

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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DID JESUS PREACH A SECOND CHANCE TO SPIRITS IN HADES?

From time to time some espouse the error that Jesus preached a second chance for salvation to imprisoned spirits while He was in Hades. Thus, they draw the conclusion that all men will have a chance to obey the gospel after death. The text twisted is **1 Pet. 3:19-20**. Before looking at the text, let's logically think through this:

- **1 Pet. 3:19-20** cannot be teaching what “second chance” advocates claim, for then it would be impossible for one to be judged according to that which was done in his body (**2 Cor. 5:10**).
- **1 Pet. 3:19-20** can't be teaching what “second chance” advocates claim, lest **John 9:4** is cut from the New Testament.
- **1 Pet. 3:19-20** can't be teaching what “second chance” advocates claim, lest **1 Pet. 1:17** is cut from the New Testament.
- If Jesus preached a “second chance” gospel, why did He limit it only to those who lived before the flood? Does God not want all men saved (**1 Tim. 2:4**)? Does this not make God a respecter of persons and, thus, a sinner (**Rom 2:11; Js. 2:9**)?
- If some really did get a “second chance” at salvation, then Jesus was mistaken (thus surrendering His deity) or He lied (thus becoming a sinner) (**Luke 16:26**).

Having pointed out the fallacious nature of the “second chance” doctrine, let's underscore what **1 Pet. 3:19-20** is teaching.

“By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison” (3:19).

- **By which** – this refers, contextually, to the Spirit. Indeed, such is the grammatical antecedent (**vs. 18**).
- **he** – This refers to Jesus; the grammatical antecedent in **vs. 18**.
- **preached** – What was preached is not stated, but we can infer from the next verse, and from other portions of Scripture, that the message was “repent or perish” (**cf. 2 Peter 3:9**). Also, although Jesus is noted as the preacher, we must understand that the idea is via agency; i.e. via the Holy Ghost (**vs. 18**) through Noah (**cf. 2 Pet. 2:5**). This concept is not uncommon in holy writ. For instance, we understand the Holy Ghost inspired the apostles (**John 16:13**), but notice in that same verse that the Holy Ghost speaks that which He hears (**cf. Heb. 1:2; 1 Cor. 14:37; cp. Eph. 2:17; Gal. 1:16**).
- **unto the spirits** – Peter writes of them as they existed at the time of his writing (disembodied spirits).
- **in prison** – Peter is stating that at the time of his writing the spirits were in prison; i.e. torments in Hades (**Luke 16:19ff**) awaiting the judgment at the final day (**cf. 2 Pet. 2:4, 9; Jude 6; cp. 2 Tim. 4:7-8**). The NASB helps here.

“Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing...” (3:20a).

- **Which were sometime disobedient** – here we learn why the spirits mentioned were/are imprisoned. Disobedience!
- **when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing...** – Here it is noted when the disobedience occurred; i.e. in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared. Here we also learn when the preaching occurred; i.e. in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared. In that we know that it was embodied spirits, then living on the earth, that were the impetus for the flood (**Gen. 6:5-7**), it follows that the preaching mentioned in **vs. 19** was to those same disobedient people who lived in the flesh before the deluge in Noah's day.

Taking together all that we have noted: I will offer the following paraphrase of **1 Pet. 3:19-20**. Here goes: ***“Christ, through the Holy Spirit and through Noah, preached to people. This occurred while the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah. Those persons did not believe Noah's inspired preaching. As a result of their disobedience, they landed in prison (torments in Hades) and were still there in Peter's day. They remain there until this day awaiting the Lord's return and the judgment.”***

Did Jesus preach a “second chance” to spirits in Hades? Logic says no! Scripture says no!