

**Lastly note** the following as the ones who received this message are considered.

1. These to whom the Spirit of Christ preached through Noah "sometime were disobedient:" A statement reflecting the evil of the thoughts and imaginations of mankind.
2. The idea is not only of those who refused to be persuaded, but of those who sought to keep others from being persuaded.
3. Anyone who rejects the preaching of truth, and who seeks to cause others to reject the preaching of truth truly is imprisoned in their own disbelief.

So as the context of this portion of Scripture is considered, a great truth of the work of the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament is made clear for the student of the Word of God.

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# **Koine**

***When to  
"spirits in prison" did  
He preach?***

An additional examination of the text of I Peter 3:18-20 discloses a glorious truth. The passage reads as follows:

*"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."*

When the context is considered, markers emerge revealing the path to understanding

the meaning of these verses of Scripture.

The first mark: is found in the first words of verse 19. The word "which" relates in the context to the noun it modifies in the previous verse. A relative pronoun must agree with its antecedent in both number and gender. This relative pronoun is singular in number and neuter in gender. Thus the word which this relative pronoun modifies must likewise be singular in number and neuter in gender. The only word in the previous verse which agrees is the word "Spirit."

Thusly, we could understand the opening statement of verse 19 to be "by which (Spirit)." So, by the same spirit that quickened Christ, that is, made Him alive, by this same spirit is the action of verse 19 accomplished.

Before moving on, an understanding of time must be considered. The inclination is to assign the time that "the spirits in prison" received the preaching to the three days and three nights during which Jesus' corpse was entombed.

The context, however, of verse 20 introduces the specific time when the imprisoned spirits "sometime were disobedient;" specifically, this occurred, "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

Could not this be the time when the Spirit Who quickened Christ also preached unto the spirits in prison? Since the Spirit Who made Jesus alive is the same Spirit in this context Who did the preaching, then the answer to that question could be, "Yes."

For Peter wrote previously in chapter 1:10-11 concerning the prophets of the Old Testament who "*prophesied of the grace that should come to you; Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*" (Emphasis supplied).

So, clearly, the fact is established that the Spirit of Christ was at work in the Old Testament prophets as they prophesied; and this, prior to His death, burial and resurrection...prior even to His virgin birth.

This understanding of the time when this preaching to "the spirits in prison" is another marker illuminating our path of understanding for this passage.

Another mark would be the identification of the one through whom the Spirit preached. I Peter 3:20 says this was "in the days of Noah." Does the Bible reveal that Noah was a preacher? Yes it does.

For Peter writes in his second epistle that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness," (II Peter 2:5). No doubt Noah preached. No doubt Noah testified. No doubt Noah witnessed. Not only did the construction project of Noah give testimony, but surely, when asked what he was doing and why, Noah preached righteousness to a wicked society of man, where "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). The Spirit of Christ was at work in Noah, in the preaching of Noah, just as the Spirit of Christ was at work in the Old Testament prophets as they preached the message given to them.