

## *1 Peter 3:19-22*

### *FROM CRUCIFIXION TO RESURRECTION*

Today as we finish looking at first Peter chapter three, we will get into some heavy theological considerations. Theology, as you recall, is the study of things pertaining to God and faith. Theologians, the people who do theology, are often quite deep thinkers who are very adept at making a simple subject quite complicated. For instance the story is told of a minister who had just become the pastor at a country church. Three of the deacons came to see him. He showed them into his study while he went to answer the phone. The deacons were surprised to see that their new minister was using a bale of hay to sit on.

Being well versed in things theological, they began to discuss this strange occurrence.

*“Perhaps,”* said the first, *“it is an act of penance. Our minister is doing penance for his sins.”*

*“It’s quite fascinating,”* said the second deacon, *“but I would prefer to think that our new pastor is trying to copy the simplicity of the life of our Lord.”*

*“No, no, no,”* said the third deacon, *“surely the pastor is making a social statement. He is identifying with the poor and needy workers on our farms.”*

At that point, the pastor returned to his study.

*“It would deeply interest us to know,”* said one of the deacons, *“what is the significance of your sitting on a bale of hay?”*

*“That’s quite simple,”* said the pastor. *“The moving van hasn’t arrived yet with my office chair.”*

We spent a considerable amount of time last week in verse 18 of 1 Peter 3. Let’s go back and read it again and then continue in verses 19 and 20 as we begin our study for this week.

1 Peter 3:18, 20 NLT:

*18 Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. **He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.***

*19 So he went and preached to the spirits in prison—*

*20 those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning*

*in that terrible flood.*

I would also like to read these verses from the NAS translation which I believe gives us the closest interpretation of the original Greek. So let's read 1 Peter 3:18-20 from that translation:

*18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;*

*19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the **spirits now in prison**,*

*20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.*

This passage suggests that sometime between His death and His resurrection Jesus made a special trip to deliver a special message to "the spirits in prison." Where exactly did Jesus go and to whom exactly did He speak, and what did He say to them? Theologians down through the centuries have tried to explain this passage. It has been said by someone that, "If all the theologians in the world were laid end to end, they still wouldn't reach a conclusion." We will see the truth of that today as we consider these verses in 1 Peter 3, which I believe to be one of the most difficult passages in the Bible to interpret accurately. I think you'll understand why as we move along.

It is critical at this point to understand the meaning of several Greek words used in this verse if we are to interpret the meaning of this verse correctly. First, let's look at the Greek word for "**spirits**." The Greek word used here is "neshamah" and it means "the inner-most part of a person that can respond to God." I believe that meaning is confirmed in Proverbs 20:27 NAS, where Solomon writes: "the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, Searching all the innermost parts of his being." (Please see the footnote at the bottom of this page for a further detailed explanation of the Greek meaning.)

The next critical word we need to define is the word used here for "**prison**." The Greek word used in 1 Peter 3:19 is φυλακή [*phulake* /foo·lak·ay/], meaning a guarding, place of guarding."<sup>1</sup>

Now let's see what kind of a definition we can find for the term "Hell." "Hell" is the English word used to translate *Sheol* in Hebrew, *Hades* in Greek; and *Gehenna* in Aramaic. In Christian tradition it is usually associated with the place of eternal

<sup>1</sup> Definition | Enhanced Strong's Lexicon **5438**, n f. From 5442; TDNT 9:241; TDNTA 1280; GK 5871; 47 occurrences; AV translates as "prison" 36 times, "watch" six times, "imprisonment" twice, "hold" once, "cage" once, and "ward" once. 1 guard, watch. 1a a watching, keeping watch. 1al to keep watch. 1b persons keeping watch, a guard, sentinels. 1c of the place where captives are kept, a prison. 1d of the time (of night) during which guard was kept, a watch i.e. a period of time during which part of the guard was on duty, and at the end of which others relieved them. As the earlier Greeks divided the night commonly into three parts, so, previous to the exile, the Israelites also had three watches in a night; subsequently, however, after they became subject to the Romans, they adopted the Roman custom of dividing the night into four watches.

punishment, especially by fire. This idea appears in Isaiah 66:24, but it is not clearly associated with a place.<sup>2</sup> I must conclude, therefore, that when the Bible, Old and New Testament, refers to “*Hell*,” “*Hades*,” “*Sheol*,” or “*Gehenna*,” it is referring to the same place.

Some believe this passage in 1 Peter 3 18-20 refers to Christ’s descent into Hell after His crucifixion to proclaim His victory to the imprisoned fallen angels referred to in 2 Peter 2:4-5, equating them with “*the sons of God*” Moses wrote about in Genesis 6:1-2. Though there is much to be said about this view as a possible interpretation, the context and the original Greek seems more likely to be referring to humans rather than angels.

There is another point of view that holds that Christ went to Hades, the place of the dead which is referred to in Luke 16:22-26. Luke there tells us that Hades had two sides: the “*Hell*” side and Paradise or Abraham’s bosom. There was a great gulf dividing the two sides, although obviously there could be communication between the two sections. So some believe that this passage in 1 Peter 3 indicates that Christ went to this Paradise and preached during His three days in the grave.

Now if we look at the context carefully we see that the “*spirits*” are described in 1 Peter 3:20 as those who were disobedient **when God waited patiently for Noah** to finish building **the ark**. These folks had repeatedly ignored the message of God delivered to them by Noah. If this seems very confusing, believe me I understand because I wrestled with this passage hour after hour until my head ached. But if you’ll stay with me I believe you will begin to see once again the incredible intricacy of the Bible and see once more that only God could be the Author of this amazing Book.

I’d like now to give you just a little more background as to what Peter is referring to here, and in order to do that I would like you to look with me at Gen. 6:3,5-14,17,18,22 NLT:

*3 Then the Lord said, “**My Spirit** will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”*

*5 The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil.*

*6 So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart.*

*7 And the Lord said, “**I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth.** Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.”*

*8 But Noah found favor with the Lord.*

<sup>2</sup> Achtemeier, Paul J.; Harper & Row, Publishers; Society of Biblical Literature: Harper’s Bible Dictionary. 1st ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985, S. 382.

Jewish writings from the third century B.C. onward speak of places of punishment by fire for evil spirits and the wicked dead (*1 Enoch*<sup>#</sup> 18:11-16; 108:3-7, 15; 2 Esd. 7:36-38). The book of Revelation describes a lake that burns with fire and brimstone in which the wicked will be eternally punished (Rev. 19:20; 20:14-15; 21:8).

*9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.*

*10 Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*

*11 Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence.*

*12 God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt.*

*13 So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!”*

*14 “Build a large boat from cypress wood and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior.*

*17 “Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die.*

*18 But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives.*

*22 So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.*

If you're curious about when all this occurred, we can't give you an exact date for this part of the book of Genesis, but we do know that Noah was born while Adam was still alive, and Noah lived five hundred years before the birth of his three sons, **Shem, Ham, and Japheth** (Genesis 5:32). **Noah** was a “*just man and perfect in his generation,*” and “*walked with God*” (Ezekiel 14:14,20). But then the descendants of Cain and of Seth, the sons of Adam, began to intermarry, and they produced a race of evil men and women. Mankind became more and more corrupt and God decided to destroy the entire evil and corrupt population. But Noah and his family would be the exception. God entered into a covenant with Noah, promising Noah and his family protection from the promised flood (verse 18). Noah was instructed by God to build an ark (6:14–16) to house himself and his family. It would take 120 years for the ark to be completed (6:3). During that time Noah repeatedly warned the people of what would happen to them if they did not repent.

When the ark was completed, the living creatures that were to be preserved entered into it; and then Noah and his wife and sons and daughters-in-law entered it, and the “*Lord shut him in*” (Genesis 7:16). The threatened judgment of which Noah warned now fell on a guilty world, “*the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished*” (2 Peter 3:6).<sup>3</sup>

Now that we've laid some groundwork in order to better understand 1 Peter 3:18-20, let's go back to that passage and try to understand what Peter is saying:

*18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;*

<sup>3</sup> Easton, M.G.: Easton's Bible Dictionary. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, c1897.

In 1 Peter 3:18–22 Peter gave us the perfect example of undeserved suffering, the crucifixion of Christ. Jesus suffered death on the cross for the sins of all mankind, from the very beginning of time all the way up to the time He will return at the end of the age. Jesus' suffering was God's will for the salvation and eternal life of those who would accept Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf, receive Him as their Lord and Savior, and trust and follow His teaching. In similar fashion, some suffering of innocent people throughout history could also be God's will for the ultimate good of mankind and the kingdom of God.

Jesus' death prepared the way for the reconciliation of sinners with God. Paul gives us further insight into this truth in 1 Corinthians 2:15-20 NLT:

*15 He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.*

*16 So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now!*

*17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

*18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.*

*19 **For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them.** And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.*

*20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"*

Those that were alive at the time saw Christ's death as He hung there on the cross as a defeat. But Christ's death was not a defeat. Having "*suffered physical death,*" He was "*raised to life in the Spirit.*" There is a balance and correlation between the two terms "*physical*" and "*Spirit.*" Both terms emphasize different aspects of Christ's existence: His earthly existence as a man, which was His physical existence, and His heavenly existence as divine "*Spirit.*" Christ was fully God and fully man.

The main point in 1 Peter 3:18 is that Christ's death was not a defeat but a triumph. While Christ died to His earthly existence as a man, by His resurrection, being "*raised to life,*" He returned to His existence as God which allowed for a far greater ministry according to Matthew 28:18-20; and John 14:12-14:

*18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.*

19 *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

20 *Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

12 *“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and **even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.**”*

13 *You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.*

14 *Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!*

Going on from verse 18 to verse 19 of 1 Peter 3, Peter writes:

*19 in which also He (Jesus)<sup>4</sup> went and made proclamation to the **spirits now in prison,***

One major obstacle in interpreting this verse is just who are the “*spirits in prison*” referred to in verse 19? Where is this prison located, and when did Christ preach to them? There are several different viewpoints with regard to “*the spirits in prison*” and when Christ “*preached*” to them:

(1) The earliest view identifies the “*spirits in prison*” with the fallen angels (“*sons of God*”) in Genesis 6.<sup>5</sup> But it is difficult to scripturally support the idea of Jesus going into Hell to preach to fallen angels or demons. In fact I can find no evidence in Scripture that Jesus ever visited Hell.

(2) Others feel the “*spirits in prison*” refer to the people of Noah’s day who are dead and awaiting the final judgment at the time Peter wrote this letter. According to this viewpoint, Christ descended to Hell between His death and resurrection. His preaching is viewed as being either condemnatory, meaning no hope, or conciliatory, offering those who died before or in the flood a second chance for salvation. However, there is no evidence in Scripture that anyone is offered a “*second chance*” after death. In fact, Scripture says quite the opposite in Hebrews 9:27 NAS:

*And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.*

And why would Jesus exclusively single out the people who lived before the flood to be the recipients of this special offer of salvation ministry, excluding all that lived after the flood up until Jesus’ birth? This viewpoint contains a great deal of speculation and therefore can hardly hold up to careful scriptural examination.

(3) A view that can be traced as far back as Augustine holds that 1 Peter 3:19–20 refers to the pre-incarnate preaching of Christ through Noah.

<sup>4</sup> Parentheses added.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6.

Do you remember what we learned a few weeks ago in 1 Peter 1:10-12? Well let's look at it again because it plays a critical role in interpreting 1 Peter 3:18-20 correctly:

*10 This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you.*

*11 They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward.*

*12 They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.*

The preaching and teaching by all the prophets in the Old Testament was accomplished by Christ's divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God. I therefore maintain that the "spirits in prison" of 1 Peter 3:19 were the souls of those who heard the message of the Holy Spirit of Christ through Noah before the flood, rejected it, and now at the time of the writing of the letter of 1 Peter in A.D. 64, find themselves in Hell awaiting the final judgment of God at which time they will be cast into the eternal Hell, which is identified in Scripture as the "Lake of Fire." This view eliminates the doctrine of Christ's descent into Hell and the question of what his "preaching" might have accomplished there. It also has the advantage of clarity and simplicity in relationship to the context of this passage.

But the point of the illustration that we must not miss in 1 Peter 3:19,20 is that Christ's past ministry during the Old Testament period was resumed at His death. **Christ's death was a victory, not a defeat.** While death ended the physical, earthly dimension of Jesus' life and ministry, it allowed once again, and in a new and better way, His ministry as the divine Spirit of God. Now let's put 1 Peter 3:18 and 19 together and continue into verse 20 to complete this fascinating passage from Scripture:

*18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;*

*19 in which also He (Jesus)<sup>6</sup> went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,*

*20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.*

The ark built by Noah which is referred to in 1 Peter 3:20 appears to be a symbol of the resurrection. It is the means of bringing people to God which we saw in verse 18. The people in the ark were brought safely through the water (verse 20). In a similar way,

<sup>6</sup> Parentheses added.

believers are brought safely to God through the cross. Water baptism and all it symbolizes is the picture of the believer coming to God through Christ. Like Noah, the people Peter was addressing had responded to God's message and were trusting Christ to bring them to God. The implication is that believers are not to jump out but wait patiently in their ark of Christ's cross through the storms of life. Believers are not to jump out of the ark to fight or retreat back into the world's ways.<sup>7</sup>

This interpretation seems to fit the general theme of this section (1 Peter 3:13-22), that is keeping a good conscience in unjust persecution. Noah is presented as an example of one who committed himself to a course of action for the sake of a clear conscience before God, though it meant enduring harsh ridicule. Noah did not fear men but obeyed God and proclaimed His message. Noah's reward for keeping a clear conscience in unjust suffering was the salvation of himself and his family, who **were saved through water**, being brought safely through the Flood.<sup>8</sup>

1 Peter 3:21 NLT:

*21 And that **water** is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Since death comes when the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26), then resurrection involves the spirit *returning* to the body (Luke 8:55). The Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 6:4; 8:11), but the Son also had authority to raise Himself (John 10:17-18). It was a miracle. It is because of His resurrection that Christians have the "living hope" mentioned in 1 Peter 1:3, 4 NLT:

*3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, 4 and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.*

We must never minimize the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It declares that He is God (Romans 1:4), that the work of salvation is completed and accepted by God (Romans 4:25), and that death has been conquered,<sup>9</sup> The Gospel message includes the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), for a dead Savior can save nobody. It is the risen Christ who gives us the power we need on a daily basis for life and service ([Galatians](#)

<sup>7</sup> Hughes, Robert B. ; Laney, J. Carl ; Hughes, Robert B.: Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (The Tyndale Reference Library), S. 691

<sup>8</sup> Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:851

<sup>9</sup> 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 1:17-18.



2:20).<sup>10</sup>

**Water here symbolizes baptism.** Baptism represents a complete break with one's past life. As the Flood wiped away the old sinful world, so baptism pictures one's break from his/her old sinful life and his/her entrance into new life in Christ. Peter now applied to his readers the principle he set forth in verses 13-17 and illustrated in verses 18-20, that is, of suffering for the sake of Christ, because Christ was punished for our sins. Peter urged them to have the courage to commit themselves to a course of action by taking a public stand for Christ through baptism. The act of public baptism would "save" them from the temptation to sacrifice their good consciences in order to avoid persecution. For a first-century Christian, baptism meant they were following thorough on their commitment to Christ, regardless of the consequences.

**Baptism** does not save one from sin, but from a bad conscience. Peter clearly taught that baptism was not merely a ceremonial act of physical purification, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. Baptism is the symbol of what has already occurred in the heart and life of one who has trusted Christ as Savior.<sup>11</sup> To make the source of salvation perfectly clear Peter added, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1:3).<sup>12</sup>

1 Peter 3:22 NLT:

*22 Now **Christ has gone to heaven.** He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.*

Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascended to Heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, the place of reverence and worship.<sup>13</sup> Believers are seated with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:4–6), and through Him we are able to "reign in life" (Romans 5:17). He is ministering to the church as High Priest (Hebrews 4:14–16; 7:25) and Advocate (1 John 1:9; 2:2). He is preparing a place for His people (John 14:1–6) and will one day come to receive them to Himself.

But the main point Peter wanted to emphasize here was Christ's complete victory over all "angels and authorities and powers" (1 Peter 3:22), referring to the evil hosts of Satan.<sup>14</sup> The unfallen angels were *always* subject to Him. As Christians, we do not fight for victory, but from victory—the mighty victory that our Lord Jesus Christ won for us in His death, resurrection, and ascension.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Exposition Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Pe 3:18

<sup>11</sup> Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12.

<sup>12</sup> Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:852

<sup>13</sup> Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34–36; Phil. 2:5–11; Heb. 12:1–3.

<sup>14</sup> Eph. 6:10–12; Col. 2:15.

<sup>15</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Exposition Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor

Even though various theologians have differing ideas about the meaning of the phrase that Christ “*made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,*” something that has no bearing on our salvation, it is easy to agree on the main lessons Peter was sharing with his readers. Those are the lessons that we need today.

First of all, **Christians must expect opposition.** As the coming of Christ draws near, our faith will incite the anger and attacks of godless people. Jesus lived a perfect life on earth, and yet He was crucified like a common criminal. If the just One who did no sin was treated cruelly, what right do we who are imperfect have to escape suffering?

A second lesson is that **Christians must serve God by faith and not trust only in results.** Noah served God and kept only seven other people were saved from the Flood; yet God honored him for His faithful service. From those seven people, we may take courage. Jesus appeared to be a total failure when He died on the cross, yet His death was a supreme victory. His cause in the world today may seem to be failing, but He will accomplish His purposes in this world.

Village Church may have only a few members but we can take heart that God is using a faithful ministry in a powerful way that is beyond our ability to see.

Third, **we can be encouraged because we are identified with Christ’s victory.** This is pictured in baptism, and the doctrine is explained in Romans 6. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that identifies a believer with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–13), and this is pictured in water baptism. It is through the Spirit’s power that we live for Christ and witness for Him (Acts 1:8). The opposition of mankind is energized by Satan, but do not forget for a moment that Christ has already defeated these principalities and powers. He has “*all authority in heaven and on earth*” according to Matthew 28:18 NIV, and therefore we can go forward with a sense of confidence and victory.

Another practical lesson is that **our baptism is important.** It identifies us with Christ and gives evidence that we have broken with the old life (1 Peter 4:1–4) and will, by His help, live a new life. The act of water baptism is a pledge to God that we shall obey Him. To use Peter’s illustration, we are agreeing to the terms of the contract. To take baptism lightly is to sin against God. Some people make too much of baptism by teaching that it is a means of salvation, while others minimize it. Both are wrong. If a believer is to have a good conscience, he/she must obey God.

Having said this, I want to make it clear that Christians must not make baptism a test of fellowship or of spirituality. There are dedicated believers who disagree on these matters, and we respect them. When General William Booth founded the Salvation Army, he determined not to make it “*another church,*” so he eliminated the ordinances. There are Christian groups, such as the Quakers, who, because of conscience or doctrinal interpretation, do not practice baptism. I love the verse in Romans 14:19, where Paul writes: “*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things*

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Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Pe 3:18

*wherewith one may edify another.*” As well as Romans 14:5: “*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*”

The important thing is that each Christian vow their devotion to Christ and make it a definite act of commitment. Most Christians do this in baptism, but even the act of baptism can be minimized or forgotten. It is in taking up our cross daily that we prove we are true followers of Jesus Christ.

Finally, **Jesus Christ is the only Savior, and the lost world needs to hear His Gospel.** Some people try to use this complex passage of Scripture(1 Peter 3:19) to prove a “*second chance for salvation after death.*”

As we have seen, Hebrews 9:27 makes it clear that death ends the opportunity for salvation. This is why the church needs to get concerned about evangelism and missions, because people are dying who have never even heard the Good News of salvation, let alone had the opportunity to reject it.

It does us no good to quibble about differing interpretations of a difficult passage of Scripture, if what we *do* believe does not motivate us to want to share the Gospel with others.

Peter made it clear that difficult days give us multiplied opportunities for witness. **Are we taking advantage of our opportunities?**<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Exposition Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Pe 4:1