

# Hope When Life is Hard

Sunday, September 7, 2014

## 1 Peter 3:13-22

### I. Introduction

### II. Living With a Clear Conscience

*Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?*

The Greek word is *zelotes*, the word we get “zeal” from. We can go through the motions of doing good out of a sense of duty or as a strategy to manipulate.

Nevertheless, as Peter himself can attest, there may be times when we are mistreated for doing good. <sup>14</sup> *But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Count yourself blessed.*

Acts 5:41; Matthew 5:10-12

v.17 - *“For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil. We naturally think the opposite. We say that you shouldn’t complain if you are punished for doing something wrong.*

*“Have no fear of them, nor be troubled”* <sup>15</sup> *But in your hearts honor Christ as Lord. He is quoting from Isaiah 8:12, where God tells Isaiah not to be like the Israelites who fear earthly powers.*

Jesus Christ is our Lord whom we are to tremble before and take refuge in. We tremble before him as our glorious and holy Lord, but we come with joy to him as our refuge knowing that our Lord will not turn his people away.

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.* Let’s go through this admonition carefully. Note first the assumption being made. We will be asked. Somehow we are demonstrating the Christian hope in our lives, which will cause someone to ask about it. And it is hope that is being demonstrated. Although the context is that of Christians living righteous lives, what stands out is their hopeful attitude.

Peter says *Always be prepared to give an answer.* Being prepared involves two elements – knowing what to say and being ready to say it.

### III. Living a Baptized Life

These spirits are described in verse 20 as those *who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.* This leads to further speculation about the origin of these spirits. Genesis 6 speaks of “sons of God” who married “daughters of men” and produced “the Nephilim.”

Actually, I don't care to speculate on that passage, nor the origin of the spirits. I think Peter refers back to Noah's day, not to identify the spirits but to make Noah's situation a model for the Christians to whom he is writing.

The sign of the judgment and deliverance is the baptism we have received. Verse 20 continues: *In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also...* Peter now compares the flood water with the present sacrament of baptism. What does he mean? Simply this: what Noah and his family were really saved from was the wickedness of the world.

But that still leaves the question, Does water baptism save? No. It may be involved in the act of salvation, if the person is repenting and turning to Christ in faith at the same moment, which was often the case in the days of the apostles' preaching.

Peter summarizes Christ's work appealing to the resurrection, as he had done back in 1:3: *It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Christ's death brought atonement; his resurrection declared the victory and our salvation. In baptism we look not to the dead Lord, but the risen Lord whose victory over death marks our own victory.

Verse 22: *who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.* This is the act of glory. Peter beheld with his own eyes the Lord Jesus rising into glory. By his ascension he returns to the position of glory and honor and power at the right hand of God the Father. There he reigns over all creation.

### **Conclusion**

Christ has died; Christ has risen; Christ has ascended on high; some day, Christ will return.