

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

AUGUST 3, 2014

## WHY DO CHRISTIANS SUFFER?

Jim Stauffer

**Rev. 2:10** *Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.* When the child of God reads passages such as this he must realize there is a good reason for someone to endure such ill treatment.

Paul commends the Thessalonians because their faith had grown to such an extent they could endure all the persecutions and afflictions that came their way as servants in the kingdom of God. He goes so far as to say this proves their worthiness as members of the kingdom. (**2 Thess. 1:4,5**) What he goes on to say in verses 6-10 is God is aware of their current plight and will take His vengeance upon their enemies when He comes in judgment.

We learn early in the history of the church that standing for Christ will bring suffering. Peter and John had repeated encounters with the council. They were beaten and jailed and yet their commentary about such treatment and threats of further abuse are summed up here. **Acts 5:41** *They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name.* Paul tells the Philippian brethren they were “*granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf.*” (**Phil. 1:29**) It is very clear the role of the disciple of Christ is to suffer for His name.

That the church will be persecuted in every age is supported evidentially historically in **Foxe's Book of Martyrs**. He recounts the martyrdom of the faithful down through the centuries. The following statement reflects his conclusions, *‘First, that there is a true Church of Christ in this world is without question. Second, every level of secular and religious leaders and their subjects have publicly and forcefully, with every cunning and deceitful means at their disposal, denounced and persecuted that true Church. Third, that Church has endured and held its testimony of Christ through every attack brought against it. Its passage through the storms caused by violent anger and hate has been glorious to see, and much of its history is written in this book so that the wonderful works of God might be to Christ's glory and that the knowledge of the experiences of the Church's martyrs might have a*

*beneficial effect upon its readers and strengthen their Christian faith.*” Realizing every Apostle with the exception of John died a martyr's death should tell us of the nature of the life of a Christian.

Since such suffering is to be expected, our question becomes, how does one prepare for and endure it. Paul and Peter provide essentially the same answer. **2 Tim. 1:12** *For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.* **1 Pet. 4:19** *Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.* This is exactly the formula Jesus followed in **1 Pet. 2:23**.

So, how do we suffer successfully? We must understand we can only experience success if there is true gratitude. **Col. 1:15** tells us to “*let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which ye were called in one body and be ye thankful.*”

We recognize this peace comes from the justification God gives to the faithful. (**Rom. 5:1**) But, while reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ acquits us of the guilt of our sin, how does that bring sufficient gratitude to produce some of the examples of the suffering faithful as we have already observed?

Look at the response of the one leper out of ten who in his gratitude returned and praised the Lord. (**Lk. 17:15-19**) His life was changed. It was salvaged. He was given a new life. He could now be a part of society in general rather than being relegated to the humiliation of the leper's place outside the city.

Now let us recognize the meaning of that “peace of Christ” Paul refers to ruling in our hearts. Look what Jesus did for us. **Heb. 2:14** *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* The passage tells us He did, “*deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*” What is referred to by the fear of death? All were sinners. (**Rom. 3:23**) Following death comes the judgment. (**Heb. 9:27**)

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In "bringing to nought him that had the power over death, that is the devil" Jesus has done for our eternal souls what He did for the leper's body. He has provided the healing, yes, saving power for it. By comparative standards this is immense. While the leper gained a few good years on earth, we shall gain eternity in heaven with God and Christ instead of everlasting punishment with the devil and his angels. This should provide the evidence we need to understand the gratitude that leads to suffering willingly.

Paul provides a wise warning for us as we live on earth to keep us on the pathway to our heavenly goal. **1 Cor. 9:24** *Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. 25 And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: 27 but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.* We must endure. But when we have, he also reminds us of the reward that awaits us, **2 Tim. 4:7** *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: 8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.*

*He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. (Matt. 10:22)*

## How We Learn From The Bible Part Three

*By Dudley Ross Spears*

Another way we learn from the Bible is called necessary inference. It is a common method used by the Lord himself. First, allow me to define what is meant by necessary inference.

Inference and opinion are the proper and instant effect of human reasoning. Jesus recognized the normal reasoning power of accountable humans. On one occasion he warned his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They wondered why he spoke of leaven. They were "reasoning in their hearts" -- **"Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?"** - Matt. 16:8. Other references: Mark 2:8; 1 Cor. 1:10 (note "same judgment" -- conclusions reached.)

Inferences and opinions we form as we learn from the Bible ought never be bound as equal with divine law. Thomas Campbell, in the "Declaration and Address," stated it this way. "That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection . . ."

There is a difference in an inference "fairly" deduced and one that is necessarily deduced from Scripture premises. Some logic books refer to this as inescapable conclusions based on premises accepted as true. The book of Hebrews is replete with necessary inferences that teach the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old. Jesus used a necessary inference to prove the Sadducees were wrong on the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees asked Jesus a trick question about a woman who had successively married seven brothers, all of whom died. They asked the Lord, **"in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?"** - Matt. 22:28. He answered in the logical format of necessary inference.

Jesus cited Exodus 3:6 where God spoke to Moses and said, **"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."** Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been physically dead for centuries but Jesus used the present tense "I am." He affirmed the necessary conclusion that God is still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Based on the premise set forth in Exodus 3, Jesus necessarily inferred that, "God is not a God of the dead (those who do not exist) but of the living." The necessary inference is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still exist because God is not a God of the dead. The passage Jesus used from Exodus 3 does not say God is a God of the living and not of the dead -- but Jesus did. It is the inescapable conclusion drawn from true premises. The inescapable conclusion drawn from the premises Jesus used is a prime and proper example of necessary inference. This is but one of many instances of the use of necessary inferences by which we learn from the Bible. This legitimizes our use of the same format as we seek to learn God's will for us.

## Life Is Not Fair

In our world of freedom and choice, we have an idea that everything is going to be well for us in every thing. There is a sense of comfort that in our prosperity we will enjoy only good things. Difficulty and heartache are not accepted. Because of our own worth, everything must be fair. It is not an easy task to believe that life would be such that we would have to suffer. Many religious leaders today draw multitudes with their wealth and good health philosophy of life. In times of crisis, people find themselves in despair over the unfair consequences of what life brings.

For the child of God, life is understood in a proper way. Life can be harsh and cruel and it can be wonderful and kind. Life can be unfair. The Christian knows this all too well. Not because of self experience only but because the knowledge that God has given in His word is that life is not about the here and now but what awaits the faithful. The focus of life is not what we gain here in the flesh but what is revealed in the spirit. No matter what may befall our lives here, we all seek a higher goal. The Bible is filled with stories of the faithful of God who could say, "Life is not fair," but rather they choose to trust in God. The lesson learned from their

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example is how we train our minds and our lives to look to the reward and the promise beyond this vale of tears and sorrow.

Was it fair that God punished Adam and Eve by casting them out of the garden of Eden to toil the land in the sweat of their face? (**Genesis 3**) Their suffering was the result of sin. They had a wonderful place to live and were told to eat of every tree in the garden. Because of their disobedience, they lost paradise. Suffering can come about because of the consequence of sin. Sexual immorality will bring its consequences in many ways. Drunkenness has destroyed lives by the thousands and people suffer every day because of it. Sin has consequences.

Abram was told to leave his country to journey to a place that he did not know. (**Hebrews 11:8-10**) *"By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."* His life was turned upside down and it would never be the same. The faith of Abraham rested upon the realization that life was not about the here and now but the life that was to be.

Joseph suffered many things in his life and yet not once do we find him complaining to God. (**Genesis 39-50**) Life was not fair to Joseph but he still trusted in God and sought His pleasure. *"The Lord was with Joseph."* (**39:2**) Job suffered many things in his life. He lost his possessions, his ten children, his health and the respect of his friends. The book of Job is not about suffering but how Job retained his faith when life was unfair. Paul suffered a *"thorn in the flesh."* (**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**) He pleaded with the Lord to remove it and the answer was: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."* (**v9**)

Life can be unfair. Our health may not be the best we would desire, tragedy may befall us, heartache and sorrow may cast a long shadow upon us but all in all and in the end, God is still there. It was unfair that Jesus had to die but He did. Can you not hear the plaintive cry of God's Son upon the cross when He cried out, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?"* (**Mark 15:34**) It was unfair but it was necessary. For the child of God, the hope of eternal life where no tears, no sorrow and no pain exist is the hope that burns bright within the heart of faith. *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* (**Romans 8:18**)

**By Kent E.Heaton Sr.**

## OUR NEED OF REVERENCE

Reverence toward God is the only proper way for us to draw near to Him. *"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"* (**Heb. 12:28**). *"Holy and reverend (awesome -- NKJV) is His name"* (**Psa. 111:9**). It is because of

reverence for God that we can love Him and walk humbly with Him (**Mic. 6:8**). Reverence also helps us to worship in spirit and in truth (**Jno. 4:24**) *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those who are around Him"* (**Psa. 89:7**).

*"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?"* (**Psa. 8:3,4**). *"By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth"* (**Psa. 33:6**). *"It is He Who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture"* (**Psa. 100:3**). *"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fulness, the world and those who dwell therein"* (**Psa. 24:1**). *"All things are of God"* (**2 Cor. 5:18**). *"In Him we live and move and have our being...We are the offspring of God"* (**Acts 17:28,29**). *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (**Matt. 10:28**).

We show reverence for God when we use His name only with the greatest respect. *"Hallowed be Your name"* (**Matt. 6: 9**). It is irreverence to use His name as a by-word or in any other empty fashion. We also show reverence when we respect the authority of God and of His Son. We show respect for His authority when we study diligently to learn what He wants us to do, and when we then obey His instructions without murmuring or disputing with His Law (**Phil. 2:14**). Humility demands that we *"consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness"* (**1 Tim. 6:3-5**).

All of us should be able to see that reverence is a learned disposition of mind and behavior. Children must be taught continually in order that they learn to show reverence to God in a PROPER way. Cain's, Nadab's, and Abihu's offerings were not displays of true reverence, regardless of how "reverently" they offered them. We as adults must also be reminded of these lessons. We should prepare our minds as the time draws near to offer praise and worship in the assembly of the saints. We can (but should not) set a wrong example for children by acting indifferently and frivolously as worship is offered to God. Our quietness and reverence and our hearty singing of praise to God, plus teaching our children to participate and our restraint upon them in requiring respectful behavior, will show them the way until they are able to understand why we are behaving this way. No person of understanding expects little children to understand the depth of meaning in songs, in prayers, and in the Lord's Supper; but we have every reason to expect proper discipline to be exercised in order to train children in the ways of righteousness. All of us must learn the greatness of God and our complete dependence upon Him so that we may live in awe of His power, in respect of His holiness, and in love for His love and mercy offered to all who will obey Him (**Heb. 5:9**).

**By Gilbert Alexander.**

**Hab. 2:20** *But Jehovah is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.*

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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### NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

J.R. DANIEL AND PAT CLOTHIER CONTINUE TO RECUPERATE AT HOME. LILLIE KEECH HAS RECOVERED SUFFICIENTLY TO TRAVEL AND VISIT RELATIVES. JAN PATRICK AND IRENE HURD CONTINUE TO SUFFER POOR HEALTH. PLEASE REMEMBER OUR BELOVED FRIEND, LORETTA TAPP IN YOUR PRAYERS.

WE ARE NOW STUDYING THE CHURCH (GIVING ANSWERS) ON SUNDAY AND THE PROPHET JEREMIAH ON WEDNESDAYS.



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10