

International Bible Lessons Commentary
1 Peter 4:1-11

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, May 19, 2013

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 19, 2013**, is from **1 Peter 4:1-11**; verses 1-3 also included below.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking

Further follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **International Bible Lessons Commentary Index**. The weekly **International Bible Lesson** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **The Oklahoman** newspaper.

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1 Peter 4:1-11

(1 Peter 4:1) Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same

intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin),

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into our world in human flesh; therefore, He knows by His own experience the pain of suffering through human flesh. He suffered because He chose to do God's will even if it meant suffering at the hands of evil doers. Those who follow Jesus Christ and choose to suffer for Him and His purposes instead of following in the ways of sin, self-centeredness, self-indulgence, and the world have finished with sin, though they may still be tempted and defeated by sin sometimes. Therefore, Peter wrote "arm yourself;" which means to put on each day and throughout the day the intention to love God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength no matter what the personal cost. We need to "arm" ourselves, because we still must face "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

(1 Peter 4:2) so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God.

Arming ourselves means choosing at the beginning of each day to live by (to intend to live by) the express will of God; His commandments revealed in the Bible and summed up in the word "love" as the Holy Spirit helps us. Prior to our new birth in Jesus Christ, we lived following human, selfish, worldly desires. Now whenever we are tempted to fall back into this way of

life, we need to pray for the strength and the way to do God's will instead of committing sin. We need to remind ourselves of what the Bible teaches and of what Jesus will do for us when we turn to Him for help when we are tempted. He came to save us from our sins.

(1 Peter 4:3) You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.

When we look back we need to consider that we have spent enough time and have wasted enough talent and treasure living apart from the will of the true God (the Gentiles did not know the true God apart from Judaism and Christianity). Peter made a list that is not exhaustive so believers would know some of the behaviors and sins to avoid if in doubt about what God will permit.

(1 Peter 4:4) They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme.

Those Jews who disregarded the will of God and those Gentiles who did not know the will of God (or disregarded their conscience and what they knew about true morality) lived contrary to their commonsense and nature as created by God. Because

new Christians will no longer live as they once lived, as pagans, unbelievers will no longer trust them, but naturally feel some fear and a sense of condemnation. Even if nothing is said condemning the unbeliever, the new way that new Christians live and act is a form of judgment to many unbelievers; therefore, they curse God and Christians.

(1 Peter 4:5) But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.

God not only judges our bad behavior now and intervenes to bring punishment now or allows the disobedient to suffer the natural consequences of their rebellious behavior, there will also be a final “day” when God judges those who will stand before Him and give an accounting, or reason, or explanation for their misdeeds, or try to defend their behavior before God passes a sentence of judgment.

(1 Peter 4:6) For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.

In my opinion, the dead spoken of in this verse are those who in the days of Noah repented of their sins and called out to God in faith to save them as the waters rose and eventually drowned them. They did

not curse God as they died; they saw and admitted and regretted their rebellion against God and His commandments. They repented and came to a measure of faith, but they needed Jesus Christ to die and rise again from the dead for them in order for Christ to save them from their sins. Christ preached this good news of salvation to them after He died on the cross for them.

(1 Peter 4:7) The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers.

“Near” is a relative term to us since 1000 years can be as a day to God. Our own physical death is near and draws near with each passing day; therefore, we need to arm ourselves with the intention to love God supremely and be serious and discipline ourselves when tempted. For our prayers in behalf of others and ourselves to be the most effective, we must live within the will of God, especially as God has revealed His will and purposes in the Bible.

(1 Peter 4:8) Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

In addition to loving God, His heavenly Father, Jesus Christ loved and still loves others. He loved constantly; furthermore, He loved all the way to death on the cross, and in the life beyond He still loves. He

gave his life to forgive us and free us from slavery to sin. Our love for others can lead us to forgive them and where possible help them to overcome temptations and a life of sin through faith in Jesus Christ and His redeeming power. Our love can put their sins against us out of sight and out of mind (cover a multitude of sins).

(1 Peter 4:9) Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

To be hospitable takes some effort on our part, some expense of time, energy, and treasure (usually) in the service of someone else. Whatever the personal sacrifice, Peter wrote and said we should not complain when helping others. In a day of few places to lodge safely and with poverty among many Christians, Christians needed to especially depend upon the hospitality of one another.

(1 Peter 4:10) Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

God's grace and God's free gifts are beyond whatever we can imagine. Our very existence as well as salvation depends on God. Whatever we possess, even the education and talent to earn money in the job, are gifts of God. Keeping that in mind, we need to avoid selfishness and seek to share our gifts with others –

our sharing with others is another way for God to express His manifold grace to all.

(1 Peter 4:11) Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Our language, the words we use and the words we avoid, will be affected if we consider how God would speak and try to speak as God would speak in every situation. We need to seek to do the will of God at all times in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and pray for God to give us the strength and wisdom to serve God and others according to the will of God. In this way, we will proclaim the nature and character of God through our lives and words. We will show forth the fact that Jesus Christ changed us and made our new way of living possible through our new birth. To Christ Jesus, not to us, belongs the praise, glory, honor, and power for whatever we say or do for ever.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. When we are tempted to do wrong, what are some of the actions we can take?

2. Why do some people curse you or other Christians or make life difficult for many Christians?

3. If sinners hear the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and refuse to turn from their sins and to Jesus Christ for salvation from their sins; and instead they keep sinning and even curse Christians for living apart from a life of sin, what does Peter say about their future?

4. What did Peter say Christians need to do for the sake of their prayers?

5. In what ways might obeying 1 Peter 4:11 make a difference?

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