

# TESTIFY *of* JESUS

THE FIRST & SECOND LETTERS OF PETER | THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

## THE MAIN POINT OF 1 PETER 3:18–22

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After he suffered, Jesus triumphed.  
(So after suffering, Christians will triumph.)

*Scripture Reading*

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1 PETER 3:18–22

# THREE DIFFICULTIES

*in 1 Peter 3:18–22*

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1. In verse 18, what does it mean that Jesus was “put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit”?
2. In verses 19-20, Peter writes that Jesus “went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they disobeyed...in the days of Noah.” What is this prison, who are the spirits, and what did Jesus proclaim?
3. In verse 21, Peter concludes that “baptism now saves you.” What can’t he mean, and what must he mean?

# THE FIRST DIFFICULTY

*in 1 Peter 3:18–22*

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1. In verse 18, what does it mean that Jesus was “put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit”?

I think Peter means that even though Jesus physically died and was buried, God caused Jesus’s human spirit to live.

# THE SECOND DIFFICULTY

*in 1 Peter 3:18–22*

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2. In verses 19-20, Peter writes that Jesus “went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they disobeyed...in the days of Noah.” What is this prison, who are the spirits, and what did Jesus proclaim?

During the time that Jesus’s body was buried, Jesus went to the realm of the dead and declared his triumph, especially to the demons who, in Noah’s day, tried to ruin humanity and have ever since been imprisoned.

An angel shows Enoch the prison, and Enoch shrieks: “How fearful is the place and how terrible to look upon!”

The angel explains: “This place is the prison of the angels [who transgressed in Noah’s day], and here they will be imprisoned forever.”

— *1 Enoch 21:8–10*

# THE THIRD DIFFICULTY

*in 1 Peter 3:18–22*

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3. In verse 21, Peter concludes that “baptism now saves you.” What can’t he mean, and what must he mean?

Peter can’t mean that we are forever saved from guilt simply by being immersed in water (1:5,9).

Peter must refer to the spiritual reality that physical baptism pictures: The actual cleansing of my heart from all its guilt and shame by being soaked in what Jesus did for me.

# WHY IS THE BIBLE SO DIFFICULT?

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1. Difficult passages are rare.
2. Difficult passages stretch us.
3. Difficult passages should be interpreted within the guardrails of simpler passages.
4. Difficult passages have a dominant message that's clear.

# THREE APPLICATIONS

*of 1 Peter 3:18–22*

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1. You must understand why Jesus died—that he died for you in order to reconcile you with God.

“[The Messiah] suffered once for sins,  
the righteous for the unrighteous,  
that he might bring us to God.”

— *1 Peter 3:18*

# THREE APPLICATIONS

*of 1 Peter 3:18–22*

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1. You must understand why Jesus died—that he died for you in order to reconcile you with God.
2. If you follow Jesus, you need not fear suffering (including death) because Jesus triumphed over suffering and death.

Christ, in his descent, proclaimed this victory [over death], achieved through his death, descent, and impending resurrection, to all the dead, righteous and unrighteous, and to the disobedient angels.

Christ's descent, in other words, is *primarily* part of his exaltation, not his humiliation.”

— *Matthew Emerson, He Descended to the Dead: An Evangelical Theology of Holy Saturday*

# THREE APPLICATIONS

*of 1 Peter 3:18–22*

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1. You must understand why Jesus died—that he died for you in order to reconcile you with God.
2. If you follow Jesus, you need not fear suffering (including death) because Jesus triumphed over suffering and death.
3. If you've been “soaked in Jesus,” then you need to think of yourself like Noah and his family in the ark: You'll come safely through every storm.