

# TAKEAWAY

## How to Live Right Now

### Part Eight: 1 Peter 3:13-22

#### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- To see the place and purpose of suffering for following Jesus
- To see the place and purpose of 'apologetics'
- To be better equipped to deal with Bible verses that are strange in mature way

#### SHARE

How often do you think of God as... strange? How comfortable are you with living with the truth that God's ways are beyond our understanding?

#### READ

##### 1 Peter 3:13-22

**Note:** This is a very tricky passage that even professional Bible scholars find challenging to understand! Don't worry if you're struggling to make much sense of it.

#### DISCUSS

Consider verses 13-18. Peter here addresses Christians who are suffering for following Jesus. What do you tend to do if you are met with criticism, mockery or even simply hard questions for your faith?

What does Peter say we should do? What would this look like practically? What reasons does Peter give for his advice?

If you're a follower of Jesus, to what extent do you feel equipped to give as reason for the hope you have? Why does it matter that we emphasise it is a *hope* rather than merely a *right answer*?

Why is gentleness and respect SO critical?

Have any particular apologetics resources been helpful to you?

Look at verse 18 in isolation. (Maybe have each person in the room say that verse out loud!) Why is this the centre of the passage?

#### EXPLAIN

Consider verses 19-22. It might help to re-read it. These are tricky verses, and have been interpreted in different ways. Here are a few pointers though:

- The famous story of Noah's ark, where the world was flooded, is seen as a symbol pointing to what we now have in baptism, where we are 'cleaned' through baptism and all it means rather than the earth being 'cleaned' of humanity and our evils.
- There is a spiritual realm beyond what we can see. At present, we can only be aware of it in part, but we should be reassured that Jesus is in charge of all of reality and we have nothing to fear with Him.
- When Jesus is said to have 'made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits - to those who were disobedient long ago', there are 3 major interpretations as to what Peter means.
  1. Jesus was preaching the good news about what He'd done to deceased people who'd never heard about Him and giving them the chance to respond.
  2. Early church leader Augustine suggested that Jesus preached 'in spirit' via what Noah said to those around him who doubted the coming flood, who were imprisoned spiritually rather than physically.
  3. Jesus was preaching, post resurrection to fallen angels (now demons) to announce His victory over evil.

- While each interpretation is challenging, whatever the passage means, it seems likely that Peter was referring to Noah because he wanted an example of someone who suffered over time but could see with hindsight that it was worth it. The patience of God and the eventual death/resurrection of Jesus ultimately saved Noah, and ourselves.

### **DISCUSS**

What might be some good ways to deal with passages that are hard to understand? What do you normally do when you bump into them?

It is interesting that God gives us a reminder to *'be prepared to give a reason for the hope that we have'* and soon follows it with a passage that is very hard to figure out! How can we be clear about what we believe and why, and yet retain a deep humility about our inability to have all the answers?

### **TRY OUT**

In order to build your hope, and strength of faith, it might be helpful to look at some of Reasonable Faith's animations, found on YouTube. They're short and easy to follow.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=idDoRftSuRU&list=PL3gdeV4Rk9Efl-NyraEGXXwSjDNeMaRoX](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idDoRftSuRU&list=PL3gdeV4Rk9Efl-NyraEGXXwSjDNeMaRoX)

Reflect on your story – If you had an opportunity to 'give a reason for the hope that you have', what kind of things would you say?

### **PRAY**

Pray for a growth of hope, faith and resilience in one another.