

All right. Let's open our Bibles this morning to 1 Peter 3:18 as we continue our study through Peter's letters.

Peter wrote this wonderful letter of encouragement that we've been looking at for the past few months, as the church found itself the subject of Nero's and Rome's rage. And his onslaught against the church would bring millions to their deaths over the next 150-200 years or so. So Peter's job, and it's not an enviable one, is to encourage the church: first - that they're on the side that wins, and second of all - they've got work to do in the world, even in the culture in which they're placed.

So, he spends a chapter telling them all that they have in Christ, that they cannot lose no matter what happens to them here. Those are set in stone. They are unaffected by circumstance. But then in chapter 2, he gets to the "how do you live in the meantime?" He tells them that they are precious people chosen by God to be a light to the world so that, even when the Gentiles would berate you or turn against you for your faith in Christ, they would have to, because of the reality of your faith, consider Jesus when the day comes that He would come to knock on their hearts. Live your life that way. And then he turns to his big subject of submission; says to the church - submit to the government for the Lord's sake, submit to the rotten boss, take it on the chin if necessary. Your response, as the world is watching, to unfair treatment and difficulty is often the greatest light in the eyes of a world that doesn't behave itself that way. And so, follow Jesus' example. He did what the Father asked, and it resulted in us being saved and giving us hope. He used the example, in chapter 3, of a wife with an unbelieving husband who wouldn't listen to the preaching of the Word but who could be reached through the heart of the wife who submitted herself to the Lord and had that same womanly, godly, hidden person of the heart that we find in the women of old; and to the husband - that he should love his wife, consider her as a weaker vessel, take interest in her, understand her, submit himself to care for her. Last time Peter, in talking to us (beginning in verse 13) about the fallout of that kind of life in the eyes of the world, said most of the time you're acceptable in the world when you're that kind of person - kind, dependable, loving. The trouble usually starts when you tell them why you're that way. And Peter said even then you're blessed because in that position you find yourself being able to give an answer for

the hope that lies within you. And if you're going to suffer, it is better to suffer for the will of God doing good than for doing evil.

Which brings us this morning to the end of chapter 3. And it's an interesting chapter because Peter, after saying about Jesus - He suffered for us once for sin (verse 18), He died, He was just, He died for us (the unjust), He brought us to God by Himself being put to death in the flesh - but He rose from the dead. So, his comparison is - look, you might suffer as a believer in this world, but know that if you do, and if the reactions aren't always so favorable, you can sanctify the Lord (verse 15), you can give a defense for the hope that lies within you (verse 15), you can have a good conscience (verse 16), your life can be such that people may berate you, but they can't really find a handle to hold onto because you're living the life of a believer. And so he says Jesus ultimately had to pay that price. And in verse 22 (at the end of our verses), he says Jesus, once He did, went to sit down at the right hand of God, where angels and authorities and powers are all made subject to Him. Or in other words, if you like, you can suffer a lot in this world, but in the end, you win. Right? You're going to sit and rule and reign with Jesus. In Him, you are assured of future victory. This world isn't always the easiest place to survive in or to live in or to witness in. But see it through because, just like Jesus, when all is said and done, the victory is yours. We always have victory through Christ.

Well in the middle, then, from verse 19 through verse 21, Peter, thinking about Jesus' death and then His resurrection, talks to us about something that took place between His death and resurrection where Jesus preached a sermon, where He proclaimed His victory. And he uses them to kind of say to us - the world can look pretty dim and grim in the eyes of the saints, but to remember that, in the end, we are overcomers, and He'll use us, will keep you going. Because this isn't it. This isn't all there is. Life is still to come.

Well here's what he says, then, in verse 19, "by whom" (of the Spirit) "also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 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." One thing for sure. There is another world that we cannot see. Well, we see a world, and that's a real world. But there's a "realer" world - one that is eternal, a spiritual world. When I went to college, I went to school for microbiology. My whole life was spent looking through a microscope in college. And it's a world you can't see except with special equipment. Well, there's a spiritual world, and you'll need to be

born again to see that, too. And it's more real, if you will, than ours is because it's eternal. So, there's an eternal world that we don't see now, but we will one day. And you know much about this other world. You know much about, as a believer, the eternal world that you don't yet see. You spend much of your time looking at it, and God is revealing it to your heart. You're in church, you've got your Bible out, you're thinking those things through, while the world around you doesn't even think about its existence at all. They think about it when somebody makes some spooky movie, and, "Oooohhh, I wonder what's going on out there." But they have no clue. They just think this is all there is, but this isn't all there is. There's a coexisting world around us.

Paul told us that, as Christians, we spend much of our time focusing on the things we don't see. He said in 2 Corinthians 4:18, "we don't look at the things which are seen which are temporal, but we rather look at the things which are not seen which are eternal." And so as you, as a believer, begin to grow, you spend an awful lot of time looking at the world and then yet looking beyond the world to the things of God. So, verse 18, Jesus dies in the flesh. That's the world we see. But He's made alive in the Spirit. That we don't see. Well, we see the result of, but we don't yet see beyond.

In your Bibles, the angels are mentioned in 34 books of the Bible - 17 Old Testament and 17 New Testament; almost 300 times, I think, they're mentioned in the Scriptures. The Greek word for angels is "*angelos*," which just means a messenger. But it was a special class of beings that didn't have a body, that were spirit beings, if you will. Some of them (in Hebrews 1:14 we are told) were sent forth as ministering spirits to minister to you and me who will inherit salvation. So, there are angels, spirits, living in a world we cannot see. But they interact, if you will, in some ways with us. In fact, I think the Bible clearly teaches you have a guardian angel, and some of you have worn that poor guy out. Because they don't have a body, they also don't have the restrictions that a body imposes. They are not subject to aging or decay. They are made for eternity. They are invisible most of the time, though we do see them taking bodies from time to time in the Scriptures. And we know that there're a ton of them. When you read of Jesus' birth, you read that there were a multitude of heavenly hosts that gathered around that place of His birth (Luke 2:13). The Greek word is "*plethos*," but it's where we get our word plethora - many numbers, just a number you can't count. When Peter tried to defend Jesus with a sword (in the Garden of Gethsemane), Jesus said, "Peter, put it away. Don't you think if I wanted to, I could ask My

Father, and He would send Me right now twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53) A legion is 6,000 men. So the Lord said, "Peter, I've got 72,000 angels on speed dial. They've got My back." When you get to Revelation 5:11, John, for the first time, writes of seeing the throne of God, and he writes that around the throne of God he saw ten thousand times ten thousand angels and thousands and thousands more - 100 million angels, plus. It's going to sound pretty good there. That'll be a heavenly choir, won't it? And if each of you has a guardian angel, there's seven billion more. According to the Bible, you might have met an angel. You might have met my wife. She's an angel. (Laughing) Got applause first service. You guys are not nearly as reactive. But that's okay. (Laughing) Hebrews 13:2 says that we should not forget to entertain strangers for in so doing we may very well be entertaining an angel without knowing it.

We know that Satan was a created angel. In fact, in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, we are told that he was one of the chief angels; that he was an anointed cherub that covered; that he was a worship leader; that he sat close to the throne of God; that he was perfect in all of his ways when his voice and his ability to worship were made in him on the day that he was created. But, like all of us, the angels were given a choice on whether they wanted to serve God or not. And he, Lucifer, chose that he would rather be God than worship God. In Isaiah 14, there are five "I wills." You can read them there in the text. "I will be like the Most High God. I will sit in the sides of the north. I will have people worship me." Well, that doesn't work. There can't be two Gods. And one's eternal, and one's created. And so Satan, the deceiver, the enemy of God, is cast out of heaven, and he is removed from that place, and his judgment is eternal, and it's coming. In fact Jesus said, in Luke 10:18 to the disciples, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." But he didn't leave alone. Revelation 12:4 says that a third of the angelic hosts joined in the rebellion; that 33% of the angels that God created gave up and went off and didn't desire to serve the Lord. They are ranked in hierarchies. There are good angels and fallen angels.

We are starting a series of studies this Wednesday night on knowing your adversary and then the armor of God. And we're going to spend ten weeks looking at our battle with the enemy and what God has provided so that we can stand and having done all, still stand. Well Paul, beginning in Ephesians 6:12, said, "You and I as Christians don't wrestle against flesh and blood." I know that's usually who we think our enemy is - the guy who doesn't like us, the boss that doesn't treat us well, the wife who wasn't so considerate, the kids who won't listen. That's not your

enemy. "We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

So, we read here in our text, in verse 22, that Jesus' death and resurrection gave Him victory over all of those things. Right? That He's God. Every knee's going to bow. But according to verses 19 and 20, some of these angels - fallen angels - did something during the days of Noah, so disobeyed the Lord as God was patiently waiting for the ark to be built (waited for 120 years), that their disobedience and the result of it was that they were no longer allowed to wander free as the fallen angels are today until the day of judgment, when the Lord will put them away. But they were grabbed in the days of Noah, and they were put away for good. They were incarcerated somewhere. Notice we read, "by whom He went and preached to these spirits that are in prison, who formerly were disobedient" in days gone by; "when the Divine longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, and in that time, only eight souls were saved through water." So there was a group of angels locked up. And since Lucifer fell, there has been this ongoing battle between angelic forces - between the angels of God and the demonic forces of evil. And aside from these who were pulled aside because they couldn't participate, the rest are still at war.

You might read Daniel 10 sometime where Daniel, for three weeks, prayed for some wisdom. And when the angel of the Lord finally got to Daniel, he said, "From the very first day you started praying, I was sent to answer you, Daniel" (who is humbling himself before the Lord and wants to hear from God). He said, "I was coming, but the prince of the power of Persia withstood me." And he mentions that there was some demonic resistance to this coming of the angel of the Lord to come speak to Daniel. But in essence, Daniel prayed for 21 days, and then the angel finally arrived; and when he got done telling him what he needed to tell him, he said, "I've got to go back now, and, behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, has come to help me. And so I've been left alone there with the king of Persia, but I've got to go back. The battle continues." And there is this war. We don't see it, we're not aware of it, but we're told of it by the Lord - amongst angelic forces, both good and evil. So imagine having a kingdom - Persia at the time - who had a wicked demon that ruled it. You wonder what wicked demon sits over Los Angeles or over New York or over San Francisco - sanctuary cities, got to be there. Or over Washington, D.C. Probably a whole slew of them there. But as you read through this battle between good and evil, between God's angelic force and the

demons, if you will, you realize that in any kind of battle, the enemy has to first learn the strategy of his enemy if he's going to countermand it. Paul, when he wrote to the Corinthians, said, "We've got to be wise lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). In other words, your best battle plan is to know your enemy, to know what he's all about, which is what kind of motivated us to do the studies on Wednesday. That's one of the first rules of warfare - you should know your enemy and learn his strategy.

Well, if you've read through the Bible, you know that God laid out His plan very early on. It began with a promise to a fallen couple (Genesis 3:15). And in His judgment, as God declared to them about sin and death that would follow, the Lord said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." And God made a promise to a fallen couple that a Redeemer was one day coming, an offspring, her Seed, who would deliver this major deathblow to the enemy's head while Himself only suffering a minor setback (if you can call the cross minor). It would bruise His heel, but Satan's head would be crushed. He would be put out of business, "*katargeo*," be broken.

Well, if you read through the Scriptures, you find that once God's battle plan was laid out, Satan, knowing his adversary, immediately went to work to try to countermand them. In Genesis 4, Cain kills Abel because Abel, after all, was in that line. As time went on (in Genesis 6), Satan inspired a wickedness upon the earth that brought such violence and such wickedness that the race became unredeemable, and we will read in a minute (in Genesis 6) the Lord saying, "I'm going to destroy it from the face of the earth." Such wickedness. And only eight survive and reemerge to populate the Earth. And then come Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Esau who, in Genesis 27, says, "As soon as Dad's dead, you're dead, Jacob." And again, you find the enemy inspiring Esau to kill his brother because through his brother was that promised Seed that would travel forward all the way to the time of Jesus the Messiah. In Exodus 1, it was the Pharaoh who was stirred, "Tell them to throw all of the male Hebrew children into the river." In 1 Samuel, it's King Saul who, for 7½ years, is hell bent on one thing - destroy King David, the one through whom the Seed of God would come, through whom was the royal line. You see, Satan was paying attention, and he sought to eliminate his enemy - God. In 2 Kings 11 and in 2 Chronicles 22, a king dies. His name is Ahaziah. When he dies, his mother - filled with Satan - decided that she would kill every

living heir to the throne so that that family would rule no more. Had she been successful, that promise of Jesus through these descendants would have been stopped, and that promise that God made to Adam and Eve (and spoken to Satan, there in Genesis 3:15) would be unable to be realized. But someone took the littlest one, Josiah, and they hid this little kid, and he survived. And seven years later, he was introduced to the nation as the king. When the Messiah is born, when Jesus is born, it is Herod who is moved by Satan to order the deaths of all boys two years old and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas. In Luke 4 when Jesus, thirty years later, comes to fulfill His public ministry, He goes to Nazareth. He stands in the synagogue. He takes the Scriptures they were reading that day. He declares to the people that He's God. You'll read there in chapter 4:28-30 that the people of the synagogue grabbed Jesus, and they dragged Him up to the top of the hill, and they sought to throw Him off. They wanted to destroy Him.

There is a war in an unseen world, and you're part of it because you're walking with Jesus. And much of what you face in the world is demonically driven. You're in a battle. The good news is, "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). You're going to win this battle! But don't think the battle is going away. Paul said to the Ephesians in chapter 6:10, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles" (or, if you will, the "willies") "of the devil. So, take up God's armor, the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand and to stand, having done all, that you might continue to stand." That's what God wants - that you might stand.

When I was in school, especially in the calculus class, they used to give us these work assignments, and then the teacher would say, "Work on the solution. Come up with the answer. If you can't figure it out, the answer is in the back of the book." And we had a book that literally had the answers. It didn't tell you how to come to the answer, but at least it'd tell you if you got it right. Well, go to the back of the Book, and you'll see who wins. The answer's in the back of the Book. Revelation 12 - you find the picture of Satan attacking Israel, who is bringing forth the Child that would save the world from their sin, and Israel became in the crosshairs of Satan because of it. Remember Haman, who attempted to wipe out the entire Jewish people? And God raised up Esther at a time such as that to be the deliverer for God's people. So there's always been this war, and Satan's well aware of what he's up against. Don't think for a minute that Hitler and the Nazi solution to the Jewish problem was anything but demonic in every way.

So Jesus, here, speaks about convicts in an unseen world - fallen spirits who battle against us - and that they're some of the worst who were locked up in the days of Noah, due to their disobedience to God while God patiently waited 120 years for the world to acknowledge Him and to be saved. Let's read verse 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." Now, like I said, Peter just got out of verse 18. I think this came to his mind, and then, beginning in chapter 4:1, he goes right back to "since Christ suffered in the flesh;" he goes right back to the subject of verse 18. We know from Revelation 9 that the prison for fallen spirits is called the "*abusso*," the bottomless pit. That's what it says. And it appears that this might very well be where these particular spirits from Noah's day - these fallen angels - were kept. It'll be where all of the fallen spirits are kept during the thousand year millennial reign of Jesus. You can read that in the Scriptures as well - during the Great Tribulation.

You remember when the Lord went to Gadara, where there was that Gadarene man in the tombs? (Mark 5) And the Lord came to deliver him from these demons. In fact, the Lord said, "What is your name?" And they said, "We're many. There're a multitude of us living in here." And then they said to Jesus, "Are You here before Your time to deliver us to the '*abusso*'?" In other words, "I don't think You're on the right time schedule. It's not our turn yet." They're very well aware of the time. "Please don't send us to the bottomless pit." And Jesus said, "Fine," and He sent these demons into the pigs. You remember? And the pigs just ran off the cliff. Deviled ham. That's where we get the word "deviled ham." (Laughing) But these demons were very aware of the fact that there was a place waiting for them where they would go to be judged.

So why were these particular fallen angels placed there so early, from the days of Noah? Let me give you a couple of things to consider. Here's what Jude writes in verse 6 of that little small book, "And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Here's what Peter writes in 2 Peter 2, and I'll just read it to you real quickly. Beginning in verse 4, he writes this, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered

them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes,and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment." You find that these angels in the days of Noah are mentioned several places - they're mentioned here, they're mentioned in Jude, they're mentioned in 2 Peter.

And then, if you will, just flip backwards in your Bible with me - just a couple of minutes - to Genesis 6. Because in Genesis 6 we find the story of Noah and of the days of Noah, and then we read something very interesting. Genesis 6:1, "Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God" (Ben Elohim; the typical word in the Old Testament for angels; you'll find it in Job as well) "saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God" (Ben Elohim) "came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." Verse 11, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth." So here's the fourth reference. Before the flood, these angels came to the daughters of men. They cohabitated - angelic beings taking bodies - with humans, and the result was this weird offspring (verse 4), giants in the land. The Hebrew word is "**nephilim**." It is the description of these giants.

So, Peter says they left their first estate. Peter writes in his first letter, in the days of God's patience, while Noah built the ark for 120 years, these angels did something which they shouldn't have done. They left their proper domain, their own abode, if you will, as Jude writes, and they produced in the land a race of

giants. Ill-conceived, in direct defiance of God, and it allowed the earth to be in such a place that God said, "The world is left unredeemable." So God waits 120 years. He has a prophet of righteousness who builds and preaches. And only Noah and his family get saved after all those 120 years. By the way, before the flood, the average lifespan of an individual was over 700 years. After the flood, his lifespan was 120, and it would slowly decrease to the time that now it's near 80+, which is what the Psalmist writes, "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years....." (Psalm 90:10).

So, God waited patiently, lovingly, with very little success. And yet the flood comes, and He destroys the earth, and He takes these wicked angels, and He locks them away because they did something - they violated their place, they entered into the lives of men, they produced a race of giants. It produced great violence upon the earth. And if you go back to Peter, Peter began verse 18 by saying Jesus died for us so that we could have life, and Jesus, in between His death and His resurrection, went and made sure that the angels in prison - those guys who had been locked up since the days of Noah - knew that there was victory to be had in Christ. I'm sure that the day that Jesus died, all of hell rejoiced, "We got Him!" Even the prisoners in prison, "All right! We win!" And the Lord showed up a few hours later and went, "Yeah, not so fast. You lose. You lose."

So all this to say to the church in Peter's day - God cannot be overthrown by the most wicked of angels, and He will still deliver His own even if there are just eight.

Verse 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." So Jesus, after His resurrection, ascends into heaven. He sits as Lord over all of these things. And yet before He went to heaven, before He rose, He went to these angels, and He preached. But it's not the normal word for "preach" - evangelize. It's the word for declare. So He goes to declare His victory over hell itself. And then in verse 21, he makes the application to the church and to us, and he says the eight people saved through water is kind of an antitype of what we have gone through. The flood waters cleansed the earth. We, in baptism, a representative of that, are cleansed too. Paul said in Romans 6, "If you were buried with Him through baptism, you can rise to life by His Spirit." So the flood cleansed the earth. Baptism symbolizes what happened to you. You went to Jesus, who washed you and cleansed you. You died with Him. You rose with Him. And all hell might be against you while you're living

here. But in the end, you win. Just like Jesus wins, you can declare, "I have victory in Christ," who sits down at the right hand of God. So He encourages them. He doesn't say baptism saves them. He says it's an antitype. In fact he adds - in parentheses - it isn't about cleaning up your flesh on your own. Salvation comes as the answer of a good conscience towards God because of the resurrection.

So, what is Peter's point? His point is pretty clear. Hey, look, the church can go through all kinds of hell here on earth. Satan can rise up and cause great difficulty. He was able to do it once and destroy the earth practically. But God's people still were delivered, and those enemies are locked up. And one day all the enemies will be locked up, and you'll still be standing. Just read the back of the Book! You win!

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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