

First Peter Chapter Four

Call to Emulate Christ's Mental Attitude in Suffering (v.1)

VERSE 1 **Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh** (οὖν [*conj./inferential*; “Therefore”] Χριστοῦ [*gen./absolute m.s., Christos*] παθόντος [*aor.act.pt.gen.m.s., pascho, suffer; “having suffered”*] σαρκὶ [*loc.f.s., sarx, flesh*]), **arm yourselves also with the same purpose** (ὁμεῖς [*pro.n.2.p.pl., su, you*] ὀπλίσασθε [*aor.mid.imper.2.p., ὀπλίζομαι, oplizomai, arm oneself with; 1X*] καὶ [*conj./adjun., also*] τὴν αὐτὴν [*def.art.w/adj.acc.f., autos, preceded by the def.art.: the same*] ἔννοιαν [*acc.f.s., ἔννοια, ennoia, attitude, intention, purpose; 2X: Heb.4:12; from nous, thinking, mind*]), **because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin** (ὅτι [*conj./result*] ὁ παθὼν [*def.art.w/aor.act.pt.n.m.s., pascho, suffer*] σαρκὶ [*loc.f.s., sarx, flesh*] πέπαυται [*pf.mid.ind.3.s., pauo, stop, cease*] ἁμαρτίας [*acc.f.s., hamaria, sin*]),

ANALYSIS: VERSE 1

1. Translation: “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, you too must arm yourselves with the same resolve (for he who has suffered in the flesh has done away with sin)”.
2. The “Therefore” suggests that Peter is now drawing a conclusion from 1Pet.3:18-22.
3. The conclusion is based on the entire passage, but mainly on 3:18.
4. Verse 18a should read: “For Christ also suffered (not ‘died’) for sins...”.
5. The exhortation proper is a military metaphor (“arm yourselves”), somewhat reminiscent of 1Pet.1:13, with its call to prepare oneself mentally for action.
6. Just as “your minds” in 1:13 betrays a certain self-consciousness in the use of metaphorical language, so ἐννοια (*ennoia*, “purpose”, or better, “intention” or “resolve”) has a similar effect here.
7. What is the “same intention” or “resolve” with which believers are to “arm themselves”?
8. Taken by itself, this sentence could suggest that they are to go out and resolutely seek martyrdom.
9. Just as Christ “suffered in the flesh”, they must make certain that suffering and death is their lot as well, presumably on the theory that this is the only way to “follow in Christ’s footsteps” (cf. 1Pet.2:21).
10. Nowhere else in the letter does Peter come close to urging such a course of action, or even hint that “suffering” in itself is a good thing.
11. What he commends is never suffering per se, but always “suffering for doing good”.

12. “The same resolve (purpose)” has to do not with the sheer fact that Christ “suffered in the flesh”, but with the attitude of mind that He brought to that moment of crisis (cf. 1Pet.2:22,23; Phil.2:5).
13. Christ faced the sufferings of His life, and in particular the sufferings associated with His Passion, with a particular mind set.
14. He was out to defeat the power of sin over collective humanity.
15. By enduring in fellowship all the things He was called upon to suffer, both from the source of men and God, He could accomplish what no other could have done.
16. One slip and there would have been no salvation.
17. The words “for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” is either a generic (universal principle with the participle as generic and the perfect indicative of “has ceased” as gnomic, that is universal in application) expression or a specific reference to Jesus Christ.
18. The latter is preferable.
19. The second participle, “he who has suffered”, has as its antecedent “Christ has suffered”, also an aorist participle.
20. So the second participle, like the first, refers to Jesus Christ.
21. The main difficulty with this interpretation is doctrinal: if Christ “is through with sin”, or “has ceased from sin”, does this not imply that at some point He was a sinner?
22. It is, after all, Peter himself who reminds his readers that Christ “did not commit sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth” (1Pet.2:22).
23. Can the words πέπαυται ἀμαρτίας (*pepautai amartias*: “is through with sin” or “has stopped sin”) be understood in a way that does not imply that Jesus was once a sinner?
24. Following this line of interpretation, Christ is “through with sin” in the sense that He has finished dealing with it.
25. This follows 1Pet.3:18a: “Christ also suffered for sins, once for all”.
26. He “is through with sin” in the sense that He has finished dealing with it, once for all; he has put it behind Him, says Peter, and so should we (cf. vv.2,3).
27. The parallel with Heb.9:28 is instructive: “so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him”.
28. The distinction is not that Christ, once sinful, is now sinless, but that the purpose of His first coming was to deal with humanity’s sin, and that now, with that purpose accomplished, He has nothing more to do with sin.
29. One difficulty remains with identifying Christ as the one who “suffered in the flesh” and is consequently “through with sin” in v.1b.
30. Taken at face value, the identification would also imply that Christ is the one who “lives the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (v.2).
31. This obviously makes no sense, because Peter knows that Christ’s days “in the flesh” are over, and that it is “by the Spirit” that He was made alive and has gone to heaven.
32. It is also clear that v.3 refers not to Christ but to Christian believers.
33. The view that v.1b refers to Christ virtually requires that it be considered a parenthesis, so that v.2 is read with v.1a: “arm yourselves with the same resolve...so as to live out [your] remaining time in the flesh not for the lusts of men, but for the will of God”.

34. Having reminded his readers that “Christ has suffered in the flesh” and urged them to “arm yourselves with the same resolve”, it occurs to Peter that it may not be immediately clear what “intention” or “resolve” Christ had that must be imitated.
35. So he inserts, almost as an afterthought, “for he who suffered in the flesh [i.e., Christ] is through with sin”.
36. That was His “resolve” – indeed the very purpose – of His sufferings, and Peter wants to make sure it is the resolve of believers.
37. So the words “Christ has suffered in the flesh” is inclusive of all of Christ’s sufferings, both from the source of men and from the source of God.
38. His focus in so suffering in fellowship was to “stop sin” (perfect of *pauo*).
39. We are to imitate Him, and so “arm” ourselves with the “same resolve”.
40. We, too, can have experiential victory over sin by doing the will of God, rather than taking the easy and expedient path of STA lusts (cf. v.2).

The Goal of Ph2 (v.2)

VERSE 2 so as to live (εἰς τὸ [*prep.w/def.art.acc.nt.s.*; “so as”; construction expresses purpose: that; “so as”] βιώσαι [*aor.act.infin.*, βιώω, *bioo*, to live/spend a life; 1X; from *bios*, life]) **the rest of the time in the flesh** (τὸν ἐπίλοιπον [*def.art.w/adj.acc.m.s.*, ἐπίλοιπος, *epiloipos*, remaining; “the rest of the time”] ἐν σαρκὶ [*prep. + loc.f.s.*, *sarx*, *flesh*]) **no longer for the lusts of men** (μηκέτι [*adv.*, *meketi*, no longer] ἐπιθυμίαις [*dat.fem.p.*, ἐπιθυμία, *epithumia*, *lust*] ἀνθρώπων [*gen.m.p.*, *anthropos*, *man*]), **but for the will of God** (ἀλλὰ [*conj.*] θελήματι [*dat.nt.s.*, *thelema*, *will*] θεοῦ [*gen.m.s.*, *theos*, *God*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 2

1. Expanded translation: “Therefore, in view of the fact that Christ having suffered with respect to the flesh, you also arm yourselves with the same resolve (for the One having suffered with respect to the flesh has done away with sin), so as to live out [your] remaining time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God”.
2. “Your” is supplied on the assumption that the thought of v.2 indeed follows on the exhortation of v.1a.
3. Peter comes back from the metaphor of v.1a to prosaic reality.
4. To “arm” oneself with the same resolve that Christ had means that one dies to sin.
5. The believer goes on living the balance of his/her Ph2 (“the remaining time in the flesh”) “for the will of God”.
6. The verb “to live” (aor.act.infin., βιώω, *bioo*; 1X) refers to the natural (biological) course of human existence.
7. The noun βίος occurs 10X: Mk.12:44; Lk.8:14,43; 15:12,30; 21:4; 1Tim.2:2; 2Tim.2:4; 1Jn.2:16; 3:17.
8. The noun means “livelihood”, or “living”.
9. This “remaining time” is the same as “the time of your stay” of 1Pet.1:17.
10. Peter defines the course of human existence by way of contrast, which is characteristic of his style: i.e., “not this, but that” (cf. 1Pet.1:12,14,15,18,23; 2:23; 3:3,4,9,21; 4:15,16; 5:2,3).

11. The course of the balance of our lives can either follow the signpost marked “the lusts of men” or “the will of God”.
12. We are to “arm ourselves” with the same mental attitude that controlled Christ (cp. Phil.2:5ff).
13. This is the road to lasting and surpassing blessing.
14. We are “no longer” to travel down this path, as it ends in loss and shame for the believer.
15. For “no longer” (μηκέτι, *meketi*), used in connection with the vices of the Gentile world, see Eph.4:17.
16. In First Peter these “lusts” are in opposition to the will of God (4:2), they are based on “ignorance” (1:14), and they “wage war against the soul” (2:11).
17. Peter intends also a contrast between the plural “lusts” and the singular “will of God”.
18. The “lusts” are not limited to sexual desires, but include all manner of STA lust (power, money/materialism, approbation, pleasure seeking, and so on).
19. The meaning is as broad as 1Jn.2:16: “For all that is in the cosmos, the lust [ἐπιθυμία] of the flesh and the lust [ἐπιθυμία] of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the cosmos”.
20. We have no obligation to the indwelling lust pattern, no matter the peer pressure put upon us (Rom.8:12).
21. Rather, we are to follow the signpost that directs us to “the will of God”.
22. The “will of God” is appraised through the study of the WOG.
23. It includes “doing good” (1Pet.2:15), as “suffering for doing good” (1Pet.3:17; 4:19).

Cultural Depravity A Thing of the Past (v.3)

VERSE 3 For the time already past is sufficient for you (γὰρ [conj./declar.] ὁ παρεληλυθὼς [def.art.n.m.s.w/pf.act.pt.n.m.s., παρέρχομαι, *pass, pass by; “already past”*] χρόνος [def.art.w/n.m.s., *chronos, time*] ἄρκετὸς [adj.n.m.s., *arketos, enough; “is sufficient”*]) to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles (κατεργάσθαι [pf.dep.infin., *κατεργάζομαι, katergazomai, accomplish; “carried out”*] τὸ βούλημα [def.art.w/acc.nt.s., *boulema, will, desire*] τῶν ἐθνῶν [def.art.w/gen.nt.s., *ethnos, nation; Gentile*]), having pursued a course of sensuality (πεπορευμένους [pf.dep.pt.acc.m.p., *πορεύομαι, poreuomai, proceed, go; “having pursued”*] ἐν ἀσελείαις [prep.w/loc.f.p., *ἀσλεία, aslegeia, sensuality*]), lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries (ἐπιθυμίας [dat.f.p., *epithumai, lust*] + οἰνοφλυγίας [dat.f.p., *οἰνοφλυγία, oinophlugia, drunkenness; 1X*] + κώμοις [dat.n.p., *κῶμος, komos, orgy; 3X: Rom.13:13; Gal.5:21*] + πότοις [dat.m.p., *πότος, potos, drunken orgy; 1X*] + καὶ [conj.] + ἀθεμίτοις [adj.dat.f.p., *ἀθέμιτος, athemitos, disgusting*] + εἰδωλολατρίαις [dat.f.p., *εἰδωλολατρία, idololatria, idolatry*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 3

1. “The time already past” stands in contrast to the believer’s “remaining time in the flesh” (v2).
2. These are the two time (χρόνος, *chronos*) periods into which the life of a Christian – particularly a Gentile Christian – is divided.
3. The relegation of the evil life of the pre-salvation period is specified by Peter’s use of a perfect participle, “already past” (παρέρχομαι, *parerchomai*, pass by); by a perfect infinitive, “to have carried out” (κατεργάζομαι, *katergazomai*, accomplish); and by a second perfect participle, “having pursued” (πορεύομαι, *poreuomai*, proceed, travel).
4. αρκετός, “is sufficient”, is used ironically, as a piece of understatement.
5. “Enough” is actually more than enough – too much, in fact (cf. Mt.6:34 and 10:25, its only other N.T. occurrences).
6. Peter states that there was sufficient time for these believers to go the limit in sin before their conversion.
7. Now it is time to put the breaks on and head in another direction, i.e., the will of God.
8. The designation of unbelievers as “Gentiles”, in a letter addressed to Christians who are themselves Gentiles, is striking (cf. 2:12), and reflects, in a way that is natural and not at all self-conscious, Peter’s strong conviction that his Gentile Christian readers are actually a new race in God’s sight.
9. The βούλημα, or “desire”, of the Gentiles echoes “the lusts of men” of the preceding verse and stands in opposition to “the will of God”.
10. This noun (*boulema*) suggests a strong bent, or predilection, with respect to an activity (cp. Acts.27:43; Rom.9:19; cf. vb. βούλομαι; occurs 37X).
11. The vices listed here were characteristic of the pagan world of their day.
12. The first item, “sensuality” (ἀσέλγεια, *aselgeia*, sensuality; 10X in the N.T.: Mk.7:22; Rom.13:13; 2Cor.12:21; Gal.5:19; Eph.4:19; 1Pet.4:3; 2Pet.2:2,7,18; Jude.4), refers to actions that arouse the sex grid of the ISTA (visual and verbal arousal).
13. It is a synonym for immorality.
14. It is used in 2Pet.2:7 of “immoral conduct” (with ἀναστροφή, *anastrophe*, conduct) and in 2:18 with ἐπιθυμία (*epithumia*, lust, desire) of “immoral desires of the flesh”.
15. The incorporation of *epithumia* into a list alongside *aselgeia* is evidence that Peter is using *epithumia* in a more specific sense than in v.2, or in 1:14 or 2:11, to refer to sexual desire or lust.
16. It is obviously no accident that 1 Peter sounds the most like 2 Peter when it denounces the same kinds of behavior that 2 Peter denounces.
17. The difference is that 1 Peter is directing its scorn against the world outside the church, while 2 Peter is combating the intrusion of the world into the church itself.
18. The most significant parallel to our verse is probably not 2 Pet.2:18, but Rom.13:13, with its careful topical arrangement of six vices into three sets of two, focusing respectively on food and drink, sexuality, and selfish ambition.
19. There, however, *epithumia* is not found within the list of vices, but after it, in Rom.13:14, as a comprehensive term covering them all (more like the “fleshly lusts” of v.2).
20. The usage here is in reference to the mental attitude lusting.
21. The third item, “drunkenness” (οἰοφλυγία, *oiophlugia*), is a compound from “wine” and “to bubble up”, occurring only here in the N.T.

22. This does not refer to the innocent enjoyment of wine, but excessive drinking.
23. The fourth term, “carousals” or “revelries” (κῶμος, *komos*), denotes riotous parties, usually in connection with pagan festivals (cp. Rom.13:13; Gal.5:21).
24. Examples today are Mardi Gras, Spring Break or New Year’s Eve celebrations.
25. “Revelries” (village merry making) seems the translation closest to the Greek noun.
26. The fifth term, “drinking parties” (πότος, *potos*, drunken orgy), is a hapax.
27. The sixth and last item is “abominable idolatries”, which certainly was rampant in the culture of first century Christianity.
28. Peter characterizes such idolatrous acts as ἀθεμίτοις (adj.dat.f.p., ἀθεμίτος, *athemitos*, unlawful), translated “abominable”.
29. It occurs here and in Acts.10:28.
30. This is the only place in which the word idolatry occurs in the plural.
31. Obviously he does not imply by the adjective that other idolatrous acts exist, or can be imagined, that are not “lawless”, but that all acts are utterly repugnant to God, who absolutely forbids idolatry in all its forms.
32. It is important that we look upon the violation of the first commandment of the Law as God does.
33. The mention of “idolatry” is what betrays the primarily religious nature of the vices in this verse.
34. In other words, idolatry generated a climate that fostered all kinds of STA excess (cf. Rom.1).

Reaction to Christian Non-Involvement (v.4)

VERSE 4 **And in all this, they are surprised** (ἐν ᾧ [prep.w/rel.pro.loc.nt.s., *hos*; “And in all this”] ξενίζονται [pres.pass.ind.3.p., ξενίζω, *xenizo*, lodge as a stranger; cp. Acts.10:6;18,32; think strange; cp. 4:12; “they are surprised”]) **that you do not run with them** (ὁμῶν [pro.gen.p., *su*; “you”] μὴ [neg.] συντρεχόντων [pres.act.pt.gen.m.p., συντρέχω, *suntrecho*, run together; join with; 3x: Mk.6:33; Acts.3:11]) **into the same excess of dissipation** (εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν [prep.w/def.art.w/adj.acc.f.s., *autos*, with the article; the same] ἀνάχυσιν [acc.f.s., ἀνάχυσις, *anachusis*, flood, excess] τῆς ἀσωτίας [def.art.w/gen.f.s., ἀσωτίας, *asotias*, dissipation]), **and they malign you** (βλασφημοῦντες [pres.act.pt.n.m.p., *blasphemeo*, blaspheme, speak against, insult, malign]);

ANALYSIS: VERSE 4

1. The introductory “And in all this” (ἐν ᾧ) refers to the sinful excesses characteristic of pagan culture.
2. Because Christians had joined their fellow citizens in the enjoyment of excessive food, drink, and sex, it was natural to assume that they would continue to do so.
3. When they did not (cp. v.12), “surprise” was the immediate reaction.
4. The pres.pass.ind. of ξενίζω (“are surprised”) means to entertain a guest/stranger (cf. Acts.10:6,18,23,32; 21:16; 28:7; Heb.13:2).

5. Here it is used of a psychological state of mind (cf. Acts.17:20; 1Pet.4:4,12).
6. The cognate noun ξένος (*zenos*) means “stranger” (e.g., 3Jn.5).
7. The verb could be translated “they think it strange” (NKJ).
8. What took them aback was the fact that Christians who had formerly engaged in pagan vice with the same gusto as the rest of society were now non-participants.
9. The verb (pres.act.pt., συντρέχω, *suntrecho*, run together with; plunge with) is a deliberate, almost comic exaggeration of “having pursued” of v.3.
10. Certainly, the Gentiles would not have so characterized their participation in civic and religious events.
11. But the reality was that the pagans did rush headlong into pleasure seeking and self-gratification according to the religious calendar.
12. They justified these things because they were done in accordance with tradition and accepted practice.
13. Organized religion and the state sponsored events that sanctified excess in food, drink, and sex.
14. The STA was granted a license to indulge in all manner of excess.
15. The words “in the same” (εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν) refer to the kinds of things specified in v.3.
16. The noun “excess” (acc.fem.sing., ἀνάχυσις, *anachusis*) is also the word for “flood”, occurring only here in the N.T.
17. It is used as a metaphor for rank excess in pleasure seeking.
18. The noun “dissipation” (def.art.w/gen.fem.sing., ἄσωτία, *asotia*) is used in the N.T. in connection with the sin of drunkenness (Eph.5:18) and a profligate lifestyle (Ti.1:6).
19. The cognate adverb (ἄσώτως, *asotos*, wild) is used of the prodigal son who was involved in the sins of “hell-raising.”
20. Our noun “dissipation” means wasteful in the pursuit of pleasure.
21. Their surprise gave way to resentment and verbal maligning.
22. In point of fact, their maligning was a form of blasphemy.
23. The verb “they malign you” is the pres.act.pt. of *blasphemeo*.
24. Christians were accused of following a God that encouraged anti-social behavior.
25. Atheism was one of the charges, since Christians refused to participate in pagan worship.
26. Believers were accused of hating others as they separated from family, friends, and neighbors who practiced these vices.
27. Finally, they were accused of being subversive to the Roman authority where participation in civic activities conflicted with Biblical standards.
28. Accusation and ridicule were heaped upon the Christian community.
29. Blasphemy is one of the terms used to describe that abuse.
30. Not only were they attacking Christians, they were engaged in blasphemy against God.
31. Those who slander believers for their changed lifestyle are in effect slandering (i.e., blaspheming) God Himself, who called these converts “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1Pet.2:9b).
32. Whatever is done to, or for, a child of God is done to, or for, God Himself (Lk.10:16; Jn.12:48; 15:18-25; Mt.25:31-40).
33. Since the very Spirit of God rests upon these Christians (cf. 1Pet.4:14), so to malign them is to blaspheme God the HS.
34. The use of such a strong word in our verse reveals that the cosmos’ reaction to our stance generates genuine offense or “scandal” (cf. 1Pet.2:8).

35. The term is transitional with respect to the next verse.

Negative Volition Will Give an Account (v.5)

VERSE 5 but they will give account (οἱ [pro./rel.n.m.s., hos, who] ἀποδώσουσιν [fut.act.ind.3.p., ἀποδίδωμι, apodidomi, give back, render, repay] λόγον [acc.m.s., logos, word; statement; account]) **to Him who is ready** (τῷ ἔχοντι [def.art.w/pres.act.pt.dat.m.s., echo, to have; “who is”] ἐτοίμως [adv., etoimos, ready]) **to judge the living and the dead** (κρίναι [aor.act.infin., krino, judge] ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς [pres.act.pt.acc.m.p., zao, to live, + conj. + adj.acc.m.p., nekros, dead]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 5

1. “Who” (n.m.p.rel.pro., hos; translated “they”) has as its antecedent the pres.act.pt.n.m.p. of *blasphemeo*, translated “they malign” or “blaspheme”.
2. Those among our accusers who remain unrepentant “will give an account” (fut.act.ind.3.p., ἀποδίδωμι, *apodidomi*, give, render, + acc.m.s., *logos*, account) at the last judgment.
3. Peter’s language suggests the reversal of the circumstances imagined in 1Pet.3:15,16.
4. In time believers may be questioned about their faith and hope, even formally interrogated about their loyalty to the state.
5. They must know how to respond graciously, yet with integrity, even to the most hostile questions (1Pet.3:15; cf. 2:13-15).
6. In the future, the tables will be turned.
7. Those who now ask the questions will have to come up with some answers of their own.
8. Jesus taught accountability for this, spoken of in Mt.12:36: “And I say to you, that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment”.
9. At the respective judgments God will bring every action to judgment (Eccl.12:14; cp. 11:9; Mt.10:26; Rom.2:16; 1Cor.4:5).
10. Unbelievers will receive the sentence of eternal condemnation based on their negative volition to the gospel.
11. Believers will be judged at the Bema Seat (in the case of CA believers; 2Cor.5:10; cp. Rom.14:10,12) and O.T. saints will be judged at the Second Advent (Dan.12:13).
12. For believers the judgment will determine the nature of their eternal reward.
13. The expression “who is ready” is, literally, “having in readiness” (τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι).
14. God is at all times “ready”; He awaits the predetermined time (Acts.17:31).
15. For unbelievers it comes after the Millennium, just before the New Creation.
16. The phrase “the living and dead” refers to those who are alive as well as those who are dead.
17. No one will escape final judgment.
18. The dead will be raised to appear before the Last Judgment.
19. The Judge is Jesus Christ, to whom God has committed all judgment (Acts.10:42; 17:31; Jn.5:22,27).