

Another Saving Ark (Part 2)

I Peter 3:17-22

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we will be reading from I Peter Chapter 3 verses 17-22.

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Peter 3:17-22 (NASB)

¹⁷ For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. 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.

Prayer

Last week we learned that man in his natural state is sinful. Because of our sin, we were told that there was another flood coming.

Who can remember what the next FLOOD will be?

It is not another flood with water, but a flood of wrath! There is a gap between man and God that we cannot cross.

ILLUSTRATION:

It would be easier for us to jump across the Grand Canyon than for man in his natural state to enter into the presence of God. It cannot happen.

God is a holy and righteous God who in His nature is not even tempted by sin. God is Holy and hates sin with all of His being. Sin is completely outside the realm of God. That is why as a righteous judge, He cannot allow sin to be left unpunished.

We are infiltrated with sin and it is impossible for us to make ourselves sinless. If we remain in our state of sin, we will have to face God's wrath when Christ comes again.

I need to remind you that Peter is not writing to lost people. He is writing to a church who is undergoing persecution. So he wants to remind them of the purpose of Christian suffering. Peter tells us that it is critical that we suffer persecution for doing what is right

instead of avoiding persecution and doing what is wrong. In fact, we should consider it a blessing when we are persecuted for doing good because we will, in the end, be rewarded for it. He is telling them this, not specifically on how to win the lost, but to remind them of what Christ has done for them and explain how they received that hope.

Peter begins to compare God's wrath to the flood in Noah's day.

1 Peter 3:20 (NASB)

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.

In these verses Peter recounts the story of Noah and the flood. God looked at the wickedness of mankind and He was sorry that He had made man. He then prepared to destroy the earth with a flood. But a man named Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God then instructed him to build an Ark. For 120 years Noah was faithful to preach and to build this ark. Eventually God flooded the world and all the wicked people drowned. Only 8 souls made it onto the boat and were saved from the flood waters. Those 8 souls were delivered and given victory. Everyone else died. Peter calls them "*those that were disobedient*". For 120 years the Holy Spirit spoke through Noah. He warned the people to stop their wicked behavior. But they would not obey God, so they died in the flood.

BODY:

I. THERE IS ANOTHER SAVING ARK.

God is a holy God that hates sin with all of His being, but He is also a God of grace and mercy. In Noah's day He delivered a flood because of His wrath, but He was also gracious and provided an ark to save. He was long suffering and gave 120 years warning for people to get in the ark and be saved!

So too today. As man awaits the coming flood of God's wrath and God's judgment, He has provided an ark that saves.

1 Peter 3:18a (NASB)

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;

ILLUSTRATION:

Imagine someone walks into the service this morning. They take out a grenade, pull the pin, and tosses it into the center of the aisle. Most of us would respond almost by reflex by diving away from the grenade. But imagine one person, instead of diving away from the grenade, dives on the grenade. When the grenade explodes, they absorb all of its fury and force saving us.

That is what Christ in essence has done for us as to the wrath of God. The wrath is there and He has dove upon it and absorbed it all for me and for you. W deserve the grenade, but He has dove upon it. On the cross He took the explosion of God's wrath.

1 Peter 2:24 (NASB)

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Jesus bore our sins! Because of His selfless act, all of our sin has been lifted from us and When God looks at us, despite all of the sin that we have done, He sees a RIGHTEOUS person!

Through Christ's death on the cross, by jumping upon God's wrath in our place, He has satisfied God's wrath fully for all whose sin was placed upon Him.

Peter next takes the story of Noah's flood and makes an analogy about baptism.

1 Peter 3:21 (NASB)

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,

Peter points to baptism as a picture or illustration of what he is talking about. We know that he is not pointing to the physical act of baptism as being able to save in itself. There are a few reasons why we know that.

1. It would contradict the rest of scripture. Even Peter tries to give us some clarification here. He continues, "**not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience**".

This is not just another Jewish ritual where you go and clean your hands. This is something deeper. It is not the outward acts, but it is the inward good conscience that saves. It is having our conscience cleared knowing that our sins were paid for by Christ. Then he adds again, not through the water but through the resurrection.

When Christ rose from the dead, it was a miracle. Miracles were done to confirm that what Jesus had taught was from God. The message that was being confirmed was that the wrath of God had been absorbed completely by Christ for our sake.

When we have a baptismal service, the person stands in the water and he is immersed into it. We are taught that he is buried in the likeness of Christ in death and raised to walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:3-7 (NASB)

3 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. 5 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; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

The baptism that saves occurs when we are spiritually being united to Christ in His death so that our sin and our old self **is on the cross and dies with Jesus**. So when Christ died our sin was absorbed by Him and our old man was crucified with Him. We are also told that we are also being spiritually united with Him in His resurrection. When we are raised out of the baptismal waters, we are born again into a new life of righteousness freed from our sin. Baptism is the **time and place** when we are buried with Christ and raised into a newness of life. But Christ is **means** by which we are saved.

ILLUSTRATION:

Let's say you come home and it's dark and you want light. So, you go to the switch on the wall and flip it and wah-lah you have LIGHT!

What is the **means** of that light coming on? ELECTRICITY.

Electricity is running through the wires and when you flip the switch it causes the light bulb to generate light. The **time** that the light comes on is when the switch is flipped. The **place** that the light is generated is at the light bulb. The **means** by which it happens is electricity.

What if you come home and flip the switch and nothing happens?

It could mean many things. Maybe you didn't pay the electricity bill! Let's assume you examine the light fixture and you discover that someone has removed the light bulb.

The light bulb is not the means by which the light comes. It is electricity. But, if you do not have a light bulb, you are still not going to get any light. Of course, the opposite is true also. If the light bulb is good and screwed into the light socket, but there is no electricity, you are still not going to get light. In other words, there is more than one kind of condition necessary in order to generate light.

Faith is like the electricity. Faith is the **means** by which we are going to get into the Kingdom. But we still have to come to the **place** (the switch) and **time** (when the switch is flipped) when God says He will open the door for us.

Faith is the **means** of our salvation. We are not saved by the waters of baptism. We are saved by faith in Christ. Baptism is the **time and place** (or the where and when) our salvation is achieved.

It is important to note that there is nothing magical about the baptismal water. Just being immersed into water without faith will not save you. You must also have the faith that Jesus died for you. This will result in a changed life pleasing to God. The important part is that baptism is a commandment that is required in the scriptures. If we love God, we will keep His commandments.

II Kings 5 talks about a king named Naaman who had leprosy who went to Elisha to be cured.

2 Kings 5:10-14 (NASB)

¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and *you will be clean.*" ¹¹ But Naaman was furious and went away and said, "Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.'¹² Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. ¹³ Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you *to do some great thing, would you not have done it?* How much more *then*, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.

When Naaman chose not to wash in the Jordan seven times, he went away **MAD and with all of his leprosy**. It was only when he obeyed that the leprosy went away. The Jordan river did not cleanse him, the water was not miraculous. It was God. It just required an humbling act of obedience to be cured.

Understand the picture here. We have to be **in Christ** because He has to take our wrath. Our sin has to be with Christ on the cross. We also have to be in Christ because we have to be raised not in and of ourselves but in Him and given His righteousness.

The picture of baptism is being united with Him.

Jesus Christ is the ark that saves!

Let me ask you this morning, "Are you in the ark that saves?"

There is only one way of salvation from God's coming wrath and that is Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:12 (NASB)

¹² And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Looking at the ark, **knowing** there is an ark, or **believing** that there is an ark does not save anybody. You must be **IN** the ark!

The scripture makes it clear that we enter into the ark of Jesus Christ through faith at the time of baptism. We turn in repentance from our sin and we believe in His atoning work and we are entered into Christ, we are united with Him in His death and resurrection.

Ephesians 2:8 (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;*

There is a coming flood, but God in His grace and mercy has provided an ark in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

There is one final thing I want us to note briefly.

II. THERE IS DELIVERANCE FROM THE FLOOD THROUGH CHRIST'S VICTORY.

1 Peter 3:18-19 (NASB)

...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,

Christ "made proclamation to the spirits now in prison."

There are many interpretations of this little sentence.

- Some think it refers to Christ through His spirit preaching through Noah while the ark was being built.
- Some think that the scripture is telling us that between the time of Christ's death and His resurrection, Christ, in His spirit, went into Hades and preached the Gospel to people giving them a second chance.
- I believe what Peter is saying here is that Christ has proclaimed His victory over Satan and his fallen angels through His resurrection and ascension.

The scriptures do not say that it was the Gospel that was preached, but the victory that was proclaimed.

The ascension back to the Father's right hand was a statement of victory over evil fallen angels.

There seems to be a chronological progression that we see.

- Death in the flesh.
- Made alive in the spirit.
- Went and proclaimed His victory.

If we look at verse 22, it seems to say the same thing.

1 Peter 3:22 (NASB)

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

Understand that since the fall of Satan, Satan and his fallen angels has attempted to destroy God's creation. Particularly, man, who was created in God's image to take them with them. In the Garden of Eden, they got man to sin and our image was corrupted. And as Christ was crucified, they sought to stop God's plan of redeeming people. But when they thought they had won the victory, Christ arose. And as He ascended to the right hand of Father, He declared that when you thought you were getting the victory, I was magnifying my glory and my grace and my wisdom. I won! I have redeemed the people from every tribe, every tongue, and every nation to myself.

CHRIST HAS PROCLAIMED HIS VICTORY!

CONCLUSION:

Again, I want to ask. Are you in the ark? For if you are not in the ark, a flood of wrath is coming and you have no protection.

BELIEVE and enter the ark!

Can you see the picture of the ark? Understand that as a believer in Christ, you are in the ark and you are safe!

1 Peter 1:5 (NASB)

⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- We are in the ark even now and that ark is protecting us TODAY through this life.
- When we enter into the next life before the throne of God in judgment we can have assurance that our name is in the Book of Life.
- We have eternity with Christ in heaven **which is assured!**
- Put that in perspective. The persecution will last for a few moments, but I am secure!
- I am in the ark!
- I am saved from the wrath of God.

THAT IS HOPE!

It gives us hope because it reminds us that God is a God of justice!

- "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." Rom. 12:19
- "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked!" Gal. 6:7
- "Whatsoever a man sows, that will he also reap." Gal. 6:7

So if you are being persecuted and you are suffering for righteousness sake, you have the assurance that you are in the ark and you are eternally safe. Plus you know that their persecution will not go unpunished.

Justice will be done. God's wrath will come upon evil. You can trust God's sovereign righteousness that He will bring about justice.

Peter says, be encouraged. The ark of Jesus Christ is here. You have entered into it and you will be safe when God's flood of righteousness comes to cleanse the earth just as the flood of water did in Noah's day.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

God be with You.