

18*¶ For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, 20 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.21 ¶ 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, 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Our text begins with the most succinct statement concerning the cross work of Christ for His people, those whom Peter has described as aliens and strangers

2 who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood. 3 Who has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. On the cross of Calvary our Christ died once and for all for the sins of His people.

From his trials to his death, he bore the burden of our sin. He bore them through the beatings, he bore them through the ridicule, he bore them through the lash on his back, the nails in his wrists and feet, the sword in his side and the thorn of crowns on his head. He bore them as if he were a guilty man who had to pay the full penalty of the law even though he committed no crimes. He suffered and as Peter has been teaching in the letter - Christ is the model of suffering for believers in an unjust world. It is this kind of radical discipleship that is required of those who are blessed when they are persecuted because of Christ's sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven - and as Jesus showed no evil for evil or insult for insult we are to do the same as the previous part of the letter instructed.

He the just one and the only just one died for the unjust.

His death was not a reminder of sin on the day of Atonement. It was literally and effectively a death that paid for the sin of every one of His people. The Jewish celebration that very day with the blood of a sacrificial lamb being sprinkled on the altar and the mercy seat behind the veil was only a reminder of sin to the nation of Israel, whether a person was a genuine believer under the Old Covenant or just a

member of the covenant nation. It took the blood of Christ as the true Lamb of sacrifice to truly accomplish redemption and have blood applied that would satisfy God's wrath toward sinners for not one ounce of sacrificial blood from any other creature ever did anything but temporarily cover sin. But the blood of Christ washed away the sin and made his people pure and holy before God for Christ's sake.

He is the just one. And only Christ by the nature of being God and holy and righteous could ever die to bring forgiveness from God to His people. Only Christ could live the life that could pay the penalty for sin and bring reconciliation with God. And this is exactly what the blood of the cross did. There is no peace with God or peace from God if of one does not come to the cross and believe and repent. Without the washing of regeneration and God birthing a new heart in a person there is no salvation and there is no peace with God. There is only ultimate helplessness and hopelessness apart from Christ.

The cross is not a place where a good man died to set an example that good people will be mistreated but men should still strive to be good men and follow his example. No at the cross Jesus died at the hands of men who hated him and hated God and would go on to hate those who believed in him and so it is today. At the cross Jesus suffered the hatred of men and the wrath of God so that in all that suffering he could finally say "It is finished" in triumph and bring full and free redemption to those who were and would be his people.

Yes, Jesus the just died for the unjust so he could bring us to God, Peter says.

To bring us near to God as in coming into his presence boldly but not brazenly. For now because of the blood being shed by Christ our High Priest on the altar and the mercy seat of the cross the veil in the temple is rent, it is no longer a barrier between men and God. As the veil of Christ's own flesh was torn for us to spill the blood on the mercy seat we now have access to the throne of God. Now we are reconciled with God through Christ and we have freedom of access because we are seated in the heavenlies with Christ and in him we are before the throne of God.

Our text says he was put to death in the flesh.

Jesus did die like any man and the body and soul/spirit were disunited for a period of three days. Jesus did literally die on the cross, his lifeless body was laid in a tomb but his spirit was commended to the Father when he left this earthly life.

But he was made alive in the Spirit. He was raised from the dead by his own divine nature. He who said, "destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again".

He did it. He who is the Spirit of holiness he who is the eternal Spirit raised himself from the dead on the third day. He alone who had the power to lay down his life and have it accomplished at the hands of sinful men raised himself from the dead. The enemies of Christ could do no more than to put him to death in the flesh nor can they do anymore more than that to those who are Christ's. But as he raised himself he will also raise all those who are his not only into newness of life as pilgrims and aliens in a strange land for a short time but forever in his presence in his consummated kingdom. For we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now we come to a very difficult part of Peter's letter, one so difficult for some that even Martin Luther said he did not know what Peter meant in writing this.

Vs.19 "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*." 1 Peter 3:19, 20, NAS95.

The first thing we have to discern is how Jesus went and made this proclamation and who are the spirits in prison.

It might be that, at face value, this message was proclaimed between the time of Jesus physical death and his physical resurrection while he was alive in his Spirit condition.

Did Jesus go to preach to spirits, spirit beings, now at the time of his death during the three days before his resurrection and they are in prison who were alive in Noah's day or did Jesus in the Spirit, His same eternal Spirit preach to some spirits in Noah's day

who are now in prison (ie.hell awaiting final judgement)) who were once disobedient while Noah preached under the direction of the Holy Spirit who is the Eternal Spirit? If this is the case, then who are the spirits? Does this mean spirit beings or the spirits of men. Had God ever preached to spirit beings to bring them to repentance? No. Are our spirits made alive when God regenerates us and brings us to repentance and faith? Yes. His Spirit speaks to my spirit that I am a child of God, Paul writes to the Romans.

So Christ as the Eternal Spirit preached through Noah.

But, the words He went in vs 19 and having gone in vs 22 are the same words in the greek and show a progression between a period of time. So if Jesus went to preach while absent from his body before the resurrection who did he preach to? If they are spirit beings in prison who are the fallen angels in Gen 6:1-8, and also referred to in 2 Peter 2:4-10 and Jude 6, then what was the message? This would be related to vs 22 of our text. His message was an assertion to them that they are subject to him and his judgement and this would be an encouragement to those who would be suffering persecution. It would be comforting to realize that all authorities whether spiritual powers or human that would oppose God's purpose through his people are in and will be in submission to Christ. In other words they have already lost their war, their resistance was futile and it is futile for any to oppose the purpose of God, whether spirit or man, because it ends in judgement.

I believe either of these two views may be correct. Both correspond with what follows in verse 20. There is not room for a dogmatic conclusion here only a preference.

v20 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, 21* ¶ 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,

In either of the above cases, each "spirit: was disobedient during Noah's days

God was demonstrating patience with all mannerr of sin and rebellion whether from spritual beings or men during the time of the Ark's construction. A remnant of humanity, pictured by Noah's family, which numbered eight, safely made it through

the water.

Water here is significant for two reasons. First it is the means of judgement brought by God to the world and second it is the means by which the Ark floats to safety.

The water was the instrument of judgement and the instrument of salvation.

And here regarding salvation Peter sees the symbolism of the salvation pictured by the water as a parallel to baptism. But what do we mean by baptism. Do we mean baptism upon our profession of faith in Jesus Christ? Does water baptism save me from my sin? No! Does it picture the reality of my salvation in dying and being raised into newness of life in Christ, yes it does.

So why would Peter use it as a picture of salvation with language that makes it seem as though we are saved by baptism?

To begin with he has Christ in mind as he does all through the letter.

Noah's family had to pass through the waters of judgement to be saved. This was done in the Ark and on the water.

We too must pass through the "waters of judgement" to use the symbol of Noah's day but our Ark is Jesus Christ. Jesus said this,

Lu 12:50 "But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished

Mr 10:39 They said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.

Jesus baptism was his death on the cross. There he endured the wrath of God for his people to bring them before God as we already studied. I am crucified with Christ, Paul wrote. At the cross those who are Christ's entered into that judgement and death in Christ. Jesus' death is the means of cleansing from sin and provides our entering into a new life just like Moses did in the Ark on the water. The water was judgement and salvation. Christ's death for his people was judgement and salvation - O what a glorious Savior we have.

Peter makes it very clear that baptism has nothing to do with an outward ceremonial ritual, particularly familiar to Jews of his day. There is nothing magical in water baptism in and of itself. But the picture of cleansing is meant to show the inward cleansing done by Christ as we were baptized with him at the cross.

And here we can look to other Scripture as well:

Tit 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. NASB 95

Ro 6:4* Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. NASB 95

Col 2:12* having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. NASB 95

Because of Christ's resurrection we can appeal to God, we have a good conscience meaning we know our sins are forgiven because we have "been baptized" in Christ and benefit from the resurrection power of Christ to live in a manner that is worthy of the Lord. Our conscience is purified (cleansed) by faith because of Christ. We can approach God because Christ has brought us into his presence.

We have the assurance that Christ is at the right of God in full power and authority over every created thing. We know that every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. All things have been subjected to Christ. He won the victory over sin and death.

So we can take some time to apply all of this with the thought of who am I in the resurrection.

I will be satisfied. Satisfied with Christ and Christ alone and the fullness of His power, His majesty, His love, His gifts, His glory and His purposes. These things, none of which are temporal and only lead to a short lived happiness, will never be exhausted for me, and therefore I will be *satisfied*, eternally in the presence of MY Redeemer.

Let us consider the ravages of death and the wonder of resurrection.

At times, God has used armies of locusts and caterpillars as the hordes of death, and once our bodies are in the grave, death's army includes the worms, and rightly so, for when we are buried in the earth we then enter into their dwelling place as uninvited guests.

The outer skin, the wall of our physical fortress, is done away with. All physical beauty is defaced, and marred. All is spoiled. Where is beauty and glamour now?

Death is common to all men and all men are made common in death.

In physical death, there is no difference between a president and a prostitute, a prince or a pauper, a wise man or an illiterate man, an athlete or a lame man. In physical death we are all reduced to a handful of chemicals and minerals. The veins, which were rivers of life, are dried up. The work of the curse of sin devastates that which lies in the grave.

As believers in Christ we should not desire for it to be any other way. This is God's decree, this is His eternal purpose and plan. Do not try to avoid what God has prepared. It is not gloomy. See the result of what God has promised for those who are alive in Christ. The promised resurrection of the believer in Christ is the miracle of miracles. The same power that first made man from the dust of the earth shall now resurrect man from wherever he is.

What was me in a physical sense, may be scattered as a million atoms and particles bound up in any number of ways with the rest of God's creation. But at the sound of the trumpet on that great day of God raising us up to Himself for His glory, I will be, you will be, miraculously gathered together and I will know it is me. I will have my eyes, my hands, my feet, my tongue, my ears even as Jesus had His when He rose from the grave and was recognized by the marks of the nails in his wrists and feet and the sword in His side. All my members which had been used at one time or another to work the works of unrighteousness will now do nothing but eternally give God all the glory that is due Him, my Christ my Jesus, my Redeemer. And yet I will be different, because then my body will live forever, and never know the grave again.

Should we be surprised that this is our future, when God has already raised Christ and He is the first born from the dead and the pattern for all of us in resurrected glory. Jesus is the hope of our resurrection. We have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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