

Background: This letter was addressed to Gentile Christians in northern Asia Minor (NW Turkey) at a time when these believers were experiencing persecution from their unbelieving Gentile neighbors. The pressure was also taking an internal toll on the Christian community.

Structure:

1.1-2, Greetings.

1.3-12: The significance of God's deeds in Christ.

1.13-2.10: The believing response to those deeds: exhortation to holiness of life.

2.11-4.6: The obligations laid upon Christians in times of suffering.

4.7-11: Call to be faithful stewards: an accounting will be made.

4.12-19: The message summarized.

5.1-14: Final exhortations and greetings.

Questions for discussion (taken in order of reading):

What divine purpose can be discerned when we believers suffer?

What (changed) condition exists in our being/nature because we are now deliberately living as Christians? What does God expect of us and what does faith make possible for us?

What is the event that has changed everything for us, and makes this new condition possible?

What still lies before us as Christians on a journey of personal spiritual maturation? What "develops" us as Christians?

How do we regard ourselves as believers existing in this mortal world?

How are believers to relate to secular authority?

React to the standards provided for wives and husbands. Consider them at that time and in our time. What do these instructions foster, if followed?

What is our posture ("state of readiness") to be as Christians in a world often hostile to what we believe?

What does suffering for The Faith give rise to in us if we continue to endure it?

What is the sole appropriate and acceptable standard for Christian life in (faith) community?

Other questions readers wish to raise: