

• *The subject of unjust suffering continues*

### 1. Jesus adopted a certain attitude to sin and suffering

• *God's purposes going forward through unjust suffering*

• *A ransom for sin*

• *Extreme suffering*

• *Satan utterly conquered*

• *Afterwards, all angels and authorities and powers subject to Him*

• *The classic example*

### 2. The Christian approaches sin with the same mentality

• *'Arm yourself' has two meanings:*

• *You are in Christ, a realm of victory*

• *Follow Jesus' example*

Peter is still dealing with the Christian's experience of unjust suffering. Jesus suffered unjustly but it led to His triumph. The subject continues in 1 Peter chapter 4.

'Therefore, now that Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourself also with the same thought – the thought that he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin...' <sup>¶1</sup>. The word 'therefore' links 1 Peter 4:1 with 3:18–22.

#### 1. Jesus adopted a certain attitude towards sin and suffering when He died upon the cross.

'Suffered in the flesh' refers to Jesus' death on the cross. The tense of the verb refers to an event on a definite occasion; it is the same tense used in 1 Peter 3:18.

Why was Jesus willing to endure such disgrace and suffering? He went to the cross with a certain 'mentality'. We know that He was willing to humble Himself. This was 'the mind of Christ' as He obeyed His Father <sup>¶1</sup>. We know that He was looking forward to the joy of being rewarded by His Father; this helped Him to despise the shame and endure the cross <sup>¶2</sup>. He was dealing a death-blow to sin. He was condemning it <sup>¶3</sup>, buying our freedom from it <sup>¶4</sup>. As a result Jesus utterly conquered it and finished with it forever. He has 'died to sin', never to come under its influence again (as Romans 6:10 has it). This was His 'thought' or 'purpose' from the beginning. Jesus knew that He was to be a ransom for sin. He steadfastly set out to go to the cross <sup>¶5</sup>. He knew that it would involve extreme suffering for Him, and He would have preferred to avoid suffering if it were possible. But He also knew He would utterly conquer sin and Satan by obeying the Father.

He knew that when He had suffered, His relationship to sin would be finished. He would no longer be the Sin-bearer. All angels and authorities and powers would be subject to Him.

Jesus is the classic example of God's purpose going forward through unjust suffering. His death leads to our death to sin. The baptized person is declaring his faith. Just as Noah's family went through water into a new world, so faith in Jesus expressed in baptism brings us into a new world also!

#### 2. The Christian approaches sin armed with the same mentality.

Jesus' suffering on the cross was an indication of His determination and willingness to suffer in order to conquer the entire realm and kingdom of sin. Now, says Peter to his Christian friends, '... arm yourself also with the same thought...'. This seems to mean two things: (i) arm yourself with the thought that Christ's having suffered has taken Him into a realm

of victory. You are 'in Christ', so you are in a realm of victory also – in Christ. (ii) But there is a second strand in what it means to 'arm yourself also with the same thought'. It surely includes the idea that we should follow Jesus' example. If Jesus' willingness to suffer led to His death upon the cross, and to His achieving a decisive victory over sin, surely something analogous and similar can be true in our lives also. If He has conquered sin, in the first place, we may conquer sin as people who follow on after what Jesus has done.

¶1 4:1

¶1 see  
Philippians  
2:5-8  
¶2 see  
Hebrews 12:2  
¶3 Romans  
8:3  
¶4 Mark 10:45  
¶5 Luke 9:51

• *Sin's power broken*

Christ has died to sin; we die to sin in Christ. But then Romans 6 says 'Do not let sin reign in your bodies'<sup>1</sup>. The power of sin has been broken – so break its power even more!

<sup>1</sup> see Romans 6:12

• *He who has suffered has ceased – refers to Jesus*

1 Peter 4:1 is analogous. Jesus has finished with sin-bearing and has been transferred to another realm; we have ceased from sin because we are 'in Christ'; so now we cease from sin even more!

• *'Armed' with the same purpose and mentality as Jesus*

Two items of interpretation are involved in this exposition; they seem to be necessary for verse 1 to make sense. (i) The eleventh word in the Greek sentence means 'that' (not 'because'). (ii) Verse 1a ('he who has suffered ... has ceased from sin') refers to Jesus.

The Christian 'arms' himself with the same mentality that Jesus had. He has been transferred to a realm of righteousness. Now, like Jesus, he faces the future with a firm determination that he or she will conquer sin. Jesus has already dealt it a deathblow and broken its power over him. Now he or she also is 'armed' with the same purpose and mentality.

• *A person who is willing to suffer in order to defeat sin has a powerful piece of weaponry!*

Peter's words imply that the Christian is conscious of being in a fight. Sin is defeated – but sin does not surrender easily. It fights back. It fights to overcome us again. **A person who is willing to suffer in order to defeat sin is a person with a powerful piece of weaponry!** Jesus went to the cross with this mentality; the Christian faces pressures to sin with the same attitude. Jesus was willing to lay down His life rather than fail to defeat sin. The Christian who feels the same way is in a powerful position; he is powerfully 'armed'.

### 3. The Christian faces the future with a firm resolve that the sins of the past will be left aside

**3. The Christian faces the future with a firm resolve that the sins of the past will be left aside.** Peter goes on to say: '*Arm yourself also with the same thought – the thought that he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin – in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer in human lusts but in the will of God*'<sup>1</sup>. From now on the Christian will face any suffering rather than disobey God's will. Although given much freedom, the Christian knows that God has wishes and purposes. The Christian is free but he wants to please God. '*For the time that has gone by is sufficient to have accomplished the desire of the Gentiles, to have walked in the ways of sensuality, in immoral desires, in drunkenness, revelry, drinking-parties, and the indecent practices of idolatry*'<sup>2</sup>. These Christians in Roman Asia Minor had indulged in this kind of wild living, but now Peter wants them to say 'Never again! I have had more than enough of the life of sin. From now on I shall live for God, no matter what happens to me'.

<sup>1</sup> 4:2

<sup>2</sup> 4:3

• *Never again! From now on I shall live for God.*



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