

THE SUFFERING OF THE SAINTS

I Peter 1:6-9

Introduction:

1. The people to whom Peter wrote were God's elect because they had obeyed the gospel of Christ (I Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess.2:13-14).
2. As God's elect they had an inheritance (I Pet. 1:5).
3. As God's chosen ones they rejoice in salvation (I Pet. 1:6)
4. Problem: Why do the saints suffer?

I. The Fact of Christian Suffering

- A. All that live godly shall suffer (2 Tim. 3:12).
 1. Jesus suffered (John 15:20; I Pet. 2:21-24). / (I Pet. 4:16)
 2. One who suffers as a Christian should not be ashamed.
- B. Why do the saved suffer?
 1. By a physical body the Christian is connected to a world where there is suffering, disease, death, and accidents.
 2. A sinful world does not appreciate godliness, and will react by inflicting physical and/or mental suffering upon the saved (I Pet. 4:1-5).
 3. Satan causes suffering (I Pet. 5:8; see Job 1) / Mtt.10:32f
 4. Some inflict suffering upon those obeying Christ

II. The Nature Of The Trials

- A. Manifold trials - I Pet.1:6:
This refers to kinds of trials and not to numbers; persecutions, deprivation, hardships, difficulties, etc.
- B. Fiery trials - I Pet. 1:7;
Some trials are fierce (Luke 12:50; Matt. 26:39);
Life during time of Nero was difficult (1 Pet.2:19,20; 3:14f)
- C. Temporary trials -- 1 Peter 1:6;
Life's trials are "but for a moment" (2 Cor. 4:17)
suffering as a Christian is but for "a little while" (I Pet. 5:10).

III. The Value of Suffering

- A. Trials test and reveal true nature of one's faith. (Cf. Abraham in Genesis 22:1,2, 12).
 1. Peter uses the figure of removing the impurities from gold by fire (1:7).
 2. Trial of faith works patience (steadfastness) James 1:2-3.
- B. Trials may arouse one to greater service -- Psa. 119:67, 71
- C. Trials enable one to help others who suffer (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

CONCLUSION:

1. It is important to develop and maintain a Christian attitude in the midst of suffering.
2. The importance of attitude: the same sun that melts wax hardens clay.
3. Rejoice because of heavenly reward -- Matthew 5:11-12.

FIRST PETER

Introduction

Author: Peter was also called Simon (Acts 15:14; 2 Pet. 1:1) and was born at Bethsaida (Jn. 1:44). His father was Jonas, or John (Mt. 16:17; Jn. 1:42) and with him Peter and his brother Andrew carried on the trade of fishing at Capernaum where he lived (Mt. 8:14) and where his wife's mother also lived (I Cor. 9:5).

His brother Andrew brought him to Christ and Jesus gave him the name 'Peter' or Hebrew "Cephas' (Jn. 1:40-42). He became a leader among the disciples and one of the inner-circles of Jesus' apostles. Christ gave to him the keys to open the kingdom on the day of Pentecost to the Jews (Acts 2) and to the Gentiles (Acts 10) with the conversion of Cornelius.

Background of the Letter: From reading the epistle it is evident there was a persecution upon the Christians under way. The persecution of Nero as described by the Roman historical Tacitus seems to best answer the situation. This came in the middle of the AD 60's. Paul was killed in this persecution and the epistle seems to have been written about this time.

The Recipients: The letter is addressed to Christians in the central and northern provinces of Asia Minor. It is addressed to the elect who are sojourners of the dispersion. It is apparent that the readers were Christians of both Jewish and Gentile background (1:14; 2:9-10; 4:3-5). Peter looked upon the scattered Christians as sojourners upon earth and as dispersed among the nations. It is likely that because of Nero's persecution many Christians had been forced to seek safety in the provinces Peter mentions.

Place of Writing and Date: In 5:13 Peter refers to "Babylon" and sends salutations to the saints to whom he was writing so that we get the impression that Peter was in Babylon when the letter was written. A great deal of speculations has been engaged in as to whether or not

this was literal Babylon, the city on the Euphrates River, or whether the term, Babylon, symbolically refers to the city of Rome or some other place of great persecution. There are a great many scholars who hold to both these views.

There is no reason, however, to interpret this passage figuratively. A passage should be interpreted literally unless the type of literature, context, or other weighty evidence indicates otherwise. Babylon is said to have been a large city with a good size Jewish population during the first century. (The city was not actually destroyed and deserted until the end of the third century.)

The date for the composition of First Peter is generally believed to be about AD 64 or 65. The persecution is probably that which was instigated by Nero in his rage against Christians following the fire at Rome in July of AD 64. According to tradition Peter was martyred in Rome about AD 65-67.