

## 1 Peter 3:13-22

(Lectionary Year A Easter 6)

By Beth Barnett

Encourages congregation to think about the ways that our stories, and the stories in the Bible intersect to make a larger story about the ways God journeys with us.	
You will need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flip chart/whiteboard and markers for brainstorm</li><li>• Four “scrolls” with the four story summaries (one on each)</li><li>• Copies of the text with “Story 1” etc marked in the text or projected onto the screen</li><li>• Art image for 1 Peter 3:18-22 by Chris Booth printed or projected onto the screen</li></ul>
Time required:	7 minutes

### Connect

Who loves hearing stories?

I love stories.

And almost every page of the Bible is jam-packed with stories.

We are reading from a part of the Bible today, in the book of First Peter, which is written in the form of letter from a follower of Jesus to lots of other followers of Jesus who live far away and a long time after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

And in this part, even though it starts off sounding like a letter, and some people like to think of it as being a bit like a sermon, it is also jam-packed with stories.

In fact, the part we are reading today in chapter three has not just one, not just two – not even THREE but **four** stories all being told at the same time together.

It is the Great Underwater Story Mashup

In fact, this almost always happens when we start telling stories – one person starts a story, and someone else is reminded of another story that connects into that story,

which triggers a third story...and on it goes. And this happens in the Bible's stories as well.

## Context



Look at the picture that artist Chris Booth has created for our reading – which shows all four stories.

All of the characters from these stories are all underwater...

I wonder how many stories we can think of that include being underwater?

*Challenge your gathering to race the clock for 30 seconds, naming as many 'underwater' stories as they can think of. (eg. Finding Nemo, The Little Mermaid, Pinocchio...)*

*Choose someone with excellent listening skills and fast clear writing to write them on a flipchart/whiteboard.*

*Repeat the challenge to race the clock naming as many underwater Bible stories as your gathering can. (eg. Jonah, Crossing the Red Sea, Naaman's healing, Jesus' Baptism, Peter sinking into the waves)*

Great! We seem to know some interesting underwater stories.

## Content

In reading the Bible today, there are four underwater stories that the first hearers of this passage would have known that are all being told at once. It's a bit like the writer

went along to the underwater story section of the library and borrowed four books or scrolls and used them in a mashup.

We can see them in the image created by Chris Booth. The four stories all come from different places – so we've got four scrolls to represent the sources of the stories.

*Use 4 scrolls, one for each story with the summaries below written or printed onto A3 size paper. Invite volunteers to unroll the scrolls as you briefly outline each story.*

The four stories are –

**Story #1** – Comes from the gospels – the life of Jesus: Jesus suffers and dies, rescues people from death and is raised to life again.

**Story #2** – Comes from Greek mythology - When people die they go down into a place with a large river. If they have money to pay, they can take a boat across the river, if they don't they will have to swim, or be stuck half dead.

**Story #3** – Comes from the Old Testament - A long time ago, Noah and his family are rescued in the flood, while others died

**Story #4** – Comes from the lives of the followers of Jesus - The followers of Jesus this is written to have been baptised in water, which represents the story of Jesus death and resurrection. It shows they are clean with a fresh start with God.

Now we are ready to read from 1 Peter 3:18-22. As we read, let's announce each story as it appears.

**Story #1!**

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,

**Story # 2!**

in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison,

**Story #3!**

who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.

**Story #4!**

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

**Story #1!**

who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

That was great!

I think we can take this up another level.



**Intergen**

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We've got our scrolls that show us where the different stories come from; we've got the art image that puts them all together in the mash up, now we need sound effects! Two of the stories need hammering sound effects – which two?

Story 1: Jesus death, and Story 3, Noah building the ark

Use your fist to bang on a solid surface for this sound effect.

Three of the stories need water sound effects – which three?

Stories 2, 3 and 4

Make 'blub blub blub blub' sound.

Let's read again - putting all that together. Choose how you'd like to join in.

Announcing the stories, making sound effects, reading along, looking at the art

Story #1!

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, (bang bang)

Story # 2

in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, (blub blub)

Story #3

who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. (bang bang blub blub)

Story #4

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (blub blub)

Story #1

who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

## Consequence

Great job, people.

This has been the greatest ancient underwater story mashup extravaganza our neighbourhood has ever seen!

I wonder if you are wondering something?

Are you wondering why this small part of the bible is a mashup of four stories?

And why one of the stories isn't even a bible story, but a Greek myth.

That's a wonderful thing to keep wondering about.

In the meantime, we see how our story, and the story of our culture, and the story of God's people in the old testament and the story of Jesus are all part of God's story.

I wonder if this helps us to know how to share our stories and God stories with one another and our neighbourhood.



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## **Optional extra exploration on death and water imagery.**

Story #2 is a story that was popular in the ancient Mediterranean world in the time of Jesus. It's an Ancient Greek story, but in the few hundred years before and through the time of Jesus, the Greek myths were the Hollywood movies of the Ancient world: just like many countries around the world are very familiar with American movie stories, the Greek stories of the ancient world, were the ones that everyone knew, whether they were Greek or not.

The story in the background is this: There is a great deep and wide river between the world of the living and the world of the dead. And when you died, you paid a ferryman named Charon to take you in his boat across to the other side safely, where you would wait to be given a new life.

That's sounds ok doesn't it? But who can see a problem?

*Accept and affirm all answers: "Yes, that could be a problem"... "Yes, people might worry about that"...*

One big problem was, what if you didn't have any money to pay? You either wandered around hopeless stuck in half-deadness, or you might try to swim.

As the story goes, the water was very dangerous and powerful.

If you were dipped in the water and came out again – so the story goes – you would become invulnerable, immortal, undefeatable. But that was rare.

Mostly people who tried to swim across got stuck forever in the river. Like a watery prison. They didn't become invulnerable, immortal – they became the opposite.

*If you have time, you might show a small section of "Hercules" which depicts the underworld*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcS1us6JCzQ&list=PLXX42H6TQ8h5UfpMir9ARuu6VqP1nvaSC&index=29>



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