

### Introduction

One hundred years have passed since we were first introduced to Noah (Gen 5:32; Gen 7:6). In contrast to wickedness, sexual violence, and corruption wherever the Lord looked, in Noah God saw the one upright person on earth (Gen 6:1–12).<sup>2310</sup> Therefore, the Lord made a covenant with him. In turn, Noah expressed his faith by building and equipping the ark as the Lord had commanded (Gen 6:13–22).<sup>2311</sup>

God had already informed Noah that a pair of each kind of animal would come to the ark (Gen 6:19–20).<sup>2312</sup> Then, the Lord clarified his earlier directive,<sup>2313</sup> saying that seven pairs of every clean animal and of every type of bird would join him (Gen 7:1–3). Not until after the flood receded would the rationale for extra clean animals become clear (Gen 8:20).<sup>2314</sup>

After decades of preparation, at last the time came. In only one week, forty days of rainfall would begin which would wipe out every land animal (Gen 7:4). Moses condensed all of Noah’s effort in carrying out an incredible amount of difficult work into this brief statement, “And Noah did according to all which the Lord had commanded him” (Gen 7:5).

By including an exact date for this event, Moses imbued the flood account with historical credibility.<sup>2315</sup> He named two sources of flooding: a great eruption of water from a subterranean ocean (“the great deep”), and a massive downpour from above (Gen 7:11).<sup>2316</sup>

By releasing these waters, the Lord returned the earth to its original chaos. God was undoing his great act of separating the waters above from the waters below the earth in a reversal of the creation order (Gen 1:1–2, 6–10).<sup>2317</sup>

Moses emphasized the salvation of those inside the ark, rather than the fate of those who did not seek refuge there.<sup>2318</sup> The sense of the text is that Noah and his family served as grand marshals of this parade, followed by the animals, who entered two by two. God led them to Noah to preserve a remnant (Gen 7:13–15).<sup>2319</sup>

The Lord’s act of sealing Noah and those with him inside the ark emphasizes that they received divine protection (Gen 7:16).<sup>2320</sup> While the storm raged all around them, the one who had shut them in guaranteed their safety (Gen 7:17).<sup>2321</sup> God’s grace saved Noah and his entourage, in contrast to the experiences of the heroes in other Ancient Near Eastern flood texts, whom most of the gods sought to kill.<sup>2322</sup>

Outside of the boat, eerie desolation reigned.<sup>2323</sup> The waters triumphed over the earth,<sup>2324</sup> lifting the ark above the tallest mountains (Gen 7:18–20). Chaotic waters which covered the earth at the beginning of God’s creative activity once again surged like hostile warriors to undo

<sup>2310</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 286.

<sup>2311</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 137.

<sup>2312</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 176.

<sup>2313</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 137.

<sup>2314</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 176.

<sup>2315</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

<sup>2316</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 291.

<sup>2317</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 181.

<sup>2318</sup>Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 126.

<sup>2319</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 138–9.

<sup>2320</sup>Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 226.

<sup>2321</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

<sup>2322</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

<sup>2323</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2324</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

the order which the Lord had put into place.<sup>2325</sup> This condition lasted for 150 days before the flood began to recede (Gen 7:24).

Despite this savage tempest, “The ark proceeded on the surface of the waters” (Gen 7:17). God in his mercy had shut Noah and his fellow passengers inside and he would bring them through the storm without harm (Gen 8:1).<sup>2326</sup> Yet, every person, land animal, and bird left outside perished (Gen 7:21–23). In contrast to the ones whom the flood washed away, Noah and his passengers were left behind.<sup>2327</sup> The same waters which rendered divine judgment preserved a righteous remnant.<sup>2328</sup>

### God Remembered Noah

**1) Gen 8:1:** The flood had wiped out virtually everyone descended from Adam (Gen 7:21–22). It destroyed even most of the animals which God commissioned humanity to steward (Gen 1:26–28). Humanity stood on the brink of a new era, with Noah as the father of all.<sup>2329</sup>

Moses structured the entire flood narrative as a chiasm (Gen 6:9–9:19).<sup>2330</sup> While the first five sections of the account increasingly darkened in tone,<sup>2331</sup> we have at last reached the center.<sup>2332</sup> After this, he described the renewal of the earth.<sup>2333</sup> By placing this verse as the pivotal focus of the story,<sup>2334</sup> Moses emphasized that Noah’s deliverance was no accident: the Lord himself saved Noah and his passengers.<sup>2335</sup>

He wrote, “And God remembered (*zakhar*) Noah and all of the animals and all of the cattle which [were] with him in the ark. And God caused a wind to pass over the land. And the waters subsided.” For the first time, the Bible describes the Lord as remembering someone.<sup>2336</sup> Significantly, Moses mentioned neither Noah’s righteousness nor his obedience as a reason for his favor (Cf. Gen 6:8–9).<sup>2337</sup>

The English word “remembered” implies that something had been forgotten. However, the Hebrew term carries a different nuance.<sup>2338</sup> It expresses commitment to a covenant (Lev 26:45; Ps 74:2; Jer 14:20–21).<sup>2339</sup> Whenever the Lord “remembered” people in the Old Testament, he intervened to save them from death, infertility, or slavery (Gen 18:23; Gen 19:29; Gen 30:22–23; Exod 2:23–25).<sup>2340</sup> Consequently, the Lord would fulfill his promise of salvation to Noah (Gen 6:18).<sup>2341</sup> God’s concern also extended to animals (Jonah 4:10–11; Matt 6:26; Matt 10:29).<sup>2342</sup>

<sup>2325</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2326</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 296.

<sup>2327</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 297.

<sup>2328</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2329</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 127.

<sup>2330</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 156.

<sup>2331</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2332</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 156.

<sup>2333</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2334</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 299.

<sup>2335</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 157.

<sup>2336</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184.

<sup>2337</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 299.

<sup>2338</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2339</sup>H. Eising, “זָכַר” (*zakhar*), *TDOT* 4:70–82, 70.

<sup>2340</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 299.

<sup>2341</sup>Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 232.

<sup>2342</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184.

Even today, we can trust God to keep his covenants with us (Matt 26:26–28; Heb 10:11–25).<sup>2343</sup> When the Lord remembers, he acts.<sup>2344</sup> He remains merciful and true to his word.<sup>2345</sup>

In Noah’s case, God’s remembrance caused him to send a wind to blow over the surface of the earth, increasing the evaporation of the water.<sup>2346</sup> The same Hebrew word (*ruakh*) means “wind” and “spirit.”<sup>2347</sup> Moses deliberately echoed the original creation account.<sup>2348</sup> At the beginning of God’s creation of the heavens and the earth, the divine spirit hovered magnificently over the waters (Gen 1:1–2). Here that same wind dispersed the waters of judgment.<sup>2349</sup>

The Akkadian gods in the Epic of Gilgamesh “cowered like dogs” when faced with the storm they unleashed in their attempt to destroy everyone on earth.<sup>2350</sup> In contrast, the Lord remained in complete control of Noah’s situation.<sup>2351</sup>

**a) Read Gen 8:1.** How does the Hebrew word “remember” differ from its English equivalent? Whom did God include in his covenant with Noah? What similarities would Moses’s original audience have recognized between this verse and the creation account in Gen 1? How does this verse provide you with comfort in hard times?

### Jesus, Remember Me

**2) Luke 23:39–43:** This scene, which occurred during Jesus’s crucifixion, took place just after the Jewish leaders and soldiers mocked him (Luke 23:35–38).<sup>2352</sup> Luke reported additional humiliation of Christ. He wrote, “One of those who was being hanged as a criminal was reviling (*blasphēmō*) him, saying, ‘Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!’”

Questioning Jesus’s legitimacy as the Messiah amounted to blasphemy.<sup>2353</sup> Not only had this lawbreaker crossed the boundaries of societal justice, even on the edge of death he exhibited no fear of God (Luke 12:4–5).<sup>2354</sup> Although this criminal aligned himself with others who mocked Christ,<sup>2355</sup> he also demanded that Jesus employ his spiritual power to rescue him from

<sup>2343</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2344</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184.

<sup>2345</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 123.

<sup>2346</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 299.

<sup>2347</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “רוּחַ” (*ruakh*), *BDB*, 924,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/924/mode/2up>.

<sup>2348</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 331.

<sup>2349</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 300.

<sup>2350</sup>Speiser, “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *ANET*, 11:113–5, 94,

[https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET\\_20160815/Pritchard\\_1950\\_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up).

<sup>2351</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

<sup>2352</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 822.

<sup>2353</sup>Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, “βλασφημέω” (*blasphēmō*), *TDNT* 1:621–5, 623.

<sup>2354</sup>John Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 1151.

<sup>2355</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 822.

the cross.<sup>2356</sup> He did not recognize that Christ could deliver him not just from death but through it (John 11:21–27; Rom 14:7–9; 2 Tim 2:11–13).<sup>2357</sup>

Luke recorded a shift in the attitude of one of the condemned men, differing from Mark’s account (Mark 15:32).<sup>2358</sup> The second criminal rebuked the first, “Do you not even fear (*phobeō*) God, for you are under the same condemnation? And we have been justly condemned, for we are receiving [things] appropriate to what we have done. But this man nothing wrong has done.”

Jewish piety rested upon the foundation of fearing God, for it represented utter dependence upon the Lord (Ps 31:19–24; Luke 1:46–50; Luke 18:9–14).<sup>2359</sup> The first man chose to malign God’s means of salvation, rather than expressing reverence for him.<sup>2360</sup> Since the second convict recognized that he and the other criminal received a just sentence, he expressed astonishment that someone about to answer to God could boldly accost Christ.<sup>2361</sup> The time had come to repent, not to mock another sufferer (Acts 25:11).<sup>2362</sup>

By admitting his guilt and perceiving Jesus’s innocence, one man became a candidate to receive divine grace (Luke 5:8–11).<sup>2363</sup> Pilate and Herod recognized Christ’s innocence (Luke 23:13–15); so now did a man who committed a capital offense.<sup>2364</sup> Jesus’s demeanor and words upon the cross, particularly when praying for forgiveness for those who crucified him,<sup>2365</sup> likely enabled the criminal to identify Christ’s royal status (Luke 23:33–34).<sup>2366</sup> Therefore, the second man appealed in repentance and trust for mercy, as to God (Ps 106:4–8; Luke 1:54–55).<sup>2367</sup>

He pleaded, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!” This cry contains one of the few occurrences in Luke where someone addressed Christ by his first name.<sup>2368</sup> Fittingly, the name Jesus (*Iēsous*) means “Yahweh is salvation,” because Christ would save people from their sins (Luke 1:30–35; Matt 1:21).<sup>2369</sup> Others who called Jesus by name also sought restoration (Luke 17:13; Luke 18:35–39).<sup>2370</sup>

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (OT), God’s remembrance of Noah (Gen 8:1) uses the same verbal root as the criminal’s desperate appeal, “Remember (*mimnēskomai*) me.” The Lord keeps in mind those in a covenant relationship with him (Judg 16:28–30; 1 Sam 1:9–11, 19–20; Ps 115:11–13).<sup>2371</sup>

While pondering his future, the dying man anticipated the coming glory of Christ and placed his fate in Jesus’s hands.<sup>2372</sup> However, unlike the first criminal, he did not demand earthly

<sup>2356</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 924.

<sup>2357</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 822.

<sup>2358</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 925.

<sup>2359</sup>Horst Balz, “φοβέω” (*phobeō*), *TDNT* 9:189–219, 209.

<sup>2360</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 822.

<sup>2361</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1152–3.

<sup>2362</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 925.

<sup>2363</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 822.

<sup>2364</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 596.

<sup>2365</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 925.

<sup>2366</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1151–2.

<sup>2367</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 925.

<sup>2368</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 925.

<sup>2369</sup>Werner Foerster, “Ἰησοῦς” (*Iesous*), *TDNT* 3:284–93, 285.

<sup>2370</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 822.

<sup>2371</sup>David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Luke,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 398–414, 397–8.

<sup>2372</sup>O. Michel, “μυμνήσκομαι” (*mimnēskomai*), *TDNT* 4:675–83, 677.

deliverance but requested salvation in the age to come.<sup>2373</sup> He recognized the truth of the charges brought against Christ as King of the Jews (Luke 23:38).<sup>2374</sup> Jesus’s approaching death failed to negate his claims to be the Messiah (1 Cor 1:22–25).<sup>2375</sup> Instead, his sacrifice preceded his kingly rule (Luke 9:51; Luke 20:9–18; Luke 24:25–27).<sup>2376</sup>

While facing his own agony and imminent death, Jesus extended salvation to this man despite receiving mockery for his apparent inability to save himself and others (Matt 26:51–54).<sup>2377</sup> Jesus replied, “Truly, to you I say, today with me you shall be in paradise.” In the gospels, whenever Christ spoke the formula “Truly I say,” this indicated he was about to make an authoritative and trustworthy proclamation.<sup>2378</sup>

Greek authors placed their emphasis at the beginning of a sentence or clause. As a result, the words “today with me” consisted of a forceful assertion.<sup>2379</sup> The criminal did not have to wait for his bodily resurrection in the age to come (1 Thess 4:13–18). On that very day, Christ would fulfill his desire (Cf. 2 Cor 5:1–8).<sup>2380</sup> Even while bearing the weight of our sins, Jesus retained the authority to deliver a royal pardon (2 Cor 5:17–21).<sup>2381</sup>

In the Greek translation of the OT, “paradise” (*paradeisos*) typically referred to the garden or park belonging to a king (Eccl 2:5; Song 4:12–14; Neh 2:8).<sup>2382</sup> The term originally applied to Eden, the garden of God (Gen 2:8).<sup>2383</sup> God promised Isaiah that he would eventually reverse the exile from Eden (Gen 3:22–24), bringing about full restoration “as a park (*paradeisos*) of the Lord” in the age to come (Isa 51:3; Rev 22:1–5).<sup>2384</sup>

According to the Jewish apocryphal book *The Testament of Levi* (second century BC): “Then shall the Lord raise up a new priest...And he shall execute a righteous judgment upon the earth...He shall shine forth as the sun on the earth and shall remove all darkness from under heaven, and there shall be peace in all the earth...And he shall open the gates of paradise and shall remove the threatening sword against Adam. And he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life...And all the saints shall clothe themselves with joy.”<sup>2385</sup>

By means of his death, Jesus opened the way to paradise (Rev 2:7).<sup>2386</sup> The Lord fulfilled his plan through—not despite—the crucifixion.<sup>2387</sup> Christ and the criminal went to paradise immediately after death.<sup>2388</sup> In the aftermath of Jesus’s resurrection and ascension, Christ sits in

<sup>2373</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 925.

<sup>2374</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 596.

<sup>2375</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 822–3.

<sup>2376</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1152.

<sup>2377</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1152.

<sup>2378</sup>Heinrich Schlier, “ἀμήν” (*amēn*), *TDNT* 1:335–8, 338.

<sup>2379</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 926.

<sup>2380</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 596.

<sup>2381</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1151.

<sup>2382</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 926.

<sup>2383</sup>Pao and Schnabel, “Luke,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 398.

<sup>2384</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1152.

<sup>2385</sup>R. H. Charles, trans., “Testament of Levi,” in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London: Black, 1908), 18:2–4, 10–14, 62–3, 66–7, <https://archive.org/stream/testamentsoftwel08char#page/62/mode/2up>, <https://archive.org/stream/testamentsoftwel08char#page/66/mode/2up>.

<sup>2386</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 926.

<sup>2387</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 823.

<sup>2388</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1152.

paradise at the Father’s right hand (Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55–56).<sup>2389</sup> Believers in the intermediate state between death and bodily resurrection abide there with him (2 Cor 12:2–4).<sup>2390</sup>

Jesus shocked those watching the crucifixion by extending abundant mercy to a criminal convicted of a crime worthy of execution.<sup>2391</sup> By faith, that man experienced vindication, and now dwells among the righteous dead (Rom 10:8–13).<sup>2392</sup> As long as life lasts, God considers no one too unworthy or too late to request and receive the gift of salvation (Luke 15:1–7; Matt 20:1–16).

**Read Luke 23:39–43.** What made the words of the first criminal blasphemous? Why did the second convict rebuke him? What did he ask Christ to do? How did Jesus respond? What similarities exist between the Lord remembering Noah and Christ promising to remember the man crucified with him?

### God Reverses the Flood

**3) Gen 8:2–5:** Due to the Lord remembering Noah (Gen 8:1), “The springs of the deep and the windows of the heavens were sealed, and the heavy rain from the heavens was restrained.” God began reversing his actions (Cf. Gen 7:11–12).<sup>2393</sup> Just as the Lord divided the waters on the second day of creation, he reestablished the separation between the watery deep and the sky (Gen 1:6–7).<sup>2394</sup> The flood remained entirely under God’s control, rather than merely subject to the forces of nature.<sup>2395</sup>

The Sumerian flood account, the Eridu Genesis closely parallels the biblical record.<sup>2396</sup> Nevertheless, several important differences appear. It says: “After, for seven days (and) seven nights, the flood had swept over the land, (and) the huge boat had been tossed about by the windstorms on the great waters, [*the sun god*] *Utu came forth*, who sheds light on heaven (and) earth. Ziusudra opened a window of the huge boat, the hero Utu brought his rays into the giant boat.”<sup>2397</sup>

In Genesis, the wind sent by the Lord evaporated the water, not warm rays of light sent by the sun god (Gen 8:1).

<sup>2389</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 926.

<sup>2390</sup>Joachim Jeremias, “παράδεισος” (*paradeisos*), *TDNT* 5:765–73, 769.

<sup>2391</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 1152.

<sup>2392</sup>Garland, *Luke*, 926.

<sup>2393</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184.

<sup>2394</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 128.

<sup>2395</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 300.

<sup>2396</sup>Pritchard, *ANET*, 42,

[https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET\\_20160815/Pritchard\\_1950\\_ANET#page/n67/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n67/mode/2up).

<sup>2397</sup>Samuel Noah Kramer, trans., “The Deluge,” in *ANET*, lines 203–8, 44,

[https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET\\_20160815/Pritchard\\_1950\\_ANET#page/n69/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n69/mode/2up).

Moses recorded the results of the Lord’s activity, “The waters gradually receded from upon the earth, and at the end of 150 days, the waters decreased.” This reversed the events of Gen 7:17, 24.<sup>2398</sup> However, the waters had not completely disappeared by that point. Instead, they returned to their original locations.<sup>2399</sup> Moses used the same description regarding the Sea of Reeds, an occurrence very familiar to his original audience (Exod 14:26–28). Later in Israel’s history, Joshua depicted the Jordan River in a similar way (Josh 4:18).<sup>2400</sup>

Finally, “The ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.” Ironically, the date is extremely specific but the location—the piece of information which interests most readers—remains quite vague.<sup>2401</sup> Exactly five months after the flood began, the ark could no longer clear the mountain peaks and came to rest (*nuakh*).<sup>2402</sup> Here Moses used wordplay, employing the verb related to Noah’s name (*noakh*) (Gen 5:29).<sup>2403</sup>

The mountains of Ararat are located in what was once Armenia (2 Ki 19:37; Jer 51:27).<sup>2404</sup> This range is now in eastern Turkey, southern Russia, and northwest Iran.<sup>2405</sup> The highest peak rises to approximately 17,000 feet.<sup>2406</sup> People have sought to identify which specific mountain the ark rested upon since before the time of Christ.<sup>2407</sup> However, concerning this matter, the Bible omits precise information.<sup>2408</sup> According to the Epic of Gilgamesh, “On Mount Nisir the ship came to a halt. Mount Nisir held the ship fast, allowing no motion.”<sup>2409</sup> In contrast, neither the Eridu Genesis nor the Atrahasis Epic names a landing site.<sup>2410</sup>

Moses wrote, “And the waters had been decreasing steadily until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.” By including an exact date—which typically occurs in the Ancient Near East (ANE) only in the annals of kings—Moses imbued the account with historical credibility.<sup>2411</sup> This occurred two and a half months after the ark came to a sudden halt. The decline of the waters mirrors Gen 7:19–20.<sup>2412</sup> It also parallels the separation of the waters from the ground on the third day of creation (Gen 1:9).<sup>2413</sup>

**a) Read Gen 8:2–5.** How did the Lord reverse what he had done to produce the flood? Why did Moses give precise dates? What makes it very difficult to guess where the ark came to rest? Imagine the moment when the boat came to a halt. What do you think that was like?

<sup>2398</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184.

<sup>2399</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 300.

<sup>2400</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184.

<sup>2401</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 300.

<sup>2402</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184.

<sup>2403</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 301.

<sup>2404</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 8:4.

<sup>2405</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 184–5.

<sup>2406</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 8:4.

<sup>2407</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 301.

<sup>2408</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 185.

<sup>2409</sup>Speiser, “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *ANET*, 11:140–1, 94,

[https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET\\_20160815/Pritchard\\_1950\\_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up).

<sup>2410</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 301.

<sup>2411</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

<sup>2412</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 185.

<sup>2413</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 129.

### Renewal of the Earth

**b) Gen 8:6–14:** Noah wanted to ensure the safety of the ark’s inhabitants before disembarking.<sup>2414</sup> This section of the flood narrative concentrates upon the long wait for the waters to subside.<sup>2415</sup> Hence, Moses employed a great deal of repetition to impart the sense of monotony which the passengers experienced while they waited for the earth to dry.<sup>2416</sup>

Moses wrote, “Then it was at the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. And he sent forth the raven. And it went out, going back and forth while the waters were drying upon the earth.” Noah thought waiting forty days after the mountain peaks emerged might suffice for them to leave the ark.<sup>2417</sup> Since the window did not allow him to view the ground, he must have placed it in or near the roof (Gen 6:16).<sup>2418</sup>

Until this point in the flood narrative, Noah received all his instructions from God. On this topic, the Lord apparently remained silent. However, since God did eventually tell him to leave (Gen 8:15–16),<sup>2419</sup> perhaps Noah grew impatient.

In the ancient world, some sailors utilized birds to locate the nearest land.<sup>2420</sup> Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD) observed, “In traversing their seas, the people of Taprobane take no observations of the stars...but they carry birds out to sea, which they let go from time to time, and so follow their course as they make for the land.”<sup>2421</sup>

Since ravens typically failed to return to their ship, sailors took special care to note the direction of the birds’ flight.<sup>2422</sup> God classified them among unclean birds due to their habit of eating decaying flesh (Lev 11:13–15).<sup>2423</sup> Thus, Noah likely expected the raven not to return.

Moses continued, “Then [Noah] sent forth a dove from him in order to see [if] the waters had diminished from upon the surface of the ground.” As doves can fly only a short distance, navigators used them to locate places to land.<sup>2424</sup> The Lord considered them clean birds, suitable for sacrifice (Lev 1:14).<sup>2425</sup> These fowl tend to live in low-lying areas like valleys,<sup>2426</sup> where they find seeds to eat.<sup>2427</sup>

Moses reported, “But the dove did not find a resting place for the sole of her foot, so she turned back to him on the ark, because the waters [were] on all the surface of the ground. And [Noah] stretched out his hand, and he took her, and he brought her to himself into the ark.” The return of the dove to Noah indicated that the land at lower elevations remained submerged.<sup>2428</sup> Moses employed wordplay here with Noah’s name. Finding no resting place (*mānoah*), the dove

<sup>2414</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 302.

<sup>2415</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 185.

<sup>2416</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 185.

<sup>2417</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 303.

<sup>2418</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 186.

<sup>2419</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 303.

<sup>2420</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 8:12.

<sup>2421</sup>Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* (trans. John Bostock and H. T. Riley; London: Taylor & Francis, 1855), 6.24.7–8, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0137:book=6:chapter=24&highlight=birds>.

<sup>2422</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 8:12.

<sup>2423</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 186.

<sup>2424</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 8:12.

<sup>2425</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 186.

<sup>2426</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 304–5.

<sup>2427</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 8:12.

<sup>2428</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 304–5.

returned to Noah.<sup>2429</sup> He imitated God,<sup>2430</sup> extending compassion to the creatures which the Lord created (Exod 23:4–5; Deut 25:4; Prov 12:10).<sup>2431</sup>

Then, “[Noah] waited yet another seven days, and he again sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came to him toward evening and behold, a fresh-plucked olive leaf [was] in her mouth. And Noah knew that the waters were diminished from upon the land. So, he waited yet another seven days, and he sent forth the dove, but she did not return to him again.”

After what had to be a difficult week of waiting, Noah tried again.<sup>2432</sup> This time, the bird brought a sign of hope. Leaves once again sprouted from olive trees!<sup>2433</sup> People have cultivated olives for over 6,000 years. A single tree can live for up to 1,000 years, producing fruit even when the trunk becomes hollow. When someone cuts an olive tree down, new sprouts emerge from the stump. This makes them difficult to kill.<sup>2434</sup> As a result, those living in the Ancient Near East (ANE) saw olive trees as a sign of fertility and new life. Recovery from the flood began.<sup>2435</sup>

The Epic of Gilgamesh recounts Utnapishtim using birds in a similar way: “When the seventh day arrived, I sent forth and set free a dove. The dove went forth but came back. Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round. Then I sent forth and set free a swallow. The swallow went forth but came back. Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round. Then I sent forth and set free a raven. The raven went forth and, seeing that the waters had diminished, he eats, circles, caws, and turns not round.”<sup>2436</sup> Releasing a raven before a dove represents a more logical strategy for tracking the evaporation of water.<sup>2437</sup> This imbues the biblical account with greater credibility.<sup>2438</sup>

Moses reported, “And it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water began to be dried up (*khārēv*) from upon the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and he looked, and behold, the surface of the ground had begun to dry. And in the second month on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the land was dry (*yābēsh*).” Once again, Moses cited specific dates to emphasize the importance of these events (Cf. Gen 7:11).<sup>2439</sup>

Furthermore, he used two different Hebrew verbs to convey what happened to the land.<sup>2440</sup> The first (*khārēv*) describes the process of drying, while the second (*yābēsh*) depicts the result.<sup>2441</sup> Initially, Noah saw that the waters began to disappear from the earth. By the end, a new world emerged from its watery grave, heralding the onset of a new era in human history.<sup>2442</sup>

Moses provided a hint to his original audience that the ark was a sacred space by his choice of words to identify what Noah removed from it.<sup>2443</sup> The term “covering” (*mikseh*)

<sup>2429</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 186.

<sup>2430</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 186–7.

<sup>2431</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 141.

<sup>2432</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 187.

<sup>2433</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 8:12.

<sup>2434</sup>Irene Jacob and Walter Jacob, “Flora,” *ABD* 2:803–17, 807–8.

<sup>2435</sup>Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 8:12.

<sup>2436</sup>Speiser, “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *ANET*, 11:145–54, 94–5,

[https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET\\_20160815/Pritchard\\_1950\\_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up).

<sup>2437</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 304–5.

<sup>2438</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 141.

<sup>2439</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 187.

<sup>2440</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 305.

<sup>2441</sup>O. Kaiser, “קָרַב” (*kharav*), *TDOT* 5:150–1, 151.

<sup>2442</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 187.

<sup>2443</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “קָרַב” (*kharab*), *BDB*, 492.

elsewhere refers to the roof of the tabernacle and to the leather which the priests placed over the sacred furnishings of the tabernacle for transporting them (Exod 26:14; Num 4:5–15).<sup>2444</sup>

According to the Eridu Genesis, a Sumerian flood account, “After the flood had swept over the country, after the evil wind had tossed the big boat about on the great waters, the sun came out spreading light over heaven and earth. Ziusudra then drilled an opening in the big boat. And the gallant [sun god] Utu sent his light into the interior of the big boat.”<sup>2445</sup>

Noah waited for almost two more months before the ground completely dried.<sup>2446</sup> Based upon the Hebrew lunar calendar, Noah and his passengers spent one year and eleven days on the ark. Intriguingly, that is the amount of time the earth requires to orbit the sun. By our reckoning, they remained on the boat for exactly one year.<sup>2447</sup> No other ANE account provides a length of time for the flood.<sup>2448</sup> This fact counters arguments that newer texts, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, depend upon Genesis.

**Read Gen 8:6–14.** Why would Noah release a raven to test the water level before repeating the experiment with a dove? How did he know that the waters abated? What indications did Moses give that the ark represented a sacred sanctuary?

### Bring Them Out

**c) Gen 8:15–19:** This section of the flood narrative comprises the eighth scene, in which Noah hears and obeys God’s command to leave the ark. It parallels Gen 7:1–4.<sup>2449</sup> In this passage, Moses gave additional hints that Noah served as a second Adam.<sup>2450</sup> The key word, which occurs four times in these verses, means “to go out” (*yatsa*).<sup>2451</sup>

Based upon the failure of the dove to return and his own observations, Noah knew that the earth was prepared for habitation (Gen 8:6–12). Apparently, God had not spoken to Noah during the year since he entered the ark (Gen 7:1–4, 11; Gen 8:13–14). Nevertheless, he waited to receive an “all clear” signal from the Lord.<sup>2452</sup>

Concerning Noah’s patience, John Calvin (1509–1564) reached this conclusion: “Noah was restrained, by a hallowed modesty, from allowing himself to enjoy the bounty of nature, till he should hear the voice of God directing him to do so...All ought indeed, spontaneously, to consider how great must have been the fortitude of the man, who, after the

<sup>2444</sup>Helmer Ringgren, “הַסֹּף” (*kasah*), *TDOT* 7:259–64, 264.

<sup>2445</sup>Thorkild Jacobsen, trans., “Eridu Genesis,” in *RANE*, 13–15, <http://www.piney.com/EriduGen.html>.

<sup>2446</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 141.

<sup>2447</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 305.

<sup>2448</sup>Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 425.

<sup>2449</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 187.

<sup>2450</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 127.

<sup>2451</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 307.

<sup>2452</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 306–7.

incredible weariness of a whole year, when the deluge has ceased, and new life has shone forth, does not yet move a foot...without the command of God.”<sup>2453</sup>

Moses wrote, “Then the Lord spoke to Noah, saying, ‘Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons, and [the] wives of your sons with you. Every living thing which [is] with you from all flesh: birds and animals and all the creeping things which move on the land, you shall bring out with you. And they shall swarm upon the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.’”

In his previous instructions, the Lord commanded Noah to bring various creatures on board to preserve their lives (Gen 6:18–20; Gen 7:2–3). Now God ordered him to release the animals so they could reproduce and fill the earth.<sup>2454</sup> Note the similarity to Moses’s account of the fifth and sixth days of creation (Gen 1:22–23, 27–28).<sup>2455</sup> That the land animals finally received this same mandate points to the beginning of a new creation (Gen 1:24–25).<sup>2456</sup>

The very close correlation between Gen 8:16–17 and Gen 8:18–19 emphasizes Noah’s obedience to the Lord’s commands.<sup>2457</sup> The second pair of verses says, “And Noah went out, and his wife, and his sons, and [the] wives of his sons with him. Every living thing: every creeping thing and every bird and everything which moves upon the land. By their clans, they went out from the ark.”

Within Israel, a clan referred to a group of related people larger than an extended family but smaller than a tribe (Num 1:2; Josh 7:14).<sup>2458</sup> Noah and all his passengers disembarked to a renewed world, full of promise.<sup>2459</sup>

**Read Gen 8:15–19.** How does this passage imply that Noah is a second Adam? What do these verses reveal about his character? How do you respond to what the Lord instructs you to do?

### Overview of 1 Peter 3:18–22

**4) 1 Pet 3:18–22:** The Apostle Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers experiencing persecution to live godly lives which honored Christ.<sup>2460</sup> Since the recipients experienced hostility from their neighbors, in the previous passage Peter urged them to endure suffering for doing good (1 Pet 3:14–17). By holding firm under trial, they would receive honor in the age to come, just as God vindicated Jesus after his crucifixion. Persisting in faith leads to victory.<sup>2461</sup>

<sup>2453</sup>Calvin, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 280.

<sup>2454</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 187.

<sup>2455</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 129.

<sup>2456</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 187.

<sup>2457</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 141.

<sup>2458</sup>H. -J. Zobel, “הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה” (*mishpakhah*), *TDOT* 9:79–86, 80–1.

<sup>2459</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 121.

<sup>2460</sup>John H. Elliott, “Peter, First Epistle of,” *ABD* 5:269–78, 269.

<sup>2461</sup>Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 237–8.

Most scholars agree that the apostle utilized traditional material when preparing 1 Peter 3:18–22.<sup>2462</sup> In particular, they cite three past tense participles in the passive voice in 1 Pet 3:18, 22: “he was put to death” (*thanatōtheis*); “he was made alive” (*zōopoiētheis*); and “having been subjected” (*hypotagentōn*). The nouns meaning “in [the] flesh” (*sarki*) and “in [the] Spirit” (*pneumati*) also occur in parallel form.<sup>2463</sup> However, whether that material took the form of a hymn or creed remains under discussion.<sup>2464</sup>

Although this passage is very complex, recognizing its major points provides us with guidance. First, Jesus suffered for unrighteous people to bring Christians to God. Second, the power of the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. Then, Christ proclaimed his victory to evil spirits. Finally, Jesus ascended to the Father and has placed all demonic forces under his power.<sup>2465</sup>

Due to the controversial nature of this passage, we will examine and critique various views in a similar format to the treatment of the sons of the gods (Gen 6:1–4). Thankfully, there is a way through the morass of difficulties.

**a) Read 1 Pet 3:18–22.** What was the purpose of this letter? Why do most scholars believe that this passage was originally a hymn or creed? How does focusing upon what happened to Jesus encourage you to persist through trials or persecution?

### Death in the Flesh but Life in the Spirit

**b) 1 Pet 3:18:** Peter began this passage in 1 Pet 3:18–22 by writing, “For Christ, too, once on behalf of sins suffered, the righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, in order that you might be brought to God. He was put to death in [the] flesh but brought to life in [the] Spirit.”

Prior to Christ’s crucifixion, Peter adamantly rejected the idea that the messiah should die (Matt 16:21–23).<sup>2466</sup> Since Christ suffered, we cannot definitively interpret persecution as a sign of the Lord’s displeasure.<sup>2467</sup> Due to our identification with Christ,<sup>2468</sup> suffering precedes glory.<sup>2469</sup> God calls us to endure affliction even as he did (Rom 8:16–23).<sup>2470</sup>

Ultimately, Jesus’s persecutors failed to achieve victory over him. We who suffer unjustly shall likewise experience vindication in the age to come (1 Pet 2:11–12; Rev 6:9–11).<sup>2471</sup> As a result of this truth, Christ’s experience encourages us to stand firm.<sup>2472</sup>

<sup>2462</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 197.

<sup>2463</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 197.

<sup>2464</sup>Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 134–5.

<sup>2465</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 180.

<sup>2466</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 238.

<sup>2467</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 179–80.

<sup>2468</sup>Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 134.

<sup>2469</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 180.

<sup>2470</sup>Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 128.

<sup>2471</sup>D. A. Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1039.

<sup>2472</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 201.

However, we cannot limit Christ’s affliction to a pattern for us to emulate.<sup>2473</sup> Not only did he suffer innocently, he died on behalf of other people’s sins (Eph 1:7–8; Rom 8:1–5; Heb 10:8–10, 17–18).<sup>2474</sup> The phrase “for sins” (*peri hamartia*) occurs repeatedly in reference to the sacrificial system throughout the Greek translation of the Pentateuch (five books attributed to Moses).<sup>2475</sup> In fact, it occurs fifty-six times in Leviticus alone.<sup>2476</sup>

Jesus’s suffering completely fulfilled its purpose (John 19:30).<sup>2477</sup> Therefore, his sacrifice took place once for all time (Rom 6:10; Heb 7:26–28; Heb 9:24–27).<sup>2478</sup> In fact, Christ became the perfect sin offering who died in our place to make us right with God (Lev 16:15–19; Isa 53:10–12; Heb 13:10–13).<sup>2479</sup>

By calling Jesus “righteous” (*dikaïos*) Peter alluded to his sinless state (John 8:46; Heb 4:15).<sup>2480</sup> Had Christ not lived in perfectly obedience, he could not have atoned for our sins by his death.<sup>2481</sup> God’s plan to save us would have failed.<sup>2482</sup>

Peter placed the recipients of his letter among the unjust people for whom Christ died.<sup>2483</sup> The usage of the term “just” or “righteous” here agrees with a definition reputedly given by Socrates (469–399 BC), “He who acts lawfully is just, and he who acts unlawfully is unjust.”<sup>2484</sup>

Prior to their conversion, Peter’s readers had been as alienated from God as their unbelieving neighbors (1 Pet 1:14; 1 Pet 2:10, 25; 1 Pet 4:3). However, Jesus calls sinners to himself, not those who cling to their own righteousness (Matt 9:9–13; 1 Tim 1:12–16).<sup>2485</sup> Once unrighteous people accept Christ’s sacrificial death to cover their sins, he commands us to live uprightly, even if that results in suffering (Matt 5:10–16; Matt 10:26–39).<sup>2486</sup>

Jesus died that, “you might be brought to God.” Even the Lord’s former enemies can now enjoy spiritual access to him and an eternity of dwelling in his presence (Rom 5:1–2, 6–11; Eph 2:1–7, 17–22; Heb 10:19–22).<sup>2487</sup> Conversion moves us from darkness into light (John 1:4–13; 1 Pet 2:9, 24).<sup>2488</sup> In effect, Christ reached across the chasm between God and humanity and led us across it to dwell in harmony with the Trinity.<sup>2489</sup>

Peter continued, “Although he was put to death in [the] flesh, he was made alive in [the] Spirit.” That Jesus was “put to death in the flesh” refers to the crucifixion.<sup>2490</sup> Due to its

<sup>2473</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (ed. Grant R. Osborne, D. Stuart Briscoe, and Haddon Robinson; IVPNTC; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pet 3:18.

<sup>2474</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 135.

<sup>2475</sup> Jobs, *1 Peter*, 238.

<sup>2476</sup> Result of Logos 7 word study on “ἁμαρτία” (*hamartia*).

<sup>2477</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 202.

<sup>2478</sup> Gustav Stählin, “ἁπαξ” (*hapax*), *TDNT* 1:381–4, 381–2.

<sup>2479</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 181–2.

<sup>2480</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 202.

<sup>2481</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 182.

<sup>2482</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:18.

<sup>2483</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 202.

<sup>2484</sup> Xenophon, “Memorabilia,” in *Xenophon in Seven Volumes, Vol. 4* (trans. E. C. Marchant; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 4.4.13,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0208%3Abook%3D4%3Achapter%3D4%3Asection%3D13>.

<sup>2485</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 202–3.

<sup>2486</sup> Jobs, *1 Peter*, 238.

<sup>2487</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:18.

<sup>2488</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 203.

<sup>2489</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 136.

<sup>2490</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 203.

grammatical structure, that phrase contrasts with “made alive in [the] Spirit,”<sup>2491</sup> which alludes to his resurrection (John 5:21; Rom 8:9–11). These phrases explicitly depict Christ’s vindication.<sup>2492</sup>

The flesh/spirit (*sarx/pneuma*) word pair occurs several times in the New Testament.<sup>2493</sup> Luke 24:39; Rom 8:4–9; 2 Cor 7:1; and Col 2:5 use the terms with slightly different nuances. In this passage, the passive verbs indicate that Jesus was put to death by people and raised from the dead by the power of the Spirit (Mark 14:55; 1 Pet 4:6).<sup>2494</sup> Christ’s death and resurrection comprise one redemptive historical act for the salvation of God’s people (1 Pet 1:3–5, 17–21).<sup>2495</sup> Most modern scholars concur that this word pair forms a contrast between Jesus’s earthly existence and his risen state (Rom 1:3–5; 1 Tim 3:16).<sup>2496</sup> It does not reflect a Greco-Roman dualism between his body and soul.<sup>2497</sup> All of Jesus died, not only his body.<sup>2498</sup>

“Flesh” describes the earthly arena of human limits, suffering, and mortality in distinction to the heavenly sphere.<sup>2499</sup> The Spirit represents God’s power, vindication, and eternal life. Each of these domains affects whole people: body and soul.<sup>2500</sup> Peter’s emphasis lies upon Christ’s bodily resurrection and the future redemption of the bodies of God’s people (Cf. 1 Cor 15:50–55).<sup>2501</sup> God has overthrown and reversed death (Rom 5:12–21).<sup>2502</sup>

Just as the Spirit raised Jesus,<sup>2503</sup> death cannot ultimately destroy believers (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:20–22).<sup>2504</sup> We can face suffering knowing that we shall share in Christ’s resurrection.<sup>2505</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:18.** Why did Jesus die for sins? What qualified him to do so? How does this encourage you? Why is it important to note that Jesus was made alive in the Spirit before he preached to the spirits (1 Pet 3:19)?

### Interpretive Issues in 1 Pet 3:19–20

**c) 1 Pet 3:19–20:** In v. 19, the disputes over 1 Pet 3:18–22 begin.<sup>2506</sup> They will continue through 1 Pet 3:21.<sup>2507</sup> With so many intertwining themes, one scholar noted, “It is no wonder that

<sup>2491</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 240.

<sup>2492</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 203.

<sup>2493</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 183. Since ancient Greek manuscripts were written entirely in capital letters, we must use the context of each passage to determine whether a New Testament author meant “spirit” or “the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>2494</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 204.

<sup>2495</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:18.

<sup>2496</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 239.

<sup>2497</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 204.

<sup>2498</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 137.

<sup>2499</sup>Eduard Schweizer, “σάρξ” (*sarx*), *TDNT* 7:98–151, 143.

<sup>2500</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 205.

<sup>2501</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 137.

<sup>2502</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 205.

<sup>2503</sup>Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, 1 Pet 3:18–9.

<sup>2504</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 136.

<sup>2505</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 184.

<sup>2506</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2507</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 183.

commentators have shaken their heads in despair!”<sup>2508</sup> Even Martin Luther conceded that he could not comprehend the meaning of this text.<sup>2509</sup> Given the amount of contentious debate, we must hold our interpretations lightly.<sup>2510</sup> On a positive note, the eminent scholars cited here remain largely in agreement, with only one contending for a minor variation.

The overall thrust of this section teaches that Jesus made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits who had disobeyed the Lord in the days of Noah.<sup>2511</sup> Peter wrote, “He was made alive in the Spirit, by which he also to the spirits in prison went [and] made a proclamation.”

We must consider multiple points of contention: 1) Who proclaimed?; 2) Who heard the announcement?; 3) What was asserted?; and 4) When did this occur? Accounting for each of the potential answers to these questions yields 180 possibilities.<sup>2512</sup>

In this instance, the two small words “by which” (*en ho*) bear critical importance. The preposition “*en*” can mean “in, among, in the presence of, with, under the influence of, by, on account of, while,” or “when.”<sup>2513</sup> Some scholars understood this sentence to mean that Jesus traveled in a spiritual form of existence. However, Peter avoided Greek dualism and did not separate Christ’s spirit from his body (1 Pet 3:18).<sup>2514</sup> Both Jesus’s body and his soul remained in the tomb until his resurrection.<sup>2515</sup>

As in 1 Pet 1:6 and 1 Pet 4:4, we can best regard “*en ho*” as “in that way.”<sup>2516</sup> Thus, Christ’s proclamation resulted from the resurrection, whether it occurred via the Spirit, in his risen state, or in the process of being raised from the dead. Contrary to older views, scholars now concur that this announcement occurred after—not before—the resurrection, on Christ’s journey to the right hand of the Father. By going to the most unlikely audience imaginable, Jesus proclaimed his lordship over everyone.<sup>2517</sup>

### Early Church Fathers’ View of 1 Pet 3:19–20

**d) 1 Pet 3:19–20:** Peter wrote that Christ made a proclamation, “to the ones who once were disobedient while God was waiting patiently in the days of Noah [while] an ark was being built.”

In the history of the church, theologians have developed vastly different interpretations concerning the identity of those disobedient entities. Prior to 190 AD, Christians asserted that Christ devastated hell. Yet, no extant record exists of the early church employing 1 Pet 3:18–20 as evidence for that concept.<sup>2518</sup>

Some of the early church fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–220 AD), linked this passage with conversion after death.<sup>2519</sup> In this view, Jesus visited Hades, the realm of

<sup>2508</sup>Scott McKnight, *1 Peter* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 215.

<sup>2509</sup>Martin Luther, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude Preached and Explained* (trans. E. H. Gillett; New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1859), 188, <https://archive.org/stream/epistlesofstpete00luth#page/188/mode/2up>.

<sup>2510</sup>McKnight, *1 Peter*, 218.

<sup>2511</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2512</sup>Millard J. Erickson, “Is There Opportunity for Salvation After Death?” *BSac* 152, no. 606 (1 April 1995): 136–7.

<sup>2513</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “*ἐν*” (*en*), *BDAG*, 326–30.

<sup>2514</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 138.

<sup>2515</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 204.

<sup>2516</sup>Eduard Schweizer, “*πνεῦμα*” (*pneuma*), *TDNT* 6:332–455, 447.

<sup>2517</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 204–9.

<sup>2518</sup>Edward G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter, 2nd Ed.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 340.

<sup>2519</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 247.

the dead,<sup>2520</sup> between Good Friday and Easter.<sup>2521</sup> He preached to the sinful humans who died in the flood, giving them a chance to repent and receive salvation (Gen 6:1–7; Gen 7:17–24).<sup>2522</sup> In this scenario, people can benefit from evangelism even after death (Cf. 1 Pet 4:6).<sup>2523</sup> Those who hold this view contend that God will offer everyone who resides in hell such an opportunity, especially if they have never heard the gospel.<sup>2524</sup>

However, the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch (second century BC–first century AD) comprises the basis for the proclamation to demons in this passage. That book appears to have been lost during the second century until the late eighteenth century. Lacking that traditional material, theologians began to interpret 1 Pet 3:19–20 in terms of Jesus descending into hell.<sup>2525</sup>

In one of his later works, Clement wrote:

“David...says, “My heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced, and my flesh shall still rest in hope. For Thou shalt not leave my soul in *hell*, nor wilt Thou give Thine holy one to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the paths of life, Thou wilt make me full of joy in Thy presence [Ps 16:10–11]...If, then, He preached the Gospel to those in the flesh that they might not be condemned unjustly, how is it conceivable that He did not for the same cause preach the Gospel to those who had departed this life before His advent?...If, then, in the deluge all sinful flesh perished, punishment having been inflicted on them for correction, we must first believe that the will of God, which is disciplinary and beneficent, saves those who turn to Him...But whatever is gross, made so in consequence of sin, this is cast away along with the carnal spirit which lusts against the soul.”<sup>2526</sup>

However, the Hebrew text of Ps 16:10 says *Sheol*, which means the underworld, rather than hell.<sup>2527</sup> The Greek translation of the Old Testament always translates the word as “Hades” (e.g. Gen 37:35).<sup>2528</sup> One of Clement’s supporting texts instead refers to Christians who died before Peter wrote his letter. The context of 1 Pet 4:5–6 suggests it does not apply to people who heard the gospel after their deaths (1 Pet 4:1–8).<sup>2529</sup>

Only once in the New Testament does the plural word “spirits” (*pneuma*) apply to humans (Heb 12:22–24), creating a major issue with this theological theory.<sup>2530</sup> Also, the adjective “righteous” (*dikaios*) clarifies that the author of Hebrews referred to people.<sup>2531</sup> In normal Greek usage, authors typically employed the word pair “body (*sarx*) and soul (*psyche*)” —not “body and spirit” (*pneuma*)—to denote the material and immaterial aspects of a person.<sup>2532</sup>

<sup>2520</sup>Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, 1 Pet 3:18–9.

<sup>2521</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2522</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 185.

<sup>2523</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 204.

<sup>2524</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 185.

<sup>2525</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 247.

<sup>2526</sup>Clement, “Stromata,” in *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire) (ANF02)* (ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; trans. W.L. Alexander; New York: Christian Literature, 1885), 6.6, 491–2, <https://archive.org/stream/antenicenefather02robe#page/490/mode/2up>. Italics mine.

<sup>2527</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “שְׁאוֹל” (*sheol*), *BDB*, 982–3, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/982/mode/2up>.

<sup>2528</sup>L. Wächter, “שְׁאוֹל” (*sheol*) *TDOT* 14:239–48, 241.

<sup>2529</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 270–1

<sup>2530</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 139–40.

<sup>2531</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 186.

<sup>2532</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 241.

While a spirit forms part of every individual, biblical authors never called humans spirits, with the exception just noted in Hebrews (Matt 27:50; Acts 7:59). Indeed, the apostle designated people as “souls” in 1 Pet 3:20.<sup>2533</sup>

“Spirits” (*pneuma*) can also denote angels,<sup>2534</sup> both good and evil (Matt 8:16; Luke 10:17–20).<sup>2535</sup> “Prison” (*phylakē*) refers to a place of punishment for people on earth. It never means torment after death (Acts 5:17–21; Acts 8:3; 2 Cor 11:23).<sup>2536</sup> However, God will confine Satan for 1,000 years in “prison.” It also serves as a place of detention for unclean spirits (Rev 20:1–3, 7; Rev 18:1–2; Luke 8:30–31).<sup>2537</sup>

Intertestamental Jewish literature often discusses the confinement of evil angels. For example, 1 Enoch—a text which Clement likely did not have—depicts a vision of stars, a common metaphor for angels (Judg 5:20–23; Job 38:4–7):

“And I saw a deep abyss, with columns of heavenly fire...And beyond that abyss I saw a place which had no firmament of the heaven above, and no firmly founded earth beneath it: there was no water upon it, and no birds, but it was a waste and horrible place. I saw there seven stars like great burning mountains...The angel said, “This place is the end of heaven and earth: this has become a prison for the stars and the host of heaven. And the stars which roll over the fire are they which have transgressed the commandment of the Lord in the beginning of their rising, because they did not come forth at their appointed times. And He was [angry] with them and bound them till the time when their guilt should be consummated (even) for 10,000 years.”<sup>2538</sup>

Peter limited the opportunity for salvation after death to the spirits of those disobedient during the time of Noah. The proponents of the theological construct of the early church fathers cannot answer why that generation alone received the privilege (Heb 9:27). Furthermore, Jesus’s ascension to the right hand of the Father after his resurrection—not his death—represents the final stage of his accomplishment of redemption (Acts 2:22–36; Acts 5:30–31; 1 Pet 3:21–22). Proclaiming victory while dead would be premature.<sup>2539</sup>

Finally, the major theme of this letter calls believers to persevere in righteousness while enduring suffering. In fact, the apostle contended that our eternal life depends upon remaining faithful to the end (1 Pet 1:3–9, 13–19; 1 Pet 3:8–12; 1 Pet 4:3–8, 17–19; 1 Pet 5:5–10). If God offered people a second opportunity to repent after death, much of the motivation for Christians to bear such hardship disappears.<sup>2540</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:19–20.** Why did some early church fathers contend that Christ preached to the spirits of people who died in the flood? What evidence discounts that view? List the pros and cons for this view in the Summary of 1 Pet 3:19–20 on p. 216.

<sup>2533</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 207.

<sup>2534</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 187.

<sup>2535</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 207.

<sup>2536</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2537</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 187.

<sup>2538</sup>Charles, “Book of Enoch,” in *The Apochrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 18:11–16, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/boe/boe021.htm>.

<sup>2539</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 248–50.

<sup>2540</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 187–8.

## Augustine's View of 1 Pet 3:19–20

e) **1 Pet 3:19–20:** The great theologian Augustine (354–430) proposed another view concerning the identity of the disobedient ones to whom Jesus preached. He asserted that the Spirit of Christ spoke through Noah during the construction of the ark (Gen 6:9–16).<sup>2541</sup> Augustine sought to avoid Clement's doctrine of postmortem conversion and utilize 1 Pet 1:10–12.<sup>2542</sup>

He confessed, "The question which you have proposed to me from the epistle of the Apostle Peter is one which...is wont to perplex me most seriously..."<sup>2543</sup> He continued: "[Peter] wrote 'The gospel was preached to the dead;' and if by the 'dead' we understand persons who have departed from the body, I suppose he must mean those described above as 'unbelieving in the days of Noah,' or certainly all those whom Christ found in hell. What, then, is meant by the words, 'That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit'? For how can they be judged in the flesh, which if they be in hell they no longer have?...Scripture does not affirm that they were made to live in the flesh, nor can it be believed that the end for which they were loosed from the pains of hell was that they who were delivered from these might resume their flesh in order to suffer punishment..."<sup>2544</sup>

Augustine contended:

"But to the men of Noah's time the gospel was preached in vain because they believed not when God's long suffering waited during the many years in which the ark was being built (for the building of the ark was itself in a certain sense a preaching of mercy); even as now men similar to them are unbelieving, who...are shut up in the darkness of ignorance as in a prison, beholding in vain the church which is being built up...while judgment is impending."<sup>2545</sup>

Rightly rejecting the dichotomy between body and soul,<sup>2546</sup> Augustine taught that the spirits of the dead did not suffer in a literal jail. Instead, people ensnared in sin during the time of Noah lived in a prison of ignorance (Gen 6:1–5).<sup>2547</sup> If Christ spoke through Noah via the Spirit, he did not travel anywhere.<sup>2548</sup>

Augustine did not have access to the tradition found in the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch (second century BC–first century AD).<sup>2549</sup> That book disappeared during the second century AD and was rediscovered in the late eighteenth century. The lack of that traditional material impacted his interpretations of these verses.<sup>2550</sup>

<sup>2541</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 184.

<sup>2542</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 248.

<sup>2543</sup>Augustine, "Letter 164," in *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, with a Sketch of His Life and Work (NPNF1-01)* (ed. Philip Schaff; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1886), 1:1, 1041, [https://archive.org/stream/TheConfessionsAndLettersOfAugustinWithASketchOfHisLifeAndWork/confessions\\_and\\_letters\\_of\\_augustin#page/n1039/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/TheConfessionsAndLettersOfAugustinWithASketchOfHisLifeAndWork/confessions_and_letters_of_augustin#page/n1039/mode/2up).

<sup>2544</sup>Augustine, "Letter 164," in *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, with a Sketch of His Life and Work*, 4:11, 1048, [https://archive.org/stream/TheConfessionsAndLettersOfAugustinWithASketchOfHisLifeAndWork/confessions\\_and\\_letters\\_of\\_augustin#page/n1045/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/TheConfessionsAndLettersOfAugustinWithASketchOfHisLifeAndWork/confessions_and_letters_of_augustin#page/n1045/mode/2up).

<sup>2545</sup>Augustine, "Letter 164," in *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, with a Sketch of His Life and Work*, 5:16, 1051, [https://archive.org/stream/TheConfessionsAndLettersOfAugustinWithASketchOfHisLifeAndWork/confessions\\_and\\_letters\\_of\\_augustin#page/n1049/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/TheConfessionsAndLettersOfAugustinWithASketchOfHisLifeAndWork/confessions_and_letters_of_augustin#page/n1049/mode/2up).

<sup>2546</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 249.

<sup>2547</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 185.

<sup>2548</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 186.

<sup>2549</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 249.

<sup>2550</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 247.

With his limited knowledge of Greek, Augustine focused upon the theology of this passage rather than good exegesis of the text.<sup>2551</sup> Peter never cited Noah as the one through whom Jesus made a proclamation.<sup>2552</sup> Consequently, this concept remains implausible.<sup>2553</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:19–20.** How would you characterize Augustine’s view of this passage? What are the strengths and weaknesses of that argument? List the pros and cons for this view in the Summary of 1 Pet 3:19–20 on p. 214.

### The Apostles’ Creed and 1 Pet 3:19–20

**f) 1 Pet 3:19–20:** In its current form, the Apostle’s Creed dates from the 7th–8th century. It asserts that Jesus, “Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried. *He descended into hell.* The third day he rose again from the dead.”<sup>2554</sup>

We have twelve creeds written in the 2nd through 4th centuries. None of them include the concept of Christ in hell, including the earliest form of the Apostles’ Creed (340 AD). The notion first appeared in an Arian creed dated to approximately 360 AD.<sup>2555</sup> Then, Rufinus of Aquileia (340–410 AD) inserted the Latin phrase “*Descendit ad inferno*” into the creed which he wrote. However, he understood that to mean “he was buried.”<sup>2556</sup> Not until 650 AD did the phrase “He descended into hell” appear in the Apostles’ Creed. Therefore, it stands as a later addition.<sup>2557</sup>

Many modern commentators also contend that the vocabulary of 1 Pet 3:18–22 makes the notion that Christ descended into hell extremely difficult.<sup>2558</sup> Peter wrote about Christ’s resurrection in 1 Pet 3:18, and of his ascension in 1 Pet 3:22. Typically, biblical authors employed the verb translated as “went” (*poreuō*) when referring to his return to God the Father (Acts 1:10–11; John 14:2–3, 28; John 16:7, 28).<sup>2559</sup>

“Prison” (*phylakē*) refers to a place of punishment for people on earth. It never means torment after death (Acts 5:17–21; Acts 8:3; 2 Cor 11:23).<sup>2560</sup> The Old Testament (OT) refers to the place of the dead as *Sheol*, which means the underworld, rather than hell (Cf. Ps 16:10).<sup>2561</sup> The Greek translation of the OT always translates the word as “Hades” (e.g. Gen 37:35).<sup>2562</sup>

<sup>2551</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 249.

<sup>2552</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2553</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 186.

<sup>2554</sup> Philip Schaff, *The History of Creeds* (vol. 1 of *The Creeds of Christendom, 3 Vols.*; rev Schaff David S.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1931), 21, <https://archive.org/stream/creedsofchriste01scha#page/20/mode/2up>. Italics mine.

<sup>2555</sup> Philip Schaff, *The Greek and Latin Creeds* (vol. 2 of *The Creeds of Christendom, 3 Vols.*; rev David S Schaff; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1931), 40–41, 46, <https://archive.org/stream/creedschristendo02scha#page/40/mode/2up>, <https://archive.org/stream/creedschristendo02scha#page/46/mode/2up>.

<sup>2556</sup> Schaff, *The History of Creeds*, 1:21 note 6,

<https://archive.org/stream/creedsofchristen01scha#page/20/mode/2up>.

<sup>2557</sup> Wayne Grudem, “He Did not Descend into Hell: A Plea for Following Scripture Instead of the Apostles’ Creed,” *JETS* 34, no. 1 (1 March 1991): 103–13, 103, [http://www.waynegrudem.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/he-did-not-descend-into-hell\\_JETS.pdf](http://www.waynegrudem.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/he-did-not-descend-into-hell_JETS.pdf).

<sup>2558</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2559</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 186.

<sup>2560</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2561</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “שְׁאוֹל” (*sheol*), *BDB*, 982–3,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/982/mode/2up>.

<sup>2562</sup> L. Wächter, “שְׁאוֹל” (*sheol*) *TDOT* 14:239–48, 241.

In addition, all the activity in 1 Pet 3:19–22 took place after Jesus was made alive.<sup>2563</sup> Thus, Peter discussed three redemptive events in this passage: the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ.<sup>2564</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:19–20.** How did the phrase “he descended into hell” become part of the Apostles’ Creed? Why doesn’t it fit well into 1 Pet 3:18–22? List the pros and cons for this view in the Summary of 1 Pet 3:19–20 on p. 214.

### John Calvin’s View of 1 Pet 3:19–20

**g) 1 Pet 3:19–20:** Some of the Reformers agreed with Augustine that Christ spoke through Noah.<sup>2565</sup> However, John Calvin disagreed with them and with the seventh century AD revision of the Apostles’ Creed.

After developing his own theory, he wrote, “Common has been the opinion that Christ’s descent into hell is here referred to; but the words mean no such thing; for there is no mention made of the soul of Christ, but only that he went by the Spirit.”<sup>2566</sup>

Calvin envisioned the descent into hell as a graphic depiction of the torture endured by condemned souls which Christ bore on the cross (Matt 27:26–49; John 19:28–30), stating:<sup>2567</sup> “Here we must not omit the descent to hell, which was of no little importance to the accomplishment of redemption. For although it is apparent from the writings of the ancient Fathers, that the clause which now stands in the [Apostles’] Creed was not formerly so much used in the churches, still...[it] ought not by any means to be disregarded...

“To conclude from it that the souls of the dead are in prison is childish. And what occasion was there that the soul of Christ should go down thither to set them at liberty? I readily admit that Christ illumined them by the power of his Spirit, enabling them to perceive that the grace of which they had only had a foretaste was then manifested to the world. And to this not improbably the passage of Peter may be applied...

“Believers who had died before that time were partakers of the same grace with ourselves: for he celebrates the power of Christ’s death, in that he penetrated even to the dead, pious souls obtaining an immediate view of that visitation for which they had anxiously waited; while, on the other hand, the reprobate were more clearly convinced that they were completely excluded from salvation.”<sup>2568</sup>

Calvin admitted that his exegesis contained problems:

“What follows is attended with some difficulty; for [Peter] does not mention the faithful here, but only the unbelieving; and this seems to overturn the preceding exposition. Some have for this reason been led to think...the unbelieving, who had formerly persecuted the godly, found the

<sup>2563</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2564</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 242.

<sup>2565</sup>Keener, *IVPBCNT*, 1 Pet 3:18–9.

<sup>2566</sup>Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 113,

<https://archive.org/stream/commentariesonca00calv#page/112/mode/2up>.

<sup>2567</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 249.

<sup>2568</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. Henry Beveridge; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 2.16.8–9. [https://archive.org/stream/institutesofchri01calv\\_0#page/462/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/institutesofchri01calv_0#page/462/mode/2up).

Spirit of Christ an accuser, as though Peter consoled the faithful with this argument, that Christ, even when dead, punished them. But their mistake is discovered by what we shall see in the next chapter [1 Pet 4:6], that the Gospel was preached to the dead, that they might live according to God in the spirit, which...applies to the faithful.<sup>2569</sup>

In addition, Calvin believed that the “prison” consisted of a watchtower for the protection of the Old Testament saints. They waited for Christ to release them by proclaiming their redemption.<sup>2570</sup> In this scenario, Jesus liberated them sometime between his death and resurrection.<sup>2571</sup>

He asserted:

“Peter speaks generally, that the manifestation of Christ’s grace was made to godly spirits, and that they were thus endued with the vital power of the Spirit...It seems to me...that godly souls were watching in hope of the salvation promised them, as though they saw it afar off...But if the word *prison* be preferred, it would not be unsuitable; for, as while they lived, the law, according to Paul (Gal 3:23), was a sort of prison in which they were kept; so after death they must have felt the same desire for Christ; for the spirit of liberty had not as yet been fully given. Hence this anxiety of expectation was to them a kind of prison.”<sup>2572</sup>

Calvin showed great insight in placing this event after the resurrection. However, several difficulties remain with his view.<sup>2573</sup> First, whenever the term translated as “prison” (*phylakē*) means “night watch” in the New Testament, it refers to being prepared for the return of Christ (Matt 24:43; Luke 12:37). Everywhere else, including in 1 Pet 3:19, it refers to a jail.<sup>2574</sup>

Prior to Jesus’s birth, David expressed comfort that God’s Spirit remains present even in *Sheol*, the place of the dead (Ps 139:7–12). Shortly before Christ’s crucifixion, Moses and Elijah appeared to some disciples in a radiance of glory, indicating they had already been made perfect (Luke 9:28–31). Yet, that Peter called the spirits “disobedient” (*apeitheō*) creates the most insurmountable issue for Calvin’s theory.<sup>2575</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:19–20.** Whom did Calvin identify as the spirits in prison? List the pros and cons for this view in the Summary of 1 Pet 3:19–20 on p. 214.

### Ancient Jewish View Applied to 1 Pet 3:19–20

**h) 1 Pet 3:19–20:** The standard ancient Jewish interpretation of this verse equates the spirits with fallen angels who engaged in sexual relations with women during the time of Noah (Gen 6:1–4).<sup>2576</sup> After the third century AD,<sup>2577</sup> the earliest record of this view attributed to a Christian

<sup>2569</sup>Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 114, <https://archive.org/stream/commentariesonca00calv#page/114/mode/2up>.

<sup>2570</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 138.

<sup>2571</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 185.

<sup>2572</sup>Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 114, <https://archive.org/stream/commentariesonca00calv#page/114/mode/2up>.

<sup>2573</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 138, note 30.

<sup>2574</sup>Georg Bertram, “φυλακή” (*phylakē*), *TDNT* 9:236–44, 243–4.

<sup>2575</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 138, note 30.

<sup>2576</sup>Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, 1 Pet 3:18–9.

<sup>2577</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 291.

commentator appeared in 1890.<sup>2578</sup> Among the scholars cited in this chapter, only Schreiner holds this view.<sup>2579</sup>

During the era of the New Testament authors, popular concepts included demons seducing women, producing evil offspring, and being held captive (Cf. 2 Pet 2:4–5, 9–10; Jude 6–7).<sup>2580</sup> Scholars recognize that the basis for this Jewish tradition stems from apocryphal literature concerning the patriarch Enoch (Gen 5:21–24).<sup>2581</sup> Notably, Peter failed to quote from or refer to 1 Enoch (2nd century BC–first century AD). This indicates that he did not cite it as authoritative but simply used a tradition familiar to his original audience.<sup>2582</sup>

Note that in 1 Enoch, the terms “angels, spirits, stars, and Watchers” refer to the same entities.<sup>2583</sup> Consider these passages:

“And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another, ‘Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children’...And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared [Gen 5:18–20].<sup>2584</sup>

“Before these things Enoch was hidden, and no one of the children of men knew where he was hidden, and where he abode, and what had become of him. And his activities had to do with the Watchers, and his days were with the holy ones. And I, Enoch, was blessing the Lord...and lo! the Watchers called me...’Enoch, thou scribe of righteousness, go, declare to the Watchers of the heaven who have left the high heaven, the holy eternal place, and *have defiled themselves with women*, and have done as the children of earth do, and have taken unto themselves wives, “Ye have wrought great destruction on the earth. And ye shall have no peace, nor forgiveness of sin.”<sup>2585</sup>

“And I saw there something horrible: I saw neither a heaven above nor a firmly founded earth, but a place chaotic and horrible. And there I saw seven stars of the heaven bound together in it, like great mountains and burning with fire. Then I said, ‘For what sin are they bound, and on what account have they been cast in hither?’ Then said Uriel, one of the holy angels...’These are of the number of the stars of heaven, which have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and are bound here till ten thousand years, the time entailed by their sins, are consummated.’ And from thence I went to another place, which was still more horrible...a great fire there which burnt and blazed, and the place was cleft as far as the abyss, being full of great descending columns of fire: neither its extent or magnitude could I see, nor could I conjecture...Then Uriel answered me, ‘This place is the prison of the angels, and here they will be imprisoned forever.’<sup>2586</sup>

<sup>2578</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 139, n 32.

<sup>2579</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 188–9.

<sup>2580</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2581</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 207.

<sup>2582</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 245.

<sup>2583</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 140.

<sup>2584</sup> Charles, “Book of Enoch,” in *APOT*, 6:1–2, 13–5,

<http://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n127/mode/2up>.

<sup>2585</sup> Charles, “Book of Enoch,” in *APOT*, 12:1–5, 27–9,

<http://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n141/mode/2up>. Italics mine.

<sup>2586</sup> Charles, “Book of Enoch,” in *APOT*, 21:2–10, 44–5,

<http://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n159/mode/2up>.

According to 1 Enoch, the demons who roam the earth initially inhabited the giant offspring, the Nephilim, who resulted from those unholy unions (Gen 6:4):<sup>2587</sup> “Though ye were holy, spiritual, living the eternal life, you have defiled yourselves with the blood of women, and have begotten (children) with the blood of flesh...And now, the giants, who are produced from the spirits and flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on the earth shall be their dwelling.”<sup>2588</sup>

Several difficulties occur with this view. First, angels do not marry (Luke 20:34–36).<sup>2589</sup> In fact, this conviction led Jewish scholars to abandon this interpretation a century after Peter wrote this letter.<sup>2590</sup> Christian commentators soon joined them.<sup>2591</sup>

We can translate “the sons of God” as “the sons of the gods” (Ps 29:1; Ps 89:7).<sup>2592</sup> This occurs because the generic name of God (*El*) usually appears in the Old Testament as a plural (*Elohim*) even though it denotes only one God.<sup>2593</sup> Due to archaeological evidence,<sup>2594</sup> we now know that “the sons of the gods” consisted of kings and other rulers (Gen 6:1–2).<sup>2595</sup> In their arrogance, many of them practiced the “right of the first night.” This heinous practice allowed a king or other government official to demand that he spend a woman’s bridal night with her before he released her to her husband.<sup>2596</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:19–20.** Why did this interpretation gain popularity? What difficulties does it encounter? List the pros and cons for this view in the Summary of 1 Pet 3:19–20 on p. 214.

### Modern Scholars’ View of 1 Pet 3:19–20

**i) 1 Pet 3:19–20:** We can best untangle the conundrum of these verses by recognizing that satanic perversion infused ancient human kingship.<sup>2597</sup> In this interpretation, fallen angels controlled the men of Gen 6:1–4.<sup>2598</sup> Most modern scholars assert that Jesus proclaimed his victory over those spirits, most likely after his resurrection.<sup>2599</sup> In fact, the ascension itself pronounced their defeat (Col 2:13–15; Eph 1:18–23).<sup>2600</sup>

Jewish scholars believed that various levels of heaven exist. Indeed, the Apostle Paul once discussed his trip to the third heaven (2 Cor 12:2–4).<sup>2601</sup>

<sup>2587</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 208.

<sup>2588</sup>Charles, “Book of Enoch,” in *APOT*, 15:4, 8, 35–6, <http://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n149/mode/2up>.

<sup>2589</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 262.

<sup>2590</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 139–40.

<sup>2591</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 291.

<sup>2592</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 139.

<sup>2593</sup>Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 399,

<https://archive.org/stream/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft#page/398/mode/2up>.

<sup>2594</sup>Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate*, 205.

<sup>2595</sup>Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 139–40.

<sup>2596</sup>Walton, *Genesis*, 293.

<sup>2597</sup>Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 187.

<sup>2598</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 117.

<sup>2599</sup>Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, 1 Pet 3:18–9.

<sup>2600</sup>Andrew J. Bandstra, “‘Making Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison’: Another Look at 1 Peter 3:19,” *CTJ* 38, no. 2 (1 April 2003): 120–4, 124.

<sup>2601</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

A vision credited to Enoch in the late first century AD says:

“And the men took me and brought me to the second heaven, and showed me the darkness, and there I saw the prisoners suspended, reserved for (and) awaiting the eternal judgment. And these angels were gloomy in appearance, more than the darkness of the earth. And they unceasingly wept every hour, and I said to the men who were with me, ‘Why are these men continually tortured?’ And the men answered me, ‘These are they who apostatized from the Lord, who obeyed not the commandments of God, and took counsel of their own will and transgressed together with their prince and have already been confined to the second heaven.’”<sup>2602</sup>

Similarly, the second century BC Testament of Levi reports:

“Hear, therefore, regarding the heavens which have been shown to thee. The lowest is for this cause gloomy unto thee, in that it beholds all the unrighteous deeds of men...And in the second are the hosts of the armies which are ordained for the day of judgement, to work vengeance on the spirits of deceit and of Beliar (Satan). And above them are the holy ones. And in the highest of all dwelleth the Great Glory, far above all holiness. In [the heaven next to] it are the archangels, who minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the sins of ignorance of the righteous; offering to the Lord a sweet-smelling savor, a reasonable and a bloodless offering. “And [in the heaven below this] are the angels who bear answers to the angels of the presence of the Lord. And in the heaven next to this are thrones and dominions, in which always they offer praise to God. When, therefore, the Lord looketh upon us, all of us are shaken; yea, the heavens, and the earth, and the abysses are shaken at the presence of his majesty.”<sup>2603</sup>

In the current scholarly interpretation of 1 Pet 3:19–20, Jesus journeyed to that division of heaven in which God imprisoned evil angels.<sup>2604</sup>

Significantly, none of the names for the place of the dead, such as Sheol, Hades, or Tartarus, occur in this verse. In addition, the New Testament (NT) never employs the term “prison” (*phylakē*) to refer to the place where the dead reside.<sup>2605</sup> On the other hand, a parallel passage says, “God did not spare angels who sinned, but in fetters of gloom cast them into Tartarus” (2 Pet 2:4). Ancient Greeks viewed Tartarus as a place farther underground than Hades where evildoers received divine punishment.<sup>2606</sup>

Homer (ca. 750 BC) wrote:

“Zeus that hurler the thunderbolt made a gathering of the gods upon the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus, and himself addressed their gathering; and all the gods gave ear, ‘Hearken unto me, all ye gods and goddesses...Let not any goddess nor yet any god...thwart my word...whomsoever I shall mark minded apart from the gods to go and bear aid either to Trojans or Danaans...I shall take and hurl him into murky Tartarus, far, far away, where is the deepest gulf beneath the earth, the gates whereof are of iron and the threshold of bronze, as far beneath Hades as heaven is above earth: then shall ye know how far the mightiest am I of all gods.’”<sup>2607</sup>

According to 1 Enoch, (2nd century BC–first century AD), the same archangel who

<sup>2602</sup>Morfill, *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch (2 Enoch)*, 7:1–3, 5–6,

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsecretsofe00morf#page/n57/mode/2up>.

<sup>2603</sup>R. H. Charles, trans., “The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *APOT*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 3:1–9, 30–6, <https://archive.org/stream/testamentsoftwel108char#page/30/mode/2up>.

<sup>2604</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2605</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 243.

<sup>2606</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ταρταρόω” (*tartarōō*), *BDAG*, 991.

<sup>2607</sup>Homer, *The Iliad*, 8.1–16,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0134%3Abook%3D8%3Acard%3D1>.

warned Noah of the coming flood was “Uriel...who is over the world and over Tartarus.”<sup>2608</sup> These Jewish authors employed a traditional Greco-Roman term (*Tartaros*) associated with the binding of the Titans found in Greek mythology.<sup>2609</sup>

Another point favoring this interpretation involves the verb “made a proclamation” (*kēruṣṣō*). In the NT, it often describes proclaiming the gospel, although it can mean simply “exhorted” or “announced” (Rom 2:21; Gal 5:11; Rev 5:2).<sup>2610</sup> In 1 Peter, the apostle consistently used a different word (*euangelizō*) to depict preaching the gospel (1 Pet 1:12, 25; 1 Pet 4:6). The only place in this epistle where *kēruṣṣō* appears is here in v. 19.<sup>2611</sup>

While the NT never mentions evangelizing spirits, it does say that Christ triumphed over them (Col 2:13–15; Eph 6:10–17).<sup>2612</sup> Jesus announced his great victory over demonic powers.<sup>2613</sup> That Christ was made alive and made a proclamation to the spirits points to a post-resurrection announcement of vindication. In 1 Pet 3:22, the apostle expanded this theme to include their subjection to him.<sup>2614</sup> Jesus has visited the habitations of demonic forces and proclaimed their subservience to him.<sup>2615</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:19–20.** Who controlled the rulers mentioned during Noah’s era? How did Jewish authors view heaven? Where was Tartarus? How do we know that Jesus did not evangelize evil spirits? What did he do instead? List the pros and cons for this view in the Summary of 1 Pet 3:19–20 on p. 214.

### Summary of 1 Pet 3:19–20

**j) 1 Pet 3:19–20:** Evaluate the interpretations concerning Christ making a proclamation to the spirits in prison:

1. Clement of Alexandria’s salvation after death (pp. 203–205, 215):

pros-

cons-

<sup>2608</sup>Charles, “Book of Enoch,” in *APOT*, 10.1–3, 20:2, 22, 43,  
<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n137/mode/2up>,  
<http://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n157/mode/2up>.

<sup>2609</sup>Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude*, 249.

<sup>2610</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 189.

<sup>2611</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 209.

<sup>2612</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 140–1.

<sup>2613</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2614</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 189.

<sup>2615</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 211.

2. Augustine’s view that Christ preached through Noah (pp. 206–207, 215):

pros-

cons-

3. The Apostle’s Creed (pp. 207–208, 215):

pros-

cons-

4. John Calvin (pp. 208–209, 215):

pros-

cons-

5. Ancient Jewish/1890 Christian (209–211, 215):

pros-

cons-

7. Modern scholars (211–213, 215–216):

pros-

cons-

Based upon this evidence, what is your conclusion?

Issues to consider:

1. Clement of Alexandria -

- an opportunity to repent while in hell
- translates the underworld (*Sheol*) as “hell”
- meaning of the plural word “spirits” in the New Testament (NT)
- the word “souls” in 1 Pet 3:20
- his interpretation of 1 Pet 4:5–6
- meaning of “prison”
- Noah’s generation the only one given a second chance
- Accessibility of 1 Enoch

2. Augustine -

- no body/soul dichotomy
- lack of Greek led to focus on the big theological picture, not on the text itself
- Accessibility of 1 Enoch
- Christ did not actually go anywhere
- Peter does not specifically mention Noah as the preacher

3. Apostle’s Creed -

- a descent into hell in versions prior to 650 AD
- Rufinus’s understanding of *ad inferno*
- Arian Creed (ca. 360 AD)
- sequence of “put to death,” “made alive,” “after having gone,” and “preached.”
- Accessibility of 1 Enoch

4. Calvin -

- importance of Jesus descending into hell due to church fathers
- descent into hell was Christ’s torment on the cross
- late date of the Apostles’ Creed
- post-resurrection preaching
- translation of “watch tower” for “prison”
- liberation of Old Testament saints between Good Friday and Easter
- appearance of Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration
- spirits called disobedient by Peter
- Accessibility of 1 Enoch

5. Ancient Jewish/ 1890 Christian -

- spirits were fallen angels who engaged in sex with women at the time of Noah
- 1 Enoch as the tradition behind Peter’s text
- location of the fallen angels in 1 Enoch
- abandonment of this view by both Jewish and early Christian theologians
- identification of the “sons of the gods”

6. Modern scholars -

- identification of the “sons of the gods”

- Jesus proclaiming victory over evil spirits after his resurrection
- ascension itself as the proclamation
- levels of heaven
- no mention of the place of the dead in the passage
- meaning of “prison” in the NT
- Tartarus lower than Hades in Greek thought
- definition of “preached” vs. “proclaimed the gospel”
- evangelization of spirits in the NT
- subjection of evil spirits in v. 22
- Accessibility of 1 Enoch

### Salvation through Water

**k) 1 Pet 3:20:** In approximately 205 BC, a large Jewish population arrived in Asia Minor. These colonists noted that the name of one town included the word “ark.” This led them to believe that Noah’s ark had landed there. Although they were likely incorrect, Noah became the most widely known biblical figure in that region.<sup>2616</sup> Several Roman emperors (193–253 AD) even minted coins with their busts on the front and with Noah and his wife on the reverse side.<sup>2617</sup>

In this verse, Peter shifted to slightly less-obscure matters (Cf. 1 Pet 3:19). He wrote that the spirits were disobedient, “when God was waiting patiently in the days of Noah [while] the ark was being built, in which a few, that is eight souls, were brought safely through water.” The apostle focused upon three analogies from Noah’s era relevant to his original audience: God’s patience, judgment upon the wicked, and salvation through water.<sup>2618</sup>

Despite human sin, the Lord exhibited patience and did not immediately destroy Noah’s contemporaries.<sup>2619</sup> An interval of approximately one hundred years gave people time to repent (Gen 5:32; Gen 7:6; Acts 14:13–18; Acts 17:30–31; 2 Pet 3:9).<sup>2620</sup> Accordingly, the Babylonian Talmud states, “There were ten generations from Adam to Noah; to show how patient the Lord is. So many generations had vexed him till he brought upon them the deluge.”<sup>2621</sup>

Peter then shifted to the theme of salvation.<sup>2622</sup> In his own era, God was patiently building a spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5).<sup>2623</sup> He noted, “only a few, that is, eight souls were saved” (Matt 7:13–14; Matt 22:14; 1 Pet 2:4, 7–8).<sup>2624</sup> Noah, his sons, and their wives comprised a righteous remnant (Gen 6:8–10; Gen 7:13).<sup>2625</sup>

The word “souls” (*psychē*) connotes multiple meanings in the New Testament. It can refer to “that which animates a person and departs after death,” “a person’s life in its entirety,”

<sup>2616</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 245.

<sup>2617</sup> Ancient Numismatic Mythology, “Coins Depicting Noah and the Biblical Flood Narrative,” <http://www.ancientcoinage.org/noah-and-the-flood.html>.

<sup>2618</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 200, 212.

<sup>2619</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 141.

<sup>2620</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 191.

<sup>2621</sup>Leo Auerbach, trans., *The Babylonian Talmud in Selection* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), *b. Aboth* 5.2, 41, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/bata/bata03.htm>

<sup>2622</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Vol. 37, 191).

<sup>2623</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 200–1.

<sup>2624</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213.

<sup>2625</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 142.

“that which possesses life,” and “inner human life.”<sup>2626</sup> When it appears in plural form in 1 Peter, “*psychē*” applies to people whom God set apart for salvation (1 Pet 1:8–9, 22–23; 1 Pet 2:11–12, 25; 1 Pet 4:19).<sup>2627</sup>

Consequently, in this passage, a *psyche* consists of a whole person whom the Lord has chosen, who lives in obedience to God, and shall experience vindication at the last judgment.<sup>2628</sup> It does not comprise the inner part of a person distinct from the body.<sup>2629</sup> After all, Noah and his passengers survived the flood in their entirety.<sup>2630</sup>

Those eight souls “were brought safely through (*dia*) water.” One can deduce two meanings in this phrase. Was the water the threat from which they were saved? Or was it the means of their salvation?<sup>2631</sup> Scholars remain divided on this issue. Some note that God used water to destroy the world.<sup>2632</sup> Without the security of the ark, Noah and his family would have drowned.<sup>2633</sup> Instead, the boat passed through the flood.<sup>2634</sup>

Jewish interpreters typically understood that Noah and his family escaped by walking through the water (Gen 7:6–7).<sup>2635</sup> One first century rabbi made this observation, “[Noah] lacked faith: had not the water reached his ankles he would not have entered the ark.”<sup>2636</sup>

In the Old Testament, water often represented God’s wrath toward sin (Ps 69:1–2, 14–15; Ps 88:7; Ps 144:7; Jonah 2:1–7). Noah and his family members were saved by the same overwhelming judgment which destroyed the ungodly. The flood separated the righteous remnant from the corruption of their peers.<sup>2637</sup> Thus, God saved them via water.<sup>2638</sup>

The Shepherd of Hermas (ca. 100–160 AD) reported a vision of a strong tower—representing the church universal—built upon the water. When he asked the reason for the location, a lady told him, “Your life is saved and shall be saved by water.”<sup>2639</sup>

Bolstering this view, Peter compared Noah’s experience to the rite of baptism (1 Pet 3:21). The apostle taught that the return of Christ will bring salvation to the faithful few while destroying sinners who fail to repent.<sup>2640</sup> Peter’s original audience consisted of tiny groups of people living as exiles among those who oppressed and persecuted them (1 Pet 1:1–2; 1 Pet 2:12, 16; 1 Pet 3:1; 13–17; 1 Pet 4:3–4, 12–14; 1 Pet 5:8–10). Despite their small numbers, they could count upon God to deliver them (2 Pet 2:9).<sup>2641</sup>

God brought Noah and his passengers safely through by means of the flood. Peter

<sup>2626</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “*ψυχή*” (*psyche*), *BDAG*, 1098–100.

<sup>2627</sup>Eduard Schweizer, “*ψυχή*” (*psychē*), *TDNT* 9:608–67, 652.

<sup>2628</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 191.

<sup>2629</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213.

<sup>2630</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 191.

<sup>2631</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213.

<sup>2632</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 192.

<sup>2633</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:21.

<sup>2634</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 142.

<sup>2635</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 142, note 44.

<sup>2636</sup>H. Freedman, trans., Maurice Simon, ed., *Genesis* (vol. 1 of *Midrash Rabbah Translated into English, 10 Vols.*; London: Soncino, 1939), 32:6, 253,

<https://archive.org/stream/RabbaGenesis/midrashrabbahgen027557mbp#page/n299/mode/2up>.

<sup>2637</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 192–3.

<sup>2638</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 212.

<sup>2639</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, trans., “The Shepherd of Hermas,” in *The Apostolic Fathers* (ed. J. R. Harmer; London; New York: MacMillan, 1891), 3.11.5, 412, <https://archive.org/stream/apostolicfathers00lighuoft#page/412/mode/2up>.

<sup>2640</sup>Carson, “1 Peter,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1039.

<sup>2641</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 192.

similarly employed the metaphor of fire (1 Pet 1:7).<sup>2642</sup> When judgment comes, God’s people can rest in security (1 Pet 1:1; 1 Pet 2:12).<sup>2643</sup> Therefore, we can bear up under trial,<sup>2644</sup> knowing that we suffer temporarily. We await certain victory, for Jesus has triumphed over death, the grave, and every evil force (Rom 16:20; Col 2:8–15; 1 Cor 15:50–58).<sup>2645</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:20.** Why would Noah’s situation have encouraged Peter’s original audience? Was Noah saved by the ark or by the water? Why do you think that? Summarize the meaning of 1 Pet 3:18–20 in a sentence or two.

### An Appeal to God

**k) 1 Pet 3:21:** This verse clarifies why Peter wrote about the flood (1 Pet 3:18–21).<sup>2646</sup> He associated people receiving the gospel and baptism with Noah coming safely through the waters (Gen 8:1, 15–19).<sup>2647</sup> The Apostle Paul also expressed continuity between the Old and New Testaments, citing an experience quite familiar to the original audience of Genesis. However, he linked baptism with Israel passing through the Sea of Reeds rather than with Noah’s experience (Ps 136:12–15; 1 Cor 10:1–2).<sup>2648</sup>

Peter wrote to people who received salvation the same way that Noah did: by passing through the water to safety.<sup>2649</sup> God employed the flood which threatened to destroy Noah and his family as the instrument of their salvation. Likewise, Christians shall escape the terrors of final judgment due to Jesus’s vindicating resurrection and their union with him in baptism.<sup>2650</sup>

When seeking to understand 1 Pet 3:21, one of the most difficult verses in the New Testament (NT),<sup>2651</sup> we must remember the context of the larger passage. Christ “was made alive in the Spirit” and “he went into heaven” (1 Pet 3:18, 22). Peter envisioned these two events as one divine act. Here he discussed the purpose of Jesus’s post-resurrection journey and its effect upon believers.<sup>2652</sup>

Referring to the end of 1 Pet 3:20,<sup>2653</sup> Peter wrote, “That [water] also corresponds to (*antitypos*) baptism, [which] now saves you.” A “type” consists of an Old Testament (OT)

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<sup>2642</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213.

<sup>2643</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 180.

<sup>2644</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:19.

<sup>2645</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 180.

<sup>2646</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:21.

<sup>2647</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 251.

<sup>2648</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 144.

<sup>2649</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 143.

<sup>2650</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 252.

<sup>2651</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 143.

<sup>2652</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 199–200.

<sup>2653</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213–4.

person or event which presaged something in the NT era.<sup>2654</sup> Meanwhile, an “anti-type” refers to a NT individual or situation foreseen in the OT (Cf. Heb 9:24, translated as “a copy”). Thus, the water which supported the ark corresponds to baptism by resulting in salvation.<sup>2655</sup>

Peter discussed conversion at length in this letter (1 Pet 1:17–2:5, 9–10, 24–25). Yet, he clearly mentioned baptism only in 1 Pet 3:21. Adding to the confusion, only here in the entire NT does anyone claim that this sacrament saves us.<sup>2656</sup> Considering how the flood parallels baptism proves helpful in unraveling Peter’s statement. Jesus described his impending death as a baptism (Luke 12:50; Mark 10:36–40; Acts 12:1–2). Paul made this connection explicit in Rom 6:1–14. He declared that in baptism, “All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (Cf. Col 2:12).<sup>2657</sup>

Peter approached how baptism saves from another angle.<sup>2658</sup> He added this explanatory information to prevent any misunderstanding: “not of flesh (*sarx*) the filth removing, but of a good conscience an appeal to God.” By placing “of flesh” at the beginning of the phrase, he emphasized that word.<sup>2659</sup> “Flesh” has multiple meanings in the NT. These include “the material which covers our bones,” “a body,” “the part of us with physical limitations,” “the aspect of us which is prone to sin,” and “a living being.”<sup>2660</sup>

Fortunately, the noun meaning “filth” (*rupos*) assists us. Although it does not appear elsewhere in the NT, it occurs four times in the Greek translation of the OT (Job 9:31; Job 11:14–15; Job 14:4; and Isa 4:4).<sup>2661</sup> In three of these, the text concerns moral, not physical, filth.<sup>2662</sup> James used a related word (*ruparia*) which refers to moral defilement (Jas 1:21).<sup>2663</sup>

Earlier in his letter, Peter warned his readers to “abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul” (1 Pet 2:11). We need spiritual cleansing, but baptism does not achieve it.<sup>2664</sup> Being washed in the waters of baptism does not transmit spiritual purity (1 Pet 2:1–3).<sup>2665</sup> Neither the washing in water nor the religious rite results in salvation.<sup>2666</sup> By itself, baptism does not save a person.<sup>2667</sup> Instead, Peter appears to use baptism as a symbol of the entire process of hearing and accepting the gospel in faith.<sup>2668</sup>

The Jewish historian Josephus (37–100 AD) adopted a similar view of baptism: “Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not...[for] the

<sup>2654</sup>Leonhard Goppelt, “*τυπος, ἀντίτυπος*” (*typos, antitypos*), *TDNT* 8:246–59, 252–3.

<sup>2655</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “*τυπος, ἀντίτυπος*” (*typos, antitypos*), *BDAG*, 90–1.

<sup>2656</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 214.

<sup>2657</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 193–4.

<sup>2658</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 144.

<sup>2659</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 214–5. Koine Greek and Hebrew authors placed what they wished to emphasize at the beginning of a sentence or phrase. “Of flesh” is a noun in the genitive case.

<sup>2660</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “*σάρξ*” (*sarx*), *BDAG*, 914–6.

<sup>2661</sup>JResult of Logos 7 word study on *ρύπος* (*rupos*).

<sup>2662</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 254.

<sup>2663</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “*ρύπαριά*” (*ruparia*), *BDAG*, 908.

<sup>2664</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 216.

<sup>2665</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:21.

<sup>2666</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 144.

<sup>2667</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 195.

<sup>2668</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:21.

putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that *the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.*<sup>2669</sup>

External acts of piety cannot make those with evil hearts right with God.<sup>2670</sup> Inner cleansing by a new birth brings us into fellowship with the Lord and with his people (John 4:14; Acts 23:1; 1 Pet 1:1–5).<sup>2671</sup>

The next part of the verse presents difficulties.<sup>2672</sup> We can translate the first word in the Greek text (*syneidēsis*) as either “consciousness,” as in awareness, or as “conscience” (1 Pet 2:19; Heb 10:2).<sup>2673</sup> By the first century BC, the second definition became the predominant meaning (Rom 2:14–15; 1 Cor 10:28–29; Heb 9:13–14).<sup>2674</sup> Accordingly, Peter placed “of a good conscience” at the beginning of his definition of the sacrament.<sup>2675</sup> The word translated as “pledge” (*eperōtēma*) also raises questions. It occurs only here in the NT.<sup>2676</sup> However, it is related to a common verb (*eperōtaō*) which means “to ask, interrogate, or appeal.”<sup>2677</sup>

Hence, two possibilities exist for this phrase. One can translate it as “the request of a good conscience from God.” That would make baptism an appeal to God for purification.<sup>2678</sup> However, Peter asserted that the one receiving baptism already had a good conscience.<sup>2679</sup> Therefore, interpreting the word as “a pledge” best fits the context of the passage (Cf. Heb 10:19–25).<sup>2680</sup> Furthermore, the activity was directed from people to God, not from God to people.<sup>2681</sup> Thus, the apostle wrote of individuals who pledged to live uprightly after being baptized.<sup>2682</sup>

We can compare Peter’s assertion that baptism saves to Christ’s declaration, “Your faith has saved you” (Matt 9:20–22; Mark 10:50–52; Luke 7:44–50). Technically, the sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ saves people. Likewise, Peter cited baptism as the human response to God’s activity. A good conscience results from the work of the Holy Spirit within an individual’s heart, who also enables that person to obey the Lord (1 Pet 3:13–16; 1 Tim 1:5, 18–19).<sup>2683</sup> During Peter’s ministry, baptism served as the first and necessary response of faith (Acts 2:38).<sup>2684</sup> As a result, the practice became identified as a rite of initiation into the Christian community.<sup>2685</sup> Faith and baptism remain distinct so that faith does not negate the need for baptism and baptism fails to make faith unnecessary (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26–27).<sup>2686</sup>

<sup>2669</sup>Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.5.2,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D18%3Awhiston%20chapter%3D5%3Awhiston%20section%3D2>. Italics mine.

<sup>2670</sup>Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:21.

<sup>2671</sup>Leonhard Goppelt, “ἕδος” (*hudor*), *TDNT* 8:314–33.

<sup>2672</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255.

<sup>2673</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “συνείδησις” (*syneidēsis*), *BDAG*, 967–8.

<sup>2674</sup>Christian Maurer, “συνείδησις” (*syneidēsis*), *TDNT* 7:899–919, 902.

<sup>2675</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 216.

<sup>2676</sup>Result of Logos 7 word study of “ἐπερώτημα” (*eperōtēma*).

<sup>2677</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἐπερωτάω” (*eperōtaō*), *BDAG*, 362.

<sup>2678</sup>Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 144–5.

<sup>2679</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 217.

<sup>2680</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἐπερώτημα” (*eperōtēma*) *BDAG*, 362.

<sup>2681</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 217.

<sup>2682</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255.

<sup>2683</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 216–7.

<sup>2684</sup>Scott McKnight, *Galatians* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 198.

<sup>2685</sup>Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 172.

<sup>2686</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 155–6.

A document dated to approximately 200 AD describes the process for new believers and the rite of baptism in detail:

“New converts to the faith, who are to be admitted as hearers of the word, shall first...be examined as to their reason for embracing the faith, and they who bring them shall testify that they are competent to hear the word. Inquiry shall then be made as to the nature of their life...Let catechumens (new believers) spend three years as hearers of the word...They who are to be set apart for baptism shall be chosen after their lives have been examined...

“They who are to be baptized shall fast on Friday, and on Saturday the bishop shall assemble them and command them to kneel in prayer. And, laying his hand upon them, he shall exorcise all evil spirits...They shall spend all that night in vigil, listening to reading and instruction...

“At cockcrow prayer shall be made over the water. The stream shall flow through the baptismal tank or pour into it from above when there is no scarcity of water; but if there is a scarcity, whether constant or sudden, then use whatever water you can find. They shall remove their clothing.<sup>2687</sup> And first baptize the little ones; if they can speak for themselves, they shall do so; if not, their parents or other relatives shall speak for them. Then baptize the men, and last of all the women...

“Let the candidates stand in the water, naked, a deacon going with them...He who baptizes him, putting his hand on him, shall say thus, ‘Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty?’ And he who is being baptized shall say, ‘I believe.’ Then holding his hand placed on his head, he shall baptize him once.

“And then he shall say, ‘Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the quick (living) and the dead?’<sup>2688</sup> And when he says, ‘I believe,’ he is baptized again.

“And again he shall say, ‘Dost thou believe in [the] Holy Ghost, and the holy church, and the resurrection of the flesh?’ He who is being baptized shall say accordingly, ‘I believe,’ and so he is baptized a third time... And so each one...is immediately clothed, and then is brought into the church. Then the bishop...shall pray, saying, ‘O Lord God, who hast made them worthy to *obtain remission of sins through the laver of regeneration of [the] Holy Spirit*, send into them thy grace, that they may serve thee according to thy will.’”<sup>2689</sup>

<sup>2687</sup>Another text called the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (ca. 200–250 AD) indicates this is why female deacons participated in the baptism of women (16, 78–9,

<https://archive.org/stream/didascaliaaposto00gibsuoft#page/78/mode/2up>.)

<sup>2688</sup>This, along with the declaration in the next paragraph, is virtually identical to the Old Roman Form of the Apostles’ Creed (<https://archive.org/stream/creedssofchristen01scha#page/20/mode/2up>).

<sup>2689</sup>Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (trans. Burton Scott Easton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 16–17, 20–1, 41–7, [Http://www.rore-sanctifica.org/bibilotheque\\_rore\\_sanctifica/12-pretendue\\_tradition\\_apostolique\\_d\\_hippolyte/1934-burton\\_scott\\_easton-tradition\\_apostolique\\_d\\_hippolyte/Burton\\_Scott\\_Easton\\_-\\_The\\_Apostolic\\_Tradition\\_of\\_Hippolytus\\_\(1934\).pdf](http://www.rore-sanctifica.org/bibilotheque_rore_sanctifica/12-pretendue_tradition_apostolique_d_hippolyte/1934-burton_scott_easton-tradition_apostolique_d_hippolyte/Burton_Scott_Easton_-_The_Apostolic_Tradition_of_Hippolytus_(1934).pdf). Italics mine.

Consequently, Peter reminded the recipients of his letter that they affirmed their commitment to Christ at the time of baptism.<sup>2690</sup> In the face of terrible suffering for their faith and the temptation to turn away from the Lord,<sup>2691</sup> feeble commitment would not suffice.<sup>2692</sup> Indeed, the term “sacrament” derives from the Latin word meaning “a military oath.”<sup>2693</sup>

People who entered the community of Essenes also made pledges. According to a Dead Sea Scroll, “All those who embrace the Community Rule shall enter into the Covenant before God to obey all His commandments so that they may not abandon Him during the dominion of Satan because of fear or terror or affliction...They shall practice truth and humility in common, and justice and uprightness and charity and modesty in all their ways...They shall atone for all those in Aaron who have freely *pledged themselves to holiness*.”<sup>2694</sup>

In summary, baptism does not atone for moral impurity. It consists of a pledge to live in relationship with the Lord after receiving a clean conscience. Therefore, we must conduct ourselves in a way which brings honor to Christ, even in the face of a hostile world.<sup>2695</sup>

Peter then wrote concerning what makes baptism effective in our salvation,<sup>2696</sup> brilliantly circling us back to the beginning of this passage (1 Pet 3:18–22).<sup>2697</sup> It is “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right [hand] of God, after having gone into heaven after angels, and authorities, and powers had been subjected to him.”

Peter employed parallelism to correspond our situation with Noah’s in 1 Pet 3:20–21.<sup>2698</sup> He wrote that it was “through water” and “through the resurrection,” not that it was “through water” and “through baptism.”<sup>2699</sup>

Ultimately, Jesus’s resurrection and ascension saves us through our union with him. The rite of baptism does not (1 Pet 1:3–5; 1Tim 3:16; Col 3:1–4).<sup>2700</sup> As a result, salvation is available through a new birth for everyone who comes to God with a desire for forgiveness and union with Christ (Luke 23:39–43; John 3:16–21; Rom 8:31–34).<sup>2701</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:21.** How does baptism save us? What happens to God’s people who die before being baptized? How does the resurrection and ascension of Jesus impact believers?

<sup>2690</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 145.

<sup>2691</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255.

<sup>2692</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 145.

<sup>2693</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255.

<sup>2694</sup> Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 1 QS 1, 5, 70, 75, [https://archive.org/stream/pdfy-Uy\\_BZ\\_QGsaLiJ4Zs/The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20%5BComplete%20English%20Translation%5D#page/n127/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/pdfy-Uy_BZ_QGsaLiJ4Zs/The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20%5BComplete%20English%20Translation%5D#page/n127/mode/2up), [https://archive.org/stream/pdfy-Uy\\_BZ\\_QGsaLiJ4Zs/The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20%5BComplete%20English%20Translation%5D#page/n133/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/pdfy-Uy_BZ_QGsaLiJ4Zs/The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20%5BComplete%20English%20Translation%5D#page/n133/mode/2up). Italics mine.

<sup>2695</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255–6.

<sup>2696</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 194.

<sup>2697</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 218.

<sup>2698</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 218.

<sup>2699</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 218.

<sup>2699</sup> Jobes, *1 Peter*, 252.

<sup>2700</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 144.

<sup>2701</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:21.

### Seated at God’s Right Hand

**1) 1 Pet 3:22:** Referring to Jesus, Peter wrote, “who is at the right hand of God after having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been made subject to him.” By his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, Jesus declared victory over his enemies. Peter asserted this by repeating the verb he employed in 1 Pet 3:19 to depict that Christ went (*poreuō*) and made a proclamation to the disobedient spirits from Noah’s era who remained in prison (Gen 6:1–4).<sup>2702</sup>

Placement at the right hand (*dexios*) of God symbolizes wielding divine power (Ps 110:1; Isa 45:1).<sup>2703</sup> This claim about Christ by Jesus, the apostles, and Stephen enraged the Jewish leaders, who considered it blasphemy (Matt 26:59–66; Acts 5:27–33; Acts 7:48–60).<sup>2704</sup> Due to the resurrection, Christ rules with royal status and might (Heb 1:1–4; Heb 8:1).<sup>2705</sup>

Acts 1:1–2, 9–11 describes the beginning of Jesus’s journey to heaven. The parallelism which Peter used indicates that the ascension and proclamation to disobedient spirits form one authoritative act.<sup>2706</sup> According to the author of Hebrews, Christ passed through the heavens, entered the heavenly Most Holy Place (Heb 9:1–5, 8), and is now exalted above the heavens (Heb 4:14; Heb 6:19–20; Heb 7:26).<sup>2707</sup>

The three terms “angels” (*angelos*), “authorities” (*exousia*), and “powers” (*dynamis*) all refer to angelic beings.<sup>2708</sup> Throughout the New Testament (NT), supernatural “authorities” and “powers” tend to be grouped together,<sup>2709</sup> often with the word “rulers” (1 Cor 15:24; Col 2:10; Rom 8:38–39). Peter avoided any of these terms when discussing human government in 1 Pet 2:13–14,<sup>2710</sup> although “authorities” can refer to earthly leaders.<sup>2711</sup>

The apostles named Satan and his forces as the ones who incited evil and the persecution of God’s people (John 16:7–11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 6:12). Spiritual forces controlling world affairs frequently appeared in Jewish literature (Dan 8:23–25).

Several apocryphal books make this explicit.<sup>2712</sup> For example, the oldest part of the Ascension of Isaiah (2nd century BC–4th century AD) mentions, “the eternal judgments and torments of *Gehenna*, and of the prince of this world, and of his angels, and his authorities and his powers.”<sup>2713</sup>

Peter ended this passage by emphasizing the sweeping scope of Jesus’s triumph. Due to his resurrection and ascension, Christ subjected even fallen angels to himself.<sup>2714</sup> His rule is universal, but it has not yet come in all its fullness (Phil 2:5–11; Heb 2:5–9, 14–16).<sup>2715</sup> This

<sup>2702</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 197.

<sup>2703</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “δεξιός” (*dexios*), *BDAG*, 217–8, 218.

<sup>2704</sup>Walter Grundmann, “δεξιός” (*dexios*) *TDNT* 2:37–40, 39.

<sup>2705</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 218–9.

<sup>2706</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 257.

<sup>2707</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 219.

<sup>2708</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 197.

<sup>2709</sup>Werner Foerster, “ἐξουσία” (*exousia*), *TDNT* 2:560–75, 571.

<sup>2710</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 220.

<sup>2711</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἐξουσία” (*exousia*), *BDAG*, 352–3.

<sup>2712</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 146–7.

<sup>2713</sup>Charles, “The Ascension of Isaiah,” 1.3, 2–3,  
<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924014590529#page/n81/mode/2up>.

<sup>2714</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 258.

<sup>2715</sup>Michaels, *1 Peter*, 220.

concept of the “now and not yet” occurs throughout the NT (Mark 9:1; Mark 14:25; Rom 8:1–2; Col 3:1–4). Until the return of Christ, the kingdom of God exists among us but remains incomplete.<sup>2716</sup>

Although Christians suffer in this world, we share in Jesus’s vindication (Rev 6:9–11).<sup>2717</sup> While we await his return, we should neither fear nor experience surprise when we encounter trials and persecution (1 Pet 2:15; 1 Pet 3:14; 1 Pet 4:12–19; 1 Pet 5:8–10).<sup>2718</sup> Even death cannot triumph over people united with Christ (1 Cor 15:50–58; 2 Tim 2:11–13).<sup>2719</sup> Just as Noah and his family members escaped, we too shall be saved through water (Gen 8:1–3, 13–18; 1 Pet 3:18–21).<sup>2720</sup>

**Read 1 Pet 3:22.** Why is Christ’s placement at the right hand of the Father significant? What are the results of Jesus’s resurrection and ascension? How would you describe the era in which we live? What comfort can we take as we endure suffering? How did Peter compare us to Noah?

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<sup>2716</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 147.

<sup>2717</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 198.

<sup>2718</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 221.

<sup>2719</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 198.

<sup>2720</sup> Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:21.

