

# An In-Depth Study of the First Letter of Apostle Peter

## [Part 6]

**1 Peter 3:13** [NIV] *“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?”*

On the surface this rhetorical question and comment suggests that zeal on a Christian’s part, for what is right is **not** likely to lead to persecution.

This is strangely inconsistent with the warning of Jesus Christ [**Matthew 5:10-12; Matthew 10:17-22; John 15:18 – 16:4**], the experience of Paul [**Acts 14:22; Acts 16:19**] and Peter’s own words [**1 Peter 3:16-17 and 1 Peter 4:12-19**].

In view of this it is best to focus on the word “harm.” The Greek word “*kakōō*” meaning to provoke or entreat evil.

In fact persecution may well come on a Christian but often the experience will lead to a closer walk with our Creator.

**1 Peter 4:19** [NIV] *“So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”*

The final issue can safely be left with God, who is watching over both you and your persecutors, and will respond in an appropriate way.

**1 Peter 3:14** [NIV] *“But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”*

In consequence Christians are urged **not** to be afraid.

**1 Peter 3:15** [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”*

**This is the positive antidote to fear, giving Jesus Christ a special place in our lives where He is to reign as Lord and Saviour.**

**How do we place Jesus Christ in our hearts?**

Having studied His words and promises so thoroughly that we can answer, from scripture, the hope we have in this life and in eternal life to come.

We present this hope in a humble and respectful way, that allows the other person to seek the same confidence that we have in their own life and future.

**1 Peter 3:16-17** [NIV] *“keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”*

A clear conscience can **only** be experienced if we are living a life that is motivated by love for God and our fellow human beings.

It may be that it is God's Will that we suffer for doing what is right instead of wrong, for the witness of a martyr is very powerful.

**1 Peter 3:18** [NIV] *“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body **but made alive by the Spirit,**”*

We should be responding to the call we have been given at this time by God [**John 6:44**] by being willing to witness to the Good News that Jesus brought to all humanity from God the Father.

Even if such witness of the hope we have, by accepting Jesus Christ as our Saviour, brings persecution and suffering.

**Note it was the Holy Spirit who resurrected the human Jesus Christ back to life.**

It is the same Holy Spirit in us, as He was in Jesus Christ the human Son of Man, who will resurrect us to eternal life.

**Without the Holy Spirit working in and through us we have no hope of eternal life.**

**1 Peter 3:19-20** [NIV] *“through whom also he went and preached to the **spirits in prison** who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, **were saved through water,**”*

The same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, preached through Noah for 120 years to those who were disobedient and convicted of transgressions against God before the flood that destroyed them.

**Genesis 6:5-7** [NIV] *“**The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air, for I am grieved that I have made them.”**”*

This is the evil society that Peter is referring to, that the righteous Noah preached to for 120 years.

Noah building the ark, far from any water, was a powerful witness, when he explained why he was building it to his generation.

**Hebrews 11:7** [NIV] *“By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. **By his faith** he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”*

By faith in God's Word, Noah set about the massive task of building the ark.

**Genesis 6:3** [NIV] *“Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with man for ever, for he is mortal; **his days will be a hundred and twenty years.**”*

This period of witness was 120 years, a limited period, to allow these rebellious people to repent, but they failed to heed the warning.

**Matthew 24:36-39** [NIV] *“No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.** For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”*

Are we responding to the same message that the Holy Spirit preached through Noah?

Or are we continuing to follow the culture and the rebellious way of this present society, rejecting our Creator God?

**If we believe we are the product of evolution then we are rejecting the Creator God who will bring us all eventually to judgement for our conduct. [2 Corinthians 5:10]**

**“Spirits in prison” –**

**Hebrews 12:9** [NIV] *“Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the **Father of our spirits** and live!”*

The “spirits” being referred to are the “spirits” of human beings who were alive at that time. [**Job 31:8**]

**Romans 6:16** [NIV] *“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, **you are slaves to the one whom you obey**, whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”*

These rebellious people were imprisoned slaves to their evil way of life.

Imprisoned in the darkness of Satan’s deception without moving into the light that was brought to this world by Jesus Christ. [**John 1:1-5**]

**“Saved through water” –**

**1 Peter 3:21-22** [NIV] *“**and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also, not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand, with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.**”*

The death by drowning in the flood of Noah’s day is symbolic of the baptism by total immersion under the New Covenant that Jesus Christ ratified by His death and now administrates as our High Priest at God’s throne in heaven.

**Romans 6:3-5** [NIV] *“**Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.**”*

The baptism, that follows repentance, is an outward expression of what has happened in our hearts [as the driving force of our lives] and our human spirit [in which the Holy Spirit can dwell and work.]

Noah and his family were raised up above the flood, that brought about the death of all his rebellious generation, by his faith in God’s Word.

**Noah, without visual confirmation, obeyed what God told him to do; that was the expression of faith in God, which saved him and his family.**

**Revelation 20:11-13** [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. **The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.**”*

Note *“the sea gave up the dead that were in it.”*

This is directly referring to all who died in Noah's flood, as well as many others who have died by drowning at sea.

This is when these people will be judged, and when they will be given access to the Holy Spirit in their lives for the first time.

**Acts 5:32** [NIV] *“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the **Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.**”*

Holy Spirit is **only** given to those who obey God as Noah and his family did.

**John 16:8** [NIV] *“When he comes, he will **convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.**”*

Without the work of the Holy Spirit these people from Adam to Noah could **not** come to repentance.

The history of Israel shows how God chose **only** a few people in each generation to have the blessing of the Holy Spirit working in their lives.

All who received the Holy Spirit and allowed Him to mould their lives, will be those who God will use to open up His Word, the Christian Bible, to their generation in the great white throne judgement we have just read about in **Revelation 20:11-13**.

This is all part of the wonderful plan that God the Father has for all of humanity as He fulfils His desire expressed in **Genesis 1:26**.

The most wonderful part of this plan of God, for those whom He is calling in each generation, is that God fulfils His Plan through us as the *“firstborn”* in His eventual family He desires that all humanity will desire to become a part of.

**1 Peter 4:1-2** [NIV] *“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, **he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.**”*

*“Therefore,”* remember this tells us to pause and review in our minds what we have just studied, before we continue.

We are to prepare ourselves, as newly baptised Christians, to a new life that will include suffering because of our faith in our Creator God.

**Romans 12:1-2** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Peter is telling those reading his letter, the very same thing as Paul told the Christians in Rome who were suffering under the harsh rule of Nero.

True Christianity demands a complete change of life and thinking, we **cannot** just *“add it to”* our old life and thought patterns.

**Always remember that sin will only lose its power over us when we focus our whole lives and thoughts to fulfilling the will of Jesus Christ our Saviour.**

**1 Peter 4:3-5** [NIV] *“For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do, living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. **They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.** But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”*

All humans have been called by God out of a society that was without the knowledge of the true Creator God.

It is natural for those who do **not** know their Creator to choose to live a life that brings them physical pleasure, such as listed in these verses.

The Christian's change in the direction of their thoughts and actions is confusing to non-Christians and will lead to rejection and persecution.

**1 Corinthians 2:9-11** [NIV] *“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”, but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. **For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**”*

A human being only appreciates such things as art, music or has thoughts and is able to make decisions by the human spirit in them. [**Job 31:8; Proverbs 20:27**]

It is **only** when the Holy Spirit is working with a person's human spirit that they can understand spiritual concepts.

**1 Corinthians 2:12-14** [NIV] *“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. **The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.**”*

To the vast majority of human beings what is taught in the Christian Bible, is foolishness.

This Christian website, that is based on the teaching found in the Christian Bible, has many hits every day, but only a few read or download the material, nor do they return for another visit.

This is expected because the Holy Spirit is **not** as yet working with their human spirit.

**“Living and dead” –**

**This phrase mostly refers to people who are alive spiritually or dead spiritually, not yet being called by the Creator God to have their first chance to become part of the created family of God. [John 6:44] Also read John 5:24; 1 John 3:14.**

Note this statement about judgement is in the future tense.

**1 Peter 4:6** [NIV] *“**For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now [spiritually] dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.**”*

The Good News that Jesus Christ brought from God the Father pertaining to salvation, how humans can avoid eternal death, must be preached, even if the vast majority reject it at this time.

**Isaiah 6:9-12** [NIV] *“**He said, “Go and tell this people: ““Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.” Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.” Then I said, “For how long, O Lord?” And he answered: “Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken.**”*

Isaiah was given this task of preaching God's Word to a people who would **not** respond to his teaching.

Isaiah asked the obvious question, when will they listen and understand?

**Why this delay on God's part?**

**Until humanity comes to the edge of self-destruction, their nature, that is prompted by Satan, will not accept God.**

Human pride will **not** allow a human to reject their own sovereignty and be subject to God's sovereignty.

Only when all hope is lost will a person turn to their Creator.

**The human spirit will retain the Christian message through physical death, even if it is rejected at this time, in this life.**

This will be a good starting point in their re-education after their resurrection back to physical life.  
**[Revelation 20:11-12]**