

# 1 PETER 3:13-17

A Call to Evaluate  
Reasons for Suffering

# A Sustained Call to Evaluate Suffering (3:13-17)

- 1 Peter 3:13-17: Centerpiece of Peter's theme of suffering and its evaluation
- A crucible for circumspection

# A Sustained Call to Evaluate Suffering (3:13-17)

<sup>13</sup> So, who will harm you if you are earnest to do good? <sup>14</sup> But even if it is a possibility that you might suffer because of righteousness, you are blessed. *“Do not be afraid of them; do not be unsettled.”* <sup>15</sup> But set apart the Messiah as Lord in your lives, being ready at every turn to give an answer to everyone who asks you for the reason for your common hope. <sup>16</sup> Yet do so considerately and respectfully, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who disparage your good conduct in the Messiah may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if this suffering

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<sup>14</sup> But even if it is a possibility that you might suffer [*ei kai paschoite*] because of righteous Optative you are blessed.

<sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good if this suffering might possibly be God's will Optative [*ei theloi to thelēma*], than to suffer for doing evil.

# A Sustained Call to Evaluate Suffering (3:13-17)

<sup>13</sup> So, who will harm you if you are earnest to c

Reflection  
via question

<sup>14a</sup> But even if it is a possibility that you might suffer  
because of righteousness, you are blessed.

Reflection via optative

<sup>14b</sup> “*Do not be afraid of them; do not be unsettled.*” [Isa

8:12] Isa 8:12-13 [LXX]:

“Do not fear the fear of [this people],  
neither be unsettled.

Set apart Yahweh,  
and he alone shall you fear.”

*Pathos: A rightly placed fear*

15a But set apart the Messiah as Lord in you **the (only) legitimate cause for suffering**

15b being ready at every turn to give an answer to everyone who asks you for the reason for your common hope.

16a Yet do so considerately and respectfully, **Reflection on how they respond to questions/mistreatment**  
conscience clear,

“The softness which should characterize the very being of Christians—I am tempted to call it ‘ontic gentleness’—must not be given up even when we are (from our own perspective) persuaded that others are either wrong or evil.”

(Miroslav Volf, “Soft Difference,” 24).

16a Yet do so considerately and respectfully, keeping your conscience clear,

16b so that, when you are maligned, those who disparage your good conduct in the Messiah may be put to shame. Reflection on the (only) legitimate cause for suffering

17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if this suffering might possibly be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. Reflection via optative

# Suffering: The Pattern of Christ

- 3:18-22: Christological pattern of vindication from suffering
- 4:1-2: Jesus as example of turning away from sin to pursue God's will
- 4:3-4: Petrine believers have left behind sin/idolatry
- 4:5, 13-14, 16-18: God will vindicate believers





# Present Suffering Affirmed (4:12-16)

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised by the fiery ordeal occurring among you as a test, as if something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> Instead, rejoice to the extent that you are participating in the Messiah's sufferings, so that, when his glory is revealed, you may be overcome with joy. <sup>14</sup> If you are reviled because of the name of the Messiah, you are actually blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup> None of you ought to suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as one who rebels against the social order. <sup>16</sup> But if you should suffer as a "Christian" [Messiah-adherent], do not be

Evaluate!

# Present Suffering Affirmed (4:19)

<sup>19</sup> So then, those who are suffering according to the will of God should entrust themselves to their faithful Creator, even as they do what is good.

3:17: εἰ θέλοι [opt.] τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ

*ei theloi [opt.] to thelēma tou theou*

“if the will of God **might possibly** will it”

Call to Evaluate

4:19: οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ

*hoi paschontes kata to thelēma tou theou*

“those who suffer **according to** the will of God”

Assurance Provided