

Title: “The Conscience of the Apologist”

Introduction: The over-arching premise of apologetics as Peter states it is biblical ethics. He frames the text in terms of good and evil. He begins with the importance of a good conscience, as the testimony of the apologist would be harmed. Also, Peter stated that if the apologist has a good name, it would be others that would be ashamed if all they could do is make false accusations of the apologist. Peter made the point that it would be God’s will that you (“suffer for doing well than for evil doing” V.17). This would be the same pattern as Christ who suffered for doing the ultimate good in this world, and for this world.

Propositional Question: If God values His glory over evil, shouldn’t we be willing to suffer for righteousness sake?

Text: I Peter 3:16-22 “Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”

CONTEXT:

Who: The epistle of II Peter was written by Peter.

What: Peter instructed the brethren to have a good conscience to be an apologist.

Where: The message was delivered to the Christians in local churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

When: The epistle of I Peter was written in 60 AD.

How: Peter the apologetics taught the brethren that biblical ethics.

INTERPRETATION:

Key theme: A pure conscience.

Key words: Conscience, evil, good, Christ, will of God, suffer, well doing, evil doing, souls, saved, answer.

Summary of the text: Peter discusses in this passage the eternal importance of holding to a biblical ethic. He frames the text around the concepts of good and evil, and makes the argument it is better to suffer for well doing than evil doing. He then makes the comparison to Christ, so to it may get a little easier to understand why evil happens. Peter referenced Noah and that only eight souls were saved. The concept Peter seems to be conveying is that God's glory, which includes righteousness is valued more than who or how many people responds to the Gospel. Peter finishes the text explaining that a good conscience is only possible because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Summary of the passage: The apologist must conduct his personal and public life with a good conscience. This passage which Peter is stating the importance of having a conviction of having biblical ethics. One outcome Peter explains is that when a biblical apologist is accused of anything all the shame would be on the one making the false accusations. Peter made the parallel between when we suffer unjustly and when Jesus suffered for our sins. Jesus' suffering brought Him to heaven.

Summary of the main verse: I Peter 3:16 "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." Peter charged the apologist with the obligation to have a good conscience, and that accusations would not stick to the one that is right with God and is living right with God. The argument made by Peter is that holding biblical ethics is tantamount to being a biblical apologist. The conscience and conversation (lifestyle) and that of being an apologist are one in the same.

APPLICATION:

Original audience: The brethren at Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

To myself: Holding my personal and public life to a biblical ethics, which gives my apologetic ministry to a higher standard.

To family: Holding a high biblical ethics in my life, and letting my life shine for God's glory.

To church: Churches need to teach classes on biblical ethics so Christians will know how to live right, and will have testimonies above reproach.

My job: For the Christian the marketplace is where one's biblical ethics will be tested. Do right.

To society: When the world sees Christians living biblical ethics an apologetic argument is won.