

1 Peter 3:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

Analysis

Peter acknowledges righteous suffering's reality. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye" (all' ei kai paschoite dia dikaiosynēn, makarioi). The conditional "if" acknowledges possibility, not certainty. Suffering "for righteousness' sake" means persecution for godly living and Christian faith. The surprising verdict: "happy" (makarioi, blessed)—echoing Jesus's beatitude (Matthew 5:10, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake"). Righteous suffering brings divine blessing, though painful presently. The command: "and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (ton de phobon autōn mē phobēthēte mēde tarachthēte), quoting Isaiah 8:12. Don't fear persecutors' threats or be disturbed by intimidation. Trust God, not human power.

Historical Context

First-century Christians faced real persecution—arrest, torture, execution. Peter's assurance that suffering for righteousness brings blessing seemed paradoxical but echoed Jesus's teaching. This wasn't masochism but eschatological perspective—present suffering yields eternal glory (Romans 8:18). The command not to fear quoted Isaiah's warning to Judah facing Assyrian invasion—trust God, not earthly powers. Early church martyrs exemplified this courage, dying joyfully because they believed Jesus's beatitude and expected heavenly reward. Their fearless deaths confounded Roman authorities and attracted converts impressed by supernatural courage.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How can righteous suffering be 'blessed' rather than merely tragic, and what eternal perspective enables this view?
2. What does it mean practically to 'not fear their terror' when facing persecution or severe opposition?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην μακάριοι τὸν
But G1487 G2532 ye suffer for righteousness' sake happy G3588
G235 G3958 G1223 G1343 G3107

δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ ταραχθῆτε
are ye and terror of their not afraid neither be troubled
G1161 G5401 G846 G3361 G5399 G3366 G5015

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

2 Corinthians 12:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

James 1:12 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Mark 10:29 (Parallel theme): And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

Mark 8:35 (Parallel theme): For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

Matthew 16:25 (Parallel theme): For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 19:29 (Parallel theme): And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

John 14:1 (Parallel theme): Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

John 14:27 (Parallel theme): Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Isaiah 51:12 (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;