

# THE PILGRIM'S CONFLICT AND CONDUCT – PART 2

## 1 Peter 2:11-12

### INTRODUCTION

- There have been many calls by many people for “freedom” lately
- But what is it to be free?
- Many people think they are free when they are not (John 8:31-34)
- Those outside of Christ are in bondage to Satan (2 Timothy 2:26), sin (Romans 6:16), lust (Titus 3:3) and fear (Romans 8:15)
- Only those who come to Christ know and experience true freedom (Romans 8:2)
- Unlike the world's false view of freedom – free to live as we please – true freedom in Christ makes us free to live for God's glory (2 Corinthians 5:15)
- God has called us to “shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” by our words and our deeds
- The epistle of 1 Peter shows us what such a life looks like – it is a *holy* life; one distinct and at odds with the course of the people of this world, making us as “strangers and pilgrims” on the earth
- It is a holiness of both spirit and body; of both the inner and outer life
- V.11 deals with personal purity – our walk before God, while in v.12 Peter exhorts to public piety – our walk before men

Why are we, as believers, called to a sanctified life, both inwardly and outwardly?

### I. BECAUSE YOUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN (11)

### II. BECAUSE OF YOUR CONFLICT WITH THE FLESH (11)

### III. BECAUSE OF YOUR CONVERSATION IN THE WORLD (12)

- A. The slander of the heathen

1. "Gentiles" here simply refers to "unbelievers" (1 Corinthians 5:1; 12:2; 3 John 1:7)
2. Note that believers are to be *among* the Gentiles, not removed in isolated communities (cf. Philippians 2:15)
3. The unbelievers of the Roman Empire spoke evil of the Christians, attributing to them many baseless crimes
  - a. Cannibalism – from the words used by Christ at the Last Supper (Luke 22:19)
  - b. Immorality – from the "love feasts" of the believers (Jude 12)
  - c. Damaging commerce – particularly by casting out devils (Acts 16:18) and turning people from idolatry (Acts 19:21)
  - d. Atheism – the early Christians were called "atheists" because they refused to worship Roman gods
  - e. Traitors to Rome – they refused to worship Caesar, and would confess Christ only as Lord
4. Later, Nero would blame the Christians for the Great Fire of Rome
5. It is characteristic of the world to call evil good, and good evil (Isaiah 5:20)
6. At the root of the world's slander is a deep hatred for Christ and his people (John 15:19)
7. From the beginning, Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10), has employed slander against the saints, and his agents in the world continue to do so today (cf. Acts 28:22)
8. A holy life brings conviction to sinners, who respond to this conviction by attacking the saints (1 John 3:12-13)
9. Note that it is only the *godly* who are promised persecution (2 Timothy 3:12)
10. Christians must resist the temptation to compromise their stand in holiness, as some have, in order to escape the verbal attacks of the wicked
11. We should regard the evil slander of the heathen against us as a blessed privilege, and a mark of our faithfulness to God

- a. “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” (Luke 6:26)
- b. The Lord Jesus experienced continual slander, reviling and false accusation (Matthew 9:34; 11:19; Luke 23:2), as did the apostles (Acts 2:13; 6:13; 24:5)
- c. God gives his special protection over his lambs who suffer the hatred of the world for Christ’s sake (John 17:14-15)
- d. Great is the believer’s reward in heaven who endures this suffering (Matthew 5:11-12)

## B. The scrutiny of the heathen

1. The unbelievers in the world are closely observing the lifestyle of believers, whether they are consistent in their behaviour, or hypocritical
  - a. 19th-century German philosopher Heinrich Heine said, “Show me your redeemed life and I might be inclined to believe in your Redeemer.”
  - b. The evangelist Gypsy Smith said “ There are five gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Christian and some people will never read the first four.”
  - c. “Whether we like it or not, every Christian is an advertisement for Christianity; by his life he either commends it to others or makes them think less of it.” (William Barclay)
2. The ungodly are seeking to find an occasion against believers (Daniel 6:4-5; Psalm 37:12)
3. The believer’s primary response to the slander of the ungodly is not to argue in defence of himself (though there are times when we must do this), but to answer with a blameless life
4. “Conversation” (*anastrophe*), a favourite word of Peter’s (1 Peter 1:15,18; 2:12; 3:1-2,16; 2 Peter 2:7; 3:11), means “lifestyle, behaviour, walk”
5. “Honest” (*kalos*) describes that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, commendable, admirable, honourable

6. The persecution of the ungodly, and our sanctified response to it, provides us with an open door to show forth to them the hope of Christ before receptive hearers (1 Peter 3:14-16)

### C. The salvation of the heathen

1. Those who once slandered the saints become saints themselves
2. Just as the hypocrisy of a believer can turn people away from Christ, so the consistent holiness of a believer can turn people to Christ
3. The day of visitation is a familiar Old Testament phrase which broadly describes the day when God comes to, or visits man, whether in judgment or in mercy (Isaiah 10:3; Luke 19:44)
4. In this case it describes the day of a sinner's salvation, when God personally visits the soul in grace and mercy, forgiving all his sin and granting him eternal life
5. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)
6. To be saved by grace is to become a glorifier of God, whose life is now devoted to the glory of God in body, soul and spirit, in this world and in the next

## CONCLUSION

1. Salvation is a "day of visitation" by God upon the soul: when was your day of visitation?
2. As strangers and pilgrims in this world, we must have little regard of the opinions of wicked men
3. We are to "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter 1:17), living in the light of eternity – for the praise of God, not men
4. As we are spoken evil of by the world, we must be sure to never give them occasion to speak reproachfully by carefully maintaining a godly walk before the world
5. May we see ourselves as mere vessels in the hands of God, channels through which the light of the glory of Christ may shine through us, penetrating the darkness of this world, and bringing others also to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ