

Spirits in Prison - cont.

... the immediate context, and scriptures elsewhere? Remember, always use a clear passage to explain a difficult passage. The best interpretation is the following:

Christ through Noah (the Who) preached (the What). Christ preached in the spirit realm (the How). Christ preached in the days of Noah (the When and the Where). Christ preached to the disobedient spirits of men in Noah's day (the Whom).

Jesus Christ, through Noah, in the realm of the spirit, previously preached to men in Noah's day, which men are now disembodied spirits in prison awaiting the judgment day of God. So what can we learn from these verses?

Some Lessons Learned

Once you die in sin, there's no changing your destiny; no "second chance" – you are in prison (Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:23-26)!

Don't ignore the preaching of Christ. Not being persuaded by preaching is the same as disobedience!

God's longsuffering will one day give way to God's judgment. Don't

Spirits in Prison - cont.

procrastinate (Matthew 24:38-39)!

A few saved are still saved. Save yourself and your family if no one else (Matthew 7:14; 22:14; Luke 13:23)! This salvation comes through water baptism and a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21): *which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

- Chris Reeves -

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Spirits in Prison - Part 2

[Continued from last week.]

Verse 19

in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison

“In which also” (*en ho kai*) is a relative pronoun; the antecedent is “spirit” in verse 18 (not “By which,” or “By whom”). In addition to being made alive “in the spirit,” Jesus “also” went and preached “in the spirit” [realm]. The reference here is to the location or manner of the preaching. There is no reference here to time. Peter is not talking about the time Jesus was in the tomb, after his resurrection, etc. This rules out the first interpretation discussed in last week’s bulletin. Matters relating to time are determined in verse 20. It is in verse 20 that we will see the time that Jesus preached.

Peter wrote that “he went and preached”. This refers to Christ preaching (Gr. *ekeryxen* = herald; proclaim). Christ preached “in the spirit” (Christ’s preincarnate divine spirit) through Noah the “preacher” of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5; Gr. *keryka* = herald; proclaim).

It must be remembered that Christ

preached through Old Testament (1 Peter 1:11) and New Testament prophets (Ephesians 2:17; John 16:13-14). Consider what Peter wrote earlier in the book (1:10-11):

Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them.

Notice that the Peter wrote that the “Spirit of Christ” was in the Old Testament prophets. This fits well with the verse under discussion. If Christ was “in” (preaching through) the Old Testament prophets, he could certainly be doing the same through Noah.

Through Noah, Christ preached to the “spirits” of men in Noah’s day, not to angelic spirits or evil spirits (Hebrews 12:9,23). Christ preached to “spirits in prison;” spirits of men who were disobedient and “now” (italics in the NASV) in prison (2 Pet. 2:9). These spirits (of men) heard the message of Christ through Noah, rejected it, died in the flood, and are now confined to the prison of judgment.

Verse 20

that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water

Christ, through Noah, preached to the spirits of men who “aforetime were disobedient” (Genesis 6:5-7,11). The world of Noah was very wicked. They did not want to hear Noah preach and they did not want to get on the ark to be saved.

Peter wrote, “When the longsuffering of God waited.” God was longsuffering while Noah preached to the wicked people and built the ark (Genesis 6:3,7). Peter wrote of Noah’s preaching in 2 Peter 2:5:

and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly

What Is the Meaning?

So, what interpretation of these challenging verses by Peter best fits the grammar of the verses ... - cont.