



VII. THE EXAMPLE OF THE EXHORTATION (1 Peter 3:18-22)

A. Christ's Suffering (1 Peter 3:18-20)

1. The purpose of His suffering (1 Peter 3:18)
 - a. The completeness of His suffering—"For Christ also hath ONCE suffered"
 - (1) The doctrinal point
 - a) The Old Testament sacrificial system was put in place to show a pattern of things in the heavens, albeit with lesser and more ineffective sacrifices than what eventually would be offered through Christ (Hebrews 9:23).
 - b) One of the ways in which the Old Testament sacrificial system was inferior was that it required continual and ongoing sacrifices (Hebrews 9:24-25).
 - c) Christ, on the other hand, only need to suffer ONCE in order to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Romans 6:9-10; Hebrews 7:26-27; Hebrews 9:12, 26, 28; Hebrews 10:10).
 - (2) The practical point
 - a) Practically speaking, the point is not so much that there was one individual season of suffering for Christ on the cross, but that there was a season of suffering in the flesh.
 - i) There was suffering in His incarnation.
 - (a) He was born into a poor family.
 - (b) He was refused birth in a palace or in an inn.
 - (c) Etc.
 - ii) There was suffering in His lifetime.
 - (a) He had no place to lay His head.
 - (b) There were times of hunger.
 - (c) There were times of sadness.
 - (d) There were times of weariness.
 - (e) Etc.
 - iii) There was suffering in His death.
 - (a) He was betrayed.
 - (b) He was physically abused.
 - (c) His trial/sentencing was the greatest miscarriage of justice that has ever existed.
 - (d) He was beaten almost beyond recognition.
 - (e) Etc.
 - b) This season of suffering was for the purpose of bringing others to God or, should they reject His sacrifice, for their condemnation.
 - c) For Christ, the season of suffering would be followed by glory.
 - d) This pattern exemplifies what the Lord was trying to teach Peter's audience concerning their own suffering and glory.



- b. The cause of His suffering—“suffered for sins”
 - (1) The practical admonition throughout this epistle has been that Peter’s audience would likely suffer, but they were never to be guilty of suffering for having done evil (1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Peter 2:11-12, 19-20; 1 Peter 3:13-17).
 - (2) Christ certainly suffered for sins, but they were not His own. They were the sins of the people for which He died and they were the sins of the people that caused Him to die (1 Peter 2:21-24; Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Titus 2:14).
- c. The change of His suffering
 - (1) The just (Matthew 27:19, 24; Acts 3:14)
 - a) He was sinless.
 - b) He had done nothing worthy of death.
 - (2) For the unjust
 - a) These were the sinners.
 - b) These were the executioners.
 - (3) Doctrinally, this truth is typically identified as the substitutionary atonement of Christ. The unjust deserved the penalty of their sins, but the Just One stepped in and took their place, receiving their punishment.
- d. The consequence of His suffering—that he might bring us to God”
 - (1) Doctrinally speaking, Christ suffered in order to reconcile man to God. Man could not regain the fellowship lost and therefore needed one to satisfy the wrath of God and bring the two parties together again (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). It was not God that was in need of reconciling, but man.
 - (2) Contextually speaking, Christ is man’s example in every facet of suffering. Just as Christ suffered, unjustly so, to bring man to God, Peter’s audience was to be willing to:
 - a) Suffer unjustly as citizens in a corrupt country in hopes of bringing our leaders and countrymen to a saving faith in the Lord (1 Peter 2:13-17)
 - b) Suffer unjustly as servants under a froward master in hopes of bringing the master to a saving faith in the Lord (1 Peter 2:18-20)
 - c) Suffer unjustly as a husband or wife married to a carnal or unsaved spouse in hopes of bringing that spouse to a saving faith in the Lord or to obedience to the word of God (1 Peter 3:1-7)
 - d) Suffer unjustly as a believer at the hands of other believers in hopes of bringing them under conviction and into a closer relationship with the Lord (1 Peter 3:8-17)
- 2. The process of His suffering (1 Peter 3:18-20)
 - a. The bookends of the process (1 Peter 3:18)
 - (1) He was put to death in the flesh.
 - (2) He was quickened by the Spirit.



- b. The in-between of the process (1 Peter 3:19-20)
- (1) The gateway to the in-between—"By which" (1 Peter 3:19)
 - a) Christ's suffering and death was a gateway for greater works.
 - b) As it pertained to the Devil
 - i) The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8).
 - ii) Through death, Christ destroyed him (the Devil) that had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14).
 - c) As it pertained to man—It was the means by which He might bring us to God.
 - d) As it pertained to spirits—See below.
 - (2) The work of the in-between—"he went and preached" (1 Peter 3:19)
 - a) His journey—"he went"
 - i) To fully understand what follows, one must understand what happens at death. Christ was both fully God and fully man and it would follow that what happens to man at death would also happen to Christ at His death.
 - ii) The process of death
 - (a) Man is a three-part being (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
 - (i) He has a **body**. This is the part of man that can be seen by others. It is the shell in which man lives.
 - (ii) He has a **spirit**. This is the part of man that communicates with God. Prior to salvation, this spirit is dead and must be made alive.
 - (iii) He has a **soul**. This is the part of man that exists into eternity and is the way by which he is identified. It is man's decision maker.
 - (b) The circumstances of death
 - (i) The departure of the soul (Genesis 35:18)
 - (ii) The departure of the spirit (Genesis 25:8)
 - (c) The death of a believer
 - (i) The **body** may be laid to rest in a number of ways, but it eventually corrupts.
 - (ii) The **spirit** leaves the body and goes to God (Ecclesiastes 3:21; Ecclesiastes 12:7).
 - (iii) Historically, the **soul** went to Abraham's bosom, or paradise (Luke 23:43), in the heart of the earth (Luke 16:22). Now, the **soul** goes be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8) in paradise's new location (2 Corinthians 12:4). This change took place when Christ came (Genesis 49:10) and led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8).



- (d) The death of the unbeliever
 - (i) The **body** may be laid to rest in a number of ways, but it eventually corrupts.
 - (ii) The **spirit** leaves the body and goes to God (Ecclesiastes 3:21; Ecclesiastes 12:7). After all, the Lord is “The God of the spirits of all flesh” (Numbers 16:22; Numbers 27:16).
 - (iii) The **soul** goes to a holding cell called hell (Luke 16:23) awaiting the final sentencing that takes place at the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-13) where it will be sentenced to eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15).
- (e) The death of Christ
 - (i) His **body** remained on the cross for a space of time after His death until requested by Joseph of Arimathaea and placed in his unused grave (Matthew 27:57-60). His body did not remain there long enough to give way to corruption (Acts 2:31).
 - (ii) His **spirit** was commended into the hands of the Father (Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30).
 - (iii) His **soul** went to the heart of the earth. More will be said about this later, but Christ made two stops in the heart of the earth. First,
 - b) His mission—“he...preached”
- (3) The focus of the in-between (1 Peter 3:19-20)
 - a) Note: Consider the two stops made by Christ within the heart of the earth.
 - i) His initial stop was in hell (Acts 2:25, 27, 31).
 - (a) What is hell?
 - (i) Hell is a place of torment clearly distinguished from the abode of the Old Testament saints (Luke 16:22-23, 28).
 - (ii) The Bible does not teach that hell had two compartments.
 - (b) 100% proof Christ made a stop in hell
 - (i) There were no human spirits in hell or paradise (Ecclesiastes 3:21; Ecclesiastes 12:7).
 - (ii) When the Bible says that Christ preached to SPIRITS it had to be spiritual beings located in hell.
 - ii) His final stop in the heart of the earth was paradise or Abraham’s bosom (see Luke 23:43). He promised to be here before the end of the day.



- b) Their identification—“the spirits” (1 Peter 3:19)
 - i) The fact that Christ preached to SPIRITS makes it clear that His audience was NOT people who had died. After all, the spirits of all men return to God at death (Ecclesiastes 3:21; Ecclesiastes 12:7).
 - ii) To understand Christ’s target audience, one must consider if there are other beings in the Bible that are identified as SPIRITS.
 - (a) Angels are identified as ministering spirits, but spirits are not to be confused with angels. Angels always appeared in male bodies, but bodies specifically related to the angel itself. Spirits, on the other hand, possess the bodies of others.
 - (b) The spirits took up their dwelling place in the bodies of men (Matthew 4:24; Matthew 8:16, 28, 33; Matthew 9:32; Matthew 12:22; Mark 1:32; Mark 5:15-16, 18; Luke 8:36; Acts 8:7; Acts 16:16) and beasts (Matthew 8:30-32; Mark 5:11-13; Luke 8:32-33).
 - (c) That spirits and devils are one and the same can be seen from several verses, but Matthew 8:16 should suffice to prove it.
 - (d) Spirits see bodies as houses (Matthew 12:43-45).
 - (i) When one departs from a man, it seeks another dwelling place (Matthew 12:43; Luke 11:24).
 - (ii) If it find none, it returns with seven other spirits more wicked than itself (Matthew 12:44-45; Luke 11:24-26).
 - (e) The devils or spirits maintain their own personality (Mark 5:2-13) and possess superior intellect (Mark 1:23-26).
 - (f) The fact that these spirits work at the bidding of Satan is unveiled in Satan’s title as “the prince of the devils” (Mark 3:22).
 - iii) It is possible that these spirits are disembodied fallen angels (previously known as the sons of God) who were judged for a specific event in a specific time.
- c) Their location—“in prison” (1 Peter 3:19)
 - i) While the Bible speaks about some spirits who were loose on the earth and operational both during the Old and New Testaments, these spirits are said to be “in prison.”
 - ii) Jude speaks of these same beings and states that they were “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 1:6).



- d) Their actions (1 Peter 3:20)
 - i) The nature of their actions—“Which sometime were disobedient”
 - ii) The timing of their actions—“when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water”
 - iii) This event is described in detail in Genesis chapter 6.
 - (a) The act
 - (i) The sons of God went in unto the daughters of men (Genesis 6:1-2). This is the timeframe of which Peter spoke when he said that their disobedience occurred “in the days of Noah” (1 Peter 3:20).
 - (ii) These sons of God were no doubt angels. After all, every time the phrase “sons of God” is found in the Old Testament, it refers to angels (Genesis 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; Job 2:1; Job 38:7).
 - (iii) Jude said these spirits left their habitation and went after strange flesh (Jude 1:6-7).
 - (b) The result—Giants were birthed (Genesis 6:4).
 - (i) They were giants in stature (see Deuteronomy 1:28; Deuteronomy 3:11; 1 Samuel 17:4).
 - (ii) They were giants in power—“mighty men” (Genesis 6:4).
 - (iii) They were giants in prestige—“men of renown” (Genesis 6:4).
 - (c) The effort—This was attack on the promised seed of Genesis 3:15.
 - (i) The only seed left uncorrupted was that of Noah (Genesis 6:9).
 - (ii) Contrary to popular opinion, only Noah and his family had a place prepared on the ark and they were the only people invited in (Genesis 6:13-18; Genesis 7:1).
 - (iii) Some have assumed that Noah’s preaching of righteousness was for the purpose of reconciling, but it was likely more so for condemnation (2 Peter 2:5).
 - (d) The outcome—In his second epistle, Peter spoke of angels that had sinned who were “cast...down to hell, and delivered...into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4).



B. Christ's Glorification (1 Peter 3:21-22)

1. Our baptismal regeneration (1 Peter 3:21)

a. Considering the context

- (1) The context ties the present understanding of salvation via baptism to the manner in which the eight souls, that found their way onto Noah's ark, were saved by water (1 Peter 3:20).
- (2) Obviously, the spiritual salvation of those eight souls (individuals) was not accomplished by the water. In fact, even those who believe in salvation by faith and works in the Old Testament would ascribe their spiritual salvation to the building of the ark and not the water (Hebrews 11:7).
- (3) The reality is that, in the days of Noah, the water was the judgment of God upon a wicked world, but the judgment did not touch Noah and his family, because they were safely in the ark and the ark itself bore the judgment of the water in their stead. In their case, the ark offered a physical deliverance.
- (4) The salvation of Noah and his family was only sure if the ark survived on the other side of the judgment of the flood.

b. The like figure

- (1) The flood and the preservation of Noah and his family was a true and literal event, but it was also a figure of a greater salvation, at the time future, brought about by the baptism (death) of Christ (Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-40; Luke 12:50).
- (2) Just as the ark took the punishment of the wrath of God and spared those that entered therein, Christ took the wrath of God upon Himself in His death and spares all who are in Him.
- (3) In short, all baptisms of the Bible are figures of or pointing to the baptism of Christ's suffering.

c. The salvation

- (1) The explanation of the salvation—In the present context, salvation is explained by the parenthetical statement.
 - a) The parenthetical statement
 - i) Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh
 - ii) The answer of a good conscience toward God
 - b) The corresponding truths
 - i) Both of these phrases should immediately turn our attention to Hebrews 9:13-14.
 - ii) The Old Testament sacrificial system could only go so far as to purify the flesh (Hebrews 9:13); however, the blood of Christ (what He shed in His baptism into death) purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14).
 - iii) In other words, the salvation explained can not be accomplished by water baptism, but by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.



- (2) The power of the salvation—In order to see this truth more clearly, consider the verse minus the parenthetical statement.
 - a) “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:”
 - b) Just as the ark suffered through the waters of the flood and landed on the mountains of Ararat, delivering Noah and his family to safety, so Christ went through the wrath of God and resurrected to secure the salvation of those who were resting in Him.
- (3) The assumption concerning water baptism
 - a) Unfortunately, many people immediately insert the word *water* where they find the word *baptism*.
 - b) In the present context, this is compounded because of the use of the word *water* in 1 Peter 3:20. However, the baptism that saves in the present context is **BY THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**.
 - c) That being said, the Bible speaks of multiple types of baptism, most of which have nothing to do with water (Hebrews 6:2).
 - i) Baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:2)
 - ii) Water baptism (Acts 8:26-39)
 - iii) Baptism with the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5)
 - iv) Spirit baptism (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27)
 - v) Baptism of death/suffering (Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50)
 - vi) Baptism with fire (Matthew 3:11-12)
2. Our glorified Saviour (1 Peter 3:21-22; Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; Hebrews 10:12-13)
 - a. The risen Saviour—“by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21)
 - b. The ascended Saviour—“Who is gone into heaven” (1 Peter 3:22)
 - c. The empowered Saviour (1 Peter 3:22)
 - (1) He is on the right hand of God.
 - (2) Many are made subject unto Him.
 - a) Angels
 - b) Authorities
 - c) Powers
3. Tying it all together
 - a. The continual theme of this epistle has been that suffering precedes glory and that the suffering is generally for the benefit and perhaps conversion of those who are the source of the suffering.
 - b. Christ endured incredible suffering at the hands of sinful man taking upon Himself the wrath of God that had been assigned to the men for which He suffered. What was the result? A glorified Saviour!