1 PETER 3:18-22 – EXEGESIS PAPER

An Exegesis Paper

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Translation

[18] For Christ also suffered once for all for sins, the just on behalf of the unjust, in order that He might bring you to God, having been put to death in the flesh but having been made alive by the Spirit, [19] by whom also, he went to the spirits in prison and made proclamation, [20] who once disobeyed, when the patience of God was waiting in the days of Noah, when the ark was being built, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were delivered through water. [21] Baptism, which is a symbol of this, now saves you, not as in the removal of filth from the body, but rather, as an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22]who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels, authorities and powers having been subjected to Him.

Syntactical, Grammatical, and Semantic Analysis[1]

[18] ὅτι (Subordinating Conjunction of Cause) καὶ Χριστὸς (Subject Nominative) ἅπαξ (Adverb of Frequency) περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν (Adverbial Genitive of Reference) ἔπαθεν (Culminative Aorist), δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων (Genitive of Advantage), ἵνα (Subordinating Conjunction of Purpose) ὑμᾶς (Accusative of Direct Object) προσαγάγῃ (Subjunctive in Purpose Clause) τῷ θεῷ (Dative of Indirect Object) θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ (Attributive Participle) ζῳοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι (Attributive Participle) · [19] ἐν ᾧ (Relative Pronoun) καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς (Circumstantial Participle) ἐκήρυξεν (Constantive Aorist), [20] ἀπειθήσασίν (Substantival Participle) ποτε ὅτε (Subordinating Conjunction of Temporality) ἀπεξεδέχετο (Descriptive Imperfect) ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ (Ablative of Source) μακροθυμία (Subjective Nominative) ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε (Locative of Time) κατασκευαζομένης (Attributive Participle) κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι (Subjective Nominative), τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν ὀκτὼ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν (Culminative Aorist) δι᾽ ὕδατος (Ablative of Means). [21] ὃ (Relative Pronoun) καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον (Predicate Nominative) νῦν (Temporal Adverb) σῴζει (Descriptive Present) βάπτισμα (Subjective Nominative), οὐ (Negation) σαρκὸς (Ablative of Separation) ἀπόθεσις (Subjective Nominative) ῥύπου (Objective Genitive) ἀλλὰ (Coordinating Conjunction of Adversity) συνειδήσεως (Objective Genitive) ἀγαθῆς (Genitive of Description) ἐπερώτημα (Subjective Nominative) εἰς θεόν (Accusative of Direct Object), δι᾽ ἀναστάσεως (Ablative of Means) Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Genitive of Description), [22] ὅς (Relative Pronoun) ἐστιν (Emphatic) ἐν δεξιᾷ (Locative of Place) [τοῦ] θεοῦ (Ablative of Separation) πορευθεὶς (Substantival Participle) εἰς οὐρανόν (Adverbial Accusative of Reference) ὑποταγέντων (Circumstantial Participle) αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων.
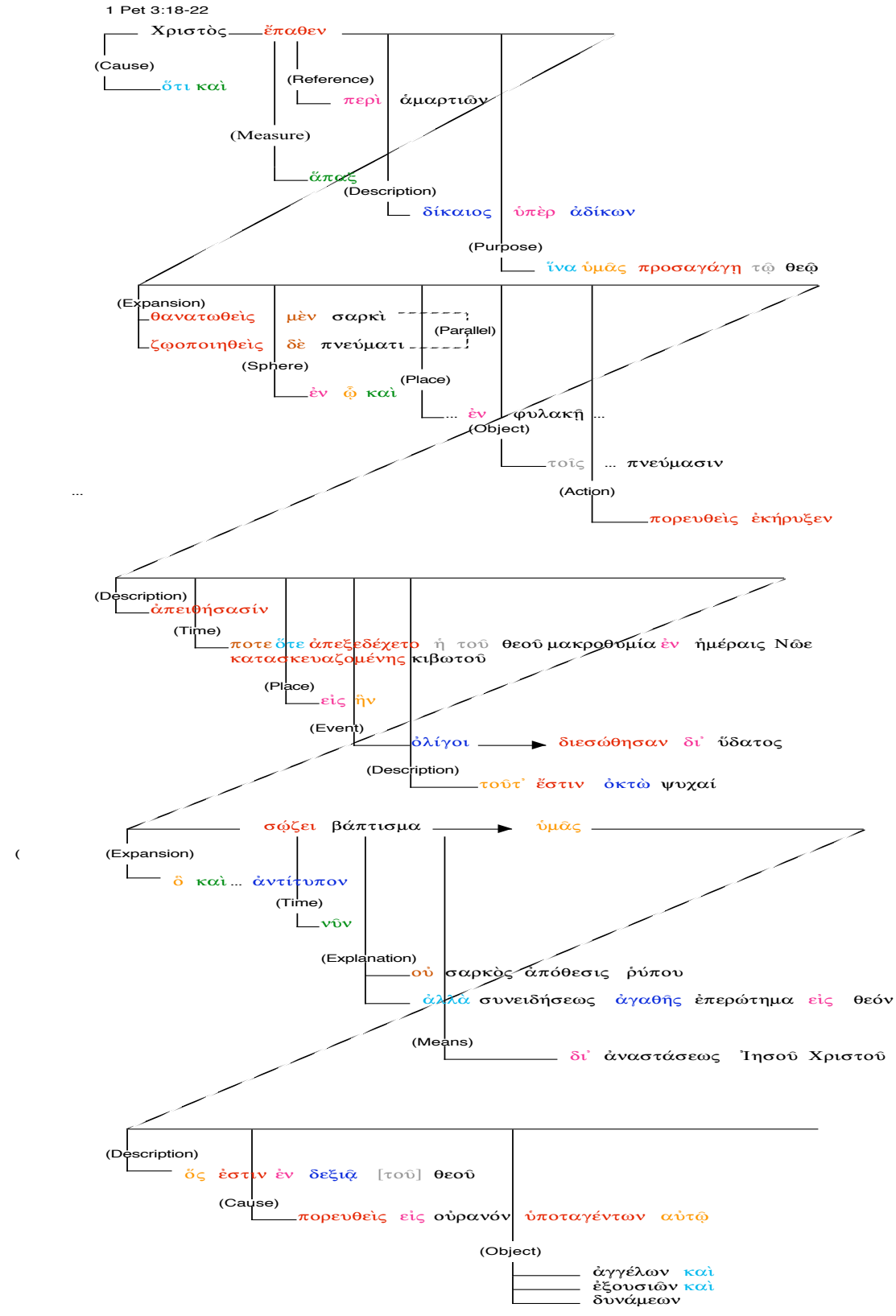
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[1] Syntactical Categories according to Brooks & Winberry

Grammatical Diagram

18	
	ὅτι
	καὶ
	Χριστὸς
	ἅπαξ
	Περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν
	ἔπαθεν,
	δίκαιος ὑΠὲρ ἀδίκων,
	ἵνα
	...Προσαγάγῃ → ^ ὑμᾶς
	τῷ θεῷ
	θανατωθεὶς
	μὲν σαρκὶ
	ζῳοΠοιηθεὶς
	δὲ Πνεύματι ·
	ἐν ᾧ καὶ
	τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ Πνεύμασιν
	Πορευθεὶς
	ἐκήρυξεν,
	ἀΠειθήσασίν
	Ποτε ὅτε
	...ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ^ ἀΠεξεδέχετο
	ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε
	κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν
	ὀλίγοι,

| | τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν ὀκτὼ ψυχαί,

διεσώθησαν

δι᾽ ὕδατος.

ὃ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον

...

σῴζει βάπτισμα,

^ νῦν

οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου

ἀλλὰ

συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν,

δι᾽ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ [τοῦ] θεοῦ πορευθεὶς

εἰς οὐρανόν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ

ἀγγέλων

καὶ

ἐξουσιῶν

καὶ

δυνάμεων. |

Semantic Diagram

1 Pet 3:18-22

Χριστὸς —— ἔπαθεν

(Cause)
    ὅτι καὶ

(Reference)
    περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν

(Measure)
    ἅπαξ

(Description)
    δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων

(Purpose)
    ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ

(Expansion)
    θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ
    ζῳοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι   (Parallel)

(Sphere)
    ἐν ᾧ καὶ

(Place)
    ... ἐν φυλακῇ ...

(Object)
    τοῖς ... πνεύμασιν

(Action)
    πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν

(Description)
    ἀπειθήσασίν

(Time)
    ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ

(Place)
    εἰς ἣν

(Event)
    ὀλίγοι → διεσώθησαν δι᾿ ὕδατος

(Description)
    τοῦτ᾿ ἔστιν ὀκτὼ ψυχαί

σῴζει βάπτισμα → ὑμᾶς

(Expansion)
    ὃ καὶ ... ἀντίτυπον

(Time)
    νῦν

(Explanation)
    οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου
    ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν

(Means)
    δι᾿ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

(Description)
    ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ [τοῦ] θεοῦ

(Cause)
    πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανόν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ

(Object)
    ἀγγέλων καὶ
    ἐξουσιῶν καὶ
    δυνάμεων

Literary Analysis

1 Peter 3:18-22 is located near the end of Peter's discussion on how his readers are to live in light of their identity in Christ. Specifically, this passage relates to the overall discussion of suffering by drawing a parallel between Christ's triumph through suffering and the hope of triumph the believers have because of their union with Christ.

Verse Analysis[2]

Verses 18-22 follow Peter's exhortation from the preceding verses regarding suffering for obeying the will of God. Having instructed his readers about the necessity of their good behavior in the face of suffering, Peter draws a parallel between the benefits of their suffering (see 3:13-17) with the benefit of Christ's suffering in verses 18-22. Verse 18 begins by stating that "Christ also suffered once for all for sins." Peter's use of the subordinating conjunction with καὶ reveals the link that he sees between the suffering of his readers and the suffering of Christ. Karen Jobes says, "Being linked with 3:13-17 by ὅτι καὶ, the 3:18-22 passage is intended to ground the immediately preceding claim that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."[3] Just as Peter's readers were suffering for doing good, so *also* Christ suffered for sins as the *just on behalf of the unjust.* If there ever was one who suffered unjustly, it was Jesus at the hands of religious leaders. Peter's sentiments on this matter are also recorded in Acts 2:22-23 where he declares

> Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— [23] this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

For Peter, the definite plan and foreknowledge of God did not absolve the religious leaders of their guilt in the murder of Jesus. Therefore, Peter draws on the unjust nature of Christ's death as an example of suffering for the sake of doing good. Yet, he does not stop with the exemplary nature of Christ's death. Peter, as will be shown, was not a proponent of the Moral Example Theory of the atonement. Instead, Peter, though initially opposed to the concept, was well aware of Jesus' teaching regarding His sufferings. In Mark 8:31, Mark records, most likely on the basis of Peter's testimony, that Jesus "began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again." In full accord with the Markan testimony of the certainty of Christ's sufferings, Peter further describes these sufferings with substitutionary language. It is no accident

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[2] For the sake of brevity, literary and paragraph analysis has been incorporated into the verse analysis to minimize repetitive material.

[3] Karen Jobes, *First Peter* (Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament; Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 237.

that Peter uses that word ὑπὲρ[4] to explain the relationship between δίκαιος and ἀδίκων in the descriptive clause that follows his initial statement about Christ's suffering for sin.

For all of the exemplary benefits that are revealed in the sufferings of Christ, the greatest benefit is the reconciliation between God and man that is affected through Christ's substitutionary work. This reality is what prompts Peter to move passed the example in the atonement to the effect of the atonement. In this case, Peter combines a subordinating conjunction of purpose (ἵνα) with the subjunctive, προσαγάγῃ, to show that his reader's relationship to God is predicated and conditioned upon the substitutionary work of Christ on their behalf. Hence, Peter is teaching his readers that Christ's suffering for sins on their behalf has provided the foundation that is necessary for their fellowship with God. Though the theological categories of atonement are not explicitly stated, Peter's use of terms like ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος, ὑπὲρ, and προσαγάγῃ implicitly point to the soteriological concepts of sacrifice, propitiation, justification, substitution, and reconciliation. It is clear from this passage that Peter does not and cannot separate the exemplary nature of Christ's sufferings from their substitutionary nature.[5]

Up till this point, the exegesis of verse 18 has been fairly straightforward and uncontroverted. Questions regarding the extent of Peter's intent may arise in the first half of verse 18, but the exegetical difficulty increases with Peter's use of two seemingly paralleled phrases, namely, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ and ζῳοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. θανατωθεὶς and ζῳοποιηθεὶς are both aorist passive participles that further explain the nature of Christ's work. The first participle, θανατωθεὶς[6], is translated as "having been put to death" and is closely related to the "judicial proceedings" of the synoptic accounts.[7] On the other hand, ζῳοποιηθεὶς[8] is translated as "having been made alive" and is predominately used to refer to the "giving" of life in the New Testament,[9] which specifically, in this case, is referring to the resurrection of Christ from the dead.[10] By themselves, they are easy to translate, yet, when followed by datives like σαρκὶ and πνεύματι, the syntactical question of function is brought to the foreground. The dative forms of these words opens up the syntactical possibility of either a dative of respect, locative of

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[4] For a pertinent discussion on the use of hyper, See Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman, 1965), 59, 154.

[5] For more details on this conclusion see Paul Achtemeier, *First Peter : A Commentary on First Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MI: Fortress Press, 1996), 251-252.

[6] This is the only NT occurrence of the participial form of θανατόω.

[7] J. Ramsey Michaels, *First Peter* (World Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 49:203.

[8] This is the only NT occurrence of the participial form of ζῳοποιέω.

[9] For examples, See John 5:21, 6:63, Romans 4:17, 8:11, 1 Corinthians 15:22, 36, 45, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Galatians 3:21

[10] There is near consensus among scholars that Peter is contrasting the death of Christ with His resurrection with the latter being Peter's primary concern.

sphere or an instrumental of agency. All three of these possibilities have a significant impact on the rest of the passage. Yet, before one can determine their function, one must determine their relationship to one another. On this point, Mark Dubis' discussion of correlative conjunction is helpful. Regarding the use of μὲν and δὲ, he writes, "μὲν marks the information in its clause as secondary in importance to the information in the δὲ clause."[11] Likewise, Steven Runge quotes BDF saying, "The inclusion of μὲν throws the emphasis on the second member (indicated by δὲ)."[12] Hence, the construction of Peter's statement is to show the correlation between Christ's "being put to death" and "being made alive" with the priority of emphasis belonging to the latter.

Having established the correlative nature of the two phrases, one can begin to investigate how this grammatical relationship affects the readers understanding of the datives. On this point, the key issue is whether or not the correlation of the datives requires both datives to have the same syntactical function. For instance, Wayne Grudem argues that both datives should be understood as referring to the "realm" of existence and activity.[13] Hence, Grudem concludes that Christ was put to death "in the fleshly realm" and was made alive in the "spiritual realm."[14] In order to advance his point, Grudem suggests that "it would be somewhat unusual to expect readers to see exactly the same grammatical structure (in Greek) in parallel parts of the same sentence, and yet to know that Peter wanted the two parts understood differently."[15] Yet, given the fact that Peter's reader would have read this letter in Greek, they would have certainly noticed the rhythmic patterns of the passive participles. Unfortunately, Grudem, along with other commentators that agree with him,[16] appears to ignore the hymnic nature of these verses, which allows Peter to use two morphologically identical datives with "different syntactical forces" on the basis of "poetic license."[17] Among other poetic examples in the New Testament, I Timothy 3:16 clearly shows how two closely related datives in a poetic form can have differing syntactical functions.[18] Therefore there is no definitive reason for these participles to be

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[11] Mark Dubis, *1 Peter : A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 33.

[12] Steven Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 75.

[13] Wayne Grudem, *First Peter* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 17:156. This use of the dative is also called a "locative of sphere."

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] For similar examples, see Achtemeier, *First Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, 250; Jobes, *First Peter*, 240; Michaels, *First Peter*, 49:205.

[17] Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 343n76.

[18] On speaking of dative function in poetry, George Knight says, "The nearly identical format of each line should not be construed as requiring the same meaning each instances of *en* and for each dative." George Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids (Mich.): W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 185.

understood as having the same syntactical force,[19] which means that it is completely legitimate to translate the phrases as "having been put to death in the flesh, but having been made alive by the Spirit."[20]

With a determination made about the function of the datives, the next interpretative difficulty comes with the prepositional phrase ἐν ᾧ. Having concluded that πνεύματι should be understood as an instrumental of agency in reference to the Spirit's work in the resurrection of Christ, it is the most natural antecedent of the dative relative pronoun ᾧ. In combination with ἐν, the phrase should be translated as "by whom" with the syntactical force of personal agency.[21] Following this prepositional phrase, the reader finds the conjunction καὶ. When καὶ follows a relative pronoun, it is being used as a thematic addition, which should be translates as "also."[22] Hence, a theme, as opposed to a singular word, is being added to the previous themes. In this case, the entire proposition, τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς, is being added to Peter's discussion of Christ's death and resurrection.

The interpretation of this proposition, which can be translated as "he went to the spirits in prison and made proclamation," has varied from generation to generation. In his 956-page commentary on 1 Peter, John H. Elliot records four different views on the meanings of this proposition, which are as follows:[23]

- Historical View – When Christ descended to the realm of the dead in conjunction with his death and prior to his resurrection, he, "in the spirit," made an announcement to the deceased humans whose souls were imprisoned in the lower world, the realm of the dead.[24]

- Pre-Existent View – Christ, in his preexistent nature, went to Noah's contemporaries during their lifetime, particularly through the person of Noah, and preached repentance to these human spirits who were imprisoned in sin.

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[19] For more discussion on this conclusion, See Dubis, *1 Peter*, 118; Thomas Schreiner, *First, Second Peter, Jude* (The New American Commentary; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 183-184.

[20] This translation takes σαρκὶ as a dative of reference and πνεύματι as an instrumental of agency.

[21] Dubis, *1 Peter*, 119.

[22] For further explanation of thematic addition, See Runge, *Discourse grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 337-348; Wallace, *Greek grammar beyond the basics*, 670-671; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 119.

[23] For the sake of clarity, Elliot's titles of the four views have been renamed while the descriptions have been kept exact. Elliot labeled each view with a numeral, but in the case of this paper, the views have been named on the basis of their description. To read the original work, See John Elliott, *First Peter : A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (1st ed.; The Anchor Bible Series; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 648-650.

[24] Elliot also enumerates several nuances to this view that do not necessitate the creation of total new categories for identification.

- Soul-Descent View – In order to resolve some of the obvious difficulties involved in View 2, Robert Bellarmine advanced the view that after Christ died his soul descended to the realm of the dead and announced salvation to those humans of Noah's generation who, he conjectured, had repented of their sin just prior to their death.

- Victorious-Christ View – Pioneered by the study of F. Spitta, this view is based on the recognized proximity of the thought in 1 Peter 3:19-20 to the early Israelite tradition concerning the Flood and in particular the widely influential book of 1 Enoch. Here the "spirits in prison" are regarded as the sinful angelic spirits whose transgressions, according to Genesis 6 and subsequent tradition, preceded and instigated the evil that was destroyed in the Flood. To them Christ announced some form of his triumph over death and their condemnation.

The "Historical View" is named such because of its enshrinement in the Apostles' Creed, which in some forms says that Christ "descended into hell." To be fair, not everyone who espouses the Apostles' Creed endorses this view. On the contrary, most have understood the language of the Apostles' Creed to simply be a reference to Christ's death and nothing more. Though the "historical" testimony to this view is impressive, it suffers from several problems. First, it reads "descent" language into a text that makes no mention of a descent. Second, it is ignores the chronological progression from death to resurrection to ascension, which is captured by the aorist participles that are joined by the additive καί. Third, it assumes that the "spirits" in prison are human beings, even though the word πνεύμασιν never refers to humans in New Testament without a genitive qualifier. On these grounds, this view must be rejected.

The "Pre-Existent View" is named on the basis of its conviction that Christ's "going to the spirits" took place in "spiritual realm of pre-existence" during "the days of Noah." Essentially, this view believes that Christ preached through Noah to those who eventually disobeyed and are now in prison (i.e.- waiting for the final judgment.) The most extensive defense of this view is found in Grudem's commentary on 1 Peter.[25] This view has an initial attraction because it appears to solve the problems created by the first view, yet, this view ultimately creates more problems than it solves and cannot bear the weight of its claims on exegetical grounds. By way of critique, this view also ignores the chronology of the participles and assumes that the "spirits" are human beings.[26] Yet, this view suffers from even greater problems than the historical view, because it utterly fails to account for the "going" of Christ in his "resurrected state." In one of the best critiques of this view, Thomas Schreiner says

> The "going" in vs. 19, therefore, also most naturally refers to what is true of Christ's resurrection body. It is obviously the case that Christ did not need his resurrection body to preach through Noah by means of the Spirit. Indeed, the reference to Christ "going" in v. 19 demonstrates the implausibility of *this view* since it is difficult to understand how

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[25] See Grudem, *First Peter*, 17:203-239 for his defense of this view.

[26] See comments on the "historical view" for further critique of this view.

Christ needs to "go anywhere" if he speaks only through the Holy Spirit. This piece of evidence alone shows *that this* view is implausible.[27]

Schreiner continues, saying, "Finally, it is difficult to see what relation preaching through Noah has to the present context. Nothing else in these verses emphasizes that the Petrine readers were also to preach to their contemporaries."[28] As with the historical view, the "pre-existent view" must also be rejected as a plausible interpretation of this passage.

The "Soul-Descent" view is primarily based upon Bellarmine's reading of πνεύματι as a reference to Christ's human soul, which, after being made alive, "descends" to preach. Without going into too much detail, this view must be rejected on the basis of its failure to identify ζωοποιηθεὶς as a reference to Christ's resurrection, the failure to justify the reading of πνεύμασιν as a reference to "repentant human beings," and the Christological problems that arise from Bellarmine's view of Christ's soul descent.[29]

The fourth and final view represents the view of this paper. In the "victorious Christ view," Christ is seen, in his resurrected state, going to the disobedient spirits from the days of Noah and proclaiming His lordship as the risen and reigning Lord of all things. This view is based on the conviction that Peter appeals to an ancient interpretation of Genesis 6 from Jewish tradition. Essentially, this view makes the best sense of the text because it accounts for the chronology of the participles, acknowledges the New Testament's consistent usage of πνεύμασιν as a reference to spirits (not humans), gives a logical flow of thought that fits the context of suffering Christians who are longing for vindication, and provides a legitimate literary background for the text by locating the "imprisoned spirits" theme in ancient Jewish tradition.[30] Unfortunately, many choose to reject this view on the basis that Peter appeals to extra-biblical literature like 1 Enoch[31] to make a biblical point, but this rejection is clearly not based upon exegetical grounds, but rather, on a theological presupposition about the nature of scripture. Yet, if one affirms the Petrine authorship of 1 Peter along with 2 Peter, then there should be no

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[27] Schreiner, *First, Second Peter, Jude*, 186.

[28] Ibid., 187.

[29] See Elliott, *First Peter : A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 649.

[30] The clearest, most concise, and possibly, most definitive defense of this position can be found in Jobes, *First Peter*, 242-252. Any critique of this position that fails to engage her research has ultimately failed to address the most recent and well-informed scholarship on these matters.

[31] For extended interaction with Peter's use of 1 Enoch and other extra-biblical sources, See Peter Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (The New International Commentary of the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 140; Jobes, *First Peter*, 243-247; Elliott, *First Peter : A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 655-660; Schreiner, *First, Second Peter, Jude*, 188-189; Achtemeier, *First Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, 259-262; Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (2nd ed.; The International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 162-163; Michaels, *First Peter*, 49:206-211; Joel Green, *First Peter* (The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2007), 123-124.

problem acknowledging that the Peter uses extra-biblical literature without conferring any scriptural authority to these sources.

Having detailed the different views that surround the interpretation of vs. 19 and provided a brief defense with extensive documentation of the view embraced by this paper, the next matter facing the reader is the relationship between Christ's triumphant declaration over the spirits and Peter's comments on how the deliverance of Noah and his descendants relate to baptism. In verse 20, Peter further describes the "spirits" to whom Christ has declared his victory, as those who "once disobeyed, when the patience of God was waiting in the days of Noah." Given the probability that Peter's readers would have been familiar with the Jewish traditions regarding the identity of these spirits and the fact that their identity is not the point of the text, Peter feels no need to explicitly identify them. Instead, he goes on to make further comment about the time and circumstances that surround the disobedience of these spirits (ἀπειθήσασίν ποτε), saying that it was "when the ark was being built." The significance of this statement is further explained by Peter's next comment, when he uses the preposition-relative pronoun construction (εἰς ἣν) to refer back to the ark as the vessel "in which a few, that is, eight souls, were delivered through water." Contextually, Peter is referring to how Noah and his family entered into the Ark and were delivered "through water (δι᾽ ὕδατος)." At this point, a debate arises over whether the syntactical function of δι᾽ ὕδατος should be understood with the force of an instrumental (by) or a spatial (through). On this point, Dubis says,

> Against the OT background, the instrumental reading would seem unlikely since the focus of the flood narrative is upon water as an instrument of judgment, not salvation. So it would make sense to read water here as something to be saved from rather than saved by. But verse 21 overthrows this intuitive reading since it identifies water not as that which judges but as that which saves.[32]

Grammatically, Dubis point is valid, yet contextually he is amiss. One does not need to go to the Old Testament background to establish the theme of salvation through judgment. In verse 18, Christ's work of "bringing" sinners "to God" is synonymous with His work in salvation. Peter, then, follows this assertion about Christ's work with the judicial language of "justice" and "death penalty" which explicit points to the salvation concept of the satisfaction of divine judgment through the substitutionary work of Christ on behalf of the unjust. It is easy to see, therefore, that Peter has "salvation through judgment" in view when he writes these verses. Essentially, Dubis, along with others, misses the link between judgment and salvation both in his exegesis of verses 18-20 and fails to acknowledge a biblical-theological view of the relationship between judgment and salvation. In his magisterial book, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, James Hamilton summarizes this theme of "salvation through judgment" by saying

> Salvation always comes through judgment. Salvation for the nation of Israel at the Exodus came through the judgment of Egypt, and this pattern is repeated throughout the

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[32] Dubis, *1 Peter*, 124.

Old Testament, becoming paradigmatic even into the New. When God saves his people, he delivers them by bringing judgment on their enemies.[33]

Therefore, by appealing to the Flood narrative, Peter is insisting that God has brought salvation for his people through the universal judgment of the wicked and by His appointed means of an ark. In addition to this, Achtemeier says that "the locative sense *(of δι' ὕδατος)* is more appropriate, since it was in fact Noah's journey 'through the waters,' that led to his deliverance not only from the flood itself, but from the evil that infested the world and which the flood was intended to destroy."[34] Therefore, Dubis' assertion that vs. 21 teaches salvation "through water" should be rejected.

Having explained the reason for Peter's appeal to the Flood narrative, the reader comes to final verses of this passage. In verse 21, Peter states that "baptism" saves his reader in symbolic correspondence to the salvation that is pre-figured in the Flood narrative. This baptism, which "now" saves his readers, is defined, not in terms of the "removal of filth from the flesh," but rather, in terms of "an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." What then is the relationship between the Flood narrative and this salvific baptism that Peter speaks of? To answer this question, Schreiner states that "Just as the chaotic waters of the flood were the agent of destruction, so too the waters of baptism are waters of destruction. In New Testament theology, however (cf. Matt. 3:16; Mark 10:38-39; Rom 6:3-5), believers survive the death-dealing baptismal water because they are baptized with Christ."[35] Furthermore, Hamilton states that

> Salvation for all believers of all ages is made possible by the judgment that falls on Jesus at the cross. The cross allows God to be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:24-26). The cross of Christ, the climatic expression of the glory of God in salvation through judgment, is the turning point of the ages.[36]

In addition, Peter qualifies the saving of efficacy of baptism, as being on the basis of "the resurrection of Jesus Christ" not water.

How then does baptism save? In Peter's case, baptism is seen as his reader's appeal to God on the basis of Christ's work for good conscience before Him. In other words, it is the reader's public profession of faith and repentance expressed in the request for God "to cleanse

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[33] James Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2010), 57.

[34] Achtemeier, *First Peter : A Commentary on First Peter*, 266.

[35] Schreiner, *First, Second Peter, Jude*, 194.

[36] Hamilton, *God's glory in salvation through judgment*, 57.

their conscience and forgive their sins" on the basis of their union with Christ, who "was baptized into the floodwaters of God's judgment"[37] for all who trust in Him.

In conclusion, Peter moves from the saving efficacy of the resurrection of Christ to the reigning reality of the ascension of Christ. At this point, the reader finds the last aorist participle that completes the chronological progression that began in verse 18. Peter uses πορευθεὶς to speak of Christ's ascension into heaven after the "angels, authorities, and powers" had been subjected to Him. The moment of this subjection cannot be determined on the basis of grammar alone, but the logic of the text suggests that this subjection is in accordance with the "mediatorial kingship"[38] that is conferred upon Him at the accomplishment of work of redemption.

In summary, Peter has taught his readers that through His death, resurrection and ascension, Christ has triumphed over injustice, death, evil spirits, and the devil, having satisfied the demands of divine judgment in order to deliver his people and give them an example in the face of suffering.

Word Analysis

ζῳοποιηθεὶς is the aorist passive participle form of ζῳοποιέω, which has a lexical meaning of "to cause to live, to keep alive."[39] In this passive form and in contrast to "being put to death," this participle refers to Christ's resurrection. For the most part, this is the consensus among Petrine scholars.

ἐκήρυξεν is the 3rd Person, Singular, Aorist Active Indicative form of κηρύσσω, which has a lexical meaning of "to make an official announcement, to make public declaration."[40] It is most frequently used in relationship to the proclamation of the gospel, but in Petrine literature it has a more generic sense due to the fact that Peter prefers to "euangelizo" to "kerusso" for the verbal declaration of the gospel.

ὑποταγέντων is the aorist passive partciple form of ὑποτάσσω, which has a lexical meaning of "to cause to be in a submissive relationship."[41] In this particular passage, the verb most likely refers to the subjection all things to Christ on the basis of His triumph work. The passive voice of the participle points to the sovereign work of the Father. Although it is only used in this form in 1 Peter 3:22, there are approximately thirty-eight other occurrences of the verb in the New Testament.

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[37] James Hamilton, "Baptism Now Saves You? | For His Renown", n.d., http://jimhamilton.wordpress.com/2010/06/07/baptism-now-saves-you/.

[38] For a systematic summary of the nature of the kingship, See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1996), 406-412.

[39] BDAG, 431.

[40] ibid., 543.

[41] ibid, 1042.

Commentary Comparison on 1 Peter 3:18-22

WBC – 1 Peter (Michaels)

Barring the terrible format of this commentary series, the content of this commentary was excellent. Michaels grapples with the difficulties of the text and is no slave to the history or tradition on matters of interpretation, yet, he remains orthodox in his conclusions while making a considerable contribution to the field of Petrine scholarship. (Rating: 4 of 5)

BENTC - 1 Peter (Jobes)

Jobes' scholarship is undeniable. In similar, but clearer fashion, Jobes' tackles the hard issues of this passage in a very readable and accessible fashion. Of particular help is her discussion of Peter's use of extra-biblical tradition. This is a highly recommended commentary. (Rating: 4 of 5)

NINTC – 1 Peter (Davids)

Generally, Davids is very helpful, yet in the case of this particular passage, there was very little that could actually be seen to contribute to the interpretation. This is possibly due to the "less than technical" approach of this commentary series. Therefore, this commentary is helpful, but should be only be used as a supplement to other more technical works. (Rating: 3.25 of 5)

NAC – 1 Peter (Schreiner)

Though not entirely impressed with the NAC series, Schreiner's work on 1 Peter is nearly unmatched in it clarity and contemporary engagement. Schreiner's background as both an exegete and theologian help him in work through the difficult elements of the text without simply capitulating to a pre-existing presupposition. If someone were looking for the best, all in one commentary on 1 Peter 3:18-22, this would be the recommendation. (Rating 4.5 of 5)

Hermeneia – 1 Peter (Achtemeier)

As a series, the Hermeneia series must be read with caution, but in terms of critical scholarship, this series, along with this volume, is a forced to be reckoned with. In incredible detail and extensive documentation, Achtemeier's commentary on 1 Peter is unparalleled with the possible exception of Elliot's AB commentary. This commentary is not for light readers and requires at least an intermediate understanding of the Greek grammar. The reader will certainly not agree with all of Achtemeier's conclusions (as exemplified above), but the reader will be challenged and forced to think through the critical issues that are presented in this passage. (Rating: 4.25 of 5)

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