

“Vindication Through Suffering,” 1 Peter 3:18–22
GCC, 11/25/18

Introduction:

- A. Peter’s Words are Strange for Moderns but were Common Stock for Original Hearers
- B. Demonic Activity is Alive and Well
- C. Christians Desire Vindication against Human and Demonic Oppressors
- D. Our spiritual struggle is against spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:12)
 - 1. The very first doubt came through Demonic Deception (Gen 3:1, 4)
 - 2. Demons stand behind world leaders (Daniel 10:13)
 - 3. Demons feed pride and arrogance (1 Tim 3:6; 2 Thess 2:9–10)

Main Idea: Jesus declares victory over the demons who, in past times, instigated mankind to sin.

- I. Who went and preached? (3:19)
 - A. Some say “Christ’s Spirit”
 - B. Both phrases refer to Jesus’ resurrection
 - 1. Resurrection body is in the realm of the Spirit (1 Cor 15:44)
 - 2. Made alive refers to resurrection (Rom 8:11)
 - C. “In which” means, “in which state”

- II. When did Christ preach?
 - A. Some say he preached through Noah in days when ark was being built
 - B. After his resurrection and possibly in the activity of his ascension
 - 1. “Went” frequently describes Christ’s ascension in NT (Acts 1:10–11; John 14:2, 3, 28; 16:7, 28)
 - 2. “Went” in 3:19 is to be connected with “who has gone into heaven” in 3:22

- III. Who are these spirits in prison?
 - A. Some say these are the souls of the disobedient ones in the time of Noah and that Jesus’ spirit was transported back to the time of Noah to preach to them through Noah.
 - B. Spirits vs. souls
When “spirits” is used in the plural, it virtually always refers to angelic or demonic spirits (Cf. Matt 8:16; 10:1; 12:15; Mark 1:27; 3:11; 5:13; 6:7; Luke 4:36; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2; 10:20; 11:26; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12–13; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 1:14; 12:9; 1 John 4:1; Rev 16:13–14; cf. Heb 1:7.)
 - C. Intertestamental Jewish Apocalyptic Literature/Tradition
(1 Enoch 10:4; 15:8, 10; 18:12–14; 21:1–10; 67:7, 2 Enoch 7:1–3; 18:3; Jub 5:6)
 - D. Peter and Jude seem to confirm this Jewish Tradition
 - 1. Jude 6
 - 2. 2 Pet 2:4
 - 3. Angels continue to be thrown into this “prison” (Luke 8:31)
 - E. Interpreting the “spirits in prison” as fallen angels in the time of Noah fulfills the three descriptions given by Peter (3:20)
 - 1. “they formerly did not obey”
 - 2. “when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah” (cf. Rom 9:22)

- 3. “while the ark was being prepared”
- F. A Creedal Comparison (1 Tim 3:16): “Seen by Angels”

IV. What did Christ Preach?

- A. Some say he preached the gospel through Noah
- B. Others say he preached the gospel to people who have already died
- C. Christ preached victory to the fallen angels (cf. 3:19 with 3:22)

V. Where was this prison?

- A. Various descriptions are used in the NT for abyss, Hell, etc. Some are described as below the earth.
- B. But at other times, the NT describes demonic spirits and powers to be in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12; Luke 10:18; Rev 12:7–10; Isa. 24:21-22)
- C. Conclusion—Christ could have either gone to proclaim victory to fallen angels somewhere in hell or somewhere in the heavenly places.

Application

- 1. Fight against these forces knowing that the decisive battle has already been won
- 2. Victory and Vindication come through Suffering