

HOPEFUL

First Peter: Standing firm in the hope and encouragement of the grace of God

Lesson Title: The Triumphant Christ

Introduction:

This is the most troublesome section of Peter's first letter.

It is helpful to get an overview of the context.

We will make three observations that we help us understand these verses.

- **First**, these verses appear at the end of a chapter, but they are actually in the middle of a paragraph. In a paragraph there is a main subject that keeps the author on track. Peter takes the broad subject of suffering and distills it into one point: *blessings follow suffering for well-doing.*
- **Second**, Jesus alone is the focal point of verses 18-22.
- **Third**, up to this point Peter's train of thought seems to be following a logical progression. However, with verse 19 he veers in another direction. Two issues emerge! They are Christ's descent "*into hell*" and the baptism that "*now saves you*".

ISOLATING THE CENTRAL THEME

- A. ***"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."*** (v.18)
1. This verse encapsulates the gospel in the briefest of terms.
 2. Christ gives us access to God.
 3. If you wonder if unjust suffering can result in blessing, remember the cross.
- B. ***"Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him."*** (v.22)
1. This verse tells what Jesus is doing today.

2. Sitting at the right hand of God, He is interceding for us. (Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25)

C. Christ then is the central theme of this passage.

TWO IMPORTANT VERSES

A. ***“In which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”***
(vv.19-20)

1. We must determine who these “spirits” are.

- Genesis 6:1-6 Scene of depravity.
- These fallen angels were not drowned but were incarcerated.
- The place of incarceration is called “Tartarus”. This is not hell, but a kind of death-row holding cell.
- This helps us understand what the “spirits” and “prison” are.

2. Next, what about the “proclamation?”

- The word “proclamation” in the Greek is “***Kerusso***”.
- It is a term for heralding an announcement.
- It does not mean declaring the gospel – so Christ was not ministering to wicked spirits.
- Christ died and His spirit descended into the bowels of the earth – Tartarus.
- There He proclaimed His victory over death, over sin and over the power of Satan.
- All the attempts of demonic spirits to sabotage our salvation through the cross were nullified.

- The King triumphs over all His enemies. (Colossians 2:15 and 1 Corinthians 15).

B. ***“When the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water”.*** (v.20)

1. Peter is highlighting the symbolic significance of the flood for the believer.
2. The flood waters were waters of death and swallowed up the earth in judgment, but the same waters lifted the eight who were in the ark to safety.
3. This is a vivid picture of our salvation.
4. We see the pattern repeated often in the Old Testament.
 - In Exodus, Pharaoh commands his own mini flood of judgment.
 - Yet, God saves His people through Moses.
 - We see it again in the Red Sea experience.
5. Today we have another vivid and lovely picture of salvation: baptism.

C. ***“And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*** (v.21)

1. Corresponding to the symbolic picture of the ark.
2. Peter is saying, *“As the water in Noah’s day lifted up the ark and gave safety to those inside, so the waters of baptism symbolize salvation to those who are baptized.”*
3. The act of baptism does not save us, it just symbolizes the salvation that has already taken place.
4. Baptism is a potent sign of our salvation and of the world’s judgment, just as the deluge of waters in Noah’s day was a potent sign of the

world's judgment and of Noah's impending salvation through the very waters of judgement.

CHRIST REIGNS TRIUMPHANT

- A. ***“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him.”*** (vv.21-22)
- B. The King has saved His bride from death and through death.
- C. The King has gloried in His victory over His demonic rivals.
- D. The King has drowned His enemies in the waters of judgment, even as He saves His people through those waters.
- E. And now, the King has ascended to His throne to rule.
- F. This is the mega theme of Scripture.