

PREPARED TO LIVE IN VICTORY: THE GLORIOUS ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Houses of Light Church • September 17-18, 2022 • Pastor Netz Gómez

1 Pet. 3:19-20

“in which [Jesus] he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.”

I. WHAT DO WE DO WITH PASSAGES THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?

A. This passage is not simple and many questions may arise: what did Christ go to proclaim? who are the imprisoned spirits? Were they humans who disobeyed during the days of Noah who are now in prison in Sheol? When did Christ go to preach to them? Was he when He went down to the lower parts of the earth between the time of His death and resurrection?

B. Commentators have proposed different explanations of this passage.:

1. The first refers to the preaching of Christ through Noah to those who lived while he was building the ark.

1 Pet. 1:10-11 *“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.”*

a) Christ in his Spirit has spoken through the prophets, one of whom was Noah, indicating to them the things that were to come. The spirits of those who did not believe were imprisoned because they refused to obey the preaching.

2. Between Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday, Christ went to the lowest parts of the earth in the Spirit and preached the gospel message to those who did not believe and therefore were in prison and confirmed that they were going to stay there and the time he took to heaven those who hoped in the faith of Abraham.

Eph. 4:8-9 *“Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” 9 (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?”*

3. The third position is that the text describes the proclamation of the victory and judgment of Christ over the fallen angels as it says next:

1 Pet. 1:22 *“who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.”*

a) This subjection of the angels, authorities and powers refers to the spirits that are in prison because they were disobedient since the days of Noah and that is why they were put in prison and Jesus in the Spirit in His resurrection proclaimed His total victory over them.

- C. These three interpretations agree with other parts of the Scriptures and although it is not easy to know which of them is the most convincing, what we can always do in passages of this type is that we speak where the Scripture speaks and are silent where the Scripture is silent. On the other hand, we don't really need to know such details because they are not crucial to our salvation or to sound doctrine. But what we can do is see what Peter wants to express here.

1 Pet. 3:20b "...God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ^{21a} Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you."

- D. Peter's point is that only eight people were saved through water so baptism corresponds to this; meaning the salvation of these few who believed who were saved through water which is a type of baptism. Peter has in mind here a few faithful people who were preserved from the water despite the coming judgment.
- E. Just like the flood in which many did not obey, so it was during the first century and Peter speaks this to encourage the church that felt very small and under a fierce attack from the Roman Empire and the Jews. God can save His people from in the most amazing ways no matter how massive the judgment is coming, nor how much opposition we face.

II. IN WHAT SENSE DOES BAPTISM SAVE US?

1 Pet.3:21 "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

- A. Few people in a world of evil were rescued by God through water and it is a shadow of baptism; that is why he says: "**baptism that corresponds to this now saves us.**" If this text is isolated from its context, wrong conclusions can be reached. Peter clarifies "**not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience,**" what he is showing here is not how water has a certain power but what water baptism means. It is an act of the heart, a response to God from the person who is seeking God to cleanse his conscience through the forgiveness of sins.
- B. What Peter focuses on here is the act of baptism; It should not be thought that the water does a mystical work, but rather that **immersion in the water represents an act of faith of the soul. The instrument of salvation is not water but faith, which is a response to God;** and then he clarifies how baptism saves "**through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**" Peter affirms that the picture of baptism is to die and rise to a new life and it is the same as Paul says:

Rom. 6:4 "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

- C. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the act by which we are saved from the death that baptism represents. When Peter says that baptism saves us through the resurrection, what he means is that in this act we join Christ so

that his resurrection saves us from death. In our case, it is not the waters of Noah that threaten us, it is death that threatens us, that is why through the resurrection we pass from death to resurrection life.

III. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST: THE MAN IN HEAVEN

1 Pet. 3:22 "who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him."

A. **Christ who was raised from the dead has gone to heaven as a man and is at the right hand of God.** When we study the book of **Acts** and the epistles, we see that they announced that Jesus came, died, rose and ascended to heaven, and that MAN IN HEAVEN will return to earth to restore all things, judge the enemies of God and rule over the earth.

B. **Acts 1 and 2** represent a great transition in which the apostles entered. Many believe that the early Church began in **Acts. 2**, but chapter **1** recounts an event that was crucial and determining in the faith of the apostles.

Acts. 1:9-11 "And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

C. The prophecies about the coming of a Messiah with power, thunder, authority and government from heaven were a mystery in the Old Testament, and were not fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus. But from the moment Jesus ascended to heaven, the stage was set for the fulfillment of these prophecies.

D. The book of the Old Testament most cited by Jesus and the apostles was Daniel and he was the one who saw a man come from heaven in the clouds, take all dominion and kingdoms on earth, and rule together with the saints over all nations; but until a "divine man" ascended to heaven this could not happen.

Dan. 7:13-14 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

E. The other book most cited by the early church was Psalms. David also saw the Messiah coming from heaven.

Psal. 68:33 "to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice"

F. The Old Testament passages that speak of the Messiah refer to Him as Jehovah taking the form of a man and being glorified to come in the clouds as Messiah. It is for this reason that God had to first take on human form, being born, living and dying as a man; but he had to overcome death,

resurrect and ASCEND TO HEAVEN, so that now there is a MAN IN HEAVEN, and thus the design of God through the mouth of the prophets can be fulfilled.

Matt. 26:64 "Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Matt. 24:30 "Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory".

- G. **Jesus is the only man with a glorified body who ascended to heaven (Rev. 1:5).** Although some rose from the dead, none rose with an indestructible body, ascended in the clouds as God. **This man who ascended into heaven proves Jesus' identity as the Messiah whom the Father made Lord (Acts 2:36).** Which gives us encouragement and strength because He is seated in heaven, above all other authority and will return to judge the nations and rescue his people. This affirms the identity and purpose of the Church.

Phil. 3:20-21 "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

- H. **The reality of the man who is in heaven and who is coming soon prepares us to face the events of the end times in victory.**

2 Thes. 1:7-10a "and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from[b] the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰ when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed."

IV. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does baptism mean and what are those who are baptized expressing?
2. How does knowing that Jesus as a man is in heaven bring you hope?
3. Explain the security that comes from knowing that angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Christ.

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Our Transitional Leadership courses, Introduction to the House of Prayer; Discipleship School and Affirming your Steps in English begin tomorrow, Monday, September 19 at 7:00 p.m. Take advantage of these training schools and register today online or at the front desk.
2. Women's Retreat October 7 and 8. Register today online or in the bookstore.