

Sunday September 12th 2010

Petros

Part Thirteen

1). 1Pe 3:10 *For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil." 13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 ¶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

a). We had seen instructions last week concerning those who would love life and see good days with respect to the coming Millennial Kingdom. We had seen how they would need to refrain their tongue from evil and their lips from speaking deceit, and to turn away from evil and do good and seek peace and pursue it.

b). And within the context of our letter, those who would love life and see good days would be those who do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling, those who would abstain from fleshly lusts and would lay aside all malice, all envy and evil speaking. Those servants who are submissive to their masters, not only to the good and gentle but also to the harsh; those wives who are submissive to their husbands, even those husbands who may be disobedient to the word, who would then follow the instructions for winning that disobedient husband; those husbands who live with their wives with understanding giving them honor, even if the wife should be a continual dripping on a very rainy day. In other words, those who would be faithfully obedient to the commands of scripture contained in this letter irrespective of the difficulty of their circumstances – those who would trust God completely - 1Pe 2:19 *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

c). And according to v11 of our scripture this morning this group would be in pursuit of the peace of God so as to be anxious for nothing even in the midst of suffering wrongfully.

d). What we have encountered in these scriptures requires of us a monumental shift in our perspective so that our focus is entirely upon our

appearance at the Judgment Seat and the Kingdom which is to come so that our primal spiritual drive will be to trust God - Pr 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 ¶ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.*

e). It is this same group then, who through their consistent faithful obedience would be classified as ‘the righteous’ in our scripture – with the marvelous promise that God’s eyes are over the righteous for their good and that His ears are ‘into’ their prayers. The promise here is that God has an active engagement in the lives of the righteous so as to benefit them. And again we would see this beneficence with regards to the appearance of the righteous at the Judgment Seat. This is what is contained in the scripture that we had studied in Chapter 1 – 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

f). And v5 here would connect with - *13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?*

g). Our scripture in v14 continues - *14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."*

h). As we saw last week, suffering for righteousness sake is always possible, but not absolutely certain. However, if we should have to suffer in this way then we are blessed.

2). Let’s pause just a moment here and make a distinction between the suffering for righteousness sake that is only a possibility and the suffering that we are promised as a certainty if we choose to follow Christ.

a). Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

b). If we choose to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit then we must inevitably suffer. Dying to our flesh never comes easily and so to pick up our cross daily will result in suffering.

c). This is the suffering that is a certainty – if we choose to align ourselves with the truth of scripture then our flesh must die – this will be painful, but there is no other way.

d). The suffering for righteousness sake that we see in 1 Peter Chapter 3, must of necessity involve the death of the flesh, but the suffering that is referenced here is a suffering inflicted upon us by a third party that comes to us because of our faithful obedience. This would be the servant who chooses to be submissive to his master even though his master is harsh, who is then poorly treated by that master.

e). It is in the actions of a third party that we would see the distinction between these two. There will always be suffering as we die to our flesh, but there won't necessarily be suffering that comes to us through the actions of a third party.

3). 1Pe 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

a). Our scripture in Peter continues by telling us that if we should have to suffer for righteousness sake then we should not give in to the fear that the third party would want us to feel and we should not become agitated by it. Instead of this, and in preparation for the possibility of this kind of suffering, we are firstly to 'sanctify the Lord God in your hearts'.

b). 'Sanctify' is of course speaking of separation and so we are to separate the Lord in our heart. And apparently many manuscripts do not have 'God' written here but 'Christ'. We are then to separate Christ as our Lord in our heart, thereby setting our heart apart for the service of Christ – This would be a similar thought to that which we find in - 1Co 6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*

c). And this does of course require a choice on our part which would be similar to that found in - Jos 24:15 ¶ *"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

d). It is of course our complete devotion to the service of the Lord as we look to the Kingdom, that would result in our being anxious for nothing and therefore not afraid nor troubled.

e). And secondly, having sanctified the Lord in our heart we must then, *always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

f). Defense = Greek – 'apologeomai' = middle voice from a compound of 575 and 3056; to give an account (legal plea) of oneself, i.e. exculpate (self):-- answer (for self), make defense, excuse (self), speak for self.

g). In secular Greek this word would be used of the defense made by an attorney of his client in order that the charge brought against his client be removed. And so within our context here we would see that the defense we are to give not only explains the hope that is in us, Christ and His coming Kingdom, but would also demonstrate of itself as we verbalize that hope, that we would be innocent of anything deserving of punishment. But we will also note that this is to be done ‘with meekness and fear’, which means that this is not done aggressively or highhandedly, it is not done with spiritual pride or with arrogance, but rather following the Lord who described Himself as – Mt 11:29b...*for I am gentle and lowly in heart,*

h). And in this I think would be our protection against ourselves. It would not be hard to imagine within the historical context for our letter at least that someone being persecuted by the Romans might want to show themselves to be superior to their persecutor and speak in a way that would condemn. We will note though that this defense does not pass judgment on another, but simply and humbly outlines our hope. Again we would see that it is the hope and our relationship to that hope that is the focus.

i). Although we might not face this kind of persecution, we should still be ready to give that defense – we need to know what we know and know why we know it and be able to express that verbally.

4). 1Pe 3:16 ¶ *having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

a). V16 continues that which is being taught in v15 – as well as giving a defense with meekness and fear, this is to be done ‘having a good conscience’. The word translated ‘conscience’ we had looked at in part 9 of this study and speaks of being fully cognoscente of the nature and character of God and understanding the promises of God, thereby looking from the present to the hope that awaits out ahead. As we see the word here we would realize that having the good conscience is also to be translated into action because of what is known of God. And so when the defense is made in meekness and fear demonstrating the implicit innocence of the one making the defense then the ones who would speak against us as evildoers, the ones who would spitefully abuse our good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

b). Ashamed = Greek – ‘kataischuno’ = to shame down, i.e. disgrace or (by implication) put to the blush:--confound, dishonour, (be a-, make a-)shame(-d).

c). Now this may be something that would happen at the time of the reviling, but is more likely to be something that will take place in Judgment, particularly as we may be dealing with ‘disobedient’ Christians here.

d). V17 then reminds us of something we had seen in Chapter 2 – ‘it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.’ In other words, if it is the will of God for us, and it might not be, to be spitefully abused by another person or persons because we remain faithfully obedient to the commands of scripture then this is much better than being spitefully abused for our disobedience. The crucifixion of Christ gives us a perfect example of this –
Lu 23:39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." 43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise."

5). And so with this in mind our scripture continues - *1Pe 3:18 ¶ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 ¶ There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

a). We know that our previous scripture said that if we suffer for righteousness sake then we are blessed, and what we see here in our scripture is testimony to that. Christ suffered for righteousness sake, the just for the unjust. His action in doing this led to two significant blessings. The first is that it provided the way for Him to bring us to God, to provide for our eternal salvation and open the door for the salvation of our soul, and secondly Christ Himself received a blessing through being resurrected from the dead and *has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

b). We cannot fail to see the connection between His suffering and His exaltation, and of course the implicit promise for ourselves if we should follow Him - *Ro 8:17 ¶ and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

c). Not only does our scripture provide us with the clear connection between suffering and exaltation but it also provides us with some intriguing factual

information concerning Christ's resurrection which is inspiring to the point of wanting to jump and shout.

d). V18 tells us that Christ was 'put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit' – what this teaches us is that Christ's physical body died, the life giving force of His blood having been poured out. But there is much more to this than just His physical death. We have in the Lord's dying in the flesh His experience of a total separation from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit as He became sin for us. We might recall that while on the cross He quotes from Psalm 22 –

Mr 15:34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

e). And if we look more closely at this Psalm we can gain greater insight into this - Ps 22:1 ¶ <<To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer of the Dawn." A Psalm of David.>> *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? 2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent.3 But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. 5 They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed. 6 But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. 7 All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" 9 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. 10 I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. 11 ¶ Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help.12 Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. 13 They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. 18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. 19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! 20 Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. 21 Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me.*

f). To read this is truly astonishing and deeply moving.

g). But did you see the end of v21? – 'You have answered Me.'

h). Christ's sacrifice is accepted by God the Father, the price for Man's redemption is paid and the separation is over. It is at this point that this is recorded Joh 19:30 *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

i). He has then been 'put to death in the flesh' and given up His spirit to His Father in the certain knowledge that He would be 'made alive by the Spirit'. In His resurrection then it would no longer be His blood that would be animating and life giving, but the Holy Spirit.

j). He had the same body of flesh and bone in which He had walked upon the earth, but His life force is now the Spirit.

6). Our scripture in 1 Peter then continues in - *19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah,*

a). Here at the beginning of v19 the NKJV translates, 'by whom' and KJV translates, 'by which' – whichever way we look at this the rules of Greek grammar, which we won't go into here, make it clear that Christ, in His resurrection body, a spiritual body went and preached to the spirits in prison, who were formerly disobedient.

b). This can at first glance appear to be a strange thing to record, but once we indentify who the 'spirits' are and why they were in 'prison', this small detail gives a shout of victory on an epic scale.

c). There is only one class of being within scripture that is classified as a 'spirit'. Although Man has a spirit and will one day, if found faithful at the Judgment Seat, possess a spiritual body as does the Lord, man is never referred to as a 'spirit'.

d). The Book of Hebrews will help us with this - Heb 1:7 *And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."*

e). Heb 1:13 *But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

f). We are then dealing with angels who are kept in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah.

g). The prison and the fate of these angels, who can only be fallen angels, is given to us in - 2Pe 2:4 *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;*

h). And, referring to the same angels - Jude 1:6 *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

i). The angels who sinned, who did not keep their proper domain who were responsible for the destruction of the ancient world in Noah's day can be found with their offence in - Ge 6:1 ¶ *Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. 3 ¶ And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 ¶ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

j). Those referred to here as 'sons of God' are also angels as this is a designation used of all created beings in scripture of which angels are a specific class.

k). Job 1:6 ¶ *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.*

l). Job 2:1 ¶ *Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.*

m). Job 38:6 *To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

n). Although eternally redeemed Man who is found faithful will in that day be a 'son of God', this is a status into which we will be adopted at the Judgment Seat not one that we hold just because we are Christians - Ro 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.....19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

o). So what we see then presented to us in Genesis Chapter 6 and then reiterated in our 1 Peter, 2 Peter and Jude scriptures is that angels whose proper domain was in the heavens, came in to the daughters of men and bore children to them. How they were able to do this is not addressed in the scriptures, only the fact that it happened, and that we must take at face value. We can note of course that there is scriptural evidence of angels taking on the physical form of men and being

able to eat a meal - Ge 18:2 *So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."*

p). Ge 19:1 ¶ *Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2 And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." 3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.*

q). So with all of this being the case we are left with the question of ‘Why did these fallen angels do this? Why are they imprisoned for it? And why did the Lord in His resurrection body go and make a proclamation to them in Tartarus?’

r). Well the key to all this begins with the Lord’s words to Satan in the Garden after the fall of Adam and the Woman - Ge 3:14 ¶ *So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

s). And so it is right here in God’s promise concerning the seed of the Woman that we will find our answers. But those answers will have to wait until next week – if the Lord is willing.