



Christ and Noah
1 Peter 3:18-22
Study Guide

1. Once again Peter goes to the example of Jesus Christ to encourage suffering saints. The word “for” in 3:18 leads us into how Christ is a perfect example for dealing with unjust suffering. Write down some of the ways in which Christ’s suffering illustrates the principles set forth in 3:13-17. How did Jesus keep His conscience clear (3:16)?
2. It has been said that verse 18 is “one of the shortest and simplest, and yet one of the richest summaries given in the New Testament of the meaning of the Cross of Jesus” (J.M.E. Ross). With this in mind, what is the significance of the words “once for all” (Rom. 6:10; Heb. 9:26, 28; 10:10)? What was God’s purpose for Christ’s sacrificial death? What are the two possible interpretations of “in the spirit?”
3. Verses 19-21 present two challenging interpretive problems. The first of these is the meaning of “made proclamation to the spirits now in prison.” What are the three main interpretations of these words? Which of these interpretations do you think best fits the context of 1 Peter 3:18-22? A study Bible or commentary on 1 Peter will guide you through the various interpretations. Why do you think Noah is mentioned here? In your answer keep in mind the truths of the “good conscience” (v. 16) and unjust suffering.
4. The next interpretive issue is found in verse 21 “and corresponding to that, baptism, now saves you.” Some have attempted to use these words to support the fallacy of baptismal regeneration (i.e., water baptism is necessary for salvation). An excellent discussion of this verse is found in the “Bible Knowledge Commentary” (Walvoord and Zuck, editors). What does baptism represent? How does this relate to the circumstances of Peter’s readers (persecution)? What would baptism have meant to a First Century Christian facing community hostility because of his faith in Christ? Why does Peter not mean that baptism saves from sin?
5. The resurrection of Christ is connected with the possession of a good conscience (v. 21). What is a good conscience? Do you have one? The resurrection of Christ is mentioned because it is “absolutely essential if we are to be made alive with Him.” Peter refers to Christ’s physical Ascension into heaven in verse 22. What do you think may have been on his mind when he said this? What connection do you think there is between Christ’s reward for faithfulness in suffering and the suffering of Peter’s readers and ours?
6. What kind(s) of suffering have you personally experienced recently? How have the truths of 1 Peter helped you at this time? Do you know of someone who is going through trials? Pray for them in the light of 1 Peter 3:13-22.