

1 Kefa 3:17-22

Undeserved Suffering ~ Part 2

In my last post, we began to explore **Undeserved Suffering ~ Part 1** by how to witness to non-**Believers** in **1 Kefa 3:13-16**. In this post, we conclude the topic of **Undeserved Suffering ~ Part 2** in 1 Kefa 3:17-22.

¹⁷ For if God has in fact willed that you should suffer, it is better that you suffer for doing what is good than for doing what is evil. ¹⁸ For the Messiah himself died for sins, once and for all, a righteous person on behalf of non-righteous people, so that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit; ¹⁹ and in this form he went and made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits,

On *the flesh* and *the Spirit* in verse 18, the idea is that **Yeshua** was resurrected by the **Spirit of God**, by whom also he went (presumably after the resurrection) to proclaim triumph over the *imprisoned spirits*. Of the many views on this text, the three main ones are (1) that between His crucifixion and resurrection, i.e. on Saturday, **Yeshua** preached to the dead in **Sheol** (the view of many church fathers); (2) that **Yeshua** preached through **Noach** to people in **Noach's** day (the view of many Reformers); (3) that before or (more likely) after his resurrection, **Yeshua** proclaimed triumph over the fallen angels (the view of most scholars today). ¹

Kefa compares the **Believers** with **Noach** and his family, both being righteous minorities persecuted by wicked neighbors, and both being delivered from the forces of darkness through trusting **God** and obeying Him.

²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago, in the days of Noach, when God waited patiently during the building of the ark, in which a few people - to be specific, eight - were delivered by means of water. ²¹ This also prefigures what delivers us now, the water of immersion, which is not the removal of dirt from the body, but one's pledge to keep a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. ²² He has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers subject to him. ~ 1 Kefa 3:13-22 (CJB).

Ancient Judaism sometimes used the flood as a prototype of future judgment, as in 2 **Kefa** 3:6–7. The emphasis on the salvation of *few* would encourage **Believers** who were a persecuted minority. **God's patience** reflects Genesis 6:3 and is mentioned in connection with the final judgment in 2 **Kefa** 3:9.

The act of faith indicated in *immersion*, rather than the physical cleansing, was what was significant; *immersion* was an act of conversion in ancient Judaism, but Judaism insisted on the sincerity of repentance for it to be efficacious.

Authorities and **powers** were angelic rulers over the nations, of which Jewish texts often speak (see Eph. 1:21–23). Thus even the evil powers behind the rulers who persecuted **Believers** had been subdued, and the final outcome was not in question. ²

In this fallen world, all people suffer. But it is better to suffer for doing good - if **God** wills it - than for doing evil. Again, **Kefa** reminds them (see 2:21-25) that **Yeshua** is their supreme example of **Godly** suffering. He suffered for sins - your sins and mine - to bring us to **God** (3:18). He visited the devil and his followers in the spiritual realm and proclaimed His victory over them (3:19). Then He was raised from the dead and seated at

¹ The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament.

² Ibid.

the right hand of **God** with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him (3:22). And if you know **Yeshua**, you were raised with Him (see Eph 2:6). So your present suffering doesn't compare to the victory you have, and will have, through **Yeshua**.

I my next post, we will learn about **Being Stewards of God's Grace** in **1 Kefa 4:1-11**.