

## Ultimate Sacrifice, Ultimate Victory, Ultimate Deliverance 1 Peter 3:18-22

Peter's readers were communities of Christians--mixtures of Jews who had migrated away from Israel and Gentiles--all of whom had accepted Jesus as Messiah and Savior. They were a distinct religious minorities in their communities.

Peter could see difficult times coming for these believers. The great fire of Rome in 64AD made this likely because Emperor Nero blamed the disaster on the Christians living in Rome.

So, he urged his readers to remain steadfast in focused devotion to Christ. He reminded them that their suffering for Christ could never compare to the eventual suffering that would be faced by those who reject the Savior.

And why would there be eternal suffering for anyone who rejected Christ? Because rejection is an unpardonable denial of God's works of mercy and justice toward sinners.

1. Christ's provision for believers' sins is full and sufficient, verse 18.  
(through his death and resurrection)

Whatever suffering any of His followers may experience, Christ suffered far more and more unjustly at the hands of evil men.

But because Jesus was absolutely righteousness, the suffering his enemies imposed on him was not for any sin he was guilty of. He suffered for others. He died to pay the penalty for the sins of all who would accept Him as their Savior.

Jesus' sacrifice in the place of sinners was complete--an infinite payment to satisfy the holy wrath of an infinite God against sin.  
The ultimate purpose of this sacrifice was to bring redeemed people to God.

### What happened when Jesus died?

The original Greek reads: "being put to death *in flesh* but made alive *in spirit*."

"*In flesh*" refers to Jesus' life in the world of flesh—that is, this temporal and fallen world. The crucifixion killed Jesus' natural human body.  
The resurrection brought him to life *in spirit*--a new body constituted spiritual.  
1 Corinthians 15:42—46.

2. Christ's judgment on all opposition is certain, verses 19—20a.  
(just as certain as his declaration of victory over the evil angels of the pre-flood world)

### What did Jesus do in His resurrected state?

Preach to the "spirits in prison."

### Who were these "spirits in prison"? Demons locked up in the Abyss.

A prison for spirits is always associated with the confinement of angelic beings—called Tartarus or the Abyss in the New Testament.  
Luke 8:31, Revelation 17:8, Revelation 20:3, 2 Pet 2:4-5, Jude 6.

**What demons?** "Those who formerly did not obey" Genesis 6:1-5  
Demons that transgressed God's creation order by crossing over from the spiritual dimension into the material to take control of humans. Jude 6-7  
Genesis 6:1-4 describes the possession of human beings by demons resulting in the complete corruption of the human race except for Noah and his family.

### What did Jesus proclaim to these "spirits in prison"?

His victory over them, sin, and death.

### When did this corruption of the human race become completely malignant?

Verse 20b In the days of Noah when God's patience was tested to its limit. The tiny minority spoke truth to the vast majority who would not listen.

There is a vast majority today who do not seem open to truth, but we must not be silent about God's gracious plan for their salvation.

3. Christ's deliverance of all who believe is certain, verse 20c—21.  
(just as certain as the deliverance of Noah and his family by the ark through the flood and Jesus' deliverance of all who trust in Him)

Like Noah's family being delivered by the Ark, Christians, confessing genuine faith by the waters of baptism, will be saved through the ark of Jesus' redeeming work of crucifixion and resurrection.

But baptism is more than a ritual. It is a pledge to pursue a new life in Christ.

Archeology makes it reasonable to conclude that Peter intended to make a connection between the region's heritage of flood stories and the true story of Noah. The Noah account reminds believers that God will not forget His own.

4. Christ's sovereign authority over all spiritual and earthly powers is complete, Verse 22.

Verse 22 certifies the completion of Christ's redemptive mission on behalf of all who believe:

Christ lived the life of complete devotion to God that I should have lived but could not.

Christ died in my place the death I should have died for my sins.

Christ rose from the dead as victor over death and sin for me.

Christ has gone ahead to the glory of heaven to prepare a place for His own.

And in Christ's ascension to glory God has subjected all things under his authority.