



ILLUSTRATION

Shooting at God

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Topics: Childishness; Fear; Fourth of July; God
Filters: Christian Culture; Humor; Stories; Youth & Children
References: Psalm 53:5 , Daniel 5:6 , Hebrews 10:27
Tone: Neutral/Mixed

When the fireworks display began on the Fourth of July, my 6-year-old nephew became so frightened I had to take him home. As we drove away, he said, "I bet God is mad at those people shooting at him!"

Opal Stout, Cottageville, West Virginia. Christian Reader, "Kids of the Kingdom."

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ILLUSTRATION

Thankful for Freedom

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Topics: Citizenship; Complaining; Complaints; Fourth of July; Freedom; Government; Gratitude; Happiness; Liberty; Thanksgiving

Filters: Stories

References: Acts 21:39 , Romans 13:1-7 , 1 Peter 2:17

Tone: Commend

While I was attending graduate school in the early 1980s, I stopped for coffee in a Malibu, California, restaurant. Coming from a non-political family, I knew nothing of political activists—but I met one that day in that restaurant.

He told everyone what a mess the United States had become. He ridiculed our government and our educational, industrial, and banking systems. He was on such a roll that he had everyone on his side except for two people: an old man and me. The activist shied away from me, seeing my Pepperdine hat, Ronald Reagan tee shirt, and *Wall Street Journal*. So he went after the old man.

As he approached, the old man continued slurping his soup and turned his back. The activist sat down at the old man's table and offered, "Mister, if you can tell me just one thing the United States has ever done for you, just one measly thing, I will leave you alone."

Finally, the old man looked up. He licked his spoon clean and set it down on the table. His red face indicated years of laboring in the sun. With a heavy Russian accent, he replied, "Ve hold zees truz to be self-evident, dat all men created equal, life, liberty, perzuit of happiness." Then he went back to the soup. The activist, defeated, could not argue against what the old man had experienced on both sides of communism.

Michael Blakley, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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PATTERN NUMBER EIGHT THE RIGHT GAME PLAN 3:13-22

KEY VERSES: 3:15, 16

But set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you, but doing this with gentleness and reverence, Keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: 3:15

TEXT: 3:13-22

And who is he that will do you harm if you become zealous of the good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness you will be blessed. Have no fear of them nor be troubled But set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you but doing this with gentleness and reverence, Keeping a clear conscience, so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ. For it is better to be suffering when doing good if it should be the will of God than when doing wrong Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous in order that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit in which also having proceeded he preached to the spirits in prison. Who formerly did not obey when God's patience was waiting in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water. Baptism which also corresponds to this is now saving you not a removing of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

EXPOSITION: The Preacher in the book of Ecclesiastes says in Ecc. 11:9, "Rejoice O young man in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." And in 12:14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

Solomon says in the book of Proverbs, 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Jesus says in the Sermon of the Mount, "Enter in at the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there be who go in that way, because narrow is the gate and hard is the way that leads unto life, and few there be that find it."

There are many today who are missing the joy of playing life by the right game plans and as a result are losers. Those who have learned to play life with Jesus Christ at the controls have found real purpose and meaning in their lives. It is, however, possible after becoming a Christian and playing in the game of life for Jesus Christ, to be playing with the wrong game plan--to be playing for oneself and dominated by the desires of the flesh, rather than playing for Jesus Christ and being dominated by the Spirit. This is what Paul is referring to in Romans 12 verse 2, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within so that you may prove and practice what the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity."

- ① John Myland -
- ② changed life is the greatest witness
- ③ concentrate on content rather than change

④ apprehension vs. application

Peter outlines the right game plan in this particular passage that will lead to a truthful and meaningful relationship with the Savior.

This is really important, because as Christians we one day are going to be standing before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Verse Thirteen: And who is he that will do you harm if you become zealous of the good?

1. Here Peter raises a question in view of the life that he has described in the previous verses "Who is the person that is going to do you harm if you become zealous in striving for unity, being sympathetic, loving brethren, tender-hearted, humble minded, not giving evil for evil or verbal abuse for verbal abuse, but you are a blessing and you are keeping your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit, and you're turning away from evil and doing good and you are seeking peace and pursuing?" It is pretty difficult to want to hurt someone like this.

Verse Fourteen: But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness you will be blessed. Have no fear of them nor be troubled.

1. Here Peter gives the promise if even being zealous for good you should suffer, for the sake of righteousness, you will be blessed.
2. Jesus, once again on the Sermon on the Mount says in Matt. 5:10, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
3. There is a two-fold command in view of the fact that if while you are being zealous for good you should suffer for righteousness, have no fear of them nor be troubled.
4. Jesus says in Matt. 10:26-28, "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops, and do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the souls. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."
5. Jesus also said in the upper room, to the disciples, "Stop being troubled in your heart, if you believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many dwelling places, if it were not so I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I am going to come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." John 14:1, 2
6. In John 14:27, He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives, gives I unto you, Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."
7. Reese points out, "The man without faith feels the harm in the trouble itself, unpopularity, slander, misrepresentation, ill health, bereavement, whereas the Christian sees nothing as harm unless the harm is in his spirit, his character, his devotion to his Lord. As long as trouble throws us back on Christ, calls out a stronger trust in him, challenges to a firmer courage for him, its threat of harm is averted. More than that, it is converted into assets of beauty and grace. You have sung H. G. Spafford's hymn, 'It Is Well', but have you sung it knowing its birthplace in a heart of anguish? Spafford was a Christian lawyer in Chicago whose wife and four young children were at sea. In the ill-fated sailing vessel, colliding with another ship, the vessel went down in 20 minutes. All the children were lost. Mrs. Spafford was picked up from the bone-chilling sea and for two weeks could send no message to her husband. When at last the rescue ship reached the coast of Ireland, she cable 'Saved Alone'. In the depths of his bereavement and at the height of his unshatterable faith he wrote, 'When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say It is well, It is well with my soul.' Suffering? Yes, Damage, No. It is well with my soul."

Clint Estridge

The Beautiful Life!
Gal. 5:22

Verse Fifteen: But set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you but doing this with gentleness and reverence.

1. Peter says "have no fear of them or be troubled, but set Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you a reason concerning the hope that is in you."
2. I am certain that Peter is commanding these dear saints to do what he failed to do at the critical hour of the Savior's crucifixion. Who can number the hours of agony and pain for his failure and fear when he should have openly identified himself to make a defense when he had the opportunity?
3. Paul tells the Romans in Rom. 10:9-10, "For if ye tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, and believe in your own heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God, and with his mouth he tells others of his faith confirming his salvation."
4. Verse 15 goes on to say, "always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you."
5. The Christian witness is one who always needs to be prepared. Prepared when the opportunity comes to make a defense to everyone who is asking for a reason concerning the hope in you.
6. This hope which is in us has been something Peter spoke about in 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 by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."
7. Reese points out, "It is noteworthy that the sanctuary in which Christ is to be acknowledged as holy and worshipped is the heart. Such phraseology may have in mind circumstances due to persecution, in which joining in corporate worship in the common meeting place might be impossible. Christians are thus exhorted, whatever their circumstances, to enjoy living communion with Christ by realizing his indwelling presence and by maintaining inner heart reverence toward him. Such an exhortation also emphasizes the inner and spiritual character of all true Christian worship. It is ultimately independent of place, for Christ has promised to manifest his presence not in particular buildings, nor in connection with visible material objects, but with his people in their hearts and in their midst."
8. But doing this, that is making a defense, "with gentleness and reverence."
9. Here Peter gives a warning as to how this defense is to be made. First with gentleness and secondly with reverence. The wives were admonished in the first part of this chapter to be witnessing without a word by their behavior, and that the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit in the sight of God was very costly.
10. Self assertion, argument, and dogmatic force have no place in the Scriptural definition of a witness. *Def. of witness.*

Verse Sixteen: Keeping a clear conscience, so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ.

1. Gentleness, reverence and a clear conscience are the three things that are going to make for a most effective witness. *I can't have a ministry in someone else's life if my own conscience is not clear.*
2. Paul says in Acts 24:16, "And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men."
3. The reason here for keeping a clear conscience is so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting or reviling your good behavior

How allows failure to make us sensitive to our response. 3. Make Him Lord + Live like it!!

*① Without a word
② Gentleness
③ Reverence
④ Clear conscience*

| TOPIC | REF # | TEXT |
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evangelism. They can draw people into a truth that points beyond this world into the next. Just by sticking it out in our marriages, we can build a monument to the principle and the practice of reconciliation.

Years ago Paul Simon wrote a best-selling song proclaiming “Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover.” A Christian needs just one reason to stay with his or her “lover”: the analogy of Christ and his church.

pp. 36–37

Marriage

694-11

Love is not a natural response that gushes out of us unbidden. Infatuation sometimes does that—at the beginning of a relationship at least—but hate is always ready to naturally spring forth, like the “Old Faithful” geyser at Yellowstone National Park. Christian love, on the other hand, must be chased after, aspired to, and practiced.

The popular culture completely misunderstands this principle. One of the cruelest *and* most self-condemning remarks I’ve ever heard is the one that men often use when they leave their wives for another woman: “The truth is, I’ve never loved you.” This is meant to be an attack on the wife—saying in effect, “The truth is, I’ve never found you *lovable*.” But put in a Christian context, it’s a confession of the man’s utter failure to be a Christian. If he hasn’t loved his wife, it is not his wife’s fault, but *his*. Jesus calls us to love even the unlovable—even our enemies!—so a man who says “I’ve never loved you” is a man who is saying essentially this: “I’ve never acted like a Christian.”

When we love well, we please God. This shouldn’t be hard to figure out. The best way for someone to get into good graces is to be kind to my children. All Christians are God’s children; by loving others, we bring enormous pleasure to our heavenly Father.

pp. 40–41

Marriage

694-12

Allow your marriage relationship to stretch your love and to enlarge your capacity for love—to teach you to be a Christian. Use marriage as a practice court, where you learn to accept another person and serve him or her. And please don’t limit this “love” to “spiritual” things like praying, preaching, and exhorting. Part of the experience of love is delighting each other in very “earthly” ways.

p. 42

| TOPIC | REF # | TEXT |
|----------|--------|---|
| Marriage | 282-07 | <p>The game is called “Tank Check,” and it is played like this. When you come home, one of you says to the other, “On a scale of zero to ten, how is your love tank tonight?” Zero means empty, and 10 means “I am full of love and can’t handle any more.” You give a reading on your emotional love tank—10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0, indicating how full it is. Your spouse says, “What could I do to help fill it?”</p> <p>Then you make a suggestion—something you would like your spouse to do or say that evening. To the best of his ability, he will respond to your request. Then you repeat the process in the reverse order so that both of you have the opportunity to do a reading on your love tank and to make a suggestion toward filling it. If you play the game for three weeks, you will be hooked on it, and it can be a playful way of stimulating love expressions in your marriage.</p> <p>One husband said to me, “I don’t like that love tank game. I played it with my life. I came home and said to her, ‘On a scale of zero to ten, how’s your love tank tonight?’ She said, ‘About seven.’ I asked, ‘What could I do to help fill it?’ She said, ‘The greatest thing you could do for me tonight is to do the laundry.’ I said, ‘Love and laundry? I don’t get it.’”</p> <p>I said, “That’s the problem. Perhaps you don’t understand your wife’s love language. What’s your primary love language?”</p> <p>Without hesitation he said, “Physical touch, and especially the sexual part of the marriage.”</p> <p>“Listen to me carefully,” I said. “The love you feel when your wife expresses love by physical touch is the same love your wife feels when you do the laundry.”</p> <p>“Bring on the laundry,” he shouted. <u>“I’ll wash the clothes every night if it makes her feel that good.”</u></p> <p>p. 126</p> |
| Marriage | 282-08 | <p>We are talking about love, and love is something you do for someone else, not something you do for yourself. Most of us do many things each day that do not come “naturally” for us. For some of us, that is getting out of bed in the morning. We go against our feelings and get out of bed. Why? Because we believe there is something worthwhile to do that day. And normally, before the day is over, we feel good about having gotten up. Our actions preceded our emotions.</p> <p>p. 136</p> |

in Christ.

4. Verses 15 and 16 form the key verses for pattern number eight, "The Right Game Plan." Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says in chapter 6, "Last of all I want to say this, your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you. Put on all of God's armor so that you may be able to stand safe against the wiles of satan, for we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies, the evil kings of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world, and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world. So use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over you will be standing up."

5. Since we are going into battle it is really important that we have the right game plan before we enter the conflict. Peter's suggestion here for the right game plan is to set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking us for a reason concerning the hope that is in us, but doing this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience so that in case we are being spoken against they may be put to shame those who are insulting or reviling our good behavior in Christ. *Just asking questions + get into the game. He can have my whole life.*

Verse Seventeen: For it is better to be suffering when doing good if it should be the will of God than when doing wrong.

1. Now Peter gives the reason for the commands in verses 15 and 16, it is better to be suffering for doing good if it should be the will of God than when doing wrong.
2. This is a statement of principle from the pen of Peter.
3. We have already noted the phrase "the will of God" in chapter 2, verse 15, "For so is the will of God that by doing good you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."
4. 2:20, "For what credit is it if when you are sinning, and if you are enduring being beaten, but if when you doing good and suffering for it and this you are enduring, this is commendable in the sight of God."
5. Lange points out, "It is infinitely better to suffer once with Christ, than to suffer eternally without Christ."
6. Gehman, in his book *Let My Heart Be Broken*, in speaking of the strength of the Korean Church says, "As I put the report in my pocket to study later, Dr. Moffit pointing to a man walking along the corridor said, 'There's a story in that man. His name is Jin Ty Kim and he's the ruling elder of a new church with a new building program. The congregation had raised all the money it could find and Jin himself had given \$200--his life's savings. Because he felt he had to contribute more, he came to the hospital in the hope of selling his eye or some part of his body so that he might make a further contribution to the building fund. When we refused to take his eye, he broke down and wept saying that after much consideration and prayer he had reached the final decision to make such a sacrifice and that if we wouldn't buy it, then he wanted at least to donate it to some needy individual. We still had to refuse, but such an attitude of mind and heart is typical of the willingness of sacrifice which accounts for the great strength of the Church in Korea."

Verse Eighteen: Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous in order that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

1. Peter is going to build further on his argument by referring once again to the Person of Christ and his sufferings as he did in chapter 2. Because Christ also died once for all for sins.
2. Paul, II Cor. 5:21 says, "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."
3. Heb. 9:26-28, "No, the fact is that now in this point in time the end of the present age, he has appeared once and for all to abolish sin by the sacrifice of Himself and just as surely as it is appointed for all men to die, and after that pass to their judgment, so it is certain that Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, and after that, to those who look for him, he will appear a second time, not this time to deal with sin, but to bring them to full salvation."
4. Peter points out it is the righteous for the unrighteous who died once for all for sins. The purpose for doing this is in order that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.
5. Ross, in speaking on this particular verse, says, "It is one of the shortest and simplest and yet one of the richest summaries give in the New Testament of the meaning of the cross of Jesus. He also links the thought with the message of the preceding about the brave souls who with a good conscience suffer for righteousness' sake. Their Lord stands beside them. He also suffered with a good conscience for a high cause. Let this example help them to endure." *
6. Smith points out, "He suffers no more, agonizes no more, died no more. When he cried on the cross, 'It is finished' it was the victor's shout and told the earth that his last pang had been endured and that there remained for him eternal repose in the bosom of his father. Thus, a beam of comforting light falls on the sufferings of Christians. They too, are for once, during a brief lifetime will soon be over, then will come rest and enjoyment, heaven and immortality. 'Our afflictions are light and but for a moment' II Cor. 4:17, and even if in some cases they are protracted through the entire period of three score years and ten, yet in comparison with eternity this is but a little while." *Suffering - glory*
7. "Being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." This phrase must have been a great comfort to those who were suffering and not knowing for certain whence they would be giving their lives up for the cause of Christ. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, points out that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And to the Philippians, he would much rather depart and be with Christ which is far better. Life, to him, was Christ, and to die would be a gain. *Death is the anesthetic, the veil which he changes*
8. These words are a reminder of the words of Jesus in the Bread of Life Discourse in John 6, verse 63, "It is the spirit that gives life. The flesh is to no avail. Words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."

Verse Nineteen: In which also having proceeded he preached to the spirits in prison.

1. We enter upon one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament with many and varied interpretations. I do not want to labor the point, however, but just to try to understand the basic teaching of these verses. *Great Bible Study in the Sky*
- * 2. "In which," of course, refers back to the Spirit of verse 18. In the spirit also having proceeded, he preached to the spirits in prison.
- * 3. We have already learned back in chapter 1:11, it was the Spirit of Christ who was in the prophets making clear when he was testifying beforehand concerning the sufferings of Christ, and the glories along with them.

5. These are angelic beings, specifically fallen angels, who have been imprisoned until judgment. Christ's preaching to them following his death

Deeper Discoveries

was a victory proclamation. This view seems to find a parallel in Jude 6 and 7, where Jude spoke of angels being kept in prison, awaiting their judgment (cf. 2 Pet. 2:4-6). The usage of the word *spirit* without a qualifying genitive indicates that the term describes angels. Also, angels are spoken of in the context as having been brought into submission following this event (v. 22). A variation of this view suggests that this refers to Christ's announcement to departed spirits of the triumph of his resurrection, declaring to them the victory he had achieved by his death and resurrection. Some interpreters suggest that Jesus offered no hope of salvation to these spirits. He did not evangelize them but simply proclaimed the victory of his resurrection to them. Either variation of this view would seem to be the best alternative (see Geisler and Howe, 534).

Jude 6, 7 (NET)

You also know that the angels who did not keep within their proper domain but abandoned their own place of residence, he has kept in eternal chains in utter darkness, locked up for the judgment of the great Day. So also Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns, since they indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire in a way similar to these angels, are now displayed as an example by suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

2 Peter 2:4-6 (NET)

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell and locked them up in chains in utter darkness, to be kept until the judgment, and if he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah, a herald of righteousness, along with seven others, when God brought a flood on an ungodly world, and if he turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction, having appointed them to serve as an example to future generations of the ungodly,

There are consequences to our choices.
The Lord said it, did it + is now celebrating victory

Regret
Tears
"IF ONLY..."

and say, 'Our hand has triumphed;
the LORD has not done all this.'

²⁸They are a nation without sense,
there is no discernment in them.

²⁹If only they were wise and would
understand this

and discern what their end will be!

³⁰How could one man chase a thousand,
or two put ten thousand to flight,
unless their Rock had sold them,
unless the LORD had given them up?

³¹For their rock is not like our Rock,
as even our enemies concede.

³²Their vine comes from the vine of
Sodom

tering us unmercifully, and we lost all hope of rescue.

21-22 With our appetite for both food and life long gone, Paul took his place in our midst and said, "Friends, you really should have listened to me back in Crete. We could have avoided all this trouble and trial. But there's no need to dwell on that now. From now on, things are looking up! I can assure you that there'll not be a single drowning among us, although I can't say as much for the ship—the ship itself is doomed.

23-26 "Last night God's angel stood at my side, an angel of this God I serve, saying to me, 'Don't give up, Paul. You're going to stand before Caesar yet—and everyone sailing with you is also going to make it.' So, dear friends, take heart. I believe God will do exactly what he told me. But we're going to shipwreck on some island or other."

27-30 On the fourteenth night adrift somewhere on the Adriatic Sea, at about

Deut
32:28, 29
(N.I.V.)

Acts 27:21-26
(Message)

Verse Twenty Who formerly did not obey, when God's patience was waiting in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water.

1. These spirits in prison are identified as those that did not obey when God's patience was waiting in the days of Noah during the building of the ark.
2. The people had a witness before them as Noah was busily engaged in building the ark, and yet only a few, that is eight souls--Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives--were brought safely through by means of water.
3. Bigg, in the International Critical Commentary has, what I believe to be the best interpretation of this passage: "I take it as agreeable to the whole strain of the apostle's words that Jesus Christ, did before his appearing in the flesh, speak by his spirit in his servant to those of the foregoing ages. Yea, the most ancient of them, declaring to them the way of life, though rejected by the unbelief of the most part. This is interjected in the mentioning of Christ's sufferings and exaltation after them, and after all the apostle returns to that again and to the exhortation which he strengthens by it, but so as that this discourse taken in is pertinently adapted to the present subject. The apostles aim in it we may conceive to be this: His main scope being to encourage his brethren in the faith of Christ and the way of holiness against all opposition and hardship. So to instruct his brethren in Christ's perpetual influence in all ages even before his incarnation, is that they might at the same time see the great unbelief of the world. Yes, their opposing of divine truth, and the small numbers of those who receive it, and so not be discouraged by the fewness of their number and the hatred of the world, finding that salvation in Jesus Christ, dead and risen again, which the rest missed by their own willfull refusal, and this very point he insists on clearly in the following chapter, verses 3 and 4, 'And the very ways of ungodliness there specified which believers renounce were those that the world was guilty of in those days, and in which they were surprised by the flood. They ate and drank until the flood came upon them.'" So in conclusion, let me say I believe Christ in the Spirit, preached the Gospel to those who in the days of Noah refused to suffer in the flesh that they might keep from sin and thus proved disobedient to the appeal of the Spirit. Christ was not actually present save in the Spirit, although wherever the Spirit is, Christ is. Lest one think this a strange interpretation, let me remind you that in II Cor. 5:20 Paul uses such words as these, 'We beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' In brief, wherever the Spirit preaches, whether in the past, present or future, Christ is there preaching among all those antediluvians. Noah and his family were the only ones saved. They passed through the waters--waters which brought death to the disobedient, but salvation to Noah who by faith prepared the ark."
4. II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
5. Gaebelin point out, "The Spirit of God preached to them, that is the Spirit who quickened the body of Christ. The same Spirit preached to the generation of unbelievers in the days of Noah. The time of the preaching then did not occur between the death and resurrection of Christ, but it took place in Noah's day. Christ was not personally or corporeally present, just as he is not present in person in this age when the Gospel is preached. His Spirit is here, so was he present by his Spirit in the days of Noah. It is written, 'My

"weighed found water"

The Baptism of the Spirit is a non-experiential Act whereby God declares the sinner righteous on the single basis of faith. ① Taken out of Adam + Baptized in Christ ② taken out of the world + Baptized into the Church the body of Christ ③ Taken out of Satan's Kingdom + Baptized into Christ's Kingdom. ④ Taken out of Satan's family + Baptized in God's family, Sons + Daughters of King Jesus.

spirit shall not always strive with man,' Gen. 6:3. His Spirit was then on the earth and long-suffering. God was waiting for 120 years while the ark was preparing. The instrument was Noah, in him was the spirit of Christ, and as the preacher of righteousness he delivered the warning message of the impending judgment to those about him who did not heed the message, passed on disobedience, who slipped away by the deluge and are now the spirits in prison. As the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets testifying beforehand of the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow so the Spirit of Christ preached through Noah."

Verse Twenty-One; Baptism which also corresponds to this is now saving you not a removing of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. The baptism that Peter is referring to here in this verse is the baptism of the Holy Spirit into the church, the body of Christ.
2. This can be seen from Peter's own record of what happened at Caesarea in Acts 11:15-17, "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning, and I remembered the word of the Lord how He said, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the holy Spirit.' If God then gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who ^{am} I that I could withstand God?"
3. I Cor. 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit."
4. Unger in his book *The Baptizing Work of the Holy Spirit*, points out, "The unanimous testimony of Scripture is that no mere external rite can place one in Christ. Peter must therefore refer to the Spirit's baptizing work when he declares baptism does also now save us. The apostle can only be thinking of the baptism of the Spirit as a present benefit of Christ's finished work of salvation."
5. When you take the negative and positive statements out of the center of the verse, the verse reads like this, "Baptism which also corresponds to this is now saving you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
6. The baptism of the Spirit had no significance until after the resurrection of Christ because as Peter taught us in 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy has caused to be born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." As a result of his resurrection from the dead it is now possible for us to be born again into the family of God, to be baptized by the Holy Spirit into the church, the body of Christ. Unger speaks on this subject further, "Spirit baptism, but not ritual baptism, has the most direct connection with the resurrection. This declaration of Peter immediately connecting Spirit baptism and Christ's resurrection emphasizes the illuminating fact that there was not nor indeed could there be any baptism by the Spirit into Christ's body until after Christ's resurrection. The death, burial resurrection, and ascension of our Lord (verse 22) were all necessary steps to the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost to perform, among his other functions, His unique baptizing ministry during this age. Without the resurrection all collapses. The resurrection gives us an ever living, life-giving Lord, the head of the new creation. (II Cor. 5:17) The Spirit's baptizing work puts us in Him (Rom. 6:3,4). And in the new creation in Him (Eph. 1:20-23) and in all that he is (Col. 2:10)."
8. Peter makes a negative and a positive statement here. First of all, negatively, "not a removing of dirt from the body," but positively, "as an appeal to God for a clear conscience."

Pentecost
Much Follow
Calvary -
Grave &
Resurrect.

C. Baptism That Now Saves You (v. 21)

Larry Richards offers a clear and concise explanation for this verse:

This is another one of the Bible's more difficult passages. The thought is not hard to understand, but people tend to snatch the verse out of context and try to understand it without seeing it in context. We must remember that Peter draws a comparison between the days of Noah and the age of Christ. His analogy is intended to show the far-reaching effect of Jesus' work. To do this he goes back to the Genesis flood and compares the Christian experience to the experience of the eight people who were carried in the ark through the waters of raging judgment. Baptism is used here to indicate our union with Christ (see Matthew 3:11; Romans 6:1-4). Like Noah and his family, we Christians have been lifted beyond danger of judgment and deposited in a new world in which we are to live new lives. Freed by Jesus, we are to live these new lives not "for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God" (4:2).

Note the appropriateness of the analogy. Noah and his family were snatched from an old world that was destined for destruction and carried safely through the waters of judgment in the ark. When the waters receded, Noah made landfall on a changed earth, empty of human habitations, rich with new, budding vegetable life. In the same way, we have been lifted out of the spiritual kingdom ruled by Satan, which is destined to be judged by God, carried through the judgment in Christ, and brought into the kingdom of God's son. Now we live in that kingdom and everything about our lives is fresh and new (Richards, 377-378).

9. First of all, negatively, not a removing of dirt from the body, which would be the case if he were making reference to water baptism here, but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience. The very fact of the presence of the spirit of God within us is evident that we are his children. Romans 8:14, 16 teach this truth, "All who follow the leading of God's Spirit, are God's own sons. The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God."
10. It is this inner endorsement of the Spirit of God that makes it possible for us to have a clear conscience in God's presence.
11. In verse 16, Peter challenges us to be keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against they may be put to shame those who are insulting or reviling your good behavior in Christ.
12. It also needs to be pointed out that water baptism played no significant role in the life of Peter. It cannot be proven from Scripture that Peter was ever baptized with water, but he and the other followers of Christ were certainly baptized with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.
13. There is a perfect analogy here between the ark and the Church. The ark was built to provide a refuge in the time of judgment. Preaching took place, for we read in II Pet. 2:5, "If ~~he~~ did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven other persons, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly."
14. From this we see that a message was proclaimed to them, that there was salvation available. But the facts remain that only 8 people all together, Noah and his three sons and their wives, were the only ones who survived this judgment. Today the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to those who are saved, it is the power of God unto salvation. When we experience the new birth in Jesus Christ we are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, His Church, and judgment will not come upon us. The words of the Lord Jesus in John 5:24 verify this fact, "I solemnly assure you that the man who hears what I have to say and believes in the one who has sent me has eternal life. He does not have to face judgment. He has already passed from death into life."

Verse Twenty-Two: Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

1. The "who" in this verse of course refers to Jesus Christ from verse 21. It is he that is at the right hand of God and he is there interceding in our behalf, making it possible for us to have an appeal to God for a clear conscience.
2. Heb. 7:24,25, "But Christ, because He lives forever, possesses a priesthood that needs no successor. This means that he can save fully and completely those who approach God through Him for He is always living to intercede on their behalf."
3. Because he is a living Christ he is in a position to intercede in our behalf continually.
4. Having gone into heaven with angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to him.
5. Once again Peter makes reference to God's chain of command even as he spoke quite at length in the second and early part of the third chapters about the matter of submission to the authority that is over us. Heb. 2:9, "We see Jesus, Who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone."
6. Now Peter tells us that the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God the Father has angels and authorities and powers subject to him.



ILLUSTRATION

Kay Warren on the Loudest Cheers in Heaven

Send to printer

Topics: Christian life; Commitment; Dedication; Devotion; Eternal life; Faith; Faithfulness, human; Fourth of July; Good deeds; Heaven; Independence Day; Memorial Day; Motivation; Reward; Rewards; Servanthood; Service; Service, reward of

Filters: Editor's Choice★; Everyday Disciples; Free; Stories; Stories

References: Matthew 6:1 , 1 Corinthians 3:12 , Ephesians 6:7 , Colossians 3:24 , Hebrews 10:24 , 1 Peter 1:3

Tone: Commend

Heading home to California ... a friend and I passed through the Dallas-Fort Worth airport. On the way to the connecting gate, we heard loud patriotic music playing and saw a group, mostly women, wearing colorful hats, cheering, and waving American flags. The troops were coming home, and here was their welcoming committee.

Two women encouraged us to grab flags and join in. We were early for our next flight, so we took places in the makeshift greeting line. At first, a few soldiers just dribbled by. We whooped and waved our flags furiously. Then the pace picked up as dozens of men and women in uniform came barreling through. We kept repeating: "Welcome home! We're glad you're back! We appreciate you!" Some soldiers wiped away tears, while others displayed huge, self-conscious smiles. ...

After 45 minutes, it was time to catch our flight. We hugged the organizers and thanked the vets who had come to honor this generation of soldiers. As we sank into our seats for the flight, we felt humbled by participating in this sweet moment of coming home. It was impossible not to draw the obvious spiritual parallels. These men and women had taken oaths of faithfulness and service. They had fought courageously, lived with deprivation, danger, and disease, and took unbelievable risks, all for the good of our nation.

But as great as America is, it is a temporary place. No nation lives forever. As believers in Christ, we are all soldiers in the Lord's army. We, too, take oaths of fidelity, sacrifice, and service. Our oaths of allegiance are to a kingdom that shall never end—a country where there is never a mistake in leadership, where justice flows down like a river, where poverty, disease, terror, hunger, and greed hold no power.

Scripture teaches us about the welcome and rewards we will receive when our battle on earth is over. Artists, writers, and theologians have all taken stabs at imagining what those moments of heavenly welcome will look like. ... That afternoon ... we were visualizing the very moment when we would step into eternity.

As my friend Elizabeth and I looked at each other, the same thought crossed our minds. Through misty eyes, she said, "If I get there first, I'll be on your welcoming committee. I'll be jumping up and down, screaming, 'You made it! I'm so proud of you!'"

I laughed and said, "Oh, you're not going to beat me. I'll be there before you. I'm older. I'll be at the head of the line to greet you!" In that moment, heaven was more real than the smell of the stale coffee in our foam cups.

Rick Warren:
Purpose Driven Life

What I'm really wondering about is this: Will we be surprised at who gets the biggest welcome? I'm not coveting more high-fives, but I am dimly aware of something so profound and holy that I can barely put it into words.

All of us fight unseen battles every day, each believer a secret soldier locked in battle with forces no one else can see. The bravest among us are not necessarily those who fight with guns or tanks. The bravest person you know might be your husband or wife or neighbor or coworker who goes on living one more day when every bone in his or her body says it's no use.

...

How much could we lighten the load for another just by telling him how brave we think he is? Oh, to be so merciful with fellow soldiers fighting their personal, hidden wars.

Best of all, how much better when we bring undisclosed struggles into community, where victories can be celebrated together, great losses mourned together, and where whoops of encouragement can provide even the most weary soldier the courage it takes to keep on keeping on, one more day.

Kay Warren, "The Loudest Cheers in Heaven," www.christianitytoday.com (5-28-09)

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CONCLUSION: Peter's Pattern to practice that we have been studying is "The Right Game Plan", and the key verses are 15 and 16. "But set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you, but doing this with gentleness and reverence, Keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ."

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5:13-16, "You are the earth's salt, but if the salt should become tasteless what can make it salt again? It is completely useless and can only be thrown out of doors and stamped underfoot. You are the world's light. It is impossible to hide a town built on the top of a hill. Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bucket. They put it on a lampstand, and it gives light for everybody in the house. Let your light shine like that in the sight of men. Let them see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven."

Playing by this game plan is going to cost you something. But remember Rom. 8:18, "Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will give us later."

Eulers plane crash - flying in on their own.

Lessons Study #8

- #1 Are you comfortable with where you are and what you are doing for the Lord? cf. Isa. 32:17
- #2 Is the fruitage of the Spirit showing up in your life cf. Gal. 5:22,23
- #3 Verse 14 is a re-statement of the words of Jesus in Matt. 5:10: "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- #4 Don't be intimidated by opposition or worried about the outcome.
- #5 Have you set apart Christ as Lord in your heart?
- #6 Are you prepared to be a witness for Jesus when you get an opportunity?
- #7 Does gentleness & reverence characterize your witness for Christ?
- #8 I cannot have a ministry in ^{else's} someone's life if my own conscience is not clear.
- #9 It is better to be suffering for doing good, if it should be the will of God, than when doing wrong. (over)

(#10) Because He is a living Christ He is in a position to intercede in our behalf continually.