

Christ the Risen Lord

1 Peter 3: 18-22

Peter had shared an exhortation for believers to remain committed to the faith, while actively sharing the Gospel with the world. Such commitment would not be without opposition, but believers are assured of the Lord's help and presence among the world. Our lives are to be dictated and directed by our faith, always ready to give an answer of the hope that lies within us. This hope is settled in Christ our Lord.

As Peter continued this thought, he shared much regarding the triumphant Lord we serve. Because of the triumphant victory Christ had already won, believers could live and serve in absolute confidence. In order to encourage their faith, Peter offered insight to the gracious provision of Christ and the absolute sovereignty He possesses. Such insight would empower the believer to remain committed to the faith. As we examine the [certainties](#) Peter revealed regarding our Savior, I want to consider: [Christ the Risen Lord](#).

I. The Provision of Christ (18) – [For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit](#). This thought provides the foundation for everything we've discussed in the previous study. The provision of Christ on our behalf will allow us to live righteously and present an effective witness to the world regardless of the difficulties we face. Apart from Him we are hopeless. Consider:

A. The Substitution (18a) – [For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust](#). Peter reminded the church of the great suffering of Christ on our behalf. The innocent took the place of the guilty, suffering on the cross as He bore our sin and endured the righteous judgment we deserved. Christ took our place, becoming sin and tasting death so we could be forgiven of sin. He provided Himself the atoning sacrifice for the sin of humanity.

- As we consider the agony He bore on the cross, the difficulties we face for our faith pale in comparison. If He was willing to endure all that for us, the least we could do is live faithfully for Him and provide a consistent witness of the hope that we have received.

B. The Reconciliation (18b) – [For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God](#). Sin caused separation from God. Being born in a body of flesh, we all were separated and condemned. We had no hope apart from the grace and provision of God. As Christ bore our sin and paid the debt we owed, He reconciled the believer to God through His death on the cross. He redeemed us from sin and reconciled us to God. The saved by grace are

now accepted of the Father because of the sacrifice of the Son. His righteousness has been imputed to our account. We are no more separated and condemned, but redeemed and accepted!

C. The Resurrection (18c) – [being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit](#). This puts everything we have discussed in its proper perspective and provides unwavering assurance. Christ died on the cross for our sin. They placed His body in a borrowed tomb where He lay for three days. On that third glorious day, Jesus came forth alive – triumphant over sin, death, and hell. We have nothing to fear in Christ. Death is certain for us physically, but it is certainly not the end of the story. Just as Christ rose from the grave in resurrection life, every believer will also be raised from the dead and spend eternity with our Lord and Savior. What have we to fear when death itself cannot separate us from the Lord we serve?

II. The Proclamation of Christ (19-20) – [By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; ^{\[20\]} Which sometime were disobedient, 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](#). Peter then discussed a powerful message Christ preached between His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection. These mysterious verses provide great truth and hope for every believer. Consider:

A. The Implication (19-20) – Peter declared that Christ preached this message to the spirits in prison. These are identified as those who were disobedient unto the Lord, rebelling against the righteousness of God in Noah's day. Centuries had passed since the flood of judgment, and Christ went to the prison in which they were held, presumably in the heart of the earth. Most scholars agree Peter is referring to fallen angels or demonic spirits, not actually human beings who rejected the warning of coming judgment and perished in the flood.

B. The Vindication – What was the purpose for the Lord preaching to these disobedient spirits in prison? The logical explanation is for Jesus to reveal His authority and triumph over sin, death, and hell. Since the creation of man, Satan and his demons have worked to disrupt the plan of God for mankind and our redemption. This was evident through the corruption in Noah's day, influenced by the forces of evil. Even as Jesus was born, Satan sought to have Him killed through the direction of Herod. He tempted Jesus in the wilderness, and attacked Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. All of this was done in an effort to prevent Jesus going to Calvary to atone for our sin. As Christ preached this message, Satan and the demonic spirits were served notice their efforts had failed and victory had been won through the provision of Christ.

III. The Transformation in Christ (21) – *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Christ being triumphant over sin, death, and hell had significant and eternal implications for the believer, being transformed from a life condemned by sin and raised to newness of life in Christ. Consider:

A. The Illustration – Peter had just reminded them of the security of Noah and his family, being preserved on the Ark from the flood of judgment. Because of sin, God brought judgment upon the earth, destroying everything that wasn't within the safety of the Ark. Only those in the Ark survived the wrath of God. Noah and his family serve as a type or picture of those in Christ. Sin causes separation from God, and must be atoned. Those apart from Christ are accountable for their sin and in danger of judgment, resulting in eternal death. Those in Christ enjoy a place of provision and safety, shielded from the wrath of God, being secured through the righteousness of Christ. Only those in Christ will be spared the wrath and judgment of God.

B. The Salvation – Peter also revealed fundamental truth regarding our salvation in Christ, using this illustration of Noah and the Ark. The waters of the flood raised the Ark above the carnage below. Peter declared such is the believer's baptism. Now, we have to be very careful with this text, and allow the Word to speak for itself. Peter says that it isn't a baptism that puts away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Clearly, Peter is in no way implying that water baptism saves. He is referring to a spiritual baptism, which results in a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Christ. Simply, those who were dead in sin, facing the wrath and judgment of God, once saved by grace, are resurrected new creations in Christ Jesus. We now have peace with God and are assured of our acceptance through the provision of Christ. The old life we once knew is gone, as we embark on a journey with the Lord, headed toward the homeland He is preparing us in heaven. Our sin was judged in Christ and we are now free from guilt and sin in Him.

IV. The Affirmation of Christ (22) – *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.* Finally, Peter affirmed the sovereignty of Christ, having overcome sin, death, and hell, rising triumphant from the grave. Consider:

A. His Position (22a) – *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God.* Following Christ preaching to the captive spirits, He rose from the grave. Death was unable to hold Him, and he conquered the penalty of death for the redeemed. After forty days upon the earth, following the

resurrection, Christ ascended back to heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father. He preached a message of victory to the captive spirits, rose from the grave, and ascended back to His position in heaven. Christ fulfilled the work of redemption He had come to accomplish, and ascended back to the Father in victory, having obtained eternal redemption for the saved. He is there interceding for us, our Advocate before God the Father. Our Lord rose again in victory, and He returned to His position in heaven. We will one day worship before His throne as the saved by grace enter our eternal home.

B. His Preeminence (22b) – [Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.](#) Christ returned to heaven, now occupying a position of preeminence. All the angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Him. He is sovereign over all – including Satan and the demonic spirits. Our Lord rose triumphant and He is seated eternally in this position of power and authority. There is not a person or power on earth, in heaven, or hell beneath that rivals His position of sovereignty. He is the eternal King. [Phil.2:9-11 – Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ^{\[10\]} That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ^{\[11\]} And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.](#) We have nothing to fear in this life or the one to come. Our Lord is sovereign over all.

Conclusion: This has been an interesting and encouraging passage. The Christian life is filled with difficulty and adversity. The enemy works to defeat us on every hand. He has power here on earth, but his power is limited. Our Lord is sovereign, and we are secure in Him. Such knowledge of Christ ought to create a boldness within the believer to stand firm for the faith and proclaim our Lord and Savior. We are more than conquerors through Christ because He is victorious over all. If you are struggling, come to the Lord for strength to continue. If you are yet unsaved, I urge you to respond to the gracious offer of salvation. Christ bore your sin, endured your judgment, and rose again for your justification. There is no need for anyone to die in sin, accountable to God, and face eternal judgment.