) for the sake of righteousness, we would be "blessed" (*makarios*, *Ibid.*, p. 487-488), which in this context means "highly privileged" due to the eternal reward that awaits us for such persecution, 1 Peter 3:14a; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T. with Matthew 5:10-12 and Acts 5:40-41.
 - 2. Besides realizing our privilege of persecution, we must not fear our persecutors or be "disturbed, unsettled, thrown into confusion, intimidated" (*tarasso*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 812-813) by them, 1 Peter 3:14b. The way to achieve this is to "make separate from others" Christ as Lord in our hearts (1 Peter 3:15a; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.), for "'Only he who can say, 'The Lord is the strength of my life' can go on to say, 'Of whom shall I be afraid?'" (*Ibid.*, in citing Alexander Maclaren, Expos. of Holy Scriptures, 16:42)
 - 3. Then, we should "always" (*aei*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 19) be "prepared" (*hetoimos*, *Ibid.*, p. 316) to "make a defense [apologetic]" (*apologia*, *Ibid.*, p. 95) to any who asks for a reasonable "account" (*logos*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 478-480) concerning our [Christian] hope, 1 Peter 3:15b.
 - 4. However, that apologetic needs to be made with "humility" (*prautes*, *Ibid.*, p. 705-706) and "respect" (*phobos*, *Ibid.*, p. 871) for the questioning unbelievers, that in having a good conscience in our behavior before our persecutors, if we are unjustly slandered as evildoers, those who revile our good behavior in Christ will be put to shame due to the lack of evidence for backing up their slander, 1 Peter 3:16 ESV. It is better to suffer for doing good, if that is God's will for us as in the case of being persecuted for the sake of righteousness, than to suffer for doing what is evil, 1 Peter 3:17 ESV.

Lesson: *Since we believers in Christ are hated by the lost world because Christ chose us to be separate from the world, (1) we should still be zealous to do good in not verbally abusing or deceiving others, but turn from evil to do good and seek peace in trying to live peaceably with the lost. (2) However, if we are persecuted for righteousness, may we recall how blessed we are due to our eternal reward for that persecution, and may we not be afraid or unsettled by our persecutors, but set Christ apart as Lord in our hearts and be ready to give an apologetic for our hope with humility and respect that offers no basis for those who slander our conduct to support their charge.*

Application: *(1) May we seek to live peaceably with the lost world, doing what is good and kind. (2) However, if we suffer for righteousness, may we rejoice in our eternal reward, focus on Christ's lordship and protect our testimony by giving a humble, respectful defense to those who ask for a reasonable account of our hope in Christ.*