

First Peter 4:4-19

4:4 – suffering due to non-conformity to the empty life (or, **asotia** meaning an empty life-style). Non-conformity led to misunderstanding and slander of the Christians calling them:

- Haters of mankind
- Political disloyal and unpatriotic (worship of the emperor could be equivalent to the pledge of allegiance to the flag in the USA)
- Uncommitted to their city and society (participation in civic ceremonies involved sacrifices, etc)
- Unprofessional (membership in a trade guild required attendance at meetings in temples)
- Rejected their families (families would worship together in their homes and even eat meals in the temples together for birthdays, etc.)

4:5 – the Christian may feel rejected by men and God in time, but that was not a problem

God was the judge in the end (1 Peter 1:17; 2:23)

God would judge the living and the dead means those who had physically died had not escaped final judgment and likewise those who were still alive would face death and then judgment or meet the Lord at his return.

The image that judgment is “ready” refers to be prepared for an event that is going to happen.

It is a idiomatic phrase in the Greek used in Acts 21:13; 2 Cor. 12:14; Daniel 3:15 and James 5:8-9 when he says “the Judge stands at the door.”

4:6 – Death and judgment is the time for the Christians vindication.

- “the dead” refers to those who have already died physically just as it did in 4:5
- “preaching” is not the same as 1 Peter 3:19

God is the judge of the dead who are waiting for judgment

God is also the judge of the living who will eventually die and then face judgment.

The phrase “preach the gospel” is **euangelizo** and means to announce the good news.

In 1 Pt. 3:19 the word was simply **kerysso** which means “proclaim” and needs an object to identify what was “proclaimed”

Those who are going to be judged are all men who had a chance to respond to God and the Gospel. They will be judged based on their response to the Gospel that they heard.

Peter uses “preached” in the aorist tense which means it was a past act that is now complete.

This matches the fact that they are now dead and the “preaching” has ceased, but the results will still be effective in judgment.

Judged in the flesh simply refers to being judged by the human point of view

- Rom. 8:5
- 1 Cor. 3:3
- 1 Cor. 9:8
- Gal. 3:15
- 2 Cor. 5:16

These Christians are now judged by men, but they will be judged by the Lord.

We are judged by men according to the flesh, but we are judged by the Lord according to the Spirit

4:7 – “the end of all things is near” is a phrase that connects the concept of temporal time to the same scale as eternal time. On that scale “the end of all things has always been near” in comparison
Mat. 10:22; Mat. 24:13; Mark 13:13; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9; 1 Cor. 10:11; 1 Cor 15:24; Rev. 2:26

“clear headed” means sane, sober

Consider yourself soberly in line with reality. Not too lofty. Not too debased.

Romans 12:3 is an example of “clear headed” used in evaluation of yourself and your gifts.

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”

Here, Peter uses it to refer to being able to maintain clear thinking in line with reality in the face of suffering and other end time elements. Stay in touch with reality and life responsibilities, which Paul addresses to the Thessalonians:

“...aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you...” – 1 Thessalonians 4:11

“...not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.” – 2 Thessalonians 2:2

In 1 Thessalonians 5:6 and 5:8 “clear minded” of “sober” is contrasted with “sleep” or being caught up in worldly affairs and not alert. Notice Paul’s reference to military armor in the same context as Peter when he refers to the mental state: alert, clear-minded, sober:

“So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”

Paul’s final words from prison to Timothy was the same:

“As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
– 2 Timothy 4:5

Clear minded is basically staying balanced in regard to the Truth.

- Do not lose touch with reality.
- Do not get so heavenly minded you are no earthly good.
- Do not be so focused on Christ’s return that you neglect your responsibilities here on earth.
- Do not get caught up in the world and the things of the world.
- Do not be shocked by suffering.

“clear headed” literally means “not drunk” and can refer to wine, but is focused on mental alertness compared to goofy thinking. Reality compared to false philosophies.

A good contrast is in Ephesians 4:18:

Be alert to reality and this will lead you to prayer

This “watch and pray” in Mat. 24:41-42; Col 4:2; (1 Cor. 16:13)

- Prayer is NOT an escape
- Prayer is NOT some wild spiritual frenzy
- Prayer IS clear thoughts of a believer communicating with the Lord from a perspective of reality seeking power, assistance and guidance for this time in this age.

4:8 – “Above all” does not mean “love” is more important than what was just discussed, but instead begins a new topic of which “love” is the first item on the new list. Also, used by James in James 5:12

Ektenes is the adverb translated “earnestly” or “deeply”. (See 1:22) This Greek word means “stretched out” and used in ancient Greek texts to refer to a horse galloping at full speed and a runner leaning for the finish line string.

“Love covers a multitude of sins” – (Proverbs 10:12 – “*Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.*” ; James 5:20)

1. Where there is love there is willingness to overlook offenses and small faults. Love is willing to forgive and move on. Opposite is to be suspicious which leads to misunderstandings. Hebrews 12:15 is a warning.
2. This is not saying your sins are forgiven if you are a loving person. For example, giving of money to the poor does not cover the sins you commit or the offensive things you say.
3. This is not saying you are forgiving the sins in God’s eyes. God will still deal with sin. But, your love can help keep personal relationships on track.
4. This is not a reference to God’s love covering our sins.

4:9 – Hospitality “without grumbling” or “without murmuring.”

1. Hospitality in the NT
 - a. Romans 12:13
 - b. 1 Tim. 3:2
 - c. Titus 1:8
 - d. Hebrews 13:2
 - e. 3 John 5
 - f. 2 John 10
 - g. James 2:21, 25
 - h. 1 Timothy 5:10
2. This likely refers to giving traveling Christians (teachers and apostles) room and board. By 100 AD and the time of the writing of the Didache (“Teaching”) standardized regulations had to be established to prevent abuse by travelers or people posing as teachers.
 - a. Food and clothing were provided for up to three days for a proper teacher.
 - b. The fourth day the teacher moved on to another city, or they got a job and were self-supporting.

4:10 – The mention of love and of being hospitable (to traveling teachers) leads to the point that everyone has gifts (1 Cor. 12:7)

Literally 4:10 says, “ministering as good stewards manifold grace of God” (diakononutes ius kaloi oikouomoi poikiles charitos theou)

The gifts were given by God to his people (apparently at conversion).

These are not natural talents, but spiritual endowments because it is called “grace” here and in Romans 12:6 and 1 Cor 12:4

These gifts need to be developed.

These gifts need to be used for service

These gifts are not for self-promotion or self-profiting.

Believers do control the gifts (1 Cor. 14:32 and 14:30, etc.)

Believers do develop the gifts

Believers can ask for gifts (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1, 13)

Believers are called “stewards” which is the household manager who was often a slave.

4:11 – Two examples (which can be seen in Acts 6:2, and again in Romans 12:7):

- a. “speaks” refers to all speaking gifts, not causal conversation.
- b. “serves” is to be done in the supernatural strength of God, not in human effort. The word “supplies” is used here and in 2 Cor. 9:10 and refers to paying the expense of training a chorus for the theater or to accept the cost for something. Wealthy citizens would pay for the play or a road or a feast, etc. God is going to pay the expense material, physically and emotional. This is the difference between burnout and complaining or fruitful continuation in joy

4:12 -

4:13 -

4:14 -

4:15 -

4:16 -

4:17 -

4:18 -

4:19 -