

THE LIVING HOPE OF THE BELIEVER

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: To give a living hope to believers who suffer for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Suggestion: This lesson will call attention to important truths in this week's Lesson. After the lesson, give your class next week's Student Lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: Peter explained why God allows believers to suffer, exhorted them to be separate from the world and encouraged them to fervently love one another with a pure heart. "God . . . has begotten us again unto a lively (or, living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet 1:3).

How does God determine which sinners He should elect? 1:2

He elects sinners by His foreknowledge of what they will do with His gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. He loves all people and desires that they all be saved (1 Tim 2:4). He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish (2 Pet 3:9). Since God is sovereign, why are the majority of people going to Hell? God made a sovereign decision to make sinners choose their eternal destiny. Before He laid the foundation of earth, He knew all people would sin and would need a Savior. So He made another sovereign decision: He would send His Son, His beloved Son, to die for the sins of all people (1 Pet 1:20; 1 Jn 2:2). If they receive His Son, they will live with Him forever. If they reject His Son, they will be separated from Him forever. He would do all the work to save them. They simply had to repent of their sins and receive His gift by faith, without any works of their own. God foreknew the decision each person would make. If they received His gift, He elected them to be conformed to the likeness of His Son (Rom 8:29). If they refused His gift, He foreknew that, too, and they will suffer His wrath (Jn 3:36). When God's sovereignty and foreknowledge are taken as stated above, it brings more glory to Him. It would be much easier for Him to choose the ones to be elected, but He lets sinners choose their own destiny. Even so, they will not disturb His sovereign plan, because He made it by His foreknowledge of their decisions. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom 11:33).

Why is sound faith and living hope so important for believers? 1:3, 21

The foundation for the lives of believers is their faith and hope in God. This foundation gives their lives stability in the time of storms (Mt 7:24-25). Sound faith comes by hearing and knowing God's Word (Rom 10:17). And knowing what God has done, especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ, gives believers living hope.

Why does God allow believers to suffer? 1:7

Peter told the believers that suffering purifies their faith. This would give them praise, honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ for the Rapture of Church believers to Heaven (1 Thes 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-54). Paul wanted to fellowship in Christ's suffering that he might know Him better (Phil 3:10) and receive His blessing when He would judge his works (2 Cor 5:10). The Church believers' judgment will follow the Rapture. Suffering helps believers appreciate Christ suffering on the cross for their sins. God also used suffering to keep Paul humble and he discovered the abundant grace that God provided to endure suffering. God's grace was so powerful that Paul took pleasure in suffering. He learned that when he was weak in his body, then he was strong in his spirit (2 Cor 12:7-10).

How should believers imitate God? 1:14-16

Believers are children of God and He wants them to be like Him. He commands believers to be holy as He is holy. That means they are to be separated from the world and not to love it (1 Jn 2:15-17).

Why should believers live holy lives? 1:17-22

God is their Father and He will judge every person according to his work. He is no respecter of persons, so they are to live with fear, that is, a high regard for Him and His judgment. He paid a high price for their salvation and He expects high respect. They are to show it by fervent love for one another with a pure heart.