

The Book of I Peter – Part Fifteen

April 10, 2011

1). Last week we focused on the reason behind why the fallen angels left their “proper abode” in order to create offspring with the daughters of men. It happened immediately after man began to multiply on the face of the earth, very near the initial creation of man...and it continued to happen even after the Flood of Noah’s day, which God had brought about to rid the earth of this abomination to His natural order of things.

a) The main reason why the demons mixed their seed with the seed of woman was to prevent THE “seed of the woman” (mentioned in Gen. 3:15 as the one who would deliver the lethal blow to Satan) from coming, thereby assuring that Satan would retain his position of authority over the heavens and the earth.

b) As we know, Satan was not successful in this attempt – not in Noah’s day, not in Abraham’s day, not in Israel’s day, nor will he be successful in the very near future when it occurs yet again surrounding the time of Antichrist and the time of the end.

c) And the most interesting part of this, as we study through Peter’s letter to the “dispersed pilgrims” (scattered kingdom-seeking Christians), is why Peter saw it necessary to make mention of these demons who are currently chained and awaiting judgment for their actions, and in particular focusing on Noah being saved from that wickedness –

1Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

2). We can see that the reason for Peter’s mention of this is that he is pointing out the anti-type of this that now saves us – baptism. We see that 8 souls – Noah and his family – were saved through water... and so are *we* saved through water. This is what we will be exploring today.

a) It is very important to keep in mind what Peter has already said, but in particular let's focus on the beginning part of his letter -

I Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

b) Peter is writing about our imperishable inheritance that is reserved for us in heaven, for those Christians who keep their faith strong until the end. This is a faith that resides in the living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This, Peter says, we have been "born again to," meaning we were born again first (initially saved), then we are to continue to have faith because it is that continuing faith that will protect us for the salvation which will be revealed in the last time - specifically, the salvation of the soul. Trials come about to test our faith for this very reason (the salvation of the soul), but we are to hold fast to Jesus Christ, in obedience, so that our faith may be found to be worthy of praise and honor and glory when we see Him again. Everything else that Peter says is in this context, and he makes particular mention of behaviors that are acceptable and those that aren't (making mention that we must abstain from fleshly lusts because they wage war *against our soul*), directing some of his comments to the different roles and positions that each one of us hold as we sojourn through this brief life. Any suffering we have to go through as a result of our choice to remain faithfully obedient to the commands of God is to be viewed as a *blessing*, regardless of what occurs to us by the hands of unrighteous people.

b) It is interesting to see that Peter starts his letter with mention of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, he then mentions the suffering that Jesus endured and the purpose for His death on the cross, and then right here we see him mentioning Christ's resurrection yet again, though from the aspect of Him going and preaching to those disobedient spirits in prison who failed to prevent Him - the Seed of the woman - from coming and accomplishing man's redemption.

c) The center point for his encouragement and warning is Christ's work – His death (the spilling of His precious blood) redeemed us “from our futile way of life inherited from our fathers,” and He died for sins “once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit...” His suffering “in the flesh” which led to death gave us an example by which we are to live our lives now (abstain from all fleshly lusts), and His resurrection gives us the life and power necessary to win victory over our “flesh” and lead us into salvation... the salvation of our souls.

d) It's all about death and resurrection, which is the symbolism behind “baptism,” which, as Peter points out, now “saves us”... because it is “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Baptism is “not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience.” Baptism is about the proclamation of intent and the proclamation of desire to keep the old man of “flesh” in his proper place of death, and to live by the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. Isn't that what Peter keeps talking about?

e) So clearly the mention of baptism now “saving us” has nothing to do with initial salvation, as the whole context of Peter's letter is about the salvation of the soul. There's no need to go over and over that point, as it seems to be crystal clear.

3) So comparing the thoughts that “baptism now saves us” and we are “protected by the power of God through faith” for our future salvation, we can see that baptism and faith are interconnected. It takes faith to walk the walk of obedience, and it takes the death of the old man and the resurrection of the Spirit-man in order to accomplish it.

a) We had previously discussed what it looks like to have “faith” that leads to the salvation of the soul. We see it mentioned in Hebrews 11 and 12 and in I Peter – it's holding true and fast your belief in what God has said regarding present actions/behaviors in light of future rewards/punishments... *and acting on those beliefs concerning what God has said*, regardless of the worldly circumstances you may find yourself in. It really is all about FAITH/BELIEF –

Hebrews 10:35

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. 38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

c). And speaking of Noah and Peter's mention of him "being saved though water," he's spoken about in this same chapter of the "men of old" who "gained approval" -

Hebrew 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

d). Noah believed what God had said concerning His warning of 'things not yet seen.' He then organized his life with a view to deliverance - he 'prepared an ark for the saving of his household.' That is faith that leads to the saving of the soul.

e). The waters of the flood brought death to the corrupted families of the earth, those that partook in that perverted wickedness, but it provided the buoyancy for life for Noah and his household because of their faithful obedience to God's revelation.

f) This is exactly what Peter is pointing out. It is only by removing ourselves (and allowing ourselves to be removed) by our good conscience toward God from the unrighteousness all around us that we will ever see the salvation that awaits us... a salvation that leads to new life in a new world, as Noah's did. It is the protection of God that brought Noah through, but he couldn't have accessed that protection had he not believed and acted upon that belief concerning the warnings of things to come. His faith saved him... and our faith will save us. Noah's faith protected him... and our faith will protect us.

g) And this is all possible because Jesus, who died once - the just for the unjust - was made alive in the Spirit (was resurrected) and now sits at the right hand of God.

4). And Peter makes mention of this in this way -

I Peter 3:21

There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

a) Note the mention of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died at the hands of unrighteous men in order to “bring us to God,” now sits at the right hand of God, “angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.”

b) The very ones that put Jesus to death, and the very ones who tried so desperately to prevent His coming through the seed of the woman, are now “made subject to Him.” Not that Jesus is ruling as King yet, but He sits at the honored position next to God Himself, second in command if you will, over all. There is nothing and no one higher in position or power than Jesus, other than His Father, and His resurrection assured this position. Prior to Jesus’ death, when He was “in the likeness of sinful flesh” in His “body of humiliation,” he allowed himself to be a “little lower than the angels” -

Hebrews 2:9

But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

And-

Hebrews 1:3

3 When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

The very resurrection that makes possible our living hope makes possible our faith that will lead to the salvation of our soul... and the very resurrection that protects us as we journey toward the salvation of our soul gives us the example that we are to emulate - suffering, death, burial and resurrection resulting in rulership. And if we emulate it, we can be assured that this very same position that Christ has relative to God, we will receive relative to Christ -

Revelation 3:19

'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline [child-training]; therefore be zealous and repent [picture of baptism, put to death the old man and walk in the Spirit of God] 20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne [position of authority over all angels and authorities and powers... the very ones who sought to kill us and prevent us from taking their positions, as they did Christ]. 22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" [This is a message for those already redeemed.]

c) How encouraging it is that Peter makes us look back at what Christ did – He died for us that we could be “brought to God” – and He shows us the road that we are to follow if we want to be saved from the judgment that will come upon the disobedient – suffering, faithfulness to what we believe about God’s revelation concerning things to come, and finally victory.

5) Paul talks about this same thing, and it is almost a carbon copy of what Peter says in his first letter, though it gives us more information concerning what exactly baptism symbolizes. It would be no small thing to note that Peter mentions Paul’s teaching in his second letter, referencing that his audience would have been familiar with Paul’s teachings... teachings that Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, calls “Scripture” –

II Peter 3:14

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

a) So Paul writes this --

Romans 6:3

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that

the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

b). What is baptism? Being united together in the likeness of Christ's death, which we do by -

1Peter 4:1

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind...

c) And then "living with Him" as we are "raised with Him" -

Colossians 2:12

...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

d). Through baptism we are buried with Him in death, symbolizing the death of our "old man," as we go under the water which symbolizes the place of death - then we are raised from the dead, by the power of the Spirit, as we come out of the water, to walk in newness of life in order to be led by the Spirit in faithful obedience to the word of God.

e). Our old sin nature, the 'old man', is to remain in the place of death so that we are no longer slaves of sin walking according to the flesh, but instead we are to be led by the Spirit, so as to be fruitful in the antitype of the 3rd Day of Genesis 1:9-13 (the third day is always associated with resurrection and life and fruit-bearing)-

Genesis 1:9

Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. 10 God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. 13 There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

f) Bearing fruit worthy of the Kingdom can only be produced in the realm of the Spirit, never in the flesh -

John 12:24

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

John 15:8

"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Matthew 13:23

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word [of the Kingdom] and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

g). The Spirit's leading for us, in the same way as Israel out of Egypt, is in one direction - to the heavenly realm of the Kingdom promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants -

Romans 4:13

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

5). Let's go back to Noah again-

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

b). Note again that it was FAITH that brought about salvation for Noah and his household - it was his belief in what God had said concerning things 'not yet seen' that made the saving of eight souls possible.

c). Knowing what God had said concerning those things not yet seen, Noah and his household organized their lives accordingly - the building of the ark - resulting in the saving of souls - Noah becoming the heir of righteousness which is according to faith.

6). And we have seen that the antitype of this, 'which now saves us' is baptism.

a). It is because we have believed what God has said concerning things not yet seen –

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith [believing God to the saving of the soul] is the substance [the unshakable foundation] of things hoped for, the evidence [a bringing to light so that we have proof] of things not seen.

And -

Romans 8:23

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

And -

Hebrews 4:1

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

b). We have not yet seen with our natural eyes the coming Kingdom of Christ, the Day of Rest, and in particular the Judgment which occurs immediately prior to it – but we do believe what God has said about it . Therefore, hopefully, we will organize our lives (build our ark if you will) in such a way that will prepare us to receive the salvation to be revealed in the last time. This is exactly what Peter exhorts us to do.

7). As we plunge beneath the waters of baptism and rise again (symbolically *daily*), we are declaring our intention to die to self and to walk according to the Spirit in faithful obedience *as a continuous process* to spiritual maturity.

a). We declare our intention to keep our old man in the place of death, we declare that we have believed what God has said about this in relation to entrance into the coming Kingdom, and we declare our intention to be found worthy at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Colossians 3:1

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not

on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

b). If we embrace this baptism now, then the future baptism that awaits us at the Judgment Seat will hold no fear -

Luke 3:16

John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Revelation 1:14

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

I Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.