**1 Peter: The Glorious Outcome of Christ’s Sufferings, Pt 2**

1 Peter 3:19-22

**Context**

**1 Peter 3:18-22**—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.

Peter wants these beloved of God to understand the blessings of the finished work of Christ and that His suffering gives them hope as they suffer.

It was in Christ’s darkest hour of death that He experienced His greatest triumph.  The point for them and us is that we face unjust suffering (even in extremes), God can provide a glorious outcome as He accomplishes His holy purpose in our lives.

**The Suffering of Christ accomplished our Salvation**

1. **It was crucial**

**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

1. **It was for sin**

**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

1. **It was once for all**

**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

1. **It was vicarious**

**18a**For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God

1. Vicarious—acting or done for another; a vicarious atonement
	1. The just for the unjust
	2. The righteous for the unrighteous
	3. The sinless for the sinful
2. An eternal God making a once for all sacrifice to atone for sin
	1. God’s eternal Son offering Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin through His atonement and thereby securing eternal redemption
	2. In contrast to a finite being offering an eternal atonement for his own sin and it never satisfying God’s righteous requirement
3. Christ was the only One who could atone for sins

**2 Corinthians 5:21**—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1. Christ willingly laid down His life

**John 10:15-18**—even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. **16**I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. **17**For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. **18**No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

* 1. In accord with His Father’s plan
	2. Done before the foundation of the world

**Acts 2:23**—this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

**Acts 4:27-28**—For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28**to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

**Acts 13:27-29**—For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. **28**And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. **29**When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb.

**2 Timothy 1:9**—who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity

**Revelation 13:8**—All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

1. Peter wants us to understand the practical nature of such a substitutionary suffering of the Savior
	1. It illustrates that such extreme affliction and injustice resulted in a supreme triumph
	2. The most heinous thing possible (the creature killing the Creator) brings about eternal salvation to the very ones that are killing Him
	3. If such a victory occurred with the greater, we too (as the lesser) can be encouraged in our unjust suffering
2. **18b** So that He might bring us to God
	1. Christ brings us to God
	2. He provides the way—the only way
	3. Symbolically illustrated by the temple veil torn at the death of Christ

**Matthew 27:51**—And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.

* 1. As royal priests now of God (**2:9**), we have access to God and can enjoy His presence

**2:9**—But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, A holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

**Hebrews 4:16**—Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Hebrews 10:19-22**—Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20**by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21**and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22**let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

* 1. Bring us (prosagō)—to lead, to bring; to open a way of access, for one to God; to render one acceptable to God[[1]](#footnote-1)
		1. Jesus introduces us to the Father
		2. In ancient courts certain officials controlled access to the king. They verified someone’s right to see him and then introduced that person to the monarch.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Hebrews 6:19-20**—This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, **20**where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

1. **It was proclaimed**

**18b**…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, **20a**who once were disobedient

1. Christ did experience death
	1. His physical death came at the hands of the Roman soldiers
	2. There are those who claim that He never died but fainted into a coma
	3. The historical accounts tell us otherwise

**John 19:31-35**—Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. **32**So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; **33**but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. **34**But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. **35**And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

1. Although dead in the flesh, He was alive in the spirit
	1. This is a reference to Jesus’ eternal inner person[[3]](#footnote-3)
	2. Christ was spiritually alive although His fleshly body was dead
	3. His eternal spirit has always been alive
	4. That would change in three days
	5. He committed His spirit to His Father at His death

**Luke 23:46**—And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” Having said this, He breathed His last.

* 1. Christ is eternal life itself

**1 John 5:20**—And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

**John 11:25-26**—Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, **26**and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”

* 1. His death was a kind of spiritual death
		1. Not the cessation of existence
		2. But a separation from His Father

**Matthew 27:46**—About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

* + 1. At that time, God placed on Him the full wrath was unleashed for the sins of man
		2. Judgement came

**2 Corinthians 5:21**—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Galatians 3:10-13**—For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.” **11**Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.” **12**However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.” **13**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”

**Hebrews 9:28**—so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

For that brief time, Christ’s experience paralleled the condition of unbelievers who live, paradoxically, in spiritual death (separation from God) in this life and face divine judgment in physical death.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Daniel 12:2**—Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

**Matthew 25:41**—“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

**John 3:36**—He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

* 1. While His physical body lay in the tomb, His living spirit was busy
1. He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison
	1. He went (poreuō[[5]](#footnote-5)) to another place in the same way v22 says “having gone into heaven” at the ascension
	2. Jesus purposefully went to an actual place to make a triumphant announcement to captive beings before He arose on the third day[[6]](#footnote-6)
	3. His message was not evangelistic so as to convert
	4. He preached or heralded His triumph over sin
		1. In ancient times, military triumphs would be celebrated with great pomp as they entered the city heralding their victory
		2. Victory over sin

**Romans 5:18-19**—So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. **19**For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

**Romans 6:5-6**—For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, **6**knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.

* + 1. Victory over death

**Romans 6:9-10**—knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. **10**For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

**1 Corinthians 15:54-55**—But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. **55**O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

* + 1. Victory over Satan

**Genesis 3:15**—And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

**Colossians 2:15**—When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

**Hebrews 2:14**—Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil

**1 John 3:8**—the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

* 1. The message was to the spirits
		1. Not to humans but to fallen angels
		2. Since the fall of Satan and the demons, there has been an ongoing conflict

(Cf. **Job 1-2; Daniel 10:13**)

**Zechariah 3:1**—Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him

**Ephesians 6:11**—Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

**Revelation 16:12-14**—The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. **13**And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; **14**for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

* + 1. There were repeated attempts by Satan to assault God and attempt to thwart His plan
			1. He inducing Adam and Eve in the garden to fall into sin (**Gen 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-14**)
			2. His demons cohabitated with women so as to corrupt the human race (**Gen 6:1-4**)
			3. He attempted genocide of the Jews during the time of Esther (**Est 3:1-4:3**)
			4. He attempted to destroy the Messianic line in the time of Joash (**2 Chron 22:10-12**)
			5. Killing all the male children two years and under in an attempt to kill the Messiah through Herod (**Matt 2:16-18**)
			6. He enticed Christ to abandon His mission through the temptations (**Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13**)
			7. He incited the Jewish leaders and the mob to cry for the blood of Jesus (**Matt 27:22**)
		2. If the demons were celebrating their victory over Christ’s death and burial, it would have been short lived
		3. The profound and permanent disappointment for them that they had been fully and completely defeated
1. The spirits who received the message were in prison
	1. This is an actual place of incarceration; not merely a condition
	2. There are free to roam demons and bound demons
	3. Under our current situation, we deal with unbound demonic forces

**Ephesians 6:12**—For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

* + 1. Those forces are controlled by their ruler—Satan
		2. They are actively and freely doing their dastardly deeds on earth
	1. The recipients of Christ’s message was not to unbound spirits but to those bound in prison
		1. Referred to as the bottomless pit or “the pit of the abyss”

**Revelation 9:1-2**—Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. **2**He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

* + 1. In Revelation, it is referenced seven times and always referring to the abode of incarcerated demons
		2. Satan himself will be bound there for 1000 years

**Revelation 20:1-3**—Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **2**And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; **3**and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

* + 1. God has sovereignly chosen to place certain evil spirits in this place

**2 Peter 2:4**—For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment

* + 1. These are the worst of the worst

Because of the heinousness of their sin, God has imprisoned certain fallen angels in such a place of severest torment and isolation. They remain in that place, awaiting their sentencing to final punishment in the eternal lake of fire.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Revelation 20:10**—And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

**Jude 6-7**—And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, **7**just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

1. Spirits now in prison…who once were disobedient…in the days of Noah
	1. These are demons who cohabitated with human women
	2. There is still fear of demons being sent to this place

**Luke 8:26-33**—Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. **27**And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. **28**Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.” **29**For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert. **30**And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. **31**They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.**32**Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. **33**And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

* 1. The reason they were bound was because of their actions during the time of Noah
		1. Peter does not give further explanation which likely implies that the reader would have understood and known the story

**Genesis 6:1-4**—Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, **2**that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. **3**Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” **4**The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

* + 1. God had given his requirements for marriage (v**1**)
		2. The demons assaulted His plan by attempting to corrupt marriage and had a wicked influence on following generations
		3. Which in part is why God judged the entire world by wiping out the whole of humanity less 8 persons

**Genesis 6:5-7**—Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. **6**The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. **7**The Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”

**Genesis 6:11-13**—Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. **12**God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. **13**Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

1. **It was salvific**

**20b**…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

1. **It was victorious**

**22**who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

**Conclusion**

As the blessed recipients of such amazing grace, we are grateful that while we were without any hope, He gave Himself for us.

**Romans 5:6**—For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

**Colossians 2:13-14**—When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, **14**having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Through God’s providential sovereign hand working, He uses even persecution to bring about His perfect plan.

**2 Corinthians 2:14**—But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

**Source**

Most of the message and notes come from:

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R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude

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John MacArthur, The Triumph of Christ’s Suffering, Pt 2, 1 Peter 3:18-20, Oct 15, 1989, gty.org

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1. Strong’s G4317 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. MacArthur, 207-208. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. MacArthur, 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid, 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Strong’s G154 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid, 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid, 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)