

Series: Sittin' in the Catbird Seat
Title: Safe in the Ark of God
Text: 1 Peter 3:18-22
Subject: Resurrection
Purpose: To teach Christians and to motivate non-Christians to be saved.
Big Idea: We are saved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
Date: 4-8-07 AMW
Place: NWCC

Introduction:

A. Do you believe Jesus rose from the dead?

1. Resurrection from the dead is what this Sunday is all about.
2. In fact that is what every Sunday is all about, for it was on the first day of the week Jesus arose from the dead.

B. Jesus could not rise unless He had first been dead.

1. In spite of all the elaborate theories that have been promoted, the fact is that Jesus was crucified and died – “put to death in the body!” (18)
2. He did this to receive in His own body the consequence of our sin; all sin both large and small.
3. He died for sins “once for all,” there need be no further sacrifice.
4. He who knew no sin became sin for us – “the righteous for the unrighteous – to bring us to God.

5. There is no other way to God except through Jesus because He alone paid the price for our sin.
6. But He who was put to death in the body was “made alive by the Spirit.”

Body:

I. Jesus arose from the dead!

A. This astounding reality defies our human experience.

1. Everyone dies!
2. All life on earth dies sooner or later.
3. Death is the final conclusion for all that live in this temporal world.
4. To rise from the dead would be a miracle of the first order.

B. Yet this miracle has been witnessed by many through the centuries.

1. Several such reports are recorded in the Bible.
2. Reports of resurrections come to us from time to time that have occurred on foreign mission fields.
3. One of our own missionaries, Samuel Stephens, director of the India Gospel League tells of meeting a woman who had been dead three days – not just in a coma or unconscious – but literally dead.

- a. Members of her congregation took her dead body into the church building and fasted and prayed over her day and night until the Lord raised her up.
 - b. Samuel met her and heard her testimony and that of the pastor and the congregation.
4. But with Jesus there was no human agency involved.
 5. The Spirit – meaning the Holy Spirit of God raised him.
 6. The same power that created us can raise the dead, and so He did raise the righteous Son of God, Jesus.

II. By this same Spirit, Peter says that Jesus preached to spirits in prison who disobeyed God prior to the flood of Noah.

A. It is impossible to know for sure what Peter is referencing here.

1. There are a number of obscure references in the Bible to God's dealing with rebellious spirits or angels.
2. Considering what we do know, it seems best to understand this as a reference to angels who, prior to the flood of Noah rebelled against God.
3. Because they left their appointed place and engaged in great evil, they were imprisoned by God to await the final judgement, at which time they would be cast into eternal hell.

4. If this is the case, then the preaching Jesus did there was a declaration of His victory over sin and death, and His ascension to authority over them and their final doom.
5. Many other theories have been suggested but none are absolutely conclusive.

B. It is not Peter's purpose to teach about fallen angels or pre-flood judgement.

1. He raises this point only as a segue into the primary thing he does want to teach.
2. And that is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus for us.

III. The resurrection of Jesus is paralleled in the Old Testament by what happened to Noah when the great flood came.

A. God pronounced judgement upon the whole earth because of the great wickedness of the human race.

Genesis 6:5-8 (NIV)

The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

B. God instructed Noah to build a great ark, or ship.

1. The only earth dwelling creatures that lived through the flood were those that were in the ark.

1 Peter 3:20 (NIV)

...In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,

2. He says, “in it,” (“it” being the ark) – literally “into it” or “within which eight souls were saved.”
3. Noah by faith built the ark in obedience to God.
4. He endured ridicule and many years of extremely hard work building a large ship out of wood by hand, inland, far from the sea.
5. He gathered the animals as God commanded, which must have been something of a miracle itself, and then took his family into the ark and God shut the door – all before the first drop of rain fell.
6. That is obedience out of faith.
7. As the fountains of the deep broke up and the heavenly reservoir emptied, water covered the earth completely, but the very water that destroyed all that were disobedient, saved those who were obedient.
8. Now, what does that have to do with us?

IV. “This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you,” he says.

A. This is the only place in the Bible that flatly states that baptism saves us.

1. Bear in mind that Peter is explaining a Biblical typology.
2. The word Peter uses here is Pntktupon from which we get “anti-type.”
 - a. It carries the idea of striking, say a piece of clay, with the fist and the impression left on the clay by the fist would be the Pntktupon.
 - b. In other words the water of the flood bears the form of baptism.
 - c. The New American Standard Version translates Pntktupon as: “corresponding to that, baptism, now saves you.”
 - d. The New Living Version gets the idea right when it translates it as “a picture of baptism, which now saves you.”
3. All through the history of God’s dealings with the human race, He established many types or examples of deliverance that would teach His people how He planned to save us from judgement.
4. These examples were real life circumstances in which judgment, death and salvation were the themes.

B. So the water of the flood corresponds to the water of baptism.

End 11:50

1. Noah and his family were saved through the water, or by the water lifting them up in the ark and carrying them in safety.
2. The water that saved them was the very water that destroyed everyone else.
3. The judgment of God is a fearsome thing to those who are guilty but to those who have been forgiven His judgment becomes salvation.
4. But the deliverance of Noah and His family did not come from the water but from the grace of God.
5. Likewise the only way baptism saves us is because we have by faith and obedience to God entered the Holy Ark – His Son Jesus.
6. We turn away from the evil of our lives and of this world and obey God who instructs us to place our faith in Jesus.
7. The only reason this option is even available is because, like Noah, we have found favor with God and He extends His grace to us.

C. So as to make sure we do not get confused Peter explains that the saving is not in the water ritual but in the resurrection power of Jesus.

1. The Jews had many religious cleansing rituals and Peter makes clear that this is not what baptism is all about.

1 Peter 3:21 (NIV)

and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good

conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

2. J. Ramsey Michaels, New Testament scholar puts it this way:

A statement such as “baptism saves” is a provisional, not an absolute statement – yet no more provisional than the statement “faith saves.” In the final analysis, neither baptism nor faith “saves”; only God saves, and such human acts as faith and baptism are simply ways of approaching God to receive salvation.... Faith “saves” in that it cleanses the heart and conscience from sin, and so prepares a person to turn to God. Baptism is the actual turning; it is the “appeal to God out of a good conscience,” and in that sense, according to Peter, “baptism saves.”...Neither is optional for Peter, and neither is sufficient by itself; together they define what it means to be a Christian, both in one’s heart and in a hostile society.

3. By faith we obey God and enter the Holy Ark, Jesus Christ, and when the baptismal flood comes, it is Jesus that raises us up out of the flood to live while all that was left outside of Christ dies.

Romans 6:4-5 (NIV)

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

4. We are saved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Conclusion:

A. Jesus has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand.

1. At the right hand of God He has all authority in heaven and earth.
2. Every being, every authority, whether spirit or human are in submission to Him.
3. Those who do not acknowledge His authority now will soon be forced to do so for the Bible tells us that the day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

B. Better to confess Him now than when it is too late.