

Good morning, the Lord bless you and give you peace. Our time this morning is a little bit more truncated than usual as we have the family matter of our annual review and consideration of next years ministries. This, of course, covers both a glance at our ministries and a glance at our financial stewardship. We praise the Lord for what He has done and allowed us to do this past year, and we look forward to seeing what He will do in the next.

Having said that we really are in the final consideration of our text in **1 Peter 3:18-22**, and though I had anticipated diving into the text and scratching away more deeply with the grammar and interpretations of this passage, I think it will be more profitable, given our time, to give a synopsis of the supportive intent of **verse 19-21** to the rest of the text and section.

There are **two main issues** that are raised in this text, as we briefly touched upon last week. The **first** issue is that of Christ's activity, either before, or after His resurrection from the dead. The issue is that of the relationship of baptism to salvation and how Noah and that time period speaks to the greater issue of God's rescuing His people from trial. I want to say a few final words about both.

The first issue of Christ's activity, as we saw last week, has three main interpretations that correspond to how Christ's life interfaces with that of Noah. The difficulty here is obvious. Noah lived in the prediluvian (pre-flood) world, and Jesus lived several thousand years after the coming of Moses, who himself was generations removed from Noah's generation. However the text is viewed within the three major interpretations that I mentioned last week there is **one major thread** that is found in all three, and that is that **God has provided a means of redemption from the evil that is present in this world. That evil is seen in people, in demonic forces, and in the brokenness of this world.** God has not only has He provided a means of redemption from these things, He has also already **expressed His wrath** against all that is evil. So the world is judged, people in the world are judged, and demonic forces are judged. Whatever position you maintain, if it fails to see those things it will fail to apprehend Peter's primary intent of the entire epistle. Further, it is not judge judgement that is underscored, His provision of redemptive grace. Redemptive grace is that grace that is efficacious, it works towards salvation, not just common grace which is given by God to all, like work, food, family, protection from all sorts of evil, that God bestows upon all mankind all the time.

This leads us to the second issue here and that of baptism. The expression of redemptive grace speaks to the intent with which Peter actually introduces the concept of baptism. So, **verse 21 distinguishes water baptism as a picture, and uses Noah as an example of that picture.** Peter says that water baptism only removes dirt from the body. But baptism is typological for the redemptive work of God through Jesus. We saw last week that the concepts of typology are applied here as the word translated "corresponds" is in it **Greek etymological root** the word for **type**. It has the sense of "image," as in the **impression of an image on a coin. Baptism is an impression of something greater which speaks to God's redemptive provisions.** That is the intent of this teaching on baptism. *Water baptism is the symbol which can only remove dirt.* There is nothing supernaturally redemptive about that. However, the supernatural work of relationship with God, which has been a theme since chapter 1, is **experienced and applied to us in the appeal, the petition, the prayer of God's merciful deliverance from the judgment that He has told us would come.** The consequence of this is not just deliverance from God's judgment, as Noah and his family experienced, but it is a good conscience towards God. We are set at peace with God. And this really fits the entire scope of Peter's teaching that salvation is not works based, but a gift of grace. It fits the themes of scripture in the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament.

It certainly is important to pause for a moment here and just consider that great reality, in Christ Jesus our conscience is at peace with God. It comprehends the entire teaching of Paul regarding the law of God which accuses us of unfaithfulness with exacting success. That law, as we understand from **Romans 2 and 3** is such that it is at least understood intuitively, it is on our hearts, and it is also understood through the revealed word of God. Christ has caused all those who trust in Him for salvation to have their consciences at peace with God, but sin, Satan, and his demonic forces constantly subvert that peace. *But the question might be raised, how do we know when my conscience is bothered if it is God who is convicting me or Satan who is guiltting me?* That answer is really not that complicated. We are told in **1 John** that if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. The case is closed with God. He has removed it from His sight. That is the difference. **Satan's tactics are to keep us in a state of guilt and condemnation. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, my friends.**

But there is something deeper here which we must cling to, and that is that truth does not depend upon the amount of people that determine it to be true or false. Truth is not relative. Truth is not determined by my own perspectives. God is truth. What proceeds from His mouth is always true. God said He would not strive anymore with man's spirit and declared He would

destroy the earth and all that was in it, and it happened. I don't think we need to defend the flood accounts. If we are looking for geological evidence and sociological evidence of this, there is not lack. (There are geological formations that can only be clearly explained by a global flood, like foundation stone in places that it shouldn't be, or fossilized organisms found in places that can only be explained by a global flood as described by Moses. There are mythical teachings throughout the Ancient Near East that speak of a flood upon man. The pictographic Chinese character for our word "boat" and "flood" include the symbols for "vessel" "eight" and "mouth" (people), as well as "water" and "total," (ICR.org; Creation.com).)

The reason that we believe this is because God has revealed it in His word. What His word tells us is that God will judge sin. What His word tells us is that God has provided snapshots to His gracious rescuing means throughout history, and that these ultimately point to what God was going to do through His Son, Jesus Christ. Yet, as one commentator pointed out on this passage, only 8 people were saved, the rest rejected it. His declaration of judgment and provision of rescuing was ignored by all except 8. **But that rejection by the millions did not make God's judgment any less true.** Millions rejected but God was capable of, and willing to, rescue the 8 who had placed their faith in His provisions. **That is what baptism speaks to, and that is the encouragement that Peter wants to bring to the hearts and minds of those suffering for being Christians.** God has done a work in your hearts and minds. If you have been baptized it was out of obedience to God's teaching, but baptism also to physically remind yourselves of God's covenant with those who rest in His provision of salvation. Do not be afraid of what might happen. God will bring you through the storm. Not even wicked spirits can harm you, Jesus has declared victory over them, and now He sits in triumph at the right hand of His Father in heaven.

I feel as though I need to make one point about baptism. Dear friends, God teaches us that we are to believe and be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian and have not been baptized, it is part of your obedience to God to do so. If you are a Christian and will not be baptized, you are in disobedience to God's word. Please understand that I am not raising a polemic about paedobaptism that is not for salvation verses credo-baptism. There is much to speak to here which we do not have time to discuss, but understand this, that in any churches distinguished on some form as Christian, Protestant or not, **the issue has never been to ignore baptism**, we just have different perspectives as to the timing and purpose. Christians who are obedient to God's word will have experienced water baptism. To say you are a Christian and refuse baptism is disobedience and a denial of one of the foundational components of your Christian life, the sacrament of baptism.

But let's come back to our text. We noted that we are not to be afraid. If God can rescue 8 people when the entire world disbelieved, what will He do for His people now? What causes you fear, loved ones? There are real and difficult experiences in life that cause all sane people to shudder. God has the power to rescue you from all of these. Not only that, but the greatest sorrow to every human being is that one day we all die. But in Jesus Christ we find the salvation of our souls. Not even physical death can harm those who have in Christ Jesus. Be strong in the Lord loved ones. Jesus has won our victory. But you need to be resting in Him. There is no salvation for those who stood around the boat in Noah's day. They had to be in the boat. There is no salvation for you if you are part of a church. You have to be in Christ. That is spiritual language for repenting of your sins and trusting Jesus Christ for the salvation of your souls. But beware, it will set you on a course to hardship in this world. You must decide if Jesus is worth more than that hardships of this life.

Peter gives us the intent of both this epistle and the next with his words in **2 Peter 3:1-11**. I will close with that reading that you may find your rest in Christ.

2 Peter 3:1-13 (ESV): This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,
12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and
the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in
which righteousness dwells.

Amen.