

# The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

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

## 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.'*

**v. 19** — *by whom also* — ἐν ᾧ καὶ [en hō kai] — **'IN WHOM' OR 'IN WHICH' – THE TRANSLATION DEPENDS UPON ITS ANTECEDENT** — variously translated as *'in which also'* (Tyndale, YLT, RV, ASV, RSV, NASV), *'in which'* (RSV, ESV), *'by which also'* (Geneva, KJV), and *'by whom also'* (NKJV). The pronoun *'hō'* may legitimately be translated as *'which'* or *'whom,'* how one chooses to translate it depends upon what its antecedent is a person (or in this case, Person, the Holy Spirit) or not. But without question the antecedent is *'in the spirit.'* “In which’ refers back to ‘in the spirit’ in verse 18. *It means ‘in which realm, namely, the spiritual realm.’ It does not necessarily mean ‘in the resurrection body’ (which Peter could have easily said, had he wanted to), but rather ‘in the realm of the Spirit’s activity’ (the realm in which Christ was raised from the dead, v. 18). Peter frequently makes a transition from one section to another by the use of a relative pronoun like this (‘which’ or ‘whom’), and it should indicate to us that the following statements, while related to the overall argument of the section, may introduce a different subject.* The pattern of introducing related but clearly distinct subjects in this way (sometimes with, sometimes without, a preposition) is seen in 1:6,8,10; 2:4,22; and 3:21; and, with transitions to less different but none the less distinct material, in 1:12; 3:3,6b; 4:4; and 5:9. *The Greek text has the word ‘kai,’ ‘and, also’, following ‘in which,’ giving the sense, ‘in which also he went...’ This simply adds emphasis to the impression that a distinct subject is being introduced: Christ was made alive in the spiritual realm (v. 18), and he also did something else in the spiritual realm (vv. 19-20).*” [Grudem, 164f]

**A BREAK TO REASSURE HIS READERS** — “[T]he writer breaks away momentarily (he will come back to it in 22) from his liturgical text in order to introduce two further considerations which will help to reassure his anxious correspondents. The first consists of a brief sketch, which will be filled out in 22, of the triumphant activity of the risen Christ, while the second presents a summary explanation of baptism, as a result of which the Asian Christians participate in Christ’s victory over the evil powers and their earthly representatives. That these three verses are, from the point of view of literary structure, an intrusion is shown (a) by the relative *'in which'* followed by *'also'*, which suggests that the writer is supplementing his liturgical source with further ideas which have occurred to him as relevant; (b) by the abrupt switch from solemn liturgical language and balanced antitheses to a diffuse, prosy and even cumbersome style, and (c) by the topics treated, which are not of the kind that, as far as we know, normally figured in primitive kerygmatic [‘preaching’] material. But if they are in this sense an interpolation, so far as their contents are concerned they cohere closely with the writer’s main objectives.” [Kelly, 151f]

**He went** — πορευθεῖς [poreutheis] — **'WENT' IN 3:19 IS THE SAME VERB AS IN 3:22, REFERRING TO THE ASCENSION** — Peter uses the same word for *'went'* as he does in v. 22, *'he went to heaven'*. This is not demanding but some who do not believe this refers to Noah have suggested this implies the proclamation made by Christ was made during His ascension as He went *'through the heavens'* to the throne of God (Heb 4:14 – *'Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.'*). “If it seems difficult to determine where our writer placed them, the context points decisively to the upper regions. First, it is natural to regard Christ’s journey as taking place after His being *'made alive in the spirit,'* and if these words denote His resurrection, the journey must be His ascension. Secondly, while the verb translated *'went'* could conceivably be used of descending to the nether world, it is nowhere so used in the NT, and such a verb as *katabainein* (*'go down'*) would be more suitable. Thirdly, the present verse can hardly be dissociated from 22, where precisely the same word undeniably denotes His ascension.” [Kelly, 155f]

**and preached** — ἐκήρυξεν [ekēruksen] — **WHAT DID JESUS ‘PROCLAIM’?** — What Jesus preached (proclaimed) and to whom He preached depends upon one’s overall consensus as to what Peter is saying.

● **DOES THE WORD USED HERE DEMAND AN EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE?** — The word Peter uses may simply mean a proclamation but in the NT it usually refers either to Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God or his disciples’ proclamation of the good news of his death and resurrection. From Vine’s Expository Dictionary:

“(a) *‘to be a herald,’* or, in general, *‘to proclaim,’* e.g., Mat 3:1; Mar 1:45, *‘publish;’* in Luk 4:18, RV, *‘to proclaim,’* AV, *‘to preach;’* so Luk 4:19; Luk 12:3; Act 10:37; Rom 2:21; Rev 5:2.... (b) *‘to preach the Gospel as a herald,’* e.g., Mat 24:14; Mar 13:10, RV, *‘be preached’* (AV, ‘be published’); Mar 14:9; 16:15, 20; Luk 8:1; 9:2; 24:47; Act 8:5; 19:13; 28:31; Rom 10:14, present participle, lit., *‘(one) preaching, a preacher;’* Rom 10:15 (1st part); 1Cr 1:23; 15:11, 12; 2Cr 1:19; 4:5; 11:4; Gal 2:2; Phl 1:15; Col 1:23; 1Th 2:9; 1Ti 3:16; (c) *‘to preach the word,’* 2Ti 4:2 (*of the ministry of the Scriptures, with special reference to the Gospel.*)” [Vine’s Expository Dictionary]

But in what sense does Peter use the word here, as a *‘proclamation’* or as *‘a presentation of the Gospel?’* One thing worth noting is that Peter uses a different word elsewhere in his epistles when he speaks about *‘preaching the gospel.’*

- The Greek word used here (root = *‘kerusso,’* *‘to proclaim, to herald, to preach’*) is only used 1x in 1 Peter 3:19 (no other times in 1 or 2 Peter).
- The verb form of a different Greek word (root = *‘euangelizo,’* verb, *‘preach the gospel, preach the good news’*) is used by Peter 3x (1 Peter 1:12, 25; 4:6); no other times in 1 or 2 Peter. It is from this Greek word that we get our word *‘evangelism.’*

*‘To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have **preached the gospel** [τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων, tōn evangelisamenōn] to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into.’* (1 Pet 1:12 NKJV)

*‘But the word of the LORD endures forever. Now this is the word which by **the gospel was preached** [τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν, to evangelisthen] to you.’* (1 Pet 1:25 NKJV)

*‘For this reason **the gospel was preached** [εὐηγγελίσθη, evēngelīsthē] also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.’* (1 Pet 4:6 NKJV)

- The noun form of this Greek word (root = *‘euangelion;’* noun, *‘gospel, the good news’*) is used by Peter 1x (1 Peter 4:17); no other times in 1 or 2 Peter.

*‘For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey **the gospel of God?** [τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίῳ, tō tou theou evangelīō]’* (1 Pet 4:17 NKJV)

Therefore, if one understands these verses to be Christ preaching to the ‘powers’ after His resurrection, one would be fully justified in taking this word in the sense of *‘proclamation.’* **“We do not know what Jesus proclaimed but it was not a message of redemption since angels cannot be saved (Heb 2:16); it was probably a declaration of victory over Satan and his hosts (Col 2:15; 1 Pet 3:22).”** [Wiersbe, 105]

**DOES THIS WORD MAKE THIS PASSAGE REFER TO ANGELS AND NOT NOAH?** — The points given above shows that a *‘gospel–message meaning’* is not demanded, however that does not mean it cannot refer to Noah and his message of repentance to the Antediluvians. The word Peter uses is still used the majority of times in the NT to refer to a gospel message. Peter also uses a form of the same word in his second epistle to refer to Noah:

*‘and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a **preacher** [κήρυκα, kēruka] of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly’* (2 Pet 2:5 NKJV)

“Although Peter does not specifically call Noah a prophet in 2 Peter 2:5, he terms him a ‘herald of righteousness’, and used the noun (kēryx) which is related to the verb ‘preached’ (kēryssō) in 3:20.... The content of this preaching [in 1 Peter 3:19] was not a message of final condemnation or the completion of redemption, but concerned the need to repent and come to God for salvation. This is what Noah would have preached to those around him. It is the right message to preach when people are disobeying ‘while God’s patience is waiting’ (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9).” [Grudem, 168]

**to the spirits in prison,** — τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν [tois en phulakē pneumasin] — **WHO ARE THESE ‘SPIRITS IN PRISON’?** — This is supposedly one of the strong points of those believing Peter’s passage refers to angels for, as they argue, ‘spirits’ is never used to refer to man:

“Human beings are referred to as ‘souls’ and not ‘spirits.’ In the NT ‘spirits’ is used to describe angels or demons, and 1 Pet 3:22 seems to argue for this meaning here. Between Christ’s death and resurrection, Christ visited the realm of the dead where He delivered a message to spirit beings, probably fallen angels; cp. Jude 6.” [Wiersbe, 105]

“[I]n the New Testament, the word *spirits* (plural) ‘always refers to non-human spiritual beings unless qualified.’ It calls deceased humans *souls* (*psuchē*). So unless this passage is the lone exception (and it would be special pleading to claim that it is), *spirits* does not mean ‘humans’ here either. Typically, *spirits* refers to evil spirits or fallen angels.” [Dorioni,

“The plural ‘spirits’ is only once in the NT used of human beings: ‘spirits of just people made perfect.’ (Heb 12:23).” [Michaels, 207]

Against that however is the argument that the word ‘spirit’ is never found in the NT without something in the context to determine how the word is used:

“The word ‘spirits’ could refer either to angelic spirits, good and evil (Matt. 8:16; Heb. 1:14) or to human spirits of people who died (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 19:30; Acts 7:59; 1 Cor. 5:5; Heb. 12:23; Eccl. 12:7).... *Some contend that when ‘spirit’ is found without a defining phrase attached to it (like ‘of men’, etc.), it means angelic or demonic spirits, never human spirits. But this argument is invalid, for ‘pneuma’ by itself is simply ambiguous, and in every case where it means ‘angelic spirit’ as well as every case where it means ‘human spirit’ the context makes it clear what kind of spirit is meant.*” [Grudem, 166]

**WHILE ‘SPIRITS IN PRISON’ NOW, THEY WERE ALIVE WHEN NOAH PREACHED TO THEM** — “But why does Peter refer to ‘spirits’ if he has in view disobedience by human beings who were not just ‘spirits’ but bodies as well? This is best explained by understanding the text to mean ‘spirits who are now in prison’ (i.e. at the time Peter was writing), but who were people on earth at the time of Noah, when Christ was preaching to them. (The NASB translates, ‘the spirits *now* in prison’.) A similar expression is found a few verses later at 4:6, ‘For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead’, which is best understood to mean ‘the gospel was preached to those who are now dead’ (but who were alive when the gospel was preached to them). One can speak the same way in English: ‘Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926’ is an appropriate statement, even though she was not Queen when she was born – we mean ‘She who is now Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926.’ ... In fact, the great majority of commentators, no matter what view they take of 3:19-20, interpret 4:6 in similar fashion, understanding it to mean that the gospel was preached to those who, at the time of writing, were now dead. It was declared to them in order that they might be saved from final judgment, even though they would not be spared dying. So ‘the gospel was preached to the dead’ in 4:6 means that the gospel was preached to ‘those who are now dead’ (at the time Peter is writing) even though they were alive on earth at the time the gospel was preached to them. Therefore, in understanding 1 Peter 3:19-20, the possibility must be left open that ‘he preached to the spirits in prison’ means ‘he preached to those who are now spirits in hell but who at the time of the preaching were human beings living on the earth.’” [Grudem, 217ff] “The plain and easy sense of the words is, that Christ, by his spirit, by which he was quickened, went in the ministry of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, and preached both by words and deeds, by the personal ministry of Noah, and by the building of the ark, to that generation who was then in being; and who being disobedient, and continuing so, a flood was brought upon them which destroyed them all; and whose spirits, or separate souls, were then in the prison of hell, so the Syriac version renders it, [Hebrew, Sheol], in hell, see Rev. xx. 7. when the Apostle Peter wrote this epistle; so that Christ neither went into this prison, nor preached in it, nor to spirits that were then in it when he preached, but to persons alive in the days of Noah, and who being disobedient, when they dies, their separate souls were put into prison, and there they were when the apostle wrote: from whence we learn, that Christ was, that he existed in his divine nature before he was incarnate, he was before Abraham, he was in the days of Noah; and that Christ also, under the Old Testament, acted the part of a Mediator, in his divine nature, and by his spirit discharged that branch of it, his prophetic office, before he appeared in human nature; and that the Gospel was preached in those early times, as unto Abraham, so before him.” [Gill, Commentary]

**prison** — φυλακῆ [phulakē] — **WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘PRISON’?** — The lexicons define this word as ‘a protection, a watch, a guard post, a prison.’ Friberg’s Lexicon notes in our verse it has the sense of ‘a part of the underworld or a place of punishment, prison.’ Some of its other uses:

‘So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.’ (Matt 14:10 NKJV)

‘Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.’ (Matt 14:25 NKJV)

‘Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.’ (Luke 2:8 NKJV)

‘When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.’ (Act 12:10 NKJV)

**WHERE IS THIS PRISON?** — If the ‘spirits’ are understood to be the souls of dead people, then the ‘prison’ would be Sheol, despite the fact nowhere is the abode of the dead depicted as a jail in either Biblical or non-Biblical material. Some who believe the ‘spirits’ to be those angels mentioned by Enoch still make the prison to be Sheol. In other Apocryphal books, those in prison are bound ‘in the depths of the earth’ (The Book of Jubilees 5:6; see also Rev 20:1-3 where Satan is bound in the bottomless pit). In 1 Enoch 13:9; 14:5 their place of punishment is ‘on the earth’, not under it. Elsewhere however, in 1 Enoch 18:12-14 the prison is an abyss at the end of heaven ‘which had no firmament of the heaven above, and no firmly founded earth beneath it.’ According to 2 Enoch (1 Enoch is the ‘Ethiopic Enoch’, 2 Enoch is the ‘Slavonic Enoch’) both the world of the dead and the world of good / evil spirits are located above the earth in ‘the second heaven.’

**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.* — ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἄπαξ ἐξεδέχeto ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ ἔστιν ὀκτώ ψυχᾶί διεσώθησαν δι ὕδατος

[apeithēsasīn pote hote hapax exedecheto hē tou theou makrothumia en hēmerais Nōe kataskeuazomenēs kibōtou eis hēn oligai, tout estin oktō phuchai diesōthēsan di hudatos] — **‘WHO DISOBEYED IN THE TIME OF NOAH’** — “The spirits in prison are those *‘who formerly did not obey’* (better: ‘disobeyed’, since the word has a sense of active rebellion), *‘when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark.’* These phrases indicate that only human spirits can be intended, for nowhere in the Bible or in Jewish literature outside of the Bible are angels ever said to have disobeyed ‘during the building of the ark’. Genesis 6:5-13 clearly emphasizes the human sin which provoked God to flood the earth in judgment. Furthermore, extra-biblical literature, some of which was probably familiar to many of Peter’s readers, frequently describes the mockery which Noah had to endure from his contemporaries, e.g. ‘They derided him and said, “Old man, what is this ark for?”’ (Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 108b). *‘When God’s patience waited in the days of Noah’* also suggests human, rather than angelic, disobedience. God’s patience waited for human beings to repent before bringing the judgment of the flood (this is also a frequent theme in extra-biblical literature), but never is there any hint that fallen angels have a chance to repent — it is only given to sinful human beings (cf. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).” [Grudem, 167]

**‘THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST PREACHED THROUGH THE OT PROPHETS’** — “Peter elsewhere mentions ideas similar to the thought that Christ ‘in spirit’ preached through Noah, for in 1:11 the Spirit of Christ is said to have been active in the prophets of the Old Testament era (cf. 1 Cor. 10:4).” [Grudem, 167f]

*‘Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.’* (1 Pet 1:10,11 NKJV)

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND OBEDIENCE — *refused obedience*** — “*The verb so translated (apeithein) is, significantly, the very same verb he has used more than once already of the contumacy of pagans who reject the gospel. In other words, his readers can reflect that the neighbors who badger and bully them are merely reproducing the rebellious characteristics of the demonic powers whose agents they are, and will surely share in their destruction.*” [Kelly, 156f]

*‘Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.’* (1 Pet 2:7, 8 NKJV)

*‘Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives’* (1 Pet 3:1 NKJV)

Note as well the times Peter combines faith with obedience:

*‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.’* (1Pet 1:2 NKJV)

*‘as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance’* (1Pet 1:14 NKJV)

*‘Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart’* (1Pet 1:22 NKJV)

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FROM PETER’S OBSERVATIONS —**

- God’s patience = a reference to Gen 6:3 where the Lord is said to delay judgment for 120 years. ***Peter’s reference to the long suffering of the Lord here suggests that, while God has been equally patient with the readers’ adversaries, He has met with an equally negative reaction.***
- eight persons = ***Note the emphasis on the fewness of those saved; “[T]he thought of it should give courage to his readers, who must have been painfully conscious of their own position as a tiny minority.*”** [Kelly, 158]
- saved through water = probably best to take ‘through’ in a local sense, in the sense of ‘were brought to safety by passing through water’ since ***they did not owe their lives to the flood-waters but rather to the ark, an acknowledged type of the cross.***
- “Christ’s proclamation to them serves to introduce a cluster of parallels between the ‘days of Noah’ and Peter’s own time. Vv 20-21 are a kind of Christian midrash on the Noah story, based on the principle (attributed to Jesus) that ‘as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man’ (Luke 17:26; cf. Matt 24:37). The analogy is only slightly developed in the synoptic tradition: ***people ate, drank, and got married until Noah entered the ark and they were taken by surprise by the great flood that destroyed everything*** (Luke 17:27 || Matt 24:38-39a). ***When the Son of man comes, the world will be similarly caught unaware by his sudden appearance for judgment*** (Luke 24:30-31, 34-37; Matt 24:39b-41).” [Michaels, 200]
- ***“His main concern is to remind them that Christ has saved them — through water — and will keep them safe, just as he saved Noah and his family in ancient times.... The burden of vv 18-22 is that the readers of the epistle have no reason to fear (cf. 3:14), because Christ has won the decisive victory on their behalf by his resurrection and journey to heaven.”*** [Michaels, 201]

**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,* — ὁ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν δι ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [ho kai hēmas antitupon nun sōzei baptismou ou sarkos apothesis hroutou alla suneidēseōs agathēs eperōtēma eis theon di anastaseōs Iēsou Christou] — **baptism** — *“What is fundamental to understanding the early church’s attitude toward baptism is (1) that early Christians were much more ritualistic than most moderns, and (2) that all early Christians were baptized. Thus, there was no such thing as an ‘unbaptized believer’ in Peter’s day.”* [McKnight, 215]

*the answer of a good conscience toward God* — συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν [suneidēseōs agathēs eperōtēma eis theon] — *“The word ‘answer’ in 1 Peter 3:21 is a legal term meaning ‘a pledge, a demand.’ When a person was signing a contract, he would be asked, ‘Do you pledge to obey and fulfill the terms of this contract?’ His answer had to be, ‘Yes, I do,’ or he could not sign. When converts were prepared for baptism, they would be asked if they intended to obey God and serve Him, and to break with their sinful past. If they had reservations in their hearts, or deliberately lied, they would not have a good conscience if, under pressure of persecution, they denied the Lord. (Peter knew something about that!) So, Peter reminded them of their baptismal testimony to encourage them to be true to Christ.”* [Wiersbe, 108f] “Its use for the questions put to the candidate in the baptismal service (‘dost thou renounce...?’) is probably due to St. Peter here.... The believer who comes to baptism has believed in Christ and repented of his past sins, renounces them and the spirits which prompted them and appeals to God for strength to carry out this renunciation in his daily life.” [Hart, 69f]

**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.* — ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων [hos estin en dexia tou theou poreutheis eis ouranon hupotagentōn autō angelōn kai exousiōn kai dunameōn] — **HOW DOES PETER’S COMMENTS RELATE TO OUR ‘PURPOSE CLAUSE’ (v. 18)?** — *“Since the two participles explain the phrase ‘so that he might bring you to God,’ it is more likely that the contrast refers to two aspects of the redemptive event: Christ’s death and subsequent resurrection. This is corroborated by clear reference to his ascension in 3:22, which completes the redemptive sequence: crucifixion (‘put to death’), resurrection (‘made alive’), and ascension (‘gone to heaven’).”* [Jobes, 241f]

**DOES 1 PET 3:19 SUPPORT CHRIST’S ‘DESCENT INTO HADES’?** — Although many of the Church Fathers connected Ephesians 4:9 with 1 Peter 3:19, we have seen that connection is tenuous at best.

“And as 1 Pet. 3.19 shows, theological interest in the reason for the three-day delay between the crucifixion and resurrection was growing in the post-apostolic period.” [Muddiman, 193]

“The Fathers found support for their idea that Christ after his death and prior to his resurrection made a journey to the place of the dead in 1 Pet 3.19 (they also often took Rom 10.6-8 in this way).” [Best, 384]

**IN CONCLUSION . . .** — *“Here, again, our safest guide is the Apostle’s scope, which is this: Christ is our Exemplar in submitting patiently to undeserved suffering. For Him his own people slew: the very Saviour who, so far from deserving ill at their hands, had in all ages been offering gospel mercy to them and their fathers, even to those most reprobate of all, the Antediluvians, But the same Divine Nature in which Christ had been so mercifully carrying a slighted gospel to that ancient generation, (now, for their unbelief, shut up in the prison of hell,) gloriously raised Him from the dead, after their equally reprobate posterity had unjustly slain Him. Here is our encouragement while we suffer innocently after the example of our Head. For this resurrection, which glorified Him over all His ancient and recent enemies, will save us. Then we, redeemed by that grace which was symbolized to the ancient believers by the type of the ark, and to modern, by the sacrament of baptism, will emerge triumphantly from an opposing and persecuting world; as Christ’s little Church (consisting then of a number contemptible in unbelievers’ eyes,) in Noah’s day, came out from the world of unbelievers. With this simple and consistent view of the Apostle’s drift, the whole dream of a descent into Hades, and a release of the souls of the patriarchs from their limbus, is superfluous, and therefore unreasonable.”* [Dabney, Systematic Theology, 463] “These views [of Christ ‘preaching to the spirits in prison’] rest upon a misinterpretation of 1 Pet 3:18-20. Lutherans teach that Christ descended into hell, to proclaim his triumph to evil spirits. But this is to give ἐκήρυξεν [ekēruxen] the unusual sense of proclaiming his triumph, instead of his gospel. Romanists teach that Christ entered the underworld to preach to Old Testament saints, that they might be saved. But the passage speaks only of the disobedient; it cannot be pressed into the support of a sacramental theory of the salvation of Old Testament believers. The passage does not assert the descent of Christ into the world of spirits, but only a work of the pre-incarnate Logos in offering salvation, through Noah, to the world then about to perish.” [Strongs, Systematic Theology, 707]