

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

XV. Wise Living In View Of Christ's Perfect Example, 1 Peter 3:18-4:6

A. Christ's Great Example In His Work On The Cross

(1 Peter 3:18)

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 3:18-4:1 calls us to wise living in view of Christ's perfect example, and 1 Peter 3:18 in that section provides Christ's great example in His work on the cross, what we view for our insight and edification:

II. Christ's Great Example In His Work On The Cross, 1 Peter 3:18.

- A. Having provided guidelines for our conduct as believers living in a godless world in 1 Peter 3:13-17, Peter began to write on the perfect example of Christ in His suffering by ungodly men on the cross, *Ibid.*, p. 850.
- B. 1 Peter 3:18 that starts that reference to the cross of Christ is rich in theological content, what J. M. E. Ross claimed comprised "one of the shortest and simplest, and yet one of the richest summaries given in the New Testament of the meaning of the Cross of Jesus." ("The First Epistle of Peter," in *A Devotional Commentary*. London: Religious Tract Society, n. d., pp. 151-52 as cited in B. K. C., N. T., p. 851) We thus view 1 Peter 3:18 for our insight and application (as follows):
 1. Christ died for **sins**, 1 Peter 3:18b.
 - a. The death of Christ has often been misinterpreted (Chafer/Walvoord, Major Bible Themes, 1974, p. 63):
 - (i) Some teach that God could not righteously "lay the sins of the guilty on an innocent victim" like we Christians claim occurred in Christ's death (*Ibid.*, p. 64).
 - (ii) Others teach that Jesus died as a martyr, that "the value of His death is seen in the example He presented of courage and loyalty to His convictions even unto death," *Ibid.*
 - (iii) Still others assert that "Christ died to create a moral effect," that "men who consider the cross will be constrained to turn from lives of sin," *Ibid.*
 - b. To the contrary, 1 Peter 3:18b claims that Christ died "for sins" (*peri hamartion*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 798).
 - (i) Christ as God Incarnate was a **willing sacrifice, not an unwilling victim**, and in infinite love in alignment with the Father's will, He died to atone for man's sins that offended a righteous God, *Ibid.*
 - (ii) Christ was not a martyr, but He willingly laid down His life at the cross by His own effort in accord with the Father's will, *Ibid.*; John 10:18.
 - (iii) His death was never meant to cause men to reform themselves, but to provide the grounds for regeneration by the power and grace of God, *Ibid.*; Titus 3:5.
 2. Christ died "**once-for-all**," 1 Peter 3:18a.
 - a. The Greek adverb *hapax* modifies the verb "died" (*Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) in this verse, an adverb that when used of "the uniqueness of Christ's work" in the New Testament means "something which cannot be repeated," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume I, p. 381.
 - b. This "once-for-all" quality of Christ's death "is clearly a contrast with the Old Testament yearly sacrifice on the Day of Atonement and declares the complete sufficiency of Christ's death," *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T. (cf. Romans 6:10; Hebrews 9:26, 28; 10:10)
 - c. Thus, contrary to the errant views of transubstantiation, consubstantiation or of Calvin's receptionism, no saving efficacy is administered in observing the Lord's Table. Christ's "once-for-all death" fully satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God, and we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone! (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 3. Christ's death was a **substitutionary** atonement, the just for the unjust, 1 Peter 3:18c. ". . . (E)ither Christ bore the burden of our sin, or we bear it. There is no middle course" (Leon Morris, "The Atonement" in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., Basic Christian Doctrines, 1975, p. 156), and praise God, Christ **substitutionally** bore our penalty for sin as well as our sin on the cross so that our salvation is perfectly secure in Him!
 4. Christ's death occurred **to bring people to God**, being put to death in the body but being made alive by the Holy Spirit, 1 Peter 3:18d. Thank God that He has brought us believers to God by His death in our behalf!

Lesson: *Christ's great example of His work for us on the cross should motivate us to live righteously for Him.*

Application: *May our focus on Christ's work for us on the cross spur us to live righteously by the Spirit's power.*