**1 Peter: The Glorious Outcome of Christ’s Sufferings, Pt 4**

1 Peter 3:18-22

**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.  In a parallel way, we look to Christ and learn from His example. In our times of difficulty, persecution and unjust treatment, do not despair. We will overcome if we persevere and respond in the same way as our Savior. He will bring beauty out of ashes.

**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. **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. *He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison*
   1. Jesus purposefully went to an actual place to make a triumphant announcement to captive beings before He arose on the third day[[1]](#footnote-2)
   2. He preached or heralded His triumph over sin
   3. The message was to *the spirits*
      1. Since the fall of Satan and the demons, there has been an ongoing conflict
      2. There were repeated attempts by Satan to assault God and attempt to thwart His plan
      3. If the demons were celebrating their victory over Christ’s death and burial, it would have been short lived
      4. The profound and permanent disappointment for them that they had fully and completely defeated
2. The spirits who received the message were *in prison*
   1. This is an actual place of incarceration

Angels

**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. The recipients of Christ’s message were those bound in prison
     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.[[2]](#footnote-3)

**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. The reason they were bound was because of their actions during the time of Noah

**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. The demons assaulted His plan by attempting to corrupt marriage and had a wicked influence on following generations
    2. 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.”*

* 1. Angels are not given to marriage in heaven

[**Matthew 22:3**](https://ref.ly/Matt%2022.30;nasb95?t=biblia)**0**—*For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

* + 1. Angels left their proper abode
    2. They came down to earth to make union with the daughters of women
    3. They could not make union with themselves and so they took on some male human form (human bodies) and endeavored to corrupt the human stream
  1. In demonic activity (Satan worship, occult, demonism) it always involves ungodly, deviant unions.

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. God was patient in the days of Noah

**Genesis 6:5**—*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.*

* 1. Demonstrated by 120 years of waiting
  2. The construction of the ark was an object lesson not to be ignored—only revealing man’s wickedness and deception
  3. Noah was only in the ark a little over a year
  4. It was a period of grace even in the face of gross sinfulness

**Genesis 6:3**—*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.”*

* 1. God is grieved and determines that He will blot out man whom He created
  2. Noah was a preacher or righteousness

**2 Peter 2:5**—*and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly*

* + 1. He was obedient to God in building the ark
    2. He preached a message of righteousness
    3. He spoke of a coming judgment through a worldwide flood
    4. And offered a way of deliverance
    5. Even all this warning left them unmoved[[3]](#footnote-4)
  1. It was only Noah’s family (Noah, his wife, 3 boys and their wives) who were spared and *brought safely through the water*

1. Corresponding to that baptism now saves you
   1. Corresponding to that is used to indicate a symbol or analogy of a spiritual truth

**Hebrews 8:3 5a**—*For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer…****5a****who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things…*

* + 1. The ark serves as an analogy on God’s provision of salvation
    2. God preserved Noah and his family while the rest of mankind perished
    3. Those who believe God and act on it are safely brought through God’s judgment of sinners
  1. *Baptism now saves you*
     1. Some have misinterpreted this to refer to spiritual salvation by water baptism (baptismal regeneration)
     2. That would be completely incongruent with the rest of scripture
     3. *Baptism* (baptisma)—immersion, submersion[[4]](#footnote-5)

Peter here uses baptism to refer to a figurative immersion into Christ as the ark of safety that will sail over the holocaust of judgment on the wicked.[[5]](#footnote-6)

* + 1. They were not only immersed in a flood, but in the divine judgment that came upon the whole earth
    2. All the while protecting them through it
    3. Analogous to what Christ does for those who trust Him

**2 Peter 3:10-13**—*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.* ***11****Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,****12****looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!****13****But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*

1. Not the removal of dirt from the flesh
   1. Peter wants the reader to understand that he’s not talking about water baptism
   2. He additionally makes that clear with the rest of the passage

A little reflection makes it immediately clear that the water would have destroyed Noah and his family, not saved them, if they had not been in the ark. The flood, which killed the rest of mankind, became the intermediary means of deliverance when it lifted the ark.[[6]](#footnote-7)

1. *An appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*
   1. It is a dry baptism that saves, not a wet one
   2. Dead to our sin, but alive to God through the resurrection (down and up)

**Romans 10:9-10**—*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;****10****for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

The ark passing safely through the flood provides a figure of God's method of saving men out inevitable judgment.  First, God delayed the Day of Judgment long enough for an ark to be prepared. Then the souls that went into the ark did not avoid the judgment, rather in the ark they were saved through the very water which drowned others and because of it they thus passed out of the old world into a new world.  When they emerged from the ark, they literally found that old things had passed away and all things had become new.  The figure is fulfilled in Christ.  He was prepared of God to come in the fullness of time.  The judgment due to sin and sinners was meanwhile delayed. Then the judgment fell on Him as the flood waters upon the ark.  When sinners take refuge in Him, they do not avoid the judgment due to sin, they are saved through its falling on Christ and because of it instead of meeting their own doom they are brought safe in Him to God.[[7]](#footnote-8)

1. Additional analogy
   1. Noah and his family died to the old world from which they came
   2. They entered a post flood world—a new life
   3. That is not unlike the newness we have in Christ after regeneration
      1. We have died to our old selves—our old world
      2. We are made alive in God and enter the body of Christ

**Romans 7:4-6**—*Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.****5****For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.****6****But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

(Cf. **Galatians 2:19-20; Ephesians 4:20-24**)

**Romans 6:3-4**—*Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?****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.*

1. *…but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*
   1. Appeal—an enquiry, a question, a demand; earnestly seeking, craving[[8]](#footnote-9)
   2. One must make an appeal to God to meet His divine requirements as a condition of God placing one safely on the ark
   3. There is a craving for a good (cleansed) conscience
   4. That craving includes repentance and faith

**Romans 2:4-5**—*Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?****5****But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*

* 1. This is the heart of the gospel: craving for spiritual cleansing that comes through the shed blood of our savior—the Lord Jesus Christ.
     1. Repentance of sin
     2. A plea for God’s forgiveness
     3. The removal of the guilt and shame
     4. Trusting in His finished work
     5. The Holy Spirit baptizing us into Christ
     6. The sinner being brought safely into our eternal home

1. This is a pledge of victory for the Christian in the face of persecution
2. **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.*

1. Christ is seated at the right hand of God
   1. Preeminence
   2. Authoritative
   3. Place of honor

**Philippians 2:9-11**—*For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,****10****so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,****11****and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**Hebrews 1:3-6**—*And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,****4****having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.* ***5****For to which of the angels did He ever say, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? And again, “I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me”?* ***6****And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”*

(Cf. **Acts 5:31; 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 10:12; 12:2**).

1. He is in heaven

**Acts 1:9-11**—*And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.****10****And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.****11****They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”*

1. He is a merciful High Priest on our behalf

**Hebrews 6:20***—where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

**Hebrews 7:25***—Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

**Hebrews 9:24***—For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

1. His authority is over angels and powers
   1. Satan and demons

**Genesis 19:1***—Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.*

**Romans 8:38***—For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers* ***39****nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Ephesians 3:10***—so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.*

**Jude 6***—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.*

* 1. They are subject to Him as a result of the cross

**Ephesians 1:19-21**—*and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might****20****which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,****21****far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*

* 1. *Subjected* (hypotassō)—to arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection[[9]](#footnote-10)
  2. He is supreme over all including all spiritual beings

1. The death He died for sinners was an act of grace

**Acts 15:11***—But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.*

**Romans 5:15***—But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.*

**Ephesians 1:7***—In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace*

**Titus 2:11***—For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men*

* 1. The salvation provided does not apply to fallen angels
  2. They could only listen in dismay
  3. Even holy angels can only marvel but never fully understand

**1 Peter 1:12**—*It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.*

**Conclusion**

As we look at the unjust suffering that we endure in this life, we need to allow God to change our perspective and see it as a path to greater Christlikeness. He endured far more unjust suffering yet through it was victorious. May God grant us the strength and resolve to see His purposes and objectives over the struggles we face.

**Romans 8:17**—*and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

**2 Timothy 2:10***—For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.*

**Philippians 1:29***—For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.*

**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:

Richard W. DeHaan, Good News for Bad Times: 1 Peter

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

John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Peter

John MacArthur, The Triumph of Christ’s Suffering, Pt 3, 1 Peter 3:20-22, Oct 22, 1989, gty.org

Jerome H Smith, The New Treasure of Scripture Knowledge

# Allan Stibbs, The First Epistle General of Peter (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

1. MacArthur, 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Ibid, 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Lenski, 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Strong’s G908 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. MacArthur,207. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. DeHaan, pp104-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Stibbs. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Strong’s G1906 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Strong’s G5293 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)