

*18For 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; 19in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, 20who 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. 21Corresponding 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, 22who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.*

In our culture we have a hyper sense of fairness. The playing field should be level. One team shouldn't have to always run uphill, and the other downhill. In fact when we watch football, the teams switch poles at the middle, just in case. No one can say, they had an unfair advantage always running that direction which was somehow better than the direction we had to run.

And that carries over in all of life. My children used to constantly appeal to "fairness". It isn't fair that she gets to go and I have to stay home and do dishes. That's not fair. Ultimately when they were teenagers and that sort of got out of hand, I would tell them, life isn't fair. If life was fair, I'd look like Tom Selleck. Get over it snowflakes. Life isn't fair. Play the hand you got dealt and quit whining.

Good advice to our world that seems to have gone off the deep end of whining about everything. I get to where I can't take it and I've reached my limit of tolerance for whining and I either click off the radio, usually NPR because that's all we get mostly out at work, or if I'm watching something with Pam on TV and it gets too out of hand for my tolerance level, I'll go outside and tinker on some broken thing in my little workshop.

Pulling down statues to try to right past wrongs and then feeling all righteous about it . . . pushes my buttons for some reason. The whining and the resulting riots and anarchy, in the name of fairness, it bugs me.

Losing our freedom of speech and freedoms of being able to speak different ideas openly, whether right or wrong, because college students can't bear the unfairness of someone having an idea different, and yes, perhaps wrong, so they have a little tantrum about the unfairness of it all, and the speaker gets canceled. That's real scary stuff . . . in the name of fairness.

And Peter introduces that idea to his readers, his aliens scattered abroad. It isn't fair. You're doing good, living righteously, a positive influence everywhere you land in this world, loving everyone, helping everyone, just being winsome and positive, and the world repays you with suffering.

Some day if we get to heaven and we find out it was Peter who wrote Hebrews, I'll say, I had a hunch. I always figured it might have been him. Because Hebrews sounds so much like Peter's letters. Many similarities.

So I want to go to Hebrews 10, a familiar passage, at least if you've sat under my teaching, we've been there before, more than once. But the situation described sounds identical to what Peter is addressing in his letters. The suffering sounds like it could be these very folks.

Hebrews 10: 32 *But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.*

That's how I picture these folks in this letter. Singled out as christians. Made a public spectacle. A public reproach. A great conflict of suffering, to the point that some of them lost their stuff, they lost their property, and they went to prison for being christians.

And then others of them sympathized and visited their brethren. In prison. Which is just begging the people who put them in prison to put

you in prison too. Take your stuff away too. And apparently that happened. They sympathized with those who lost everything and had gone to prison, then they lost everything and joined them in prison.

And these christians went through that with joy. Here, take my stuff. I've got treasure in heaven that you can't get to. In fact you're taking away my stuff and mistreating me here, just adds exponentially to my storehouse of treasure there. That's what Jesus said.

That is the situation these folks are living in. Fairness? Fairness somehow seems to go out the window when it concerns christians in conflict with this world that belongs to Satan.

Logic, fairness, equal playing field, all of it is somehow a foreit when you are called out of this world and belong to another Master. A heavenly king. Then when it comes to how this world views fairness, all bets are off. You're fair game. You've forfeited your appeal to the court of fairness.

Apparently, christians fall under different rules. And Peter is writing to these folks to encourage them. That's why my money is on Peter as author of Hebrews. It's the exact same message.

*34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*

Peter's encouraging these folks he's writing this letter to, to not throw away their confidence. To endure the unfair suffering. To receive the inheritance, in another world, in heaven, that will exponentially outweigh what you've lost to the unfair world pressing in on you now.

We looked at that for a couple of weeks now, but in our verses this morning, Peter gives us the ultimate example of unfair treatment, and the ultimate victory that resulted.

These verses are unparalleled in the depth that they take us into the sufferings of Jesus, unfairly, and the victories He had as a result. We get some glimpses into worlds that we really don't know very much about. Fascinating stuff. Scary stuff for the fellow who has to "make the sense" because we don't have much of the information that apparently these first century authors had.

There's plenty here for us to consider, so let's dive in.

*18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust,*

It was the idea of suffering unfairly, doing what is right, and then suffering anyways that introduced this great statement of our fore runner.

Jesus is the ultimate example of suffering unfairly. He suffered to the point of death. He was sinless. Both of those are extremes that most of us will not realize in our tiny little sufferings.

I may suffer unjustly. I may suffer for being a christian, for doing and teaching good in this evil world. But I can never claim to be suffering even though sinless.

Pilate was spot on when he pronounced what is recorded for us in Luke 23:4 *Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."*

Even Pilate didn't fully realize the depth of his statement. There was no sin, none, ever, that could convict Jesus. He was sinless. We are sinful. Even if we suffer for doing good, for doing right, that distinction stands. Jesus suffered ultimately, and He was sinless.

Substitutionary death is only a viable thing if the substitute for me is sinless. He takes my sin. I take His righteousness. A righteousness not my own. I can appear before God clothed in white linen because Jesus took the filth and gave me His righteousness.

We want to look at a couple of more things in this simple statement of Peter's that are profound. *18 For Christ also died for sins once for all*

When Peter says; Christ also, it's a throwback to his encouragement of these who are suffering. Christ also . . . suffered. Christ also . . . died. And the just died for the unjust. Christ died for our sins. Jesus paid the debt that we were helpless to repay. He suffered and He died, as payment for my sins. And your sins.

Do you see it there in Peter's brief words. The gospel is so simple. It doesn't need pages of lawyer speak. It's so simple even a fool can understand it. *18 For Christ also died for sins once for all*

Once for all. Once for all. We need to stop and consider those words before we move on. Christ died for sins, once, for all time. *It is finished* He says in John 19:30 just before He gives up His spirit. The sacrifice of the sinless Christ for our sins happened one time, and it is finished for all time.

The jews made endless sacrifices for sins. At the peak of the sacrificial system, around the time of Jesus crucifixion, the jews would slaughter a quarter of a million animals, the blood of which was to signify a life, for a life. Over and over for eons, until God judged their temple system and destroyed it forever in 70 AD by the romans. Millions upon millions of animals slaughtered for individual sinners and families of sinners. A river of blood flowed out of that temple from the animal sacrifices.

Jesus, the just, died once for all, for the unjust. Finished. Forever. A religious system that slaughters Christ over and over, wafers and wine, transubstantiation of this sacrifice being carried out over and over is in direct conflict with these simple words. Once For All. Finished.

Again, we fall back on the book of Hebrews. Chapter 10:

*1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.*

*2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

*9then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. 10By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

*11Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. 14For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

*Once for all. Once for all. One time. One, one, one. For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God,*

An interesting word choice by Peter. *bring us to* in the greek is *prosagó* and it has the idea in it's uses of making a way for someone to have an audience.

Like, you need an audience with the king, but you don't just march in there. There is protocol. You need someone to be a *prosagó*. Someone who brings someone to someone else.

In this case, Jesus is the one who, first having died in our place for our sins, brings us to God. Trust me, you don't want an audience with God in any other form. When you face God you want it to be with Jesus who is the *prosagó*, the one who brings you to God, with heavenly garments, clean garments, sin forgiven.

Jesus is our safe passage. We'll get back to that idea shortly. But first Peter gives us a glimpse into the triumph of Jesus death.

*...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.*

Did that make your brain explode? What in the world??

Where did we just get whisked off to? This is what we love about Peter. Oh, he's got a point he's working towards, several, but he doesn't get there in an organized logical fashion like Paul does. He takes you on a whirlwind trip into the abysses of hell.

*...having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; He starts out, they may have killed Jesus body, his spirit left his dead body, but He went somewhere else, His spirit did, and He proclaimed His victory to spirits now in prison.*

Yikes. Who are they and why did Peter go here? Well, apparently this teaching is obscure to us, but not so obscure to first century christians.

So we need to take a brief glance at Genesis chapter 6, because Peter mentions that these spirits in prison are there for disobedience in the time of Noah.

*1Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 2that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. 3Then 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." 4The 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.*

*5Then 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. 6The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7The 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." 8But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

So here was Satan's plan. Angels that have sinned cannot be redeemed. A third of the angels rebelled against God and became demons. And Satan has a plan. Angels have no redemption possible. But God has planned to redeem mankind ever since the fall in the garden of eden.

And Satan figures, if demons take on human form and co-habitate with the daughters of men, it only takes a generation or two to get the whole mess so contaminated that God can't save any of it. Angels are irredeemable. So pretty quickly the lines get muddied and no one is redeemable. Satan wins. God loses.

You'll recall that the two angels who went into Sodom and Gomorrah took on the form of mankind. And the wicked men of Sodom were breaking down Lot's gate trying to get at them in order to have sexual encounters with them. And God struck them blind.

Apparently angels have this capacity. Or the possibility is certainly there as obviated by the Noahic flood. It took Noah 120 years to build the ark, and he was a preacher of righteousness, but by the time that 120 years was over, only 8 people had righteous blood lines that God would save. Noah, his wife, and his 3 sons and their wives.

Jude speaks of this timeframe. And he also ties in the sin of gross sexual immorality with what was happening with the fallen angels and the daughters of men in Noah's time.

*5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. 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, 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.*

Sodom and Gomorrah have ties with the days of Noah. And perhaps our day and time. I was being kind when I said "perhaps". I think the parallels are blatant and the next purge won't be with water.

Peter addresses this very thing again in his second letter. It sounds like it could have been addressed to the church in 2017. Listen to 2 Peter

*1But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

*4For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 5and 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; 6and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; 7and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8(for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), 9then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.*

That's our background. Angels who left their assigned by God estate and had sexual encounters with women on earth to produce a super race. An un-redeemable race.

This sin which caused God to purge the world of all but 8 humans, is equated with the sin of Sodom. Angels left their first estate, even as the men of Sodom left their first estate, the created order of God, and replaced that estate with homosexuality.

God judged the entire world with water. All but 8 people perished. And God locked those disobedient evil spirits up in prison. Abyssos of darkness it says.

And according to Peter, when Jesus body died on that cross, His spirit went and proclaimed the victory to those spirits locked in prison awaiting final judgement. God is victorious over the plan of Satan to so contaminate the human race that no redemption is possible. Redemption has happened. It is finished. Once for all.

*21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh,*

Corresponding to what?

Well we'll begin with the negative. Water does not have anything to do with salvation.

Water, the universal solvent, can in fact remove dirt from flesh. But it doesn't save anybody. So what it doesn't mean is the easiest part to interpret.

What we have here is a type. The word "corresponding" is the greek word antitypon. So we have a picture of our salvation. What was the picture. It was at the end of vs. 20

*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.*

8 people got into an ark and were safe. That's our picture. They were immersed into a vehicle and brought safely through judgement.

So we need to use our heads a bit. The word for baptism is in fact *immersion into*. A covering or enclosing into. 8 people immersed, enclosed within if you will, a boat, made it safely to the other side of the judgement.

A modern picture that I find helpful is the space capsule programs. That astronaut was surrounded by a tiny capsule that had to make it through a re-entry where the heat from friction was tremendous. That little vehicle did the same thing the ark did. Those astronauts were immersed inside a vehicle that bore them to safety.

That's our picture. 8 people immersed inside an ark made it safely through the waters. The astronauts immersed safely in the capsule made it safely back into the earth's atmosphere.

What is our vehicle. What is the church immersed into that bears it safely through the judgement. We are baptized into Christ. He bears us safely through, just as the ark did for Noah and 7 others.

*21Corresponding 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,*

The immersion into Christ, our cleft of safety within the Rock is by appeal. Repentance from a life of sin, and an appeal by faith in the risen Christ for a clean conscience, a conscience no longer burdened down with the weight of sin. This is our way to safety.

When we make that appeal, He hears us and we, with Him, leave our sin at the cross where He died, we go into the grave with Him and are resurrected with Him to newness of life.

Noah and his family were sealed inside that ark. The old world died while they were born to safety, and when they went out of the ark, everything was new. That's our type. We are immersed into Christ, we leave our sin at the cross, we are resurrected with Him to a new life. He is our vehicle to safety. He takes the punishment we deserved.

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

This is the final picture of the triumphant Christ. He announced, He proclaimed His victory to the spirits now in prison. He arose from the dead. After 40 days he ascended to the right hand of God. He is alive forevermore, and His church, His called out ones are safely immersed into Him.

He is our prosagó. He will bring us safely to God. *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God,*

Throughout the new testament the church, us, is always spoken of as in Christ. In Christ. He is our vehicle of safety. He brings us safely to God. We are in Him. In Him my sins are left behind at the cross. In Him I have been resurrected to a new life. In Him I am clothed with a righteousness not my own. I want to be found in Him, the prosago.

Noah came safely through God's judgement. I want to come safely through God's judgement and that happens for those who are in Christ.