

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

1 Peter 3.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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1 Peter 3.

INTRODUCTION: during Peter's generation the readers of this first letter of his were confused and discouraged by the persecution they were encountering because of their faith. Peter exhorted them to stand strong, repeatedly reminding them of Christ's example, the riches of their inheritance in him, and the hope of his returning again to resurrect them to eternal glory. He explained how Christians should respond when they suffer because of their beliefs. Peter is called, the "apostle of hope." His primary message is to trust the Lord, live obediently no matter your circumstances, and keep your hope fixed on God's ultimate promise of deliverance. Suffering is to be expected, but it is temporary and yields great blessings for those who remain steadfast. Peter wrote this letter in the mid-60s A.D.

Topics.

- Woman, do not let your adorning be external gold.
- Husbands show honour to your wife.
- The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and he hears their prayers.
- Suffer for righteousness' sake and you will be blessed.
- It is better to suffer for doing good and having a good conscience.
- Jesus went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.
- God has exalted Jesus above the angels and all authorities and powers.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Peter spoke of spiritual milk, of God laying in Zion a living stone a corner stone rejected by men, but in God's sight chosen and precious, of a royal priesthood, a holy nation and of Jews and Gentiles becoming one new nation in Christ. He talked of people being called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, of being subject to every human institution and told believers not to use their freedom for evil. Peter spoke of Jesus bearing our sins in his body and believers being healed by his stripes.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Wives with Unsaved Husbands.

1 Peter 3:1-2 ----- ¹Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives ²when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

The word, "likewise" links us back to the previous chapter in which Peter told all brothers and sisters in Christ to put away malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all slander and live as servants of God, respecting everyone and loving those in the family of the Lord keeping our conduct among the Gentiles honourable so that they may speak well of God. Now Peter focuses on wives and husbands.

The following two things should be noted before we begin: -

1. Just because a man does not believe in God does not mean he is wicked many in the secular world do wonderful works of charity and love their families.
2. It is assumed that the husband in these verses though unsaved loves his wife.

This is not about submitting to a dominant, abusive and controlling man neither Jesus nor the apostles will tell a woman she has to submit to a husband who is abusive to her. Certainly Peter in the previous chapter told servants it is a gracious thing to be subject to their unjust masters when, mindful of God and endures sorrows while suffering unjustly (1 Peter 2:18-19), but to use these words of Peter to force a woman to submit to an abusive husband is reading more into the verse than what Peter is saying, certainly God will honour any woman who has no other choice but to submit especially when she does so being mindful of God, but it cannot be used to condemn a woman who flees from an abusive husband to find physical safety or mental, emotional and spiritual peace.

Peter in these verses is advising wives with unsaved husbands to quietly submit to them so that they may be won to Christ. The principle here is to be gentle and kind in contrast to doing anything that would bring tension into the marriage. The idea is not to impose or force her faith onto her husband through argument and quarrelling, but simply live the life of a godly woman so that her feminine respectful and faithful behaviour might win her husband over rather than feeling like she should constantly preach to him.

NOTE: there is another wonderful principle and encouragement here for all wives with unsaved husbands. Often they are unable to attend many Christian functions other woman with Christian husbands can. Here Peter is saying that before God it matters not as far as God's love toward a wife who may have to sacrifice certain functions she might like to attend, because God's love is no less toward her just because she cannot attend many religious functions. In fact her dependence on Christ and on Christ alone will have spiritual rewards that many others do not discover.

Women do not let your Adorning be External Gold.

1 Peter 3:3-6 ----- ³Do not let your adorning be external the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing ⁴but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, ⁶as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

These words of Peter's have sadly been used by some religious teachers to condemn woman for wearing lipstick and curling their hair etc., but this is not what Peter has in mind.

Peter is saying the following two things: -

1. No Christian woman should use make-up to appear sensual he is not talking about using makeup in a general manner as most women do.
2. No Christian woman should ever feel the need to have expensive hairstyles or wear expensive designer clothing and accessories to feel that she is of worth to herself or to God.

Peter is saying that a Christian woman's self-worth should not be dependent on how she looks on the outside, but on how abundant the fruits of the Spirit are on the inside. We may value the external, but God doesn't His eyes fall in love not with our outward appearance, but what is on the inside (i.e., kindness, compassion, grace, mercy, love and the readiness to forgive), if we want God to fall in love with us these are the things we should dress ourselves in.

It is important to notice the following two things concerning the words, "Holy women adorn themselves by submitting to their husbands as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (v5-6).

1. Abraham was not only a godly man who deeply loved God, but also loved his wife Sarah. This means he was not an abusive dominant man, but a man full of the fruits of the Spirit. The Bible states: - Abraham mourned and wept over Sarah's death clearly showing he loved her and not only did the Hittite people refuse to take Abraham money for Sarah's tomb, but gave him the best of their

tombs and told him he was a prince amongst their people (Gen 23:1-6). This clearly shows Abraham treated whoever he lived amongst with respect and decency.

2. The word lord here is not used in the sense of dominant and abusive master, but in respect to Abraham's good conduct.

Sadly throughout history many wives living with abusive controlling and dominant husbands have been condemned by some churches for escaping simply to find physical safety or mental, emotional and spiritual peace. Certain churches may condemn such behaviour, but God does not. Jesus understands the mental torment that abuse can inflict on a person, those who suffer such physical or verbal abuse and are in such emotionally and mentally painful circumstances should know that Christ's love and empathy goes out toward them. Being the Lord of all justice there is no-doubt Jesus judgment is not against the fleeing wife, but the abusive husband who is driving her to find shelter and mental peace.

Do not Fear anything that is Frightening.

The word frightening in the following verse, "You are children of Sarah if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening (v6) does not mean if you do not fear any abusive, dominant and controlling husband, but if while you remain faithful to your godly husband do not fear the persecution of the surrounding nations or fear what the world may do.

Husbands Show Honour to Your Wife.

- 1 Peter 3:7 ----- ⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Honour means esteeming the value of a person and showing them respect to the highest degree. Here is the balance to the wives submission, husbands are to not only live with their wives in an understanding way, showing them honour and giving them respect, but also to treat them as the weaker, meaning they are to live to protect them from harm because both the believing wife and husband are equally loved by God and heirs of His grace and through this grace heirs of eternal life.

So that your prayers may not be hindered: should a husband not show his wife respect and honour, but instead is abusive, dominant and controlling God will not hear his prayers unless they are prayers of repentance over of his prideful, aggressive and egotistical behaviour.

Have Unity of Mind, Brotherly Love, a Tender Heart, and a Humble Mind.

- 1 Peter 3:8-9 ----- ⁸Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

Though we must all agree on the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, unity of mind does not mean that we all have to agree on every detail of Bible doctrine or Scriptural teaching from Genesis to Revelation, but that we agree to accept the differences of each other. Even in a natural family not every member agrees in every way with each other rather the cement that binds them together is love.

Likewise the global family of Christ is made up of brothers and sisters from different cultures, nations and languages, different levels of education (especially religious), different mindsets and worldview and all sorts of past baggage, but if we are in Christ we belong to the same family and are all children of God and therefore heirs of eternal life and everlasting glory.

Sympathy: means understanding, compassion, kindness, consideration and empathy.

Brotherly love: carries the idea of having an affectionate friendly family spirit.

A tender heart: means having a loving, compassionate caring affectionate, kind and gentle heart.

A humble mind: means being unassuming meek self-effacing and respectful.

Evil: means wicked, malicious, immoral, nasty, spiteful and cruel (it refers mostly to those who deliberately inflict harm and hurt upon others).

Do not Repay Evil for Evil or Reviling for Reviling.

Jesus is our perfect example of not paying evil for evil, when being taken captive Jesus said: -

- Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? (Matt. 26:53)

And yet when the Roman soldiers nailed him to the cross rather than call on the twelve legions of angels he prayed: -

- Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34).

Loving Life and seeing Good Days.

1 Peter 3:10-11 ----- ¹⁰For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.

The words, "Whoever desires to love life" means whoever desires to enjoy life and be free of trouble. If we live a life of wickedness and speak lies to fulfil our own selfish ambition and deceive others for our own gain we will not only reap what we sow, but our hearts and minds will not find the joy of life that we are seeking after through dishonest and deceptive means.

NOTE: as one reads through the Bible it becomes very clear that God's will for every brother and sister in Christ for every circumstance of life is to take the path of love and the way of peace.

The Eyes of the Lord are on the Righteous, and He hears their Prayers.

1 Peter 3:12 ----- ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Christ's ears are open to the prayers of the righteous means God's favour is toward them. The righteous in this context refer to the following two groups: -

1. Those who trust fully in the Lord Jesus Christ for their righteousness and not in ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions.
2. Those who turn away from doing wrong, speaking lies and deceit and not only do well, but search out the way of peace for every situation and follow and practice it.

The face of the Lord is against the evil, means: -

- Christ will not hear the prayers of those who deny the existence of God.
- The prayers of those who live a lifestyle of wrongdoing and use others for their own selfish gain and deceive and lie to get what they want will not be heard.

Years ago on a T.V. program called the Amazing Race two religious women were behind the winning car. They knew if they could overtake the car in front of them they would not only win the race but win a million dollars. They prayed, "Dear God help us win this race, please give the car in front a puncture or cause an accident, in Jesus name Amen." This is a prayer that wishes harm on others for selfish gain and clearly a prayer Christ will not hear (meaning he will not answer).

Suffer for Righteousness' Sake and you will be Blessed.

1 Peter 3:13-17 ----- ¹³Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

Peter is saying, if we live a life of honesty and doing what is good and treat others with respect and decency, no-one will harm us because of our faith in Christ, but even if some do persecute us we should not fear them, but rather continue to do good and continue to share our faith (but share it with others not to those who are persecuting us, clearly they don't want to hear it).

Peter shines a spotlight on the words gentleness and respect these two pillars are not only two keys to witnessing, but also keys to avoiding rejection and persecution. When we show people gentleness and respect even though they maybe against our faith they will (in most cases) respect us.

It is better to Suffer for Doing Good and Having a Good Conscience.

The words, "It is better to suffer for doing good" (v17), means it is better to be slandered and spoken against knowing you have only done good, because when people who have seen our good behaviour and good works hear others speaking badly of us they will know that those who are slandering us are telling lies and making false accusations.

This is what Peter means when he says, "Have a good conscience" (v16) don't live a hypocritical and pretend religious life, meaning don't live a double life, don't be holy at church on Sunday and at religious functions and outside of them lead a life of wrongdoing and backbiting, gossiping, demeaning and degrading others. This is totally against the Spirit of Christ and when people slander you everyone who has seen you act and speak in such an ungodly manner will know that those slandering you are most likely telling the truth. Added to this, it not only brings a bad testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, but also to the entire Christian faith.

Jesus went and Proclaimed to the Spirits in Prison.

1 Peter 3:18-20 ----- ¹⁸For 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, ¹⁹by which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison ²⁰because 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.

These verses have caused much confusion amongst various religious teachers since there is a certain difficulty in understanding exactly what Peter is saying. So they have to be read in the context of the entire teaching of the Bible and not as an isolated group of verses that stand on their own.

Prison: symbolises sin and death and the human spirit trapped in (or by them). In the following words of Isaiah prison has the association of a person being in bondage to sin and death: -

- I am the LORD; I have called you (Israel) in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the (Gentile) nations, to open the eyes that are blind, *to bring out the prisoners* from the dungeon, *from the prison* those who sit in darkness (Isaiah 42:6-7).

Here prison refers to those who are in darkness meaning without the light of the Gospel that leads to God and eternal life. It refers those trapped by religious customs, traditions and laws that bring guilt and fear. The following words of Isaiah show that he understood that the expression "in prison" referred not to the dead, but to those living and bound in sin: -

- The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of *the prison* to those who are bound (Isaiah 61:1)

This is referring to people being bound by sin and death nowhere in the New Testament do we see Jesus setting free real criminals from real prisons. The Bible and the Gospel are about the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. Scripture presents mankind as being dead in trespasses and sin (i.e., in prison to sin and eternal death).

Prior to becoming believers, Paul told the Ephesians that they were: -

- Dead in trespasses and sins in which they once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience (Ephes. 2:1-2).

The prison Jesus Christ came to free all mankind from is the spiritual prison of death (separation from God) because of trespasses and sins.

The Dead and Disembodied Spirits.

This passage and the following three verses are often used by some religious teachers to support the mistaken belief that spirits without bodies actually exist and to prove the conscious existence of the dead as disembodied spirits. They teach that when Jesus died, he went and preached to these spirits without bodies in prison.

1. The first is when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea and said, "It is a ghost!" (spirit in KJV) and they cried out in fear (Matt 14:25-26) (Mark 6:48-49) since it was night and therefore dark and it is certain that no-one expected to see a man walking on water the disciples mistakenly thought they had seen a spirit or ghost when it was in actual fact Jesus who by his FAITH was able to transcend the laws of nature which Peter was also able to do for a little moment. The disciple were not seeing a disembodied spirit but the Lord Jesus Christ who climbed in the boat and continued the journey with them to the others side of the lake.
2. The second is when Jesus appeared to the eleven apostles after his death and resurrection, Luke writes, "Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit (Luke 24:36-37). Notice, Luke does not say Jesus was a spirit, but they thought he was a spirit. Jesus to prove he was not some kind of ghost like spirit without a body not only showed them his hands and his feet, and told them to touch him, but also ate some food so that they would see that a spirit has flesh and bones (i.e. a body) (Luke 24:38-43) showing that the resurrected Lord was not a ghost like spirit, but had a body of flesh and bones (immortal and eternal).

There is no evidence or proof in the Bible that living conscious disembodied spirits exist. Nevertheless it is easy to understand how the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost like spirit. Consider the following no-one had ever seen an immortal eternal resurrected human body before nor had anyone even considered such a miracle, even the apostles who Jesus told (a number of times) that after three days he would be resurrected from the grave did not understand what he meant until they saw him with their own eyes and touched him.

So the disciples had no idea of what they were looking at when Jesus appeared to them on water in the dark of night and after his resurrection, thus the reason they naturally thought they were looking at some kind of ghost like spirit, but the disciples thinking they had seen a disembodied spirit is not proof or evidence that spirits without bodies exist, many people today believe in ghost and aliens, but their belief in them is not proof they actually exist.

3. The third occasions is the verses we are reading in this chapter (i.e., "Jesus went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison) (1 Peter 3:19), but Peter is not saying Jesus died and went and preached to disembodied spirits nor is he

implying that the dead have a conscience existence as disembodied spirits and Jesus died and went and preached to these disembodied spirits. For this teaching to be true it requires that a dead person without a body is able to respond to the Gospel and be saved to eternal life after death and there is not one verse in the entire Bible that teaches once a person is dead their spirit without a body is able to hear the Gospel repent and be saved.

Regarding the dead the Bible says: -

- It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment (Heb. 9:27).
- Those who go down to the pit (grave) do not hope for your faithfulness (Isaiah 38:18) (meaning they have no consciousness or awareness).
- The dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten (Eccles. 9:5).

For further information concerning the dead, see the title: -

- Death (What happens when we Die) in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Another two reasons disembodied spirits do not harmonize with the Bible: -

1. Everywhere angels appear in the Bible, they do not appear as a vapour like ghost, but as bodily beings, yet Scripture refers to them as Spirits this is because they are eternal and immortal and not because they are a vapour like ghost without a body.
2. John in the following warning, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1) identifies spirits as being the spirit (good or bad) within living humans. The spirits here are living human beings. All spirits of Scripture have some form of body. Throughout the Bible spirits are always in a living body of an eternal angel or a mortal human which means that the phrase, "spirits in prison" is a perfect expression that denotes a person being in bondage to sin and death.

The Spirits in Prison.

Now back to Peter's words: -

- Christ being put to death, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹by which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison (v18-20).

NOTICE: verse nineteen does not state that Jesus personally went and preached to the spirits in prison, but rather it says, "By which" he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison." The words "by which" link it back to the spirit of the previous verse, meaning it was by the spirit that those in Noah's time had the word of righteousness proclaimed to them. This literally means that it was by the Spirit of Christ in Noah that he preached to the spirits in prison (i.e., people living in bondage to sin and death prior to the flood). The following notes show that the prophets speaking by the Holy Spirit concerning the glories of Christ is referred to as the Spirit of Christ in them.

Scripture states: -

- No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

The Holy Spirit enabled the prophets to speak of Christ's ministry and suffering, his death and resurrection, his return and the Kingdom to come it is in this sense that the Spirit of Christ spoke through the prophets by the Holy Spirit. God is the source of the Holy Spirit and speaks His messages by the Holy Spirit through men He chooses to inspire. They then by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit testify of Christ and in this sense the spirit of Christ or the messages or words of Christ are in the prophets.

Peter wrote: -

- The prophets inquired what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when they predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories (Peter 1:10-11).

In this context the Spirit of Christ in them, means the Spirit of prophecy concerning Christ that was in the Old Testament prophets.

The Spirits in Prison.

The phrase "The spirits in prison did not obey (v19-20). Show that they were not ignorant, but mentally conscious and able to make decisions and choices. Thus these words of Peter refer to the human spirit being imprisoned in a living human body to sin and death. The crime is sin, the prison is our body and the sentence is death. Peter is saying the spirit of a man or woman is trapped, bound and imprisoned because of sin. When the Gospel (the Spirit of Christ) was preached to the people in Noah's time, the spirits in prison were spirits of living human beings who: -

- Were violently wicked, disobedient and rebellious.
- Did not respond to Noah's message of righteousness.
- Were condemned by the preaching of Noah.

The following verses show that Noah and his family were messengers who proclaimed righteousness: -

- God did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, *a messenger of righteousness, with seven others*, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly (2 Peter 2:5)

And the author of Hebrews wrote: -

- By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the *righteousness that comes by faith* (Heb. 11:7).

Now consider: if Jesus after his death and resurrection did personally go to the generation of the wicked prior to the flood why would the Lord only go to those that were disobedient in the days of Noah? Especially since they already had a preacher of righteousness for one-hundred and twenty years, why wouldn't Christ go to all the other generations who were without such a righteous man as Noah and who had died before and after the time of Noah? This would be not only showing favouritism to a select generation of the wicked who have died, but also a great injustice toward all other generations should such a teaching be true.

Clearly Peter was referring to the spirit of Christ (i.e., the message of righteousness that leads to eternal life) that was in Noah and his family when they proclaimed the God's message of salvation during those one-hundred and twenty years.

Certainly it is true, no Scripture speaks of Noah preaching the Gospel as they do of the prophets, the apostles and Paul, but it is certain a godly man of Noah's tremendous faith and union with God would certainly have warned his generation of the impending doom if they did not repent.

The following is a similar story, Peter in chapter four wrote: -

- This is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does (Peter 4:6).

Some have mistakenly thought this verse means that the Gospel was preached to those who have died. Based on this verse they believe people die and then have the Gospel preached to them so that they may live eternally as God does, but this is a grossly erroneous teaching since it goes against the entire teaching of the Bible. Certainly Peter is talking about those who have already died, but he is referring to those who though now dead had the Gospel proclaimed to them when

they were alive. Peter does not mean they had the Gospel proclaimed to them when they were dead or after they died, rather he is saying that they are now dead and had the Gospel preached to them prior to their death.

Baptism which Corresponds to Noah and the Ark that now Saves You.

1 Peter 3:21-22 ----- 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, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Today water baptism corresponds to Noah and his family being saved from the flood by the ark. Noah and his family entered the ark the flood came and brought death and destruction to those outside of the ark. By being in the ark Noah and his family were saved from God's judgment and death.

The ark: is of course a symbol of Christ.

The flood: is a symbol of the coming judgment of God on this world.

Noah and his family: are, a symbol of the family of Christ.

God the heavenly Father through water baptism has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of his beloved Son (Col. 1:13) which will save us from God's judgment to come as the ark saved Noah and his family from the flood.

The entire human race not only stands all their life-time subject to bondage of sin and guilt as a community of prisoners, but are also destined to death (Heb. 2:15). The way to escape from this prison is through water baptism into the Lord Jesus Christ, the real and eternal ark of God. Whoever is in Christ is delivered from the bondage of the law to condemn to eternal death because of sin.

Whoever is in the Lord Jesus Christ will be carried by their faith in him into a new world of eternal glory as the ark carried Noah and his family into a new-life and new world. Jesus Christ is the real and true ark that delivers all humans from the prison of sin and eternal death.

For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).

Baptism Now Saves You.

The words: -

- Baptism, which corresponds to this (Noah and the flood), 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 (v21).

Since there has been much confusion over these verses, it helps to consider the following, the waters of the flood could not have saved Noah and his family, had they not made use of the ark had they been immersed in the water they would have perished, being in the ark allowed them to be carried up on the water that was destroying everything in its path.

So it was not the water that saved Noah and his family, but the ARK. Likewise it is not the water of baptism saves, but Christ. We know this because Peter to guard against religious people thinking that the mere external act of baptism with water will save a sinner states that water baptism is not simply a "removal of dirt from the body" (v21) (meaning not just the act of being dipped in water), but also involves a person's conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ meaning there has to be a sincere and true faith in Christ's death and resurrection and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Water baptism is designed to shine a spotlight on the faith of the person being baptised in contrast to it being simply an external act of washing. The words, "But the answer of a good conscience toward God" (v21) implies that when baptism is

being performed, there should be a testimony of the person being baptised that evidences their sincere faith and devotion in Christ and that their mind and conscience has been enlightened to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is important because the real value of baptism and its power in saving is not in the mere external act of it, but in the state of the heart, indicated by the testimony of the person being baptised.

Water baptism that saves is baptism that is administered in connection
with true repentance and true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following show how Noah, the flood and the ark perfectly reflect Christian water baptism: -

- The waters of the flood washed away all the corruptness of the world, while the water of baptism symbolises the washing away of all the sin of the person being baptised.
- The ark saving Noah and his family from certain destruction is a perfect reflection of those in the Lord Jesus Christ (the true ark of God) being saved from eternal destruction.
- As long as Noah and his family remained (with much patience) in the ark until the waters resided and it rested on safe ground they were kept safe through the flood, clearly a perfect reflection of those who remain in Christ being carried by faith and God's grace through the troubled waters of life until they are brought to the eternal Kingdom where nothing will harm or hurt them any longer.

CONSIDER: long before the flood Noah believed in God; walked uprightly before him, found grace in his sight and obeyed him in building the ark. There is no-doubt Noah would have been saved to eternal life whether there was a flood or not, but God made the flood the means of destroying the corrupt and violent world and the ark the means of Noah's salvation from certain destruction.

Likewise, we are saved by faith and grace in being in the true ark of God the Lord Jesus Christ so should someone seeking God find they are unable to be baptised because of illness, lack of water, lack of knowledge or have no-one to baptise them, they will be saved since there is no-doubt Noah who God called a righteous man long before the flood came was saved to eternal life. But should anyone refuse being water baptised without a valid reason one would have to question the genuineness, substance and validity of their faith since it is clearly taught not only by Jesus, but also the apostles throughout the New Testament. Added to this Jesus himself set the example for all Christians by being water baptised himself and to make the value and importance of this spiritual baptism even clearer Jesus said to John the Baptist: -

- Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness then Jesus was baptized and immediately he came up from the water the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove coming to rest on him and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:15-17)

Clearly Jesus did not need to be baptised to be accepted and saved by God his heavenly Father, yet God's heart rejoices and confirms his delight in his Sons obedience to being water baptised by John. If Jesus the Lord of glory the Son of God was willing to humble himself and be water baptised, who are we to stand in pride and say no?

Water Baptism and the Covenant.

A true covenant to be legal requires that two parties agree to the terms of the covenant. Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai read out the Covenant of God to all the people of Israel and they with one voice agreed to enter into the LORD'S Covenant and this declaration sealed the Covenant between God and the nation of Israel. Likewise water baptism seals our Covenant relationship with God since it is a public declaration that we like Israel of old are fully agreeing to enter into God's New Covenant in Christ. Thus water baptism implies a consecration and dedication of the heart, the mind and the body to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is certain that when a repentant sinner comes up out of the waters of baptism (as Jesus did) they can be fully assured that God's voice is resounding in delight from heaven with the words, "This is My beloved child in who I am well pleased."

NOTE: simply being water baptised will save no-one, rather Mark tells us "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16) anyone being baptised without faith is simply taking a public dip in water. This is why baby baptisms are not taught in the Bible. True water baptism is not a mere ceremonial tradition of religion, but rather it is a conscious awareness that it is an ordinance of Christ for his people and a wiliness from the heart to submit in faith to the Lord in obedience to his word and to bring glory to his name.

Peter wrote, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The Holy Spirit in this context embraces God's forgiveness, the indwelling Spirit of God and the gift of righteousness that God grants to all who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In simple terms it is that Spirit that saves a sinner to eternal life.

God has exalted Jesus above the Angels and all Authorities and Powers.

Here is the wonder and glory of our salvation and of the Christ we worship: -

- Jesus has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him (v22).

Paul in his letter to the Ephesian brothers and sisters wrote: -

- God raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. God put all things under Christ's feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the Lord who fills all in all (Eph. 1:20-23).

End