

1 PETER 4:12-16 | THE FIERY TRIAL

- Verse 12 –
 - While this appears to be *about the Tribulation*, and certainly has applicable similarities, it is grammatically shown to be about the recipient's *current experience*.
 - The words **which is to try you** are often read as a *future*, but the word **which** should rather be read as a *non-defining* clause (a clause which gives information, not definition).
 - Incidentally, the English word *which* is grammatically proper in non-defining clauses, while *that* is used in defining clauses.
 - Remember: *which is as disposable as a sandwich bag*.
 - The **fiery trial** is *for the purpose of* testing those who were receiving it.
 - The sentence should be understood to say, “the fiery trial which you are experiencing is for the purpose of trying you.”
 - Peter's listeners were to **think it not strange** that this was taking place.
 - To a certain degree, all people of faith should expect trial, and expect that such is for the purpose of *proving their mettle*.
 - Of course, this passage has a particular context and should not be used to prove that *all Christians will suffer*.
 - Under no circumstances could this verse prove that Christians go through the tribulation. The only way to do so would be to disregard the grammar and thus simply use the words as a proof-text. However, such an argument is easy to find. For example:
 - From “Rapture and End Times” - “A judgement by fire will happen next and it will be a testing time for all mankind. 1 Peter 4:12 Do not hope for a rapture from this first event. The prophecies that tell of a ‘meeting in the air’ refer to the visible Return of Jesus for His Millennial reign, which is to come much later.”
[\(https://raptureandendtimes.com/2021/08/14/rapture-2021-shelter-from-the-storm/\)](https://raptureandendtimes.com/2021/08/14/rapture-2021-shelter-from-the-storm/)
 - From “Desiring God” (John Piper) – “God’s promise to keep us from the hour of trial probably doesn’t mean that we are taken out of the world, but rather that God will keep us from the faith-destroying effects of the hour of trial. He will guard us. He will protect our faith. In fact, 1 Peter says, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” ([1 Peter 4:12](#)). I don’t think it’s a New Testament teaching that God rescues his people *from* trial, but he protects them *through* trial.
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-rapture>)

- Verse 13 –
 - Peter’s suffering followers were to **rejoice** in the present because of what would happen in the future.
 - Currently being in a sharing-fellowship (Greek κοινωνέω [koinoneo] translated **partakers**) with **Christ’s sufferings** they would **be glad** in the future **when his glory shall be revealed**.
 - Paul says the same when, speaking to a faithful Jewish audience (I believe), he says that they are **heirs of God** but only **if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together** (Rom. 8:17).
 - Note the use of the word *that* rather than *which* (*that* being an essential defining clause).
 - Dispensationally, the point is that we cannot take 1 Peter 4:13 (and, more broadly, the entire epistle) to be the basis for the doctrine of the Body of Christ. If we do so, we will inadvertently introduce works into our salvation message (for that which is descriptive of the *saved* life is essential to the salvation message).
- Verse 14 –
 - The condition of the *if/then* statement (being **reproached, for the name of Christ**) has been met, therefore **happy** are the recipients of the letter.
 - The word **happy** is, more broadly, *blessed*.
 - Better to glorify God and pay the price than to speak evil of Him and miss His glory.
- Verse 15 –
 - Suffering in itself is not commendable nor commended.
 - A **murderer** or **thief** or **evildoer** will suffer consequences, but they are a reproach and not a blessing.
 - While few of us fit the category of the first three sins, many of us succumb to being a **busybody in other men’s matters**.
 - This phrase comes from a single Greek word, ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος [allotriepiskopos].
 - The compound word is from *allogrios* (belonging to another) and *skopos* (view, scope).
 - Lord, give us the grace to *mind our own business*.
- Verse 16 –
 - The word **Christian** now means *a member of the body of Christ*. That is, a person who has received God’s free grace-gift through Christ.
 - However, the term was first used in Antioch (Acts 11:26), where it described members of Peter’s assembly (i.e.: Jews who believed Jesus was their Messiah and were living perfectly according to the Law).
 - While the truth of this verse is universal, we should keep in mind its original scope.