

# Following Jesus In Times of Persecution



1 Peter 1:3-12



New Testament 4  
Part 2: Lessons from the Apostle Peter

## SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 4 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

1 Peter 1:3-12; 2:21; 3:8-18; 4:12-19; 5:7-9; Matthew 13:1-9,18-23; John 16:1-3

### MEMORY WORK:

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21b).

### SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- [“Roll the Gospel Chariot Along”](#)
- [“I’m in the Lord’s Army”](#)
- [“I’m a Hard Fighting Soldier on the Battlefield”](#)

### LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP’s Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [N.T. Disciples & Peter](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “N.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)
- “Summary of the Bible” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Felt figures or pictures of New Testament characters mentioned in lesson who faced persecution
- Pictures to illustrate point two on Lesson 11, Wednesday night

### PERSONAL APPLICATION:

If others mistreat me because I believe in Jesus, I can answer them with God’s Word, and I can gain strength from God through prayer and from the help of others.



## LESSON STARTS HERE

### INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Have you ever had something happen to you that hurt **a lot**? Have you ever been made fun of or bullied by others? Has anyone ever made fun of you because you were doing what is right? (Let the children talk about this for awhile.) Last week we talked about what it means to live right or godly. Today we are going to talk about what the Bible says about bad things that happen to us.

### INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

What are some of the things that have happened to you that hurt a lot? Have you ever been made fun of or bullied by others? Has anyone ever made fun of you because you were doing what is right? (Let the children talk about this for awhile.) Have you ever thought about how God wants you to behave when those things happen? Last week we talked about what it means to live right or godly. Today we are going to talk about what the Bible says about bad things that happen to us.

### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Everybody on the planet has had bad things happen to them. Why doesn't God stop all of the **suffering** and **tribulation**? Why do bad things happen to good people, and why does God allow people to **persecute** good people? The Bible answers these questions for us. Many people don't know what the Bible says about these questions, and they don't trust God, so they get upset with Him because of these questions and choose not to obey Him.



**Suffering:** “pain that is caused by injury, illness, loss, etc.: physical, mental, or emotional pain” (*Merriam-Webster* online)

**Tribulation:** “unhappiness, pain or suffering; an experience that causes someone to suffer” (*Merriam-Webster* online)

**Persecute:** “to treat (someone) cruelly or unfairly especially because of race or religious or political beliefs” (*Merriam-Webster* online)

2. The Bible tells about the suffering of many good people from the past. (Briefly discuss Joseph, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and Job.)
3. The Christians in the first century were often treated badly because of their faith in Jesus. Read Hebrews 11:35-38.



**NOTES:** The Christians who had been scattered throughout the provinces of Asia Minor were enduring the most severe persecution to that point (and the first official persecution by the Roman government), probably beginning in A.D. 64, when Nero made them the scapegoats for the burning of Rome, and continuing until his death in A.D. 68 (Scholars believe that Peter was killed in A.D. 67.). The Gentiles persecuted Christians because they didn't worship Greek or Roman gods. Considered to be atheists, Christians were blamed for all kinds of natural disasters, as well as economic and societal problems. First Peter was a letter of hope and encouragement, of perseverance during "fiery trials" of their faith (1 Peter 4:12-13). At least 15 times in this letter, Peter refers to suffering, using eight different Greek words to do so. The theme of the book is patience in trial and hope for the future. Peter may be regarded as the "apostle of hope." Second Peter is a reminder to beware of false teachers who try to undermine the Word of God and the words of His chosen spokesmen.

4. With the older children, you may want to discuss some of the types of persecutions they endured:
  - Accused by Gentiles of being atheists because they didn't worship Greek and Roman gods
  - Physically attacked by Romans, Jews, and Gentiles
  - Blamed for natural disasters and societal problems
  - Made to dress in animal skins and put in arenas (e.g., the Roman Coliseum) to fight tigers
  - Used as human torches to light the streets.
  - Stephen was stoned for preaching about Jesus (Acts 7).
  - Paul and Silas were thrown into prison (Acts 16:19-23).
  - Paul was stoned and left for dead, beaten many times, suffered shipwrecks, was put in prison several times, etc., because of his preaching (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).
  - John the Baptizer was beheaded because he was not afraid to preach the truth to Herod (Matthew 14:3-11).
  - James the apostle was killed by Herod (Acts 12:1-2).
  - Peter was thrown into prison after a lame man was healed (Acts 3-4:3).
  - Some of the apostles were put in prison after healing the sick and casting out unclean spirits (Acts 5:15-20).
5. If we are following Jesus, we will be different from many of the people around us. When we behave right, it oftentimes makes others around us feel bad for not behaving right, even though they don't want to. Many times, that will make them want to persecute us or try to get us to stop behaving right. We must do what Jesus would want us to do, regardless of what others may say about us or do to us.
6. Why do suffering and persecution happen? Especially, why do they sometimes happen to good people?
  - Satan: Much of the suffering in the world can be traced back to Satan. In Genesis 3:6, the serpent tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God, which caused untold suffering on every human after Adam and Eve. Physical death, pain in childbirth, and difficulty in providing for families, for example, came to all people due to Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve through the serpent (Genesis 3). Satan was behind the suffering that Job endured, including the loss of his children,

possessions, the happiness of his wife, and his own health. Today, the New Testament describes Satan as being like a roaring lion roaming around the Earth looking for humans to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Christians will suffer persecution and suffering due to Satan's efforts. In fact, we are told to expect it (John 15:18-20; 16:2-4; 2 Timothy 3:12; Matthew 13:3-9; Matthew 5:10).

- Free will: God loves humans, and therefore, allows us to choose to follow Him or not. He does not want to make us obey Him. He gives us freedom. If He didn't, then we would be like robots. With that freedom to choose to obey Him or not, comes the possibility that we will choose to disobey Him by hurting others (e.g., eating a piece of fruit from a tree that caused humans to be kicked out of the Garden; murder or stealing) or ourselves (e.g., drugs; read 1 Peter 4:15-16) through our actions. If He stopped the pain and suffering that we have freedom.
- Testing: God does not tempt us to do wrong (James 1:13), but like a teacher, He tests/tries us to prove our righteousness to ourselves, others (e.g., Job proved his righteousness to Satan), and Himself (Isaiah 48:10; James 1:2-3; Job 23:10). When we behave properly, even in the bad times, it proves that we love God no matter what.
- Vindication: In the book of Job, Satan argued that God wasn't really worthy of worship at all times, but rather, only when He blesses and protects people (i.e., Job). He argued that if God removed His protection of Job and allowed Satan to persecute him, Job would turn on God (and God would be found to be unworthy of worship during the bad times). Job's continued love of God in spite of suffering vindicated God (i.e., proved God to be right). When we serve and obey God, even in the bad times, it proves that God is right and Satan is wrong. God is worthy of love and obedience no matter what.
- Punishment: Sometimes God allows (or causes) suffering as discipline/punishment for things we have done wrong (Hebrews 12:5-11). Consider the punishment the Israelites had to endure throughout the Old Testament, multiple times, due to their disobedience. God's punishment/chastening is described as the love a parent has for a child (Hebrews 12:6; Proverbs 13:24).
- Improvement: What do we learn from the pain that is caused by touching the stove or a flame? That we shouldn't touch those things! If there were no pain when we did those things, what would we do the first time we tried? We would keep touching them, and our hands and fingers would either catch fire or not work anymore. So the pain was actually good for us! What happens to a child if he gets everything he wants, is never told "no," is never disciplined for misbehavior, and is protected from every pain? He becomes spoiled and behaves terribly! Nobody wants to be around such a person. Suffering, pain, tribulation, and discipline help to mature us and strengthen us into better people. Through suffering and tribulation, we gain patience (James 1:2-4); perseverance, character, and hope (Romans 5:3-4); respect, peace, righteousness, submission, and obedience to God (Hebrews 12:5-11); humility and spiritual strength (2 Corinthians 12:7-10); and knowledge of God's Law (Psalm 119:71). If we want to go to heaven, then we have to develop these qualities that come through suffering. So shouldn't we actually be happy when we are given opportunities to grow in these areas through suffering (cf. James 1:2; Romans 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Psalm 119:71)? God designed the Earth to be the perfect place to prepare our souls for eternity. Suffering and pain are important parts of that goal.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the article "[The Problem of Evil](#)" by Dave Miller and Kyle Butt, "[Where is God When I Hurt?](#)" by Dave Miller, and "[The Value of Human Suffering](#)" by Wayne Jackson on the Apologetics Press Web site for further study on how suffering is harmonized with the God of the Bible.



**PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):**

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

**Ages 2-5:**

- [“Following Jesus in Persecution Coloring Sheet”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- “Suffering” Ball Game: Make a baseball diamond in the class room (cut out cardboard squares for each of the bases and place them around the room). Divide the class into two teams. Have the children on one team take turns stepping up to the “plate” with a member of the other team on the “pitcher’s mound.” Have the child at the plate give an example of persecution or suffering that he may have to endure when he becomes a Christian. Each child has 10 seconds to come up with one example. If he cannot think of one, the team gets an “out,” and the next child comes up to the plate. After three outs, the other team gets a turn. If a person gives an example (as long as it is different enough from the others), he can move to first base. If another person on the team gets an example, he moves to first base and the person on first moves to second, and so forth. Once a person reaches “home,” the team gets a point. When three outs are made, the bases are “cleared” of players.
- Alternate Ball Game: Make a baseball diamond as above, but let the pitcher ask the batter a question about this or previous lessons from this quarter. If the child misses the question, he’s “out,” and if he gets it right, he moves to first base.
- [“Following Jesus Matching Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)

**1st-2nd Graders:**

- “Suffering” Ball Game: Make a baseball diamond in the class room (cut out cardboard squares for each of the bases and place them around the room). Divide the class into two teams. Have the children on one team take turns stepping up to the “plate” with a member of the other team on the “pitcher’s mound.” Have the child at the plate give as many examples as he can in 10 seconds of persecution or suffering that he may have to endure when he becomes a Christian. If he cannot think of one, the team gets an “out,” and the next child comes up to the plate. If they get one, they get to move to first base. If they think of two, they get to move to second base, and so on. (The examples have to be sufficiently different to count.) After three outs, the other team gets a turn. The person(s) on base moves as many bases as the batter moves (e.g., if a person is on “second base” and the next batter gets one example, the person on second will move to third while the batter moves to first; if a person is on second and the next batter gets two examples, the person on second will go all the way “home” while the batter moves to second). Once a person reaches “home,” the team gets a point. When three outs are made, the bases are “cleared” of players.
- Alternate Ball Game: Make a baseball diamond as above, but let the pitcher ask the batter a question about this or previous lessons from this quarter. If the child misses the question, he’s “out,” and if he gets it right, he moves to first base.
- [“Following Jesus Matching Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Following Jesus Fill in the Blank and Matching Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Following Jesus Crossword Puzzle”](#) (provided in activity sheets)

**3rd-4th Graders:**

- “Suffering” Ball Game: Make a baseball diamond in the class room (cut out cardboard squares for each of the bases and place them around the room). Divide the class into two teams. Have the children on one team take turns stepping up to the “plate” with a member of the other team on the



“pitcher’s mound.” Have the child at the plate give as many examples as he can in 10 seconds of persecution or suffering that he may have to endure when he becomes a Christian. If he cannot think of one, the team gets an “out,” and the next child comes up to the plate. If they get one, they get to move to first base. If they think of two, they get to move to second base, and so on. (The examples have to be sufficiently different to count.) After three outs, the other team gets a turn. The person(s) on base moves as many bases as the batter moves (e.g., if a person is on “second base” and the next batter gets one example, the person on second will move to third while the batter moves to first; if a person is on second and the next batter gets two examples, the person on second will go all the way “home” while the batter moves to second). Once a person reaches “home,” the team gets a point. When three outs are made, the bases are “cleared” of players.

- Alternate Ball Game: Make a baseball diamond as above, but let the pitcher ask the batter a question about this or previous lessons from this quarter. If the child misses the question, he’s “out,” and if he gets it right, he moves to first base.
- [“Following Jesus Matching Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Following Jesus Fill in the Blank and Matching Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Following Jesus Crossword Puzzle”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read:
  - February, 2013 issue of *Discovery* Magazine (Apologetics Press)
  - *A Patient Man from Uz*, by Kyle Butt, Apologetics Press
  - *Daniel and the Lions*, Arch Books, Larry Burgdorf (DISCLAIMER: Unlike cherubim, the angels in the story are not said to have had wings. Color in the wings to make them look like a rock.)

## SONGS:

### “ROLL THE GOSPEL CHARIOT” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown\*

Roll the gospel chariot along. (3X)  
And we won’t tag along, behind.

If a brother’s in the way, we will stop and pick him up. (3X)  
And we won’t tag along, behind.

If a sister’s in the way, we will stop and pick her up. (3X)  
And we won’t tag along, behind.

If a sinner’s in the way, we will stop and pick him up. (3X)  
And we won’t tag along, behind.

Roll the gospel chariot along. (3X)  
And we won’t tag along, behind.

**“I’M IN THE LORD’S ARMY”**

[See Internet for words and tune]

**“I’M A HARD FIGHTING SOLDIER ON THE BATTLEFIELD” ([Click to Hear](#))**

Author: Unknown\*

I’m a hard fighting soldier on the battlefield. (3X)

I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,  
By the service that I yield.

I’ve got a helmet on my head, in my hand a sword and shield. (3X)

I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,  
By the service that I yield.

You gotta walk right, talk right, sing right, pray right, on the battlefield. (3X)

I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,  
By the service that I yield.

If I die let me die in the service of my Lord, (3X)

I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,  
By the service that I yield.

\*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

\*\*\* IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.







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1 Peter 1:3-12



New Testament 4  
Part 2: Lessons from the Apostle Peter

## WEDNESDAY EVENING

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### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

1 Peter 1:3-12; 2:21; 3:8-18; 4:12-19; 5:7-9; Matthew 13:1-9,18-23; John 16:1-3

### MEMORY WORK:

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21b).

### SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY'S LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

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- “Summary of the Bible” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Felt figures or pictures of New Testament characters mentioned in lesson who faced persecution
- Pictures to illustrate point two on Lesson 11, Wednesday night

### PERSONAL APPLICATION:

If others mistreat me because I believe in Jesus, I can answer them with God's Word, and I can gain strength from God through prayer and from the help of others.



## INTRODUCTION:

- [N.T. 4 Bible Fact Flashcards](#) (provided under “N.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

## POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday morning’s lesson (see [N.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. The Christians who read Peter’s first letter were told to expect to suffer persecution, but Peter told them that they could rejoice because the bad times would not last forever (1:6). They might not be able to rejoice while surrounded by terrible trials, but they could rejoice as they looked ahead with hope and trusted in God.
3. Even though we are not yet mistreated in the United States today like the early Christians or like people in other countries, there may be times when others treat us badly because of our faith in Jesus. Are we willing to be teased and made fun of for following Jesus and behaving like He wants us to behave? Are we willing to be like the apostles who **rejoiced** “that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41)? Read Matthew 5:10.
4. Peter warned the Christians that the devil is roaming about trying to devour Christians. He encouraged them to resist the devil and his temptations, and be strong in faith, remembering that all Christians are brothers and sisters and all are enduring the same kinds of trials and tribulations everywhere (1 Peter 5:8-9). James encouraged Christians to be like the prophets who endured suffering with patience. As was the case with Job, James reminded his readers that God always “comes through” for the righteous (James 5:10-11).
5. Rather than complain about the suffering we will have as Christians, let’s have the attitude of Paul—read Philippians 4:11-13.

## PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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