

1 Peter 3:17-22

Study Questions

1. According to verse 17, what unique purpose lies behind believers suffering for doing the right thing?
2. How is this confirmed in what happened to Jesus in verse 18? How was this a unique experience? See Romans 5:6-8 for Paul's explanation about how Christ's death established the basis for our new life with God (our justification).
3. In what sense is this a pattern that believers must go through? See 1 Peter 2:21-24 to explain how being declared right with God (justification) results in sanctification (responding in positive ways to unjust suffering). Jesus experience, while unique, is also an _____ to teach us how to grow in the Christian life.
4. Verses 19-20 can be understood in a number of ways. One of the fundamental principles of Bible interpretation is to understand the "unclear" portions in light of the "clear" teachings of Scripture. See confirmation of this in Isaiah 8:20.

Verse 18 provides the framework for understanding the ideas elaborated in verses 19-20. What event is in view in the last part of verse 18? How did Christ suffer in the body? There is a contrast between physical suffering and spiritual triumph. When was Jesus raised by the Spirit? See Romans 1:4.

What was the cumulative effect of Christ's death and resurrection over sin and the power of evil? See Colossians 2:13-15. We believe this is at the heart of what Peter explains in verse 19-20.

5. Beginning with verse 19, we understand the work of Christ against the backdrop of Noah. How was Noah as example of suffering in the flesh? To what was the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11) calling the people of that generation?

What was God's answer to their unashamed mockery? How is Christ's resurrection God's definitive rebuttal to the world's ridicule?

Why does this understanding make more sense than explanations about some mysterious mission of Jesus between his death and resurrection into the realm of the dead?

6. Noah reminds us of the connection between water as the sign of judgment and God's means of deliverance through baptism. How do we know we're not talking about baptism as an absolute power in itself? What does baptism represent? See Galatians 3:27

Baptism represents not only our conversion but a way of life. See Romans 6:3-6

How does this direct us to respond to unjust suffering?

7. What is the ultimate triumph begun with Christ's resurrection? See verse 22. What is the importance of Christ ascending into heaven? See Hebrews 9:24-28 and Romans 8:24.

How does this encourage us to handle suffering for doing God's will? See also Hebrews 12:1-3