

You Want Me To Do What?

After Peter so capably described the hope that we have as Christians, he then lays down the facts about what happens at times for the Christian. He says that we at times might suffer persecution for the faith that we have. What Peter has just done in vss. 6-9 is introduce the main theme of his letter. If there is one theme that is predominate in this book it is persecution, and now he speaks of the faith that they have and lays out what persecutions do to our faith.

Peter says in vs. 5 that they are to greatly rejoice in the hope they have, but right now they are being grieved by various trials. There were persecutions all over in the first century. The Jews were having a heyday with Christians all over the world. They would go so far as to follow Paul to one city just to the next to run him off. It is clear that there was persecution all around both from Jews and Gentiles. But what Peter does not want these Christians to do is throw up their hands and say that they didn't see this in their contract. He wants them to realize that this persecution is doing for their faith the exact same thing fire would to gold. When gold is melted down it removes the impurities that are in the metal and there is now a pure substance. It is the same way with persecutions. When we suffer for the cause of Christ we have to make it or break it as Christians. Then, since we are under this pressure, we can show the genuineness of our faith by bearing up under persecution and staying faithful or being cast away like the impurities.

Next, Peter explains about Christ and the reward they will receive. But it is clear that these Christians had not even seen Christ or at least did not know Him in the same way as Peter. But that was not important, it was more important that they believed in who Christ was and rejoiced in the joy that He gives. Not only that, when all of this persecution was done, there would be an end. The end of their faith and devotion to the Lord was going to be marvelous. It would mean they would have salvation.

Now if we take a step back we might ask the question, "Do I really have *suffer* for Christ?" I mean I understood that I would have to give up some things to serve Christ. There is a change in my life now and I need to live that out. But I really haven't been evil to anyone, I've been a kind individual and I've been trying to spread the gospel. Why should I have to suffer persecution?

I think that is a genuine question that those who suffer wrongfully sometimes ask. But it is also clear that not everyone likes good people. If you go and start stirring the waters by asking people about Christ there is

going to be some people that just do not want to hear it. If you keep on doing it, there are going to be some people that want it to stop. And if you don't stop, there are some people that are going to try to stop it. That is where persecution comes in. It is suffering for doing good! We just have to keep our spiritual minds about us and look to the end of our faith -- the salvation of our souls, and not focus on there here and now -- persecution.

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