

# **CHRIST'S EXALTATION**

## **1 PETER 3:18-22**

<sup>18</sup> For the Messiah also suffered for sins once for all time, the righteous one for unrighteous people, so that he might bring us to God. he was put to death in the body, and raised to life in the spirit.

<sup>19</sup> In the realm of the spirit, he arrived and made public proclamation to the imprisoned spirits, <sup>20</sup> who were disobedient in the past when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it, only a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> This “baptismal” water, now saves you, not the washing of dirt from your body but a promise to God of a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. <sup>22</sup> He is now at the right hand of God, having arrived in heaven, after angels, authorities, and powers became subject to him.

# Luther

“This is a strange text and certainly a more obscure passage than any other passage in the New Testament. I still do not know for sure what the apostle meant.”  
[1523]

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he was put to death in the body [*sarx*], and raised to life in the spirit [*pneuma*].


<sup>19</sup> In the realm of the spirit, he arrived and made public proclamation to the imprisoned spirits [*phulakē pneumasin*],  
<sup>20</sup> who were disobedient in the past when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it, only a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water.

<sup>21</sup> This “baptismal” water, now saves you, not the washing of dirt from your body but a promise to God of a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. <sup>22</sup> He is now at the right hand of God, having arrived in heaven, after angels, authorities, and powers became subject to him.

# Four basic views (adapted from Elliott, *1 Peter*, 19-21)

1. Christ descended to the realm of the dead after death and prior to his resurrection. He then preached to deceased humans imprisoned there, who were from Noah's generation, announcing judgment on them (or good news to those of Noah's generation who repented before their death).
2. Christ descended to the realm of the dead after death and prior to his resurrection. He then preached to deceased humans imprisoned there, who were from Noah's generation, announcing the good news and allowing for a [post-mortem] response and redemption.
3. Christ, in his pre-existent state, went to Noah's contemporaries during their lifetime via Noah's preaching to repent.
4. Christ, after his resurrection, announced his vindication to

...the imprisoned spirits [*phulakē pneumasin*], <sup>20</sup> who were disobedient in the past when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it, only a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water.

- ✓ Genesis 6:1–8 [7:13]
- ✓ Small group of righteous ones among wicked generation
- ✓ Sons of God and daughters of humans  
Nephilim 
- ✓ 1 Enoch as it rehearses and expands on Genesis 6

# 1 Enoch 15 (1.15) [Winter's translation and numbering]

23 And He answered and said to me, and I heard His voice: "Fear not, Enoch, thou righteous man and scribe of righteousness. Approach hither and hear my voice. 24 And go, say to the Watchers of heaven, who have sent thee to intercede for them: 'You should intercede for men, and not men for you. Wherefore have ye left the high, holy, and eternal heaven, and lain with women, and defiled yourselves with the daughters of men and taken to yourselves wives, and done like the children of earth, and begotten giants as your sons. 25 And though ye were holy, spiritual, living the eternal life, you have defiled yourselves with the blood of women, and have begotten with the blood of flesh, and, as the children of men, have lusted after flesh and blood as those also do who die and perish. 26 Therefore have I given them wives also that they might impregnate them, and beget children by them, that thus nothing might be wanting to them on earth.

27 But you were formerly spiritual, living the eternal life, and immortal for all generations of the world. And therefore I have not appointed wives for you; for as for the spiritual ones of the heaven, in heaven is their dwelling. 28 And now, the giants, who are produced from the spirits and flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on the earth shall be their dwelling. 29 Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men and from the Watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth, and evil spirits shall they be called. 30 And the spirits of the giants afflict, oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, and work destruction on the earth, and cause trouble. They take no food,

<sup>18</sup> For the Messiah also suffered for sins once for all time, the righteous one for unrighteous people, so that he might bring us to God. he was put to death in the body [*sarx*], and raised to life in the spirit [*pneuma*].

Compare  
Acts 1:10–11;  
John 14:2;  
16:7  
[+ Heb 4:14]

<sup>19</sup> In the realm of the spirit, he arrived [ascended] and made public proclamation to the imprisoned spirits [*phulakē pneumasin*], <sup>20</sup> who were disobedient in the past when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it, only a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> This “baptismal” water, now saves you, not the washing of dirt from your body but a promise to God of a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. <sup>22</sup> He is now at the right hand of God, having arrived [ascended] in heaven, after angels, authorities, and powers

In [the ark], only a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> This “baptismal” water, now saves you, not the washing of dirt from your body but a promise to God of a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.

- ✓ Flood tradition and imagery signaling primordial and future judgment (Marcar, “In the Days of Noah,” *NTS*, 2017)
- ✓ Noah and family (just 8) as prototype of small, beleaguered group of the faithful (like Peter’s audience)
- ✓ Baptism: Saved through water (as Noah’s family was)
- ✓ Righteousness vindicated
- ✓ “...the righteous one for unrighteous people” (3:18b)

# Suffering: The Pattern of Christ

- 3:18-22: Christological pattern of vindication from suffering
- 4:1-2: Jesus as example of turning away from sin to pursue God's will
- 4:3-4: Petrine believers have left behind sin/idolatry
- 4:5-6: God will vindicate believers



# 1 Peter 4:5–6: How/does it fit?

<sup>5</sup> They [those who malign you] will have to give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.

<sup>6</sup> For this is the reason that the good news was preached even to those now dead [“the dead”], so that, while they might be judged in their earthly lives according to the human order, yet they might live in the spirit according to God’s order.

# 1 Peter 4:5–6: How/does it fit?

3:18: θανατωθεῖς μὲν σαρκὶ

ζωοποιηθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι.

he was put to death in the body [or, in the earthly realm],  
and raised to life in the spirit [the realm of the spirit, or by  
the Spirit].

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4:6: ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ

ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

so that, while they might be judged in their earthly lives  
according to the human order, yet they might live in/by the  
spirit according to God's order.