

The Resurrected King of All

1 Peter 3:18–22

I. INTRO

- A. The gospel seems like a simple concept
- B. You could, quite easily, summarize it with a few verses here and there:
 - 1. 1 Corinthians: The gospel is that Jesus died, in accordance with the Scripture, was buried, three days later raised to life again, and then appeared to many witnesses
 - 2. 1 Timothy: Jesus Christ died to save sinners of whom I am the worst
 - 3. 2 Corinthians 5:21, For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 - 4. Isaiah 53:5, But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
 - 5. Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- C. The Good News is simple, but simple doesn't mean shallow.
- D. Easter Sunday is about the resurrection of Jesus, which is why church tradition has most commonly referred to it as Resurrection Sunday
 - 1. It represents the third day after Jesus paid for the sins of man on a cross
 - 2. His death satisfied the wrath of God and paid the full penalty for sin
 - 3. But since dead men aren't very helpful, God raised him from the dead
 - 4. He came back as the resurrected first of a new, spiritual humanity
 - 5. The Father gave him all authority and he told his first followers to go, under that authority, and to be fruitful and multiply - to fill the earth with his people and bring about his dominion
- E. This is why we celebrate today - the day when sin was not only paid for, but the casket was burst apart from the inside out.
- F. The gospel is simple, yet immensely profound - as we will see today

II. 1 Peter 3:18-22

- A. *[18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,*
 - 1. This verse nicely summarizes what Jesus did on the cross. In theological terms, it is called the substitutionary atonement, and it refers to Jesus Christ dying as a substitute for me and you, for sinners.
 - 2. The Scriptures teach that all men are sinners (Romans 3:9-18, 23), that means they are in rebellion against God both by nature and by choice, and that the penalty for our sinfulness is death.
 - a) Romans 6:23 reads, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

3. So, without Christ, we are going to die (b/c we earned it) and spend an eternity in hell as payment for our sins
 4. Death in the Scriptures refers to a "separation." Everyone will die, but some will live in heaven with the Lord for eternity, while others will live a life in hell for eternity.
 5. Were this the end of the story, it would be terrible, but both Romans 6:23 and 1 Peter 3:18 clearly communicate Good News that is found in Jesus.
 6. So, Jesus Christ died in our place when He was crucified on the cross.
 - a) We deserved to be the ones placed on that cross to die because we are the ones who live sinful lives.
 - b) But Christ took the punishment on Himself in our place - He substituted Himself for us and took what we rightly deserved.
 - c) 2 Cor 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"
 7. Earlier in 1 Peter, Peter put it this way: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24).
 8. Christ took the sins we committed onto Himself to pay the price for us. A chapter later, here, we read, [18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,
 9. This concept is inherent to the gospel and, if you notice, is seen in all the passages we mentioned in the introduction.
 10. Isaiah 53:5, But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. → Notice the substitution
 11. We can only pay the price of sin on our own by being punished and placed in hell for all eternity. But God's Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to pay the price of our sins.
 - a) He died for our sins, in the flesh, although his flesh wasn't sinful.
 - b) Because He did this for us, we now have the opportunity to not only have our sins forgiven, but to spend eternity with Him by being "alive in the Spirit."
 12. This is what the cross accomplished and why it matters.
- B. *[18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, [19] in which [in the spirit,] he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, [20] because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.*
1. Why did Jesus die? To save sinners. Why do we sin? Because we are sinners. Why are we sinners? Because Adam, our first parent, rebelled against God, corrupting our nature. Why did he do that? Because he was deceived and listened to the deceiver over the author of life. And why did

that happen? Because there was, and is still under way, a massive war in heaven reflected here on earth.

2. We don't like talking about it in the USA b/c it is so foreign to our scientific worldview, but the reality is that the spiritual unseen world is, in many ways, more real than what's right in front of your face.
3. The serpent in the garden, as we see from the rest of Scripture this spiritual being known as Satan, isn't pleased with God's plan. So what is God's plan?
 - a) God, the creator of all and the King of everything creates people in his image
 - b) Essentially he creates the world as we know it, the planet earth, and people to rule over it as little kings under his authority.
 - (1) So he is king over everything and people are kings under his authority on earth
 - c) Satan just can't fathom why on earth God would give humans, of all creation, dominion and authority over the earth
 - d) So he deceives Eve and then Adam to not listen to God (to not live under his authority) but instead to listen to him
 - e) In that moment, it is as if Adam takes the crown off of his head, puts it on Satan's, and kneels before him
 - f) A new king is crowned, dominion is given to this fallen spiritual being, and humans get everything that comes with it
 - g) But God makes a promise that a descendant (seed) of Adam and Eve is going to crush the serpent's head and bring it all full circle
 - h) From that day on the adversary (which is what Satan means) and the dark spiritual beings that rebelled with him are trying to destroy the line of Adam so that the promised Son is never born
4. One of the first efforts we see in the Scripture for them to try and derail this freight train is in the story of Noah.
 - a) The story says that these fallen angels corrupted the line of man by procreating with them, creating these fallen beings known in Hebrew as the Nephilim - the giants of old
 - b) God isn't tolerating this so he sets an expiration date for the world saying that he will purge it with water
 - c) And as that day comes, Noah and his family go into this giant boat, the Ark, w/ animals, 2 of every kind God deems necessary, and then the flood comes.
 - d) God casts the rebellious spirits, the fallen angels, into this temporary hell to await the final judgment.
5. This may sound wild, but this is what Peter is referencing here and this is the Hebrew worldview of the day.
 - a) The "sons of God" in Gen. 6:2-4 are angels (see note on Gen. 6:1-2) who sinned by cohabiting with human women "when God's patience waited in the days of Noah" (1 Pet. 3:20), and the word

“spirits” here in the Greek almost always, without exception in the NT refers to supernatural beings and not people (e.g., Matt. 8:16; 10:1; Mark 1:27; 5:13; 6:7; Luke 4:36; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2; 10:20; 11:26; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12, 13; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 4:1; Rev. 16:13–14; cf. Heb. 1:7).

- b) Similarly, the word “prison” is not used elsewhere in Scripture as a place of punishment after death for human beings, while it is used for Satan (Rev. 20:7) and other fallen angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).
 - c) Now I know you may think this is weird, but this is the Hebrew worldview and what Peter believes. I know this b/c of the writings he references here and in 2 Peter.
6. So consider this - b/c this isn't imaginary it's real:
- a) Throughout history Satan and his minions have been trying to stop the promised Seed from reclaiming the throne and the crown
 - b) Jesus arrives on the scene - the promised Seed
 - c) Satan tries to tempt him in the wilderness as he did Adam - Jesus doesn't fall for it
 - d) Satan then tries to use human means to destroy Jesus. He twists the Pharisees against him. He twists Judas Iscariot against him. He twists Herod against him.
 - e) Jesus, the promised Seed, is arrested, tried, and sentenced to death
 - f) And he dies.
 - g) And if you were one of these imprisoned spirits, in the spiritual gulag, watching this unfold, what would you be thinking? We won.
 - h) Jesus arrives, descends into prison, having died in the flesh. But when he arrives there's no time for the demons to gloat. Instead, he goes down there to proclaim to the prisoners, the spirits who disobeyed during Noah's day
 - i) What does he proclaim? Use your most colorful imagination.
 - j) It's an epic mic drop and then he is resurrected.
7. What they thought was victory for them was actually defeat. That was God's plan all along, kick the doors off the grave from the inside out.
- C. [21] *Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*
- 1. A comparison is drawn between salvation in the ark and baptism. In both instances, believers are saved through the waters of judgment, since baptism portrays salvation through judgment.
 - 2. As the ESV study Bible notes, “The mere mechanical act of baptism does not save, for Peter explicitly says, “not as a removal of dirt from the body,” meaning that the passing of water over the body does not cleanse anyone. Baptism saves you because it represents inward faith, as evidenced by one's appeal to God for the forgiveness of one's sins (for a

good conscience). Furthermore, baptism “saves” only insofar as it is grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a visual representation of the fact that Christians are clothed with Christ (cf. Gal. 3:27), and in union with Christ they share his victory over sin.”

3. What is Peter getting at? When you are baptized with this story in mind, it is as if you are mimicking the journey of Jesus - dying, being buried, descending, giving the spirits in prison a little mic drop, and then being raised again.
4. If you have this in your head, every baptism on the planet reminds the Spirits in Prison that they lost, but we won in Jesus.
5. It is as if every time someone gets baptized, God is showing them off to the imprisoned, rebellious angels, and then pulling them back to life.
6. And here’s the big tada: All of this is possible b/c of the resurrection
 - a) Without the resurrection, Christ just died.
 - b) Without the resurrection, we just die.

D. through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

1. What’s the point of all of it? Christ has triumphed over his enemies.
2. He is now ascended to the right hand of God, and all angels and demonic powers are subjected to him since he is Lord and Christ.
3. God has now given him all authority over heaven and earth; The expiration date is set (we just don’t know the specifics)
4. As for us, we are crucified with him, buried with him, raised with him, seated with him, and hidden in his body.
5. In this life, we walk around as the king’s ambassadors announcing to everyone everywhere that they don’t need to listen to the spiritual beings who used to rule them b/c there’s a new king in town and he’s recruiting
6. All because of the resurrection

III. Pulling it all together?

- A. The gospel is simple - Jesus Christ died to save sinners, and that salvation is by faith in what he has done
- B. But the implications of the gospel are wild
 1. Dethroned spiritual powers, demons in hell, a constant string of baptisms as a reminder to the rebels that they’ve lost, a kingdom being restored, a ridiculously tough King who kicked down the gates of hell from the inside out, and so on and so forth
- C. If you think the gospel is a weak gospel, then we don’t know the same God
- D. If you think the gospel is a crutch for weak people, then you’ve never met my King
- E. If you think Christianity is primarily about social issues and what happens here and now, then you aren’t seeing the full picture.

- F. The gospel is like wading into the ocean. A toddler can run in and out of the lapping waves, but the deep churning can capsize a tanker and drag it down to the depths only to be exhumed again
- G. What are you going to do about it?
 1. This King doesn't say, "Ask me into your heart"
 2. He says, "Follow me if you want to live" and then he goes spiritual Rambo on some fools.
 3. Will you follow him? Will you follow this King? That's his invitation
 4. And if you want to start that journey, let him know and let us know and we can journey together