

Spirits In Prison

(1 Peter 3:13-22)

- Introduction:
1. This passage has generated a great deal of discussion and a great deal of misunderstanding.
 2. Some fanciful theories have arisen from this passage.
 3. Let's examine this passage and attempt to arrive at a sound conclusion.

I. Some Background And History

- A. Jessie Ferguson and his views based on this passage almost destroyed the church in Nashville during the 1850's.
- B. Ferguson taught a mystic spiritualism and held the following views:
 1. Christ did and continues to preach to lost souls after death.
 2. Those who had never heard or never obeyed will be given an opportunity after death by being preached to by Christ himself.

II. A Brief Review Of This Theory

- A. While one may not know what the passage means yet, he can know some things that it does not understand.
- B. When trying to understand a difficult passage, interpret it in light of clearer passages.
- C. Ferguson's theory is wrong for a number of reasons.
 1. It makes the great commission useless (Mark 16:15).
 2. The Bible doesn't teach the doctrine of a second chance (Hebrews 9:27).
 3. At the judgment, men will be pleading to be saved (Matthew 7; 25).
 4. It would imply two plans of salvation (Luke 16:24).
 5. It contradicts Christ's statement about the great gulf that is fixed (Luke 16:26).
 6. It would also imply universal salvation, or a majority of saved (Matt. 7:13-14).

III. A Closer Look At The Passage

- A. (verse 18-19) by the spirit Christ preached to the people who lived in the days of Noah.
 1. (1 Peter 1:10-11; 1 Peter 1:21; 2 Peter 2:5).
 2. (Ephesians 2:17).
- B. (Verse 19) spirits in prison.
 1. Spirits when Peter wrote, not when they were preached to.
 2. Prison has reference to their situation in death (Held by Hades)
 3. Note: Peter did not say they were spirits in prison when the preaching was **done**, but rather, that was their condition when he **wrote** this epistle.
- C. Summary: Noah, the spirit of Christ in him, preached to those who were wicked in the days of the flood, who are now dead, and they refused to repent and be saved.

- Conclusion:
1. Don't miss the message here for us.
 2. They had the opportunity to be saved, but refused....today, like in the days of Noah, we have the opportunity to be saved.
 3. What will you do with your opportunity?