

Scripture Reference: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Date: June 23, 2013

Title: " Disobedient and Imprisoned"

Focus: Living a Life of Holiness.

Intro:

1. In this passage Peter is presenting Jesus as an example of a life of holiness.
2. Sadly too often readers miss what Peter is saying here because they get caught up in what he is not saying.
3. The letter of 1st Peter is an exhortation to godly living.

Peter tells the believers scattered throughout the ancient world to be holy. Why? Because God is holy and they are His people (1:15-16).

He tells them this holiness is to be seen in their submission to earthly authorities (2:13), societal relationships (2:17), and in the husband/wife covenant (3:1 & 3:7).

4. However, by chapter three he warns them that while holy living honors God and pleases Him, it does not mean one will not suffer in the process.
5. He points to Jesus as an example.

Body:

v. 18; Jesus Suffered in the Flesh

Jesus suffered in every conceivable way by living a life of devotion to God.

Emotionally: Jesus wept because the people were missing God's Messiah. (John 19:41-44)

Spiritually: Jesus wrestled with temptation and Satan to be obedient to His Father. (Matthew 4)

Mentally: He prayed in agony in the garden over what obedience would mean. (Luke 22:44)

Physically: He was beaten and crucified because of His obedience to God.

Peter highlights Jesus's physical suffering in particular.

Jesus' abuse and death brought the benefit of salvation for all.

The just one died for the unjust.

He died in the flesh so others might be made alive in the spirit.

vv. 19-22; Jesus' Holy Life was Vindicated

Speaking of the impact of Jesus' life, Peter alludes to the book of Enoch and talks about Jesus being vindicated before "spirits in prison"

What he says here is not clear. This passage has been discussed for two millennia. Uncertainty continues to abound over exactly what Peter referencing here.

Martin Luther stated, "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."

However, several things are clear:

Peter was talking about "*spirits*," not people. (v. 19)

These "*spirits*" were "*disobedient*" during "*the days of Noah*," not then, and certainly not today. (v. 20)

This is not a reference to Jesus going to hell and giving people a second chance.

A second chance Gospel is nowhere found in the Bible. Though the assertion people must give an accounting of their lives before God is. (Heb. 9:27)

Peter's point in introducing these "*spirits*" is that Jesus proclaimed to them the efficacy of His living in devotion to God.

NOTE: Devoted living is the essences of holiness.

vv. 21-22 are a parenthetical thought about Noah and his event being a picture of the cleansing affect of baptism, not in the washing away of sin, but of "a good conscience" towards God.

Jesus' Life Continues to be Discussed

Some want to diminish Jesus' life and contribution to humanity

People have tried, and continue to try, to call into question Jesus':

Existence

Character

Resurrection

Words and Deeds.

Yet what remains is that a man from a village in a small country who never traveled more than a few miles from His home has influenced the world and altered the lives and eternal destiny of millions.

Jesus and His Gospel have been vindicated.

Closing:

1. There is profit in a righteous life, even if it results in suffering.
2. Jesus' life and death profited all humanity. Though viewed as sacrificial and a defeat, it secured life for all who will believe.

3. Jesus' life speaks powerfully to His followers about living a life of holiness (dedication), even if it means apparent loss, failure, and death.