

Suffering As A Believer

1 Yeshua 4:12-19

In my last post, we examined the topic of **Being Stewards of God's Grace in 1 Yeshua 4:1-11**. In this post, we explore **Suffering As A Believer in 1 Kefa 4:12-19**.

Kefa elaborates on what it means to share in the sufferings of **Yeshua** - picking up on his thoughts from **1 Kefa 3:12–22**. **Kefa** again returns to the theme of suffering. No one looks forward to suffering. We want to reign with **Yeshua**, not suffer with Him. But to reign with **Yeshua** in glory, we must suffer with Him now. Whatever form of suffering **God** calls you to, do not be surprised but rejoice instead so that you may also rejoice with great joy when He returns.

12 Dear friends, do not regard as strange the fiery ordeal occurring among you to test you, as if something extraordinary were happening to you.

Kefa says ***do not regard as strange the fiery ordeal occurring among you to test you***. **Yeshua** said that suffering would come to His followers (see Matt. 5:11–12; 10:24–25). We have already seen in **1 Kefa 6-7** that suffering and the refinement it brings to a **Believer's** life.

13 Rather, to the extent that you share the fellowship of the Messiah's sufferings, rejoice; so that you will rejoice even more when his Sh'khinah is revealed.

We ***share the fellowship of the Messiah's sufferings*** as we identify with **Yeshua**. **Believers** learn what it means to be like Him in their anguish. They can have joy because they honor **God** through their suffering and know that **God** will vindicate their faithfulness one day (vv. 18–19).

Do not only brace for afflictions but ***rejoice*** in them, sharing ***the fellowship of the Messiah's sufferings***. For just as the ***Sh'khinah*** (**God's** manifest glory) once rested on the **Temple** in **Yerushalayim**, now ***the Spirit of the Sh'khinah is resting on you***, since ***"your body is a temple for the Ruach HaKodesh who lives inside you"*** (see 1 Cor. 6:19). The ***Sh'khinah*** was ***revealed*** as **Yeshua's** at His first coming (John 1:14–15); it is the same as ***"the glory to be revealed"*** (5:1&N) at his second coming (Titus 2:13).

14 If you are being insulted because you bear the name of the Messiah, how blessed you are! For the Spirit of the Sh'khinah, that is, the Spirit of God is resting on you!

In **Matthew 5:11-12**, **Yeshua**, preaching the **Sermon on the Mount**, warns against insults and persecution. **In the first century, believers living throughout the Graeco-Roman world** likely experienced discrimination and varying degrees of ostracism because of their faith. Many still do today. Yet, in Matthew's passage, **Yeshua** says how blessed we are.

15 Let none of you suffer for being a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or a meddler in other people's affairs.

Kefa identifies a wrong kind of suffering: suffering for the sake of evil criminal activity. He discourages this kind of suffering, which comes as a consequence of sin. **Kefa** mentions two sins (***evildoer or a meddler***) that can result in social persecution, but not necessarily criminal prosecution. **Believers** should avoid behavior that is dishonoring to other people in general.

16 But if anyone suffers for being Messianic, let him not be ashamed; but let him bring glory to God by the way he bears this name. 17 For the time has come for the judgment to begin. It begins with the household of God; and if it starts with us, what will the outcome be for those who are disobeying God's Good News? –

For the time has come for the judgment to begin likely refers to future judgment at **Yeshua's** return rather than present sufferings. Those who suffer for **Yeshua's** sake can be confident that **God's** judgment will validate their hardship. **Kefa** lives in the era between **Yeshua's** resurrection and return. Thus, the judgment is imminent and has in many ways begun, since the time to choose **Yeshua** is now.

The household of God evokes the building metaphor from **1 Kefa 2:4–5** and refers to the family of **Believers** in **Yeshua**. **Kefa** maintains that **God** will judge all people impartially and stresses that He will begin with His people. All people will be held accountable for their actions, even though **God** will grant mercy to those who chose the path of faith in **Yeshua**.

18 "If the righteous is barely delivered, where will the ungodly and sinful end up?"

Kefa draws on the Septuagint (ancient Greek **Tanakh**) version of **Proverbs 11:31** to remind his audience of the high cost of following **Yeshua** in a world that condones sinful behavior and reviles the name of **Yeshua**. Just as **Yeshua** faced suffering - being mocked, beaten, and crucified - to make the gift of salvation possible, **Believers** must faithfully follow their Lord until the end of their lives or **Yeshua's** return. This is not because their salvation depends on it - **Yeshua** alone saves them (**1 Kefa 1:3–12**) - but because others may come to **Yeshua** due to their model of faithfulness. ***Ungodly and Sinful*** are those who do not walk the path of faith and experience the full ramifications of their sin when God judges all humanity.

19 So let those who are suffering according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator by continuing to do what is good. ~ 1 Kefa 4:12-19 (CJB)

We have our marching orders through troubling times: **Remain Faithful!**

In my next post, we conclude our study of **1 Kefa** as he encourages the **Shepherds of the Flock** with some concluding remarks of his own.