

43. What *does* it obtain for one?
 44. Explain the phrase "interrogation of a good conscience toward God," v. 21.
 45. Baptism is effectual because of what great event in the life of Jesus?
 46. Who *are* the angels, authorities, and powers of v. 22?
 47. What does v. 22 show about the final outcome of Christ's sufferings?

CHAPTER FOUR

4:1-2 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Expanded Translation

Inasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, you also must equip yourself with the same frame of mind (as He possessed) for the one (Christian) who has had suffering in the flesh has ceased from (the practices of) sin; in order that you might not from now on live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

as Christ suffered in the flesh

SUFFERED—*pascho*, see 2:19.

arm ye yourselves

ARM—*hoplidzo*: to arm, equip; in the middle voice (here) to arm one's self, equip one's self.

with the same mind

MIND—*ennoia*, knowledge, insight, understanding, manner of thinking or feeling. In Heb. 4:12 it is rendered "intents." The same word is used in a similar setting by Paul: "Have this *mind* in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philip. 2:5). We should, therefore, take on the same mind or attitude that Christ did—a readiness and willingness to suffer for God and His kingdom.

for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin

Some would refer this phrase to Christ. However, the more likely reference is to Christians in general. Christ never "ceased" practicing sin—He was without it (2:22). The true disciple who wishes to profit from the example of Christ, will cease his life of sin even though he must suffer persecution for it. Suffering endured with a Christian attitude *will have a purifying influence upon one's life!*

that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh

Suffering, persecution, and trial provide no excuse for falling into sin. Rather, such times grant to us opportunity for spiritual growth and development. Watch that person who has learned how to keep a strong grip on the Saviour in time of great stress and difficulty—observe him over the years—and you will also be observing one who is *conquering sin*.

to the lusts of men . . . will of God

The two stand in direct contrast, and they always have: Isa. 55:6-9. The true follower of Christ casts off the former lusts and submits himself without reserve to the will of God.

4:3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries:

Expanded Translation

For the time which has passed by (in our former unregenerated state) is sufficient (enough, adequate) to have worked out the desires and wishes of the Gentiles (heathens, pagans) and to have walked in intemperance (outrageous behavior), lusts (cravings of the flesh), drunkenness, revellings (wild group behavior), liquor-drinking contests, and idolatries which are (in God's sight) lawless and profane;

to have wrought the desire

DESIRE—*boulema*, desire, purpose, will.*

walked in lasciviousness

LASCIVIOUSNESS—*aselgeia*, intemperance; licentiousness, lasciviousness (Rom. 13:13, etc.), insolence, outrageous behavior (Mark 7:22).

Thayer says, "The conduct and character of one who is *aselges* (a word which some suppose to be compounded of the alpha negative and *selge*, the name of a city in Pisidia whose citizens excelled in strictness of morals) . . ."

(Others give a different origin of the word, saying it is the combination of the alpha negative, plus *selgo*, a word meaning "not affecting pleasantly, exciting disgust." But the later Lexicons favor the first idea on its etymology.)

*For you who would like a more complete definition of this word, consult Thayer's Greek Lexicon under *thelo*.

Trench says it "is best described as wanton lawless insolence . . . The *aselges*, as Passow observes . . . being one who acknowledges no restraints, who dares whatsoever his caprice and wanton petulance may suggest . . . the fundamental notion . . . of *aselgeia*, lawless and insolence and wanton caprice."

See II Pet. 2:7 where the same word occurs in the plural.

lust, wine-bibblings

LUSTS—*epithumia*. See "desire" under 1:2. The Apostle here means those unbridled and uninhibited cravings of the flesh—stirred up and perpetuated by Satan.

WINEBIBBLINGS—*oinophlugia* (from *oinos*—wine, and *phulo*—to bubble over, overflow): to debauch with wine, drunkenness, sottishness.

"commonly . . . it is used for a debauch; no single word rendering it better than this; being as it is an extravagant indulgence in potations long drawn out . . . such as may induce permanent mischiefs on the body . . . as did, for instance, that fatal debauch to which, adopting one of the reports current in antiquity, Arrian inclines to ascribe the death of Alexander the Great . . ." Trench.

REVELLINGS—*komoss* properly, a festive procession, a merry-making; in the New Testament, a revel, lascivious feasting. See Rom. 13:13 ("rioting"), Gal. 5:21. Trench states that the word contains both an element of riot and of revelry. *Komoss* was often used of the company of revelers themselves; always of a festal and disorderly company, but not of *necessity* riotous and drunken. Still, he says, the word generally implies as much, being applied in a special sense to the troop of drunken revelers who at the late close of a revel, with garlands on their heads, and torches in their hands, with shout and song, pass to the harlots' houses or otherwise wander through the streets, with insult and wanton outrage for everyone whom they met.

Do we not see very similar acts in our society today? Midnight parties, high school and college dances, and other late-hour gatherings of the world are frequently concluded in a similar fashion. In fact, attend any such get-together in this, our "cultured" twentieth century, and nearly all of the sins mentioned in this passage will be committed!

CAROUSINGS—*potos*: a drinking; a drinking together, drinking-bout, comotation. This word would be descriptive of a couple or group who sat down at a drinking place and competed against one another to see who could drink the most.

and abominable idolatries

Athemitos (alpha negative, plus *themitos*—lawful), hence, unlawful, wicked. In this passage, the meaning is that it is *divinely* unlawful, hence lawless, profane, ungodly.

4:4 wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

Expanded Translation

in which (sinful ways just described) they are amazed that you do not keep company with them, indulging in the same excess, (overflowing) of riot (profligacy, debauchery), speaking against you.

wherein they think it strange

STRANGE—*xenidzo*, means first of all to receive as a guest, entertain (Acts 10:23), or, in the passive, to be entertained as a guest, to lodge or reside with (Acts 10:6). However, the word is derived from *xenos*, the primary meaning of which is foreign, alien, strange. Hence, in this verb form the meaning is sometimes (as here) to be struck with surprise, be amazed, be astonished at the novelty or strangeness of a thing.

that ye run not with them

RUN WITH—*suntrecho*, means literally, to run or flock together (Mark 6:33, Acts 3:11). Here it is used as a metaphor of one who runs in company with others.

into the same excess of riot,

EXCESS—*anachusis*: a pouring out; metaphorically, excess, an overflowing, an overabundance.

OF RIOT—*asotia* (*a*-alpha negative, plus *sodzo*, to save), hence, properly either of one who is abandoned (a hopeless, incorrigible individual), or, one who *does not save* (himself, his means, his time, etc.). The adverb form occurs in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:13, "riotous"), and is evidently why we have entitled that narrative as we have.

I cannot resist here to quote again from Richard Trench:

"... more commonly the *asotos* is one who himself cannot save or spare—'prodigus': or, again, to use a good old English word more than once employed by Spenser, but which we have let go, a 'scatterling.'"

"But it is easy to see that one who is *asotos* in this sense of spending too much, of laying out his expenditure on

a more magnificent scheme than his means will warrant, slides easily, under the fatal influence of flatterers, and of all those temptations with which he has surrounded himself, into a spending of *his own lusts and appetites* of that with which he parts so freely, laying it out for the gratification of his own sensual desires. Thus the word takes on a new colour, and indicates how not only one of a too expensive, but also and chiefly, of a dissolute, debauched, profligate manner of living . . .”

“In this sense *asotia* is used in the N.T. . . . The waster of his goods will be very often a waster of everything besides, will lay waste himself—his time, his faculties, his powers; and, we may add, uniting the active and passive meanings of the word, will be himself laid waste; he at once loses himself, and is lost.”

Thus the Lexicons define *asotia*: An abandoned, dissolute life, profligacy, prodigality, debauchery.

speaking evil of you:

Blasphemeo (hence our word blaspheme): to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, accuse falsely and maliciously. (As in I Tim. 1:20.)

4:5-6 who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. For unto this end was the gospel preached, even to the dead, that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

Expanded Translation

These wicked persons shall render an account (report) to him (Christ) who is ready and prepared to judge those living and those dead. For unto this purpose was the good news (of salvation) preached also to those (now) dead, in order that they might be judged (condemned?) in accordance with (the judgment proper for) men who live in the realm of the flesh, but that (others) might live in harmony with God, and his will in the realm of the Spirit.

who shall give account

ACCOUNT—*logos*, usually rendered “word” in the Scriptures, is translated “reason” in 3:15. Here it means account, report; an answer or explanation.

to him that is ready to judge

That is, Christ: Jn. 5:22-23, Acts 17:31.

the living and the dead

A phrase which has been variously interpreted.

Some believe the terms *living* and *dead* are to be understood of one's *spiritual* state. "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins" ((Eph. 2:1). ". . . thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou are dead" (Rev. 3:1). "But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth" (I Tim. 5:6).

Most scholars, however, have simply understood the phrase as referring to the universality or comprehensiveness of the judgment, as in II Tim. 4:18. Many are familiar with the committal which concludes concerning the body in the grave:

". . . there to await the day of resurrection
When the earth and sea will give up their dead,
To appear before our Lord Jesus Christ,
The Righteous Judge of the living and the dead."

See II Cor. 5:10, Rev. 20:12-13.

for to this end was the gospel preached, even to the dead

If we have placed the right construction on the phrase "living and dead," then the *gospel* must have been preached to many who were, at the time of Peter's epistle, in their tombs. The thought here is so similar to that expressed in 3:19 that we dare not separate them. The "spirits in prison" there, is equivalent to "the dead" here.

We have commonly limited the term "preach the gospel" to the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the fact that salvation is offered by this One who is the Son of God. True, I Cor. 15 *does* so define the Gospel, and this *message of salvation through the resurrected Christ* is by far the most frequent usage of the word *evangelidzo* in the New Testament. Peter himself so uses it in 1:12, 25, and the noun form (*euangelion*, "gospel") in 4:17.

But this specific definition of the term is only an *application* of its basic meaning: to proclaim or announce good tidings. Several times in the Septuagint, and in a number of New Testament passages it is used in this *basic* sense (Rev. 10:7, 14:6; Matt. 11:5). Sometimes the writer obviously did *not* have salvation through the resurrected Christ, as such, in mind, but simply the *message of salvation*, which is surely "good news," whether preached in the Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian dispensation.

"But they (the Jews) did not all hearken to the *glad tidings*. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report" (Rom. 10:16),

Again the Apostle Paul speaks of the disobedient Jews, this time during the days of Moses:

"Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter thereinto, and they to whom the *good tidings* were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience . . ." (Heb. 4:6).

The message to those of a previous era which provided salvation, then, may Scripturally be called good tidings, joyful message, good news, glad tidings, or gospel. This, I believe, was the "gospel preached even to the dead," including the antediluvians (3:19-20), who were, at the time Peter wrote, dead, and whose spirits were in prison. They did not, for the most part, accept this gospel, but it was preached to them nevertheless. Caton pointedly remarks that if *all* are to be judged by the Gospel of Christ as promulgated by the Apostles, then there must be a post-mortem preaching of the same, or else there would be a failure of justice on the part of God.

that they (the dead) might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh

Referring to those who had refused to believe, accept, and obey the *Gospel*, the message of salvation.

The fact that they had the good news proclaimed to them but *refused* it, made their condemnation even more justifiable. Knatchbull translates, "that they who live according to men in the flesh may be condemned . . ."—a quite frequent sense of "judged" in the New Testament; and a definite possibility here.

but live according to God in the Spirit

Or "but (they who live) according to God in the Spirit may live." The words "Indeed . . . but . . ." (*men . . . de*) represent a definite contrast in the original: "on the one hand . . . on the other . . ." The contrast is between people who live in two realms or spheres, the flesh and Spirit. Though men living in the realm of the flesh condemned them and abused them by their evil-speaking, *they* were living in the spirit-realm with the approbation of God upon their lives.

3. Service to God and Christians Enjoined in View of Impending Calamity 4:7-19

4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer:

Expanded Translation

But the end (conclusion, termination) of all things is near. You must therefore be soberminded and self-controlled; and be calm, that you might be able to pray.

But the end of all things is at hand

The "all things" mentioned here does not necessarily refer to all the world. There are a number of places in the New Testament where the term "all" is not to be taken in a literal sense. See for example, Matt. 10:22. But whatever he has reference to, he tells us it is "at hand." The word here so translated (*engidzo*) occurs 43 times in the Greek New Testament. It is usually rendered "at hand," "draw near," etc. Sometimes it is used in regard to place or position, and sometimes with reference to time, as in this instance. When referring to time, it invariably refers to what is imminent or impending. However, some commentators believe the word frequently does not carry this idea in a literal sense, because, they say, there are certain contexts where placing this significance on the word is impossible. Something could be "near," they say, *as far as God is concerned*, and yet cover thousands of years. ". . . one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8). The following passages have been cited as proof of this usage of *engidzo*: Matt. 3:2, Rom. 13:12, Heb. 10:25, James 5:8. Also Phil. 4:5, where the adverb form (*engus*) appears. All of these passages, they point out, are as yet unfulfilled. Thus they believe that the word covers a period of more than 1900 years, and reaching unto the second coming of the Lord, and the end of the world.*

That the above construction on the word "near" as it occurs here, *could* be true, it is conceded. But I am not convinced, after examining the above 43 passages, that *engidzo* is never used in this loose sense by any New Testament writer.

By carefully checking each of the above cited Scriptures in their own contexts, one will find that it is at least very possible,

*See, for example, *Jesus Is Coming* by Blackstone, pp. 83-88. Also Johnstone's Commentary on Jas. 5:8.

if not likely, that they have *all* been fulfilled. (In the last passage cited (Phil. 4:5) where the word is rendered "near," there may simply be a reference to Christ's *presence*. That is, the Lord was close to them, hence a comforting influence.)

If we take the term "at hand" literally here, how shall we understand this verse? It appears to me that we once again have a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state. (See comments, 2:12.) So great was this event, so far-reaching was its influence in the Roman world, that it could be spoken of by the people of that age as "the end of all things." (Compare the use of "the last days" with reference to the same event, Jas. 5:1-9.)**

be ye therefore of sound mind

Note that the exhortation here is *based on* the fact just stated: things were soon coming to an end. All those who were true to Christ would have nothing to fear—if they were mentally and spiritually prepared! (See 1:13.) To be of sound mind (*sophroneo*) is to be so ruled by one's mind that he is self-controlled and temperate. Some persons are impulsive and ruled by emotions. But the quality spoken of here consists of the government of such passions, so that on all occasions we behave with prudence.

and be sober unto prayer

The word "sober" (*nepho*) literally meaning not intoxicated, is used in the New Testament of one who is calm and collected in spirit, temperate. (See comments, 5:8.)

In view of the coming catastrophies, persecutions, and confusion all about them, it would have been easy for the Christians to become alarmed, bewildered, and fearful. The Apostle exhorts them not to be rash or impetuous, but rather to be calm, that they might be able to pray. Their sobriety was to be "unto" (*eis*) prayer—in order that they might be in a state of mind which was conducive to prayer life. (See Expanded Translation.)

4:8-9 above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins: using hospitality one to another without murmuring:

**It would help the student see the far-reaching consequences of that great holocaust, by reading in *Wars of the Jews*, by Flavius Josephus, Book VI, Chapters VIII, IX and X.

Expanded Translation

in preference to everything else, having an intense, earnest and fervent love among yourselves; for love covers (conceals, hides) a multitude of sins. Be hospitable toward one another without

sulking and grumbling.

above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves

The last word is emphatic in the original. Why is this virtue so important? Peter had just spoken of the great calamity that was to fall round about them. Times were already difficult, and the persecution, trials, and hardships were soon to increase. Under such trying and extenuating circumstances, the *church* must be a loving and harmonious unit.

BEING FERVENT—See under 1:22, where we have a very similar exhortation.

love covereth a multitude of sins

That is, when love dominates a person's life and being, he is not a fault-finder or crank. The constant practice of sin should certainly arrest our attention—whether in our life or in another's. But when love is the controlling force in our lives, we will not be *looking* for sins in our brothers' lives. "Hatred stirreth up strifes," the Wise Man said, "but love covereth all transgressions" (Prov. 10:12). This same thought is expressed by Paul in his great eulogy on Love, when he said that love "taketh not account of evil (I Cor. 13:5).

God also covers our sins when He forgives us (Psa. 32:1, Jas. 5:20). For that reason, some have thought *God's* love and forgiveness is here cited as an example to be imitated. The phrase may, however, simply be taken as a general truth.

using hospitality one to another

The word *philoxenos* comes from *phileo*, to love and *xenos*, stranger. Thus literally; kind to strangers, loving strangers. But "strangers" here is obviously to be taken in the sense of *others* (*guests*), that is, those outside your immediate household. We are to practice this virtue among *ourselves* as Christians. More is involved in this than *just* having Christian guests in our home. We should *want* them there, and treat them kindly and helpfully.

All too often this virtue is practiced by a few in the church who (bless their generous hearts) are thoughtful of those in need. Others, it seems, practice hospitality to a few of their select friends, while those who need assistance most go unhelped.

Hospitality among ourselves is to be practiced . . .

without murmuring

The way all of God's work is to be done (Philip. 2:14). The word "murmuring" (*goggusmos*) sometimes referred merely to low and suppressed discourse, a *muttering* (Jn. 7:12). But more often, as here, it is an expression of secret and sullen discontent—*complaining* or *grumbling*. Hospitality so rendered represents no virtue at all—it only shows you have grudgingly complied to duty. Won't those guests feel so comfortable and relaxed in your home as you show your "love for guests" in this manner? God help us to serve Him and others out of a cheerful and ready mind!

4:10-11 according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Expanded Translation

According as every man was gifted by God, employing this same gift, be serving and ministering among yourselves as good stewards (caretakers, managers) of the grace of God which is abundant and many-sided. If any man speaks, let his words be uttered as words of God. If any man is performing a service, let him do so as one who serves out of the strength which God supplies, that in everything God may receive glory through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the might (power, dominion) for ever and ever. (Literally, into the ages of the ages). Amen.

according as each has received a gift

Or "gifted" as above. It is difficult here to know for certain whether the Holy Spirit has reference to extraordinary powers and manifestations of the Holy Spirit (as in Rom. 12:6, I Cor. 12:4, 31, etc.), or if the reference is simply to natural talents with which God has equipped every person, though not in the same measure or with the same gifts. The literal meaning of "gift," according to Thayer is: "a gift of grace; a favor which one receives without any merit of his own." Many would refer its usage here to the class of extraordinary powers. However, in such passages as II Cor. 1:11, I Cor. 7:7, and possibly Rom. 11:29, the word has a more *general* significance. Thus Moulton and Milligan

tells us it is used of gifts *generally*. . . . They list several such usages in the Papyri. This general usage of the word—referring to *whatever* abilities or talents one might be able to use for Christ—seems to be intended here. That it included *more* than the direct miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, seems to me to be shown in v. 11, for such a “gift” was certainly not necessary to qualify as a *server* or even as a deacon.

The idea, I believe, is that *whatever* we have, we must use *in God’s service*.

ministering it among yourselves

Diakoneo. One immediately notices the relationship of this word to the word “deacon,” as it is the verb form of the word so translated. Hence, several lexicographers give it the meaning “perform the duties of a deacon” or some similar rendering. This is a possibility here, but again it is probably better to take the word in a general rather than a specific sense, as in 1:12.*

as good stewards of the manifold grace of God

A “steward” was commonly a superior slave of proven character, who looked after the accounts and functions of the household. We are managers, caretakers, and overseers of God’s gifts of grace to us! How, Christian, are you using what God has given to you? Are you a competent and careful steward of that which he has loaned you for a while—or are you foolishly squandering it for *your* good and pleasure? We should be stewards that have the best interests of our Master at heart—employing our time and energy for His benefit!

if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God

An “oracle” is a word or message. If the *gift* of verse 10 had reference to natural endowments, verse 11 provides a further exhortation to cultivate such capacities and use them profitably in the Lord’s service.

If *gift* in verse 10 has reference to the spiritual gifts (miraculous), then the exhortation here would be to rightly use such a gift (prophecy?) so that others would know that that person was speaking from God.

if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth

Referring to the same one who is ministering his gift among the congregation (v. 10). He must recognize, acknowledge, and

*Also so used in Jn. 12:26, Acts 19:22, Philem. 13.

call upon the power of God, "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

that in all things God may be glorified

The ultimate purpose of all our service: "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy.

Expanded Translation

Loved ones, you must not be surprised (amazed, astonished, shocked) concerning the fiery trial among you, which comes upon you to prove (test, try) you: as though something strange, unexpected, or surprising is happening to you: But insomuch as you are sharers (partners, partakers) in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice! that you may also rejoice greatly and exceedingly at the revelation (disclosure, appearance) of His glory when He comes again.

Note the close similarity of 1:6-9, 3:17, 18, 4:1-2.

Beloved, think it not strange

The trial was already upon them, and evidently to become more severe (v. 7). They were not to be surprised or amazed at this, but should rather have *expected* it as a natural consequence of living the Christ-like life. ("Think it strange" (*xenidzo*) is defined in v. 4.)

concerning the fiery trial among you

i.e., trying, severe, and difficult trials. Fire is painful, but fire is also necessary in the refining process.

which cometh upon you to prove you

See comments, 1:7.

as though a strange thing happened unto you

We should be mentally and spiritually prepared for such tests (see under 1:13). "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).

but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice

Christ was without fault of any kind, yet He suffered (2:21-23). He suffered as a result of *living righteously*. We should suffer for

the *same reason* as our Master. "A servant is not greater than his Lord," Jesus told His disciples. "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you . . ." (Jn. 15:20).

We cannot return to the hill of Calvary and agonize with our Lord there. Yet our fellowship with Him is not as it should be until we are so living from day to day so that times of suffering *similar to His* are our lot. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ" (II Cor. 1:5). Paul not only wanted to know the power of Christ's resurrection, but "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10).

When our suffering is a result of patterning our behavior after His Divine example, then we may truly have reason for rejoicing. Our consoling thought may then be, "Because I am acting like Christ, I am being treated like Christ."

that at the revelation of His glory

When He comes the second time. No one will welcome that day more than those who have suffered (and are suffering) for Him! The *hope* of His coming and the joys to follow have sustained and encouraged these Christians through life. But their faith and hope will then become sight! Those in trial and affliction, above all people, are qualified to be "looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God" (II Pet. 3:12).

4:14-16 **If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters; but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.**

Expanded Translation

If you are censured (railed at, reproached) for professing and living by the name of Christ, blessed are you, because the glorious Spirit of God is resting upon you. For none of you must suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer (criminal?) or as a busybody in the affairs of others: but if a person suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; rather, let him be glorifying God in (or *by*, or *through*) this name ("Christian").

If ye are reproached

The latter word (*oneididzo*) meaning to censure, attack vehemently in words, insult. It is rendered "upbraid" in Jas. 1:5.

for the name of Christ

Several other translations are possible (see above), but the meaning is altered little. We must suffer because we profess and live by the name of our Saviour.

blessed are ye

i.e., God's favor and blessings are upon us. Our lot is a happy one, though this is sometimes difficult to perceive in our weakness of faith!

Peter specifies *why* we should consider it a privilege and favor to be so treated:

because the spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you

Not two *different* spirits, but two ways of describing the same one. (Note the Expanded Translation.) Another translation might be: because the Spirit of glory even the Spirit of God resteth upon you. This *blessing* upon us when being reviled or otherwise mistreated far outweighs the suffering endured by the assaults of the world. We will not be left or forsaken. God's glorious Spirit will be with us.

There is a very close parallel with this passage in Matt. 5:10-12. Please look it up. How many likenesses can you name?

for let none of you suffer as a murderer, thief, evil-doer, meddler in other men's matters

Suffering for these things is only receiving one's just deserts (Cp. 2:12, 20). We ought to be ashamed of ourselves and humbly ask God for forgiveness if we suffer for doing any of these (including the last!).

The word *evil-doer* may be rendered "criminal" as in 2:12. The word frequently had reference to one who broke *civil* laws, the laws of the land. Souter thinks the reference here is to a sorcerer, magician, or poisoner.

meddler in other men's matters

All one word in the original, *alotrioepiskopos*. It is, in turn, from two words: *alotrios*, belonging to another, and *episkopos*, an overseer, inspector, watcher, guardian (sometimes rendered "bishop"). The reference, then, is to a person who takes upon himself the supervision or oversight of affairs pertaining to others

and in no wise to himself. Don't be a "bishop" of another man's business! See II Thes. 3:11, I Tim. 5:13.*

but if any man suffer as a Christian

As a follower of Christ. This name appears only three times in the New Testament: Acts 11:26, 26:28, and here.

Isaiah prophesied that God's people would be called by "another name" and a "new name, *which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.*" (Isa. 65:15, 62:1-2.) The name *Christian* is the only one that is *new*, for in the Old Testament we have Godly people called saints (Psa. 16:3), brethren (Psa. 133:1), and disciples (Isa. 8:16). I therefore believe this name was given to us by *God*, and not by the heathens or Gentiles.**

The phrase "suffer as a Christian" is here equivalent to "when ye do well" (2:20), "zealous for that which is good" (3:13), and "for righteousness' sake" (3:14).

let him not be ashamed

Note Barnes' Comment here:

"He is to regard his religion in every way honorable, and all that fairly results from it in time and eternity as in every respect desirable. He is not to be ashamed to be called a Christian; he is not to be ashamed of the doctrines taught by his religion; he is not to be ashamed of the Saviour whom he professes to love; he is not to be ashamed of the society and fellowship of those who are true Christians, poor and despised though they may be; he is not to be ashamed to perform any of the duties de-

*Thayer (and others) believe "other men" here has reference to the *Gentiles*. Citing this very passage, he states: ". . . the writer seems to refer to those who, with holy but intemperate zeal, meddle with the affairs of the Gentiles

—whether public or private, civil or sacred—in order to make them conform to the Christian standard." This interpretation seems likely to me for two reasons: (1) ALL the previous sins mentioned (murder, thievery, evil-doer) were crimes against society or the public at large; (2) The Gentile (or outsider) could easily be referred to by *allotrios* ("other men's"). In Matt. 17:25-26 it is very properly translated "strangers." And in Heb. 11:34 our translators have rendered it *aliens*.

**See the various commentators (particularly McGarvey) on Acts 11:26 and the term "were called" (*chrematidzo*).

manded by his religion; he is not to be ashamed to have his name cast out, and himself subjected to reproach and scorn. A man should be ashamed only of that which is wrong. He should glory in that which is right, whatever may be the consequence to himself . . . His views may be regarded as bigoted, narrow, severe. Opprobrious epithets, on account of his opinions, may be applied to him. His former friends and companions may leave him because he has become a Christian. A wicked father, or a gay and worldly mother, may oppose a child, or a husband may revile a wife, on account of their religion. In all these cases, the same spirit essentially is required which was enjoined on the early Christian martyrs. We are never to be ashamed of our religion, whatever results may follow from our attachment to it."

4:17-18 For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?

Expanded Translation

For the specific time has come for the judgment (of trial, persecution, or affliction) to begin at the house of God. And if this judgment begins first at us, what shall be the end (ultimate destiny) of the ones who do not believe and obey (yield to) the good tidings of God? And if the righteous is saved accompanied with difficult times (under the disciplining hand of God), where shall the ungodly (irreverent, irreligious) and sinner appear?

For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God

What judgment? The word *krima* is employed in many different senses in the New Testament. It especially refers to the sentence of God as a judge. Sometimes this meant a *condemnatory* sentence: II Pet. 2:3 ("sentence"), Jude 4 ("condemnation"). But surely *this* is not the judgment God has in mind for the *house of God!* It is true that some will be condemned who *seem* to be in His true house.* But the Apostle speaks of *their* fate in the same verses.

*As the Parable of the Dragnet shows, Matt. 13:47-50, and which Paul also confirms, I Tim. 5:24-25.

We know Peter did not mean *final* judgment here, for he stated "the time is *come*." Literally, the forepart of the verse reads, "because it is the time of the beginning of the judgment." It was something impending upon the church *at that time*.

It is the opinion of most commentators that the Holy Spirit is here speaking of a severe trial and time of persecution.*

God, the all-wise judge, allows such to come upon Christians to purify and refine them.**

and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God?

"Obey not" (*apeitheo*) is a present participle: ". . . those not yielding to the Gospel . . ." It is defined under 2:8 where we also have a present participle: "being disobedient."

The Church is the special object of God's care, concern, and love, yet it is soon to be tried, persecuted, and afflicted! If our merciful and loving Father allows such for His *children*, how much *greater* will be the hardship and misery of those who refuse to believe and obey Him? What shall be *their* outcome?

and if the righteous is scarcely saved

Or, saved *with difficulty*, or, saved *with hardship**** (See the Expanded Translation.) *God's* strength is not so limited and impotent that He "scarcely" or *barely* saves us: II Pet. 1:10, 11; II Tim. 1:12, Heb. 7:25, Isa. 59:1. Some, it is true, are *almost* lost before they are saved (Jude 23). But this is not because of God's inability.

where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?

What shall be their ultimate destiny? They shall certainly not appear in heaven.

If a Christian is *saved* under the disciplining and chastening hand of God, what will be true concerning the *future life* of the *unsaved*? If there are *difficulties* involved in saving a Godly and holy man, how much *more* difficult is it for one to be saved who does *not have* the reassuring promises of the Gospel? The salvation of such a man is not only difficult—it is impossible!

*Zerr, Lange, Brown, The Pulpit Commentary, Barnes, Wood, etc.

**Perhaps these were also *chastening* judgments. Compare the use of *krino* (the verb) in I Cor. 11:32.

***Compare the use of *molis* in the Book of Acts: 14:18 ("scarce"), 27:7, 8, 16 ("with difficulty"). The idea of "barely" is present, but the thought of *difficulty* seems uppermost.

4:19 Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful creator.

Expanded Translation

And consequently (because these things are true) those that are suffering according to the will of God must give over their souls in well-doing to a creator worthy of trust and confidence.

In Verses 17-18 we learned:

1. That God, as the good judge, was about to allow hardship and stress to come upon Christians. He has promised to save us if we will cling to Him—but He has *not* promised that life would be without its hardships.

This brings to mind the well-known words of Annie Johnson Flint:

God hath not promised skies always blue
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

God hath not promised we shall not know
Toil and temptation, trouble and woe;
He hath not told us we shall not bear
Many a burden, many a care.

God hath not promised smooth roads and wide,
Swift, easy travel, needing no guide;
Never a mountain rocky and steep,
Never a river, turbid and deep.

But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

2. That God is just in condemning the wicked to *eternal* punishment. Someone says, "Would God be so cruel, harsh, and *brutal* as to let people suffer in the fires of hell?" What shallow insight into the mind of God! He allows His *very own children* to suffer here on earth—sometimes for years on end! And during the same years, the unconverted may be "enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). Why, then, would not Jehovah allow the *sons of Satan* to suffer in the *world to come*? The Christian chooses to embrace Christ and suffer temporarily on earth

(II Tim. 3:12). The unregenerated man chooses the ways of the devil, and suffers eternally in the future life. In fact, even in *this* life it is often true that "the way of the transgressor is hard" (Prov. 13:15).

In view of the *superiority* of the Christian's position, then, let him place all his trust in his God. Let him suffer only for doing right, but when times of affliction are his lot, he must learn to lean heavily on the strong and sustaining arm of his loving Father.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER FOUR

I. Vss. 1-6

1. In what way are we to have the same mind as Christ (v. 1)?
2. Does the expression (v. 1) "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin," refer to Christ or Christians? Explain your answer.
3. Multiple choice: "Gentiles" in this book is used of:
 - a. all who were not of Hebrew extraction,
 - b. the Greeks,
 - c. the Romans,
 - d. non-Jews who were not Christians.
 (The term appears in 2:12 and 4:3.)
4. Define, in everyday words, the meaning of the sins mentioned in v. 3.
5. Do Christians seek out the company of sinners?
6. Who thinks it is strange that we do not go along with them?
7. What expression we have studied shows that though a man dies, his life will still be judged?
8. When was the Gospel preached to "the dead"?
9. Why was the preaching done?
10. What does it mean to be "judged according to men in the flesh"?
11. Look at v. 6. With what verses we have previously studied would you connect this one?

II. Vss. 7-11

12. When Peter said, "But the end of all things is at hand," do you think he was prophesying of the end of the world? Explain answer.
13. If this statement refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, how do you explain the "all things"?
14. How is one "sober unto prayer"?

15. Without using your Bible, finish this statement: "Above all things being _____ among yourselves . . ."
16. Explain: "love covereth a multitude of sins."
17. Finish: "using hospitality one to another _____"
18. Notice v. 10. What two types of "gifts" could be in the mind of Peter?
19. How would you apply v. 10 and 11 to Christians *today*?
20. What is the highest motive for all of our service?

III. Vss. 12-19

21. Name two things fire does that trial in a Christian's life should also accomplish?
22. Note v. 12. Of what previous verses does this remind you?
23. How are we partakers (sharers) in Christ's sufferings?
24. For what reason should a Christian be reproached?
25. For what reasons should he *not* suffer (according to this chapter)?
26. In what name should a Saint glorify God?
27. In what other Scriptures does the name "Christian" appear? Who gave us this name?
28. Make a list of five circumstances in life where one is tempted by Satan to be ashamed, but where being ashamed would be sinful.
29. What is the "judgment" about to come on the church at this time?
30. How are the righteous "scarcely saved"?
31. Answer the question the Holy Spirit asks in v. 17. In v. 18.
32. According to the final verse of this chapter, we must commit our souls "unto a faithful _____" in times of suffering.

CHAPTER FIVE

VI. EXHORTATIONS TO ELDERS

5:1-4

5:1 The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Expanded Translation

Therefore (because the judgment of trial is engulfing the church), I exhort and appeal to the elders (presbyters) among you, being a fellow-elder and a witness or testifier of the sufferings of Christ, and being a sharer (partner, partaker) in the glory which shall be revealed (uncovered).