



BIBLE TALK

Mike King

Question: Please explain 1 Pet. 3:19-21, “*Christ preaches to the spirits in prison.*”

Answer: Christ preached by the inner principle of life which was not subject to death or controlled by the physical. This preceded His “incarnation” or “being in the flesh.” Peter said they were “spirits in prison.” Called “spirits” because they were in a disembodied state at the time Peter wrote; and they were “in prison,” because of being restrained by ignorance. Those now in the spirit world were once in the flesh and disobedient while the ark was being built; and it was during this interval that Christ preached to them through Noah, He being the principal and Noah His agent. Jesus functioned the same way when he preached through His apostles to the Gentiles (Eph. 2:17) and baptized through His disciples (Jn. 4:1).

The wicked world rejected the Lord’s preaching through Noah and perished. Noah’s family was saved “through water”; the water bore up the ark and carried them away from the corruption of the old world. This deliverance is a type of salvation from sin in water baptism (Acts 22:16). It should be observed that Peter does not say that Noah and his family were saved **in** water nor **from** water; they were saved **through** water—through the water God exercised His saving power. In this there is a “true likeness” to baptism saving today, not of course as a Savior, but as an instrument God uses to exercise saving power. The apostle points out that it is not “*the putting away of the filth of the flesh,*” but the creation of a good conscience. A good conscience is not proof of salvation (Acts 23:1—Saul persecuted the church with a good conscience), but prompts one to desire to do God’s will. With the possession of a good conscience, one will desire baptism (Mk 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). The key point is that Jesus was resurrected for the dead which enables us to resurrect from a grave of water to eternal life.

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