

The Letters of **Peter**



Lesson 3-Godly Characters and Preaching to Spirits in Prison **Focus:** 1 Peter 3:1-22

- **Wives having a godly Character that Testifies to the Truth of God (v.1-6)**
 - (v.1,2) Godly example is usually much more precious than words, especially in the case of reaching our family members and friends. A godly life says so much about the wonderful Character of Jesus (and also the work He does in the lives of His followers!).
 - Godly character, loving respect, and meekness are essential for the Christian and essential for a godly wife to have! She should show the character of Christ to her husband, even if he is not a faithful or obedient Christian! She must demonstrate God's plan for husbands and wives. **A golden character is what we must be concerned with! We should NOT be concerning ourselves with the flashy, often lustful, and sinful styles of the world.** Be meek and lowly instead. Let people focus on your character and not your wardrobe—dress in such a manner to produce such results! Jewelry will never help your soul, but will likely flatter pride and ego in both you and others more than anything else! Therefore, it's better for Christian's not to indulge in such (See also Genesis 35:1-5; Isaiah 3:16-26; 1 Timothy 2:9,10).
- **Husbands having a godly Character that Glorifies God (v.7)**
 - *Husbands should do "likewise" to the wives and show the love and true character of God. They should not sin in their ways, but should honor God, and have a good prayer life therefore!*
- **Living by the Meek and Righteous Character of Christ (v.8-13)**
 - We are to **shun evil** and to live for honoring God. Our speech should be filled with love and truth, and not evil words or cursing! We are not to retaliate or to pay back some evil with another evil! This is NOT Christ's way. Instead show love even to the unlovable, undeserving, or even hateful. God does. (See Matthew 5:43-48).
 - (v.12) God will listen to the prayers of the righteous, but those who refuse to obey or listen to God's word when heard, why should He answer them? He won't! (Proverbs 15:8; 28:9; James 5:16).
- **Taking Suffering Patiently (v.14-18)**
 - Christ Jesus suffered for our sins. He was just and righteous, but He took our pain, suffering, and punishment. He took what He did not deserve.
 - Many who do evil cannot stand or appreciate the righteous. In fact they generally hate and persecute the righteous for their righteousness. Just look at our history and that of God's people!!! But remember, we are not to be afraid, but rather faithful. We should learn of God to rejoice, even in persecutions and trials, and we should be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks a reason for the hope that is within us! **Our faith should be reasonable!** For those who ask us the reason for our faith and our choice to put our trust in Jesus Christ, we should have some answers ready to go! And we should have the sanctifying Spirit and power of God in our hearts—living righteously for the glory and honor of His name!! (v.14-16; you may

also see Matthew 5:10-13, righteous living and open witnessing for God, as “salt,” often go in hand with persecution).

➤ **Preaching to Spirit’s in Prison (v.19-22)**

- What does it mean to say that Christ went and “preached unto the spirits in prison” (v.19)? Please notice what the prior verse says in connection to this one. The prior verse (v.18) ended saying “...but quickened [i.e. brought to life] by the Spirit.” That is, by the Holy Spirit. Christ was brought to life from His death, **by the Holy Spirit!** Verse 19 continues, “...by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” That means, **by the same Holy Spirit of God, “by the Spirit,” He went and preached to** the “spirits [or people] in prison.” Now, verse 20 qualifies or explains who those “spirits in prison” were. They were those “who sometime where disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared...”. That means the antediluvian people, or the people who lived before the world-wide flood (or deluge) that God sent in the days of Noah. So, **Christ Jesus went and preached to those who lived before the judgment of the great flood, by the Holy Spirit!** Back in those days too, God was preaching through His Holy Spirit! **Genesis 6:3 makes reference to this very thing!** God said that His “...Spirit would not always strive with man...” for man is flesh [while God is Spirit—see John 4:24]. So, God limited promised to send a world-wide flood just 120 years from that time should mankind not repent of their sins.
- **By the Holy Spirit,** God was preaching to people in the days of Noah that a flood (i.e. judgment) would come for their sins.
- **How were these “spirits” “in prison”?** They were “in prison” to their sins (See John 8:31-36). Jesus tells us that anyone who does sin is in bondage, a prisoner to their sins, but those who come to Christ Jesus will be “set free!” “Spirits” here is referring to people. In this case the people were preached to in the past, when they lived on the earth, but now they are dead. The idea of “spirit” connects breath, life, and soul together, referring to the spiritual side of the person (whether good or evil). The state or condition of their heart is referred to in this word, “spirit.” Their life, their breath, and their energy is described in this word. Please notice other usages in the Bible [“...the spirit of Jacob their father revived”-Genesis 45:27; “...his spirit came again, and he revived”-Judges 15:19; etc.]. Therefore, we are talking about real, living, breathing people who were in prison to their sins, and were preached to by God’s messengers and the Holy Spirit who was pleading with people to give up their sins (John 16:8).
- **(v.21) “The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us...”** The apostle says, “...the like figure” or similar figure, and then compares baptism as saving us. He’s talking about how the boat in Noah’s day represented salvation (see end of v.20). The saved who repented of their sins and came onto the ark were only eight people. They were saved because they obeyed God. Just getting wet merely in baptism to wash ourselves does not provide the salvation, but the **FACT THAT WE OBEYED GOD** and were baptized, **by His method or way of salvation** is what counts. It was an act of faith to obey God and be baptized, thus accepting His full salvation, just like it was an act of faith for God’s people in ancient times to believe and obey God, getting on the ark and being saved from the coming destruction of the flood. We also are to be saved from the coming destruction of God’s fiery judgment at the end of the world, by having faith in Jesus Christ and being baptized into Him! “The answer of a good conscience towards God” is very important! Also, Christ’s death and resurrection are a fitting symbol for us. We must die to self and sin, being baptized and burying that in a watery grave, then raising to walk in a new life with God (See v.18 and Romans 6:3-6).

Question (s) for the Heart:

Are you willing to seek God and develop His righteous character in your life? _____