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# The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON LXXX : UNITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS (4:1-16)

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This passage lays out as follows:

## CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE: LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

### THE PASSION (2:21-23)

*'For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;'*

### THE CRUCIFIXION (2:24a)

*'who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree,'*

### THE PRESENT EXPERIENCE OF BELIEVERS (2:24b-25)

*'that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.'*

~~~~~ (3:1-17) ~~~~~

## CONNECTING THOUGHT, TYING THIS EXAMPLE WITH THE PREVIOUS

*'For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God,*

## CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE: ALTHOUGH HE SUFFERED, HE OBTAINED THE VICTORY OVER THE POWERS

### THE CRUCIFIXION (3:18a)

*being put to death in the flesh'*

### THE RESURRECTION (3:18b)

*'but made alive by the Spirit,'*

### SIDE PANEL: THE VICTORY OBTAINED BY CHRIST (3:19-21)

*'by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,'*

### THE ASCENSION (3:22)

*'who has gone into heaven*

*and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.'*

**WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?** — <sup>13</sup> Who will harm you if you live righteously? <sup>14</sup> But if they do persecute you, you are blessed. <sup>15</sup> But set Christ apart in your hearts, acknowledge Him as holy, set Him apart and above all human authority, and be ready to give a defense of what you believe with meekness and reverence, in a humble and respectful manner. <sup>16</sup> Have a good conscience, free from guilt and having nothing to hide. So that in the day of Christ when we all give an account, they will be ashamed. <sup>17</sup> For it is better in God's sovereign plan that we stand and suffer for doing good than to give in and reproach Christ!! <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered on our behalf, the sinless for the sinful, in order to bring us to God.

**A FULL CIRCLE OF CONFUSION** — Without ever having taken the time to delve into this passage in detail, I had always considered Peter to be referring to Christ (in the Person of the Holy Spirit) preaching through Noah to the *Antediluvians* (the prefix 'ante' means 'before,' therefore 'antediluvian' is 'before the deluge, of or belonging to the period before Noah's flood, a person who lived before Noah's flood'). This theory will be explained in detail below but as also will be explained, there is another theory that is more prevalent today: that Peter was basing his remarks on the apocryphal Book of Enoch and was referring to the angels who sinned before the flood. The support for that theory seemed overwhelming until I read counter-arguments from Wayne Grudem in his commentary on 1 Peter. I now have a better understanding of the issues surrounding Peter's difficult verses and while having a great respect for the 'Book of Enoch' theory, I am able to return with peace and conviction to my initial beliefs.

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES** — There are many good references given below but I feel compelled to highlight two. One

of the most thorough of those commentators which promotes the 'Book of Enoch' theory is **John Norman Davidson Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Harper & Row, New York) 1969.** As mentioned in the previous note, in contrast to Kelly's work is the following: **Wayne A. Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter* (InterVarsity Press; Downers Grove IL) 1988.** *I would recommend both titles for any wishing to study these verses further.*

**A DIFFICULT PASSAGE** — Simon Kistemaker points out that the meaning of each word in 3:19 varies; D. Edmond Hiebert states *'Each of the nine words in the original has been differently understood.'* [q.v., Kistemaker, 141] *"A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the New Testament, so that I do not know for a certainty just what Peter means."* [Luther, 166] *"First Peter 3:18b-22 is by all accounts the most difficult passage to interpret in 1 Peter — some say the entire New Testament."* [Dorioni, 146] Therefore we are to avoid extreme dogmatism in our understanding of this passage. Almost without exception every commentator I read treaded lightly and expressed their beliefs with consideration for opposing beliefs. *To express certainty in such a situation is to parade our ignorance rather than our depth of understanding!*

**QUESTIONS TO BE EVALUATED** — Almost every word and phrase contains points of differences.

v. 18b — *being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,* — Is the 'spirit' a reference to the Holy Spirit ('Spirit') or something else ('spirit')? Are the two phrases parallel or are they distinct?

v. 19 — *by whom also* — What is the antecedent: in the spirit? If this refers back to 'spirit', is it 'by whom' (a reference to the Holy Spirit) or 'by which, in which' (a reference to whatever is meant by the word 'spirit')? Both are possible grammatically.

v. 19 — *He went* — Where? When?

v. 19 — *and preached* — What did Christ proclaim / preach?

v. 19 — *to the spirits in prison,* — Who are these 'spirits in prison'? What is meant by 'prison'? Where is this prison?

v. 20 — *who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.* — To whom is Peter referring? (this relates back to the 'spirits in prison')

v. 21 — *There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,* — One of the most controversial verses in the Bible relating to Baptismal Regeneration.

v. 22 — *who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.* — How does this relate to the preceding?

Add to this the whole discussion of Gen 6:1-13 which also must be evaluated to see how it fits within Peter's emphasis (if at all).

**MAJOR THEORIES** — While there are a multiplicity of theories which combine parts of each of the theories below, these are the major theories with which we will consider in our study (the basic outline of which is dependent upon Wayne Grudem's study on this topic):

- **After Christ died, he proclaimed release to people who had repented just before they died in the flood and let them out of their imprisonment (Purgatory) into heaven.** — This theory began with Robert Bellarmine in 1586 and has been common amongst Catholic interpreters.
- **After Christ died, He went and preached to people in hell, offering them a second chance for salvation.** — Most thoroughly presented by B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*, 1946 (Reicke includes the preaching to disobedient angels); Hart, Bigg, Best, *each referenced below*; F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 1970; and hesitantly followed by C. E. B. Cranfield, *1 / 2 Peter and Jude*, 1960. Note not all of these men held to a second chance after death.
- **After Christ died, he went and preached to people in hell, proclaiming to them that he had triumphed over them and their condemnation in hell.** — The 'orthodox Lutheran theory' and strongly supported by R. C. Lenski.
- **When Noah was building the ark, Christ 'in spirit' was in Noah preaching repentance and righteousness through him to unbelievers who were on the earth then but are now 'spirits in prison' (people in hell).** — First suggested by Augustine (ca. 400 A.D.) and followed by Thomas Aquinas. NOTE: Augustine incorrectly took the 'prison' to be a metaphor for *'a darkness of ignorance'* in which unbelievers live. Although some disregard this theory due to Augustine's metaphor, accepting this theory does not demand we agree with the metaphor.
- **Afer Christ died (either before His resurrection or in His ascension) He proclaimed triumph over the fallen angels who had sinned by having sexual relations with women before the flood.** — *Admittedly the prominent theory today*, primarily because of E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 1949, and W. J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits*, 1965. Others who espouse this view but may differ on the *'when did this preaching occur'* includes Kelly, Wall, *each referenced above*; Edwin A. Blum, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 Peter*, 1981; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Letters of Peter and Jude*, 1967; R. T. France, *Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples*, 1977. **Grudem**

*casts aspersion on this view by stating this argument rests upon the assumption of certain extra-biblical writings, especially 1 Enoch. For Peter's illustration to have made sense, Peter's readers would have had to immediately recognize the allusion to Enoch 'proclaiming condemnation for their sin.'*

## WHAT IS THE 'BOOK OF ENOCH'?

Scot McKnight, quoting R. T. France, 'Exegesis in Practice', "*To try to understand 1 Peter 3:19-20 without a copy of the Book of Enoch at your elbow is to condemn yourself to failure.*" [McKnight, 216] "There are several books mentioned in the Bible which are not included in our Bible [e.g., The Book of Jasher, mentioned in Josh 10:13; The Annals of Jehu, mentioned in 2 Chron 20:34; The Acts of Solomon, mentioned in 1 Kings 11:41; a book written by Samuel, mentioned in 1 Sam 10:25; etc.]. They are not spiritual canon, either because they were not available at the time the canon was originally adopted, or at the time they were not considered inspired. In cases when inspiration was questioned, one could argue that any book quoted or mentioned by a prophet or an apostle should be considered canon; unfortunately this position would prove too simplistic. Books and writings can fall under various categories such as civil records and laws, historical documents, or spiritual writings. A city or state census is not inspired, but it could add insight into certain areas of life. Spiritual writings which are directly quoted in the Bible serve as insights into the beliefs of the writer or what was considered acceptable by society at the time." [Lumpkin, 7] *As a pastor might quote from a Catholic source, quoting that source does not give credence or support to everything that person believes or has written.*

Factoids (gleaned mostly from Lumpkin):

- The Book of Enoch was once studied by Jews and Christians alike and is still read in certain Coptic Christian Churches in Ethiopia today. The opinion of historians today is that it does not contain the authentic words of the ancient Enoch but theories vary as to the origin of the book.
- It was considered inspired and authentic by the Essenes of the first century BC and remained popular for at least 500 years.
- When originally discovered in the 18th century, it was dated several centuries after Christ because there were similarities between New Testament quotes and paraphrases, as well as being quoted by some early Church Fathers (e.g., Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria). It was thought to have been influenced by both Peter and Jude but after having discovered it among the Dead Sea Scrolls (dated second century BC), it turns out Peter and Jude was influenced by the Book of Enoch, not the other way around.
- It was widely known and read the first three centuries after Christ but was discredited (along with many other writings) at the Council of Laodicea (363/364 AD). It gradually disappeared from circulation.
- Rumors of a surviving book drew Scottish explorer James Bruce to Ethiopia. He returned with copies of the book and the first English translation was published in 1821. The famous R. H. Charles edition was published in 1912. Several portions of the Greek text surfaced, then seven Aramaic fragments were discovered in Qumran cave 4.
- Three versions of the Book of Enoch exist today, the first being described above and is based upon the Ethiopic copies (**the Ethiopic Book of Enoch**). Of the three 'Book of Enochs', this is the only one considered inspired by some and part of the Ethiopic Christian Church.
- The second is commonly called **the Slavonic Secrets of Enoch** and was discovered in 1886 in the archives of the Belgrade Public Library. Unfortunately, later additions to the text and the deletion of teachings considered 'erroneous' renders this text unreliable.
- The third is known as **the Hebrew Book of Enoch** and claims to have authored by Rabbi Ishmael between 90-130 AD, although no fragments have been found earlier than 400 AD. This book was written in Hebrew but has some Latin and Greek words and cognates. The Hebrew Book of Enoch is a continuation and expansion of the Enochian traditions of the other two books of Enoch and is highly mystical in nature.

**OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF ENOCH'S PERTINENT PASSAGES** — Here is the gist of Enoch's writings as it relates to Genesis 6 and 1 Peter 3.

"The spirits who disobeyed in the days of Noah are the sons of God described in Gen. vi. 1-4.... [P]eter depends on the current tradition in which the original myth has been modified and amplified. This dependence supplies an adequate explanation of the difficulties which have been found here and in ver. 21.... The important points in the tradition as given in the Book of Enoch (vi. - xvi. cf. Jubilees v.) are as follows: the angels who lusted after the daughters of men descended in the days of Jarel as his name (Descent) shows. The children of this unlawful union were the Nephilim and the Eliud. They also taught men all evil arts so that they perished appealing to God for justice. At last Enoch was sent to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon these watchers, who in terror besought him to present a petition to God on their behalf. God refused to grant them peace. They were spirits eternal and immortal who transgressed the line of demarcation between men and angels and disobeyed the law that spiritual beings do not marry and beget children like men. Accordingly they are bound and their children slay one another leaving their disembodied spirits to propagate sin in the world even after it has been purged by the Flood.... For [Peter] it was not merely important as connected with the only

existing type of the Last Judgment or an alternative explanation of the origin and continuance of sin but also as the greatest proof of the complete victory of Christ over the most obstinate and worst of sinners.” [Hart, 68]

“In later Jewish literature the story of their misbehavior [i.e., fallen angels who cohabitated with women prior to the flood, fathering giant children] and dreadful condemnation was avidly dwelt upon and richly embroidered (e.g. 1 Enoch x-xvi; xxi; The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch lvi. 12f; The Book of Jubilees v. 6; Qumran: Damascus Document ii. 18-21; Qumran: Genesis Apocryphon ii. 1; 16). In particular we should note (i) that their misdemeanour was specifically defined as disobedience, for they had ‘transgressed the commandment of the Lord’ (1 Enoch xxi. 6; cf. cvi. 13f.); (ii) that their place of punishment is called a prison (1 Enoch xviii. 14; xxi. 10); (iii) that the corruption of mankind and consequently all human sin are traced back to them and their leader Azazel (1 Enoch x. 8); and (iv) that even after their sentence they continue their evil work by means of their ‘spirits’, defiling men and luring them to idolatry (1 Enoch xix. 1; cf. xv. 9-12).” [Kelly, 154]

**SETTING ASIDE THE CONTROVERSIES, HERE’S WHAT PETER IS SAYING** — *“Even if this passage is more obscure than we might wish, two clear points anchor the point of the text: (1) Being linked with 3:13-17 by ὅτι καὶ (hoti kai, because also, 3:18), the 3:18-22 passage is intended to ground the immediately preceding claim that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (2) Even though Christ suffered unjustly to death for doing good, that suffering was not the defeat it may have appeared to be but was instead a victory over all angels, authorities, and powers (3:22). Suffering unjustly for doing good is therefore not the final judgment about who is in the right.”* [Jobes, 237] *“So while the overall point is clear, we cannot be certain on the details. The main point is: **Since Christ bore witness through His suffering and was vindicated, we, too, can bear witness through suffering and trust God to vindicate us...** His readers were a small minority seeking to obey God, but surrounded by a godless culture. They were being chided for not joining in the dissipation around them (4:4). Peter uses the example of Noah to say, ‘The majority is seldom right on spiritual matters! Stand alone for God, if you must. Don’t cave in to the pressure to conform to this godless world. Like Noah, you will bear witness. Also like Noah, you will be delivered and this wicked world will perish.’”* [Cole, A Difficult Passage] “This interpretation is very appropriate to the larger context of 3:13-22. The parallel between the situation of Noah and the situation of Peter’s readers is clear at several points:

- (1) Noah and his family were a minority surrounded by hostile unbelievers; so are Peter’s readers (vv. 13-14; 4:4, 12-13).
- (2) Noah was righteous in the midst of a wicked world. Peter exhorts his readers to be righteous in the midst of wicked unbelievers (vv. 13-14, 16-17; 4:3-4).
- (3) Noah witnessed boldly to those around him. Peter encourages his readers to be good witnesses to unbelievers around them (vs. 14,16-17), being willing to suffer, if need be, to bring others to God (just as Christ was willing to suffer and die ‘that he might bring us to God’, v. 18).
- (4) Noah realized that judgment was soon to come upon the world. Peter reminds his readers that God’s judgment is certainly coming, perhaps soon (4:5,7; 2 Pet. 3:10).
- (5) In the unseen ‘spiritual’ realm Christ preached through Noah to unbelievers around him. By saying this Peter can remind his readers of the reality of Christ’s work in the unseen spiritual realm and the fact that Christ is also in them, empowering their witness and making it spiritually effective (cf. 1:8,11,12,25; 2:4). Therefore, they should not fear (v. 14) but in their hearts should ‘reverence Christ as Lord’ and should ‘always be prepared’ to tell of the hope that is in them (v. 15).
- (6) At the time of Noah, God was patiently awaiting repentance from unbelievers, before he brought judgment. So it is in the situation of Peter’s readers: God is patiently awaiting repentance from unbelievers (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9) before bringing judgment on the world (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10).
- (7) Noah was finally saved, with ‘a few’ others. Peter thus encourages his readers that, though perhaps few, they too will finally be saved, for Christ has triumphed and has all things subject to him (3:22; 4:13,19; 5:10; 2 Pet. 2:9).

*This passage, once cleared of misunderstanding, should also function today as an encouragement to us to be bold in our witness (as Noah was), to be confident that, though we may be few, God will certainly save us (as he did Noah), and to remind us that just as certainly as the flood eventually came, so final judgment will certainly come to our world as well, and Christ will ultimately triumph over all the evil in the universe.”* [Grudem, 168f]

**v. 18b** — **being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,** — *θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ τῷ πνεύματι* [thanaōtheis men sarki zōpoiētheis de tō pneumati]; — “[T]his is the third christological passage in 1 Peter (see 1:18-21; 2:22-25), and all three takes as their starting point the suffering and death of Jesus. *Whereas 2:22-25 emphasizes the redeeming power of Christ’s crucifixion, this passage highlights the conquering power of his resurrection and ascension.*” [Jobes, 236]

**made alive** — **CANNOT BE ‘REMAINED ALIVE’ BUT RATHER ‘MADE ALIVE’** — used elsewhere in the NT 10x, all with God, Christ or the Holy Spirit as subject; sometimes in parallel with ‘raise’ (e.g., Rom 8:11) suggesting that here its sense is synonymous with being raised to life. Those supporting the ‘descensus ad inferos’ view, starting with Clement and Origen, understood the contrast to be between flesh (= Christ’s body) and spirit (= Christ’s soul). “The word pair σῶμα (sōma, body) and

ψυχή (*psychē*, soul) were the terms used in Greek vocabulary to distinguish between the material body and the immaterial soul, not *sarx* and *pneuma*.... More important, the body-soul contrast required by the *descensus* interpretation does not do justice to the contrast between the full phrases ‘put to death in flesh’ and ‘made alive in spirit.’ *In what sense could Christ’s soul be said to have been made alive in contrast to the death of his body? Even granting that Peter could refer to the doubtful body-soul contrast with sarx and pneuma, the soul would have remained alive and active, but the text says Christ ‘was made alive in spirit.’ Christ in his entirety was put to death at the crucifixion and in his entirety was made alive at the resurrection.... [I]n what sense was his soul ‘made alive’ when his body was put to death? One could argue that his soul remained alive, but that is not what the text says.* [Jobes, 239, 241] “He was brought to life, for this, and not ‘remained alive,’ must be insisted on as the meaning of ἐζωοποιήθη [*ezōpoiēthē*].” [Alford, 364] In the patristic age it was interpreted in the then-common Greek division of human nature into two parts: one material and the other spiritual. Thus ‘flesh’ = Christ’s body and ‘spirit’ = either His soul (Origen, Hilary, Cyril of Alexandria) or more precisely His divinity in union with His human soul (Epiphanius, Augustine). *While commonly held throughout the Reformation and even by some moderns, “... its adherents are obliged either to take ‘being brought to life in the spirit’ as equivalent to ‘being kept alive in His immortal soul (or divine nature), or to imply that His immortal soul (or divine nature) died and was then revived.”* [Kelly, 151] “Any attempt to distinguish between [‘made alive in the spirit’] and Jesus’ bodily resurrection must do so by showing that only Jesus’ ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’ was quickened while his body remained in the tomb, and this is not borne out by Peter’s [‘flesh – spirit’] distinction.” [Michaels, 204] “Peter is not contrasting two parts of the nature of Christ, body and soul, a Greek distinction that would be read into this passage in the Fathers, but rather two modes of existence.” [Davids, 137] *Contra MacArthur*: “Thus, Peter’s point here must be that though Jesus’ body was dead, He remained alive in His Spirit.” [MacArthur, 208]

### SINCE THE THOUGHTS ARE PARALLEL, ‘SPIRIT’ IS PROBABLY NOT A REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

— The syntax of 3:18 forms a contrasting parallel between two passive participles (put to death / made alive), each followed by contrasting datives (in flesh / in spirit). “This contrast qualifies the purpose clause in 3:18, ‘so that he might bring you to God.’ The particles μὲν (men, on the one hand) and δὲ (de, but) indicate that the contrast is probably to be understood as concessive (*although* he was put to death in flesh, he was made alive in spirit.)” [Jobes, 240; emphasis hers] **These are much more parallel statements than is apparent at first in the English:**

|                            |                                   |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ       | <b>thanaōtheis men sarkī</b>      | ‘being put to death in the flesh’ |
| ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ τῷ πνεύματι | <b>zōpoiētheis de tō pneumati</b> | ‘but made alive by the Spirit’    |

Note the ‘men - de’ construction. This is a common Greek construction and simplistically, it could be understood in the sense of ‘on the one hand ... on the other hand.’ *While some might argue the datives do not need to be translated in the same sense (e.g., Kistemaker), it makes more sense to me that they should be translated the same to keep the parallelism. If so, that seems to eliminate the ‘spirit’ here being a reference to the Holy Spirit.*

**HOW IS PETER USING THE DATIVES?** — The commentators I studied discuss the following manners in which these phrases could be understood.

- as a simple conjunction, ‘wherein, thereby, or thus’ — I have not read any who considers this verse in such a manner.
- as instrumental, ‘by flesh ... by the Spirit’ — the datives are instrumental or agency, thus ‘humanity put Christ to death but the Spirit raises Him.’ “*This understanding, however, violates the parallel syntax of the datives, for although one could argue that Christ was made alive by the Holy Spirit, he was not put to death by the flesh.... It seems, however, that in context the emphasis is not between the agents of the action but between the two states of Christ’s existence. Just as Christ emerged from suffering and death into resurrection life, so Peter’s oppressed readers, which is a thought more apt to Peter’s purposed.*” [Jobes, 240f] This also applies to the point below.
- the first dative is locative is locative and the second is agency, ‘in the flesh, by the Spirit’ — breaking away from the phrases being parallel, some understand the first dative in one manner, the second in another:

Feinberg: ‘made alive in the spirit’ = the bodily resurrection of Jesus which was achieved by the Holy Spirit. He then takes the phrase *en hō* of 3:19 to be a reference to the Holy Spirit in which or by whom Noah preached. “*This understanding, however, violates the parallel syntax of the datives, for although one could argue that Christ was made alive by the Holy Spirit, he was not put to death by the flesh.*” [Jobes, 240]

Kistemaker defends this however: “Commentators note that to achieve balance in the sentence, ‘Put to death in the body [flesh] but made alive in the spirit,’ the two clauses must have the same preposition: ‘*in the flesh*’ and ‘*in the spirit*.’ However, we do not have to abide by strict logic. If this were the case the translation of 1 Timothy 3:16, ‘He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit,’ would also require the same preposition to achieve two perfectly balanced clauses in translation.” [Kistemaker, 140] But it may also be argued that many do translate 1 Tim 3:16 consistently, e.g., NKJV: ‘*manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.*’ 1 Tim 3:16 is also not presenting a contrast while 1 Pet 3:18 does.

“A contrast exists here between death and resurrection of Christ. The participle ‘being put to death’ obviously refers to the death of Christ, showing specifically how he suffered. The participle ‘being made alive’, on the other hand, refers to the resurrection of Christ. The verb refers to the resurrection in a number of texts in the New Testament (John 5:21; Rom 4:17; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:22,26,45; cf. also Eph 2:5; Col 2:13). Elsewhere in the New Testament the death and resurrection of Christ are also communicated in the same text (cf. Rom 4:25; 8:34; 14:9; 1 Thess 4:14). We can be confident, therefore,

that Peter did not envision Jesus merely living in the interval between his death and resurrection in terms of his human spirit. He thought here of Christ's resurrection from the dead.... *The deadlock [between other theories as to what Peter meant] can be broken if we recognize that the two dative nouns are not used in precisely the same way; the first is a dative of reference, and the second is a dative of agency. Christ was put to death with reference to or in the sphere of his body, but on the other hand he was made alive by the Spirit.*" [Schreiner, 183f]

*Karen Jobes argues against this by stating the structure of the syntax suggests that the contrast is not just between 'flesh / spirit' but between the entire phrases.*

- **as locatives, 'in flesh ... in spirit'** — 'made alive in the spirit' is not referring to the resurrection but to the realm into which he was resurrected. The phrase *en hō* of 3:19 then refers back to the spiritual realm, which he assumes to be the same spiritual realm in which the pre-incarnate Christ was active when he preached through Noah.

*"Although 'flesh' (sarx) has a range of meanings in the New Testament, whenever, as here, 'flesh' is contrasted with 'spirit' (pneuma), the contrast is between physical, visible things which belong to this present world and invisible things which can exist in the unseen 'spiritual' world of heaven and the age to come. (See 4:6; cf. Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38; John 3:6; Rom. 8:4-6; 1 Tim 3:16; etc.) 'But made alive in the spirit', in view of the contrast noted above, must mean 'made alive in the spiritual realm, in the realm of the Spirit's activity'. Here it refers specifically to Christ's resurrection, because 'made alive' must be the opposite of 'put to death' in the previous phrase. 'In the spiritual realm, the realm of the Holy Spirit's activity, Christ was raised from the dead.' This is important because in the New Testament generally this 'spiritual' realm is the realm of all that is lasting, permanent, eternal.... The 'flesh-spirit' contrast in v. 18 is rather between two spheres of activity than between the pre- and post-resurrection states of Christ.... The contrast 'put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit' fits in with the whole letter's emphasis on the relative unimportance of temporary suffering in this world compared to the enjoying of an eternal inheritance in the next (cf. 1:6-7,8,11,13,23; 2:11; 3:3-4,14; 4:1-2,6,13,14,16,19; 5:1,4,10). Our Lord willingly suffered physical harm, even death, for the sake of eternal, spiritual gain — 'that he might bring us to God'." [Grudem, 163f]*

I see very little difference (practically speaking) between this understanding and the next.

- **as datives of respect or reference: 'with respect / reference to flesh ... with respect / reference to spirit'** — Davids, 129: translates this 'He was put to death with respect to the flesh, but he was made alive with respect to the spirit.' Of those that I read, this seems to be the favored understanding.

"Christ died for sin; therefore he died with respect to flesh, which in the NT is the mode of existence of unregenerate humanity. *But he died as a whole person, not simply as a body (another meaning of 'flesh')*. Christ was made alive (and note the made alive, for here as usual the action of the Father in raising him from the dead is assumed) because of his relationship to God; therefore he was made alive with respect to the spirit, the mode of existence of the regenerate or those pleasing to God. *It is not that the spirit or soul of Christ was dead and that it alone was made alive, nor that Christ took leave of the flesh, but that in the resurrection life of his whole person, body as well as spirit, he took leave of further identification with sin and thus of the further need to die (he suffered once); he now lives as a resurrected person in the mode of existence in which Christians, even before resurrection, can participate, body and soul, although their complete participation awaits 'the redemption of the body.'*" [Davids, 137] "[I]n the human nature: flesh includes the whole of human nature, both body and soul; for though the body only dies, yet death is the dissolution of the union between them both; and such was Christ's death; for though the union between the two natures continued, yet his body and soul were disunited; his body was left on the cross, and his soul, or spirit, was commended to God." [Gill, Commentary on NT]

**THE SENSE IS MOST PROBABLY 'CHRIST'S EARTHLY EXISTENCE / CHRIST'S RISEN STATE'** — *'Put to death indeed in the flesh' ... "[I]t was thus, in this region, under these conditions, that the death on the cross was inflicted: His flesh, which was living flesh before, became dead flesh: Christ Jesus, the entire complex Person, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, was put to death ['in the flesh'], but made alive (again) in the spirit.... But here let us beware, and proceed cautiously. What is asserted is not that the flesh died and the Spirit was made alive; but that ['regarding, with respect to'] the flesh the Lord died, ['regarding, with respect to'] the Spirit He was made alive. He, the God-man Christ Jesus, body and soul, ceased to live in the flesh, began to live in the Spirit; ceased to live a fleshly mortal life, began to live a spiritual resurrection life. His own Spirit never died, as the next verse shows us. 'This is the meaning, that Christ by His sufferings was taken from the life which is flesh and blood, as a man on earth, living, walking, and standing in flesh and blood.... and He is now placed in another life and made alive according to the Spirit, has passed into a spiritual and supernatural life, which includes in itself the whole life which Christ now has in soul and body, so that He has no longer a fleshly but a spiritual body.' (Luther) And Hofmann says, 'It is the same who dies and the same who is again made alive, both times the whole Man Jesus, in body and soul.'" [Alford, 364f] "In fact the flesh-spirit distinction which we meet in the NT, and particularly in Paul, is completely OT in inspiration and has nothing to do with the Greek, ultimately Platonic, dichotomy of the soul and body. As in Rom. i. 3f; 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'flesh' and 'spirit' do not here designate complementary parts of Christ, but the whole Christ regarded from different standpoints. By 'flesh' is meant Christ in His human sphere of existence, considered as a man among men. By 'spirit' is meant Christ in His heavenly, spiritual sphere of existence, considered as divine spirit; and this does not exclude His bodily nature, since as risen from the dead it is glorified. The datives are datives of reference, and the credal excerpt is affirming the paradox that, regarded as man, Christ was done to death, but, regarded as eternal spirit, that same Christ in the fulness of His*

being, His body of course included, has been restored to life by God's power. Indeed, it is as thus risen and glorified that He 'brings us to God.'" [Kelly, 151] **"There is growing agreement that the distinction here indicated by 'flesh' and 'Spirit' is not between the material and immaterial parts of Christ's person (i.e., his 'body' and 'soul'), but rather between his earthly existence and his risen state (cf. Rom 1:3-4; 1 Tim 3:16)... The statement that Christ was 'made alive in the Spirit,' therefore, means simply that he was raised from the dead, not as a spirit, but bodily (as resurrection always is in the NT), and in a sphere in which the Spirit and power of God are displayed without hindrance or human limitation. Death 'in the flesh' is conquered and reversed; Jesus Christ is set free to complete a mission of utmost importance for the readers of the epistle."** [Michaels, 204f] **"[W]e can hardly suppose the meaning to be that His human spirit was first destroyed and then re-created, for there is no trace of such an idea elsewhere in the Bible."** [Biggs, 161] "The notion that Jesus was 'put to death' and then 'made alive' is so common in the NT (even though the vocabulary used here is untypical) that there is no way to trace the origin of such a simple formula with confidence (the usual expression is 'died and rose,' or 'died and lives'; cf. e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Luke 24:7, 46; Rom 6:10; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:15; 1 Thess 4:14). Less common is the statement that Jesus 'went to heaven' (for the idea, cf. 'taken up in glory' in 1 Tim 3:16). Perhaps the closest parallel to the threefold sequence discernible in 1 Peter is found in the Valentinian *Epistle to Rheginos*, or *Treatise on Resurrection* (probably composed in Rome in the second century), 45.25-28:

*So then, as the Apostle said,  
we suffered with him, and  
we arose with him, and  
we went to heaven with him.*

The 'Apostle' being cited is undoubtedly Paul, not Peter and the pattern of 'we ... with him' is probably derived from Paul (cf. Rom 6:8; 8:17b; 2 Tim 2:11). Yet the term 'suffered,' especially where 'died' would have been expected, recalls 1 Peter, as well as Paul... ['Made alive'] is used only here of Jesus' resurrection. Elsewhere in the NT it refers either to future resurrection (John 5:21; Rom 4:17; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:22), or to the giving of life in a more general sense (1 Cor 15:36; 2 Cor 3:6; Gal 3:21; — John 6:63 and 1 Cor 15:45 are open to debate). **Nevertheless, the reference to Jesus' resurrection is unmistakable....** The verbs ['put to death'] and ['made alive'] are found together in 2 Kings 5:7 LXX (with reference to the power of God to kill and make alive)... God is clearly presupposed as the one who brought Jesus to life, and it is even possible (because of the passive voice, and on the analogy of 2 Kings 5:7) that God is the implied subject of ['put to death'] as well. The contrast between 'flesh' and 'Spirit,' however, suggests the contrary: Jesus was 'put to death' by human hands, not by God, but it was God who brought him to life by the power of the Spirit." [Michaels, 198, 203f]

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