

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. Dowling, Mr. Garner, Mr. Hadley, Ms. Donna Law, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Owens, Mrs. Siota, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Jesus' Preaching to the Spirits in Prison

By Derek Long

1 Peter 3:18-20 says, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom 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" (NKJV). 1 Peter 3:19 speaks about Jesus preaching "to the spirits in prison." Many people may struggle to understand what is going on in this verse. It is my hope to be able to give some thoughts on things which might help us understand this passage better.

I have heard people argue from 1 Peter 3:19 that people who die in a lost condition are given a chance to hear the gospel after they die. The Bible plainly teaches such an idea is false. In Luke 16:26 the rich man is told it is impossible for people to change places after death because "there is a great gulf fixed" (NKJV). A person has no opportunity after they die to go from the place of punishment to the place of comfort. Ecclesiastes 9:4 teaches, "But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope" (NKJV). A person who is alive has the opportunity to do things which impact where they will spend eternity but a person who has died cannot change where they will spend eternity. 2 Corinthians 5:10 teaches, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (NKJV). We will be judged on the basis of what we did "in the body" not what we did after we died and left the body. After death there are no second chances to make changes and so we best

take advantage of the opportunities we are given while we are alive to make our lives right with God.

I have also heard people argue from 1 Peter 3:19 that fallen angels were taught the gospel during the period of time between Jesus' death and resurrection. It appears such proclamation of the gospel might be for the purpose of simply declaring Jesus has triumphed over them and not for the purpose of them actually being saved. The argument appears to rest upon the following line of reasoning: 1. Those Jesus preached to are those who were disobedient in the days of Noah. 2. Those who were disobedient in the days of Noah were angels who came down and cohabitated with women. 3. A supporting point is the assumption Jesus went to the place of punishment between His death and resurrection. 1 Peter 3:20 clearly supports the first point mentioned above and so I would not object to that statement by itself. However, the last two statements are not in accordance with what the Bible teaches. First, are the "sons of God" referred to in Genesis 6:2 angels or righteous men? Jesus gives us some information about angels which will help us in answering this question. In Luke 20:34-36 Jesus says, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (NKJV). See also Matthew 22:30. It is evident from these passages that angels do not die nor do they marry. Genesis 6:2 makes it plain the angels were marrying and not simply cohabitating without marriage. Genesis 6:2 says the sons of God, "took wives for themselves of all whom they chose" (NKJV). If angels are not coming down to earth and marrying daughters of men in the days of Noah, the foundation of the above argument is flawed. Second, did Jesus go to a place of punishment between His death and resurrection? In Luke 23:43 Jesus tells one of the thieves who was crucified with Him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (NKJV). Paradise is not a realm of punishment but instead a place of bliss. If Jesus went to a place of torment instead of Paradise, then Jesus must have been lying when addressing the thief on the cross!

Having addressed some false views relating to 1 Peter 3:19, let us set forth what the passage is teaching. The end of 1 Peter 3:18 speaks about Jesus being "made alive by the Spirit" (KJV, NKJV) or "made alive in the spirit" (ASV, ESV, NASB, NIV). If one takes the rendering "by the Spirit," the passage appears to speak of the Holy Spirit's role in Jesus' resurrection. If one takes the rendering "in the spirit," the passage speaks about how Jesus' flesh died but His spirit was still alive. Either way, it will not change what 1 Peter 3:19 is really saying much. If it is "by the Spirit," then Jesus by the Holy Spirit preached to those of Noah's generation in the days leading up to the flood. If it is "in the spirit," then Jesus not in the flesh but in the spirit because He had not yet been made flesh (John 1:14) preached through Noah (2 Peter 2:5) to those who were disobedient in the days of Noah before the flood. The passage is not discussing something done between Jesus' death and resurrection but rather something which occurred, "when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared" (1 Peter 3:20, NKJV). Noah was preaching to that generation but Christ was really preaching to them through Noah who was being inspired by the Holy Spirit. The spirits who were being preached to were "in prison." The Bible refers to those in sin as being in prison (Isaiah 42:7; 49:9; 61:1). It could be in that sense that He preached to spirits who were in the prison of sin. Let us be careful when studying passages to make sure we harmonize them with other statements of Scripture. It has been my attempt to do so in this article on 1 Peter 3:19.