Come back to 1Peter 4 and re-read verses 15 - 18. What do you think is the message of these verses?

How might verse 19 be both a comfort and a challenge to a Christian who suffers because of faith?

Study 7: Suffering

Reading: 1Peter 4:12 - 19

When you learn of Christians suffering because of their faith, what questions come into your mind?

<u>Read 1Peter 4:12 - 19:</u>

Why shouldn't we be surprised when we suffer?

According to these verses, what are some right and wrong ways for a Christian to suffer?

Is Peter speaking about any sort of suffering or a particular type of suffering?

What two reasons are there for rejoicing when we suffer in this way?

How is being insulted because of Christ evidence that God's Spirit is with us?

The term Christian is used only three times in the New Testament - here and in Acts 11:26 and 26:28. Used by outsiders, the word was probably a term of contempt, but by believers it meant "adopted into the family of Christ." Why might a Christian expect to sometimes encounter suffering because of that name?

In verse 17, the text says that their suffering as Christians indicates that it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God. This may sound a little strange to us, but not if we understand the background. Firstly, it is useful to know that everywhere else in the Bible where the phrase 'house of God' is used, it refers to the temple or tabernacle in which God dwells. Can you think where else in 1Peter Christians are referred to as a 'house'?

There are also some strong OT background:

Read Jeremiah 25:15 - 31. Where does God's judgment begin? To where does it spread?

Read Ezekiel 9, which is part of Ezekiel's vision of the idolatry taking place in the Jerusalem Temple. Why is God judging his people? Where does the judgment start?