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Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison in 1 Peter 3:19

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[Abstract]

Scholars have debated the idea of Christ's descent in 1 Peter 3:19, which had a great influence on the doctrine of *triduum mortis*. While the church fathers believed that 1 Peter 3:19 refers to the descending of Christ, recently many scholars have interpreted 1 Peter 3:19 as referring to Christ's ascending to heaven. This article argues that in the context of 3:18-22, Christ's proclamation of his victory to the spirits in prison occurred in his ascension rather than in his descending. The idea of preaching the gospel to dead people is not suitable in the text of 3:18-22. With this message of victory, 1 Peter consoles the recipients who are being persecuted by enemies. Thus, 1 Peter 3:19 teaches that Christ's proclamation of victory to the evil entities occurred when he ascended to heaven.

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I. Introduction

Many people debate the meaning of 1 Peter 3:19 because it is important with regards to the question of what Christ's descent means. The Apostle' Creed maintains a reference to the "descent" of Christ, and some have understood that this descent refers to Christ's "πορευθείς" (going) in 1 Peter 3:19.¹ The idea of Christ's descent in terms of πορευθείς in 1 Peter 3:19 had a great influence on the doctrine of *triduum mortis*. Although the descending of Christ was taught by the church fathers, more recently many commentators, following W. J. Dalton's thesis, interpret πορευθείς in 1 Peter 3:19 as referring to the ascension to heaven.² Now few scholars agree with the triduum mortis. This paper begins with a review of the current debates concerning the time of Christ's going related to his descent in 1 Peter 3:19.

My thesis is that the going of Christ in 1 Peter should be understood as follows: after his resurrection, when Christ went,

1 The Korean Apostle' Creed edits out the "descent" of Christ. Scholars have debated the meaning of the "descent" of Christ and the reason for editing it out. Additionally, many Korean scholars support the idea of Wayne Grudem that Jesus Christ preached through Noah. Cf. Wayne Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter* (TNTC: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 157-62.

2 Dalton presents the interpretation that Christ ascended and proclaimed to the imprisoned spirits in heavens. W. J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965).

he proclaimed his victory to the imprisoned spirits. First, this will be argued by examining the text of 1 Peter 3:19. Additionally, I will examine the proclamation of victory after the resurrection in terms of the context of 3:18-22.

II. Literature Review

1 Peter 3:19 has a long history of interpretation, beginning with the early church fathers.³ From the church fathers until recent times, the time of Christ's going was primarily understood as occurring between his death and resurrection. But in recent scholarship the interpretations are many, and fall mainly into three categories (1) between the death and resurrection of Christ; (2) at the time of Noah; (3) after the resurrection.

1. Between Christ's Death and Resurrection

Scholars have several views about the time of Christ's going with respect to the proclamation of Christ in 1 Peter 3:19. The first hypothesis is that Christ went between his death and his resurrection.⁴ These scholars maintain in general that Christ

³ Concerning the interpretations of 1 Peter 3:19 from the early church fathers to Calvin Cf. D. N. Campbell and J. van Resburg, "A History of the Interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-22," *Acta patristica et byzantine* 19 (2008): 73-78; Dalton, *Proclamation*, 54-57; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 258-61; John H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (AB 37B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 706-9; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 153; Clad T. Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 3-9.

⁴ Bo Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism* (Copenhagen: Ejnar

preached to the dead people in hell who were offered the chance of salvation during these three days—the *triduum mortis*. L. Goppelt connects the spirits in 1 Peter 3:19 with the dead in 1 Peter 4:6.⁵ Christ preached to dead people who sinned, following the example of Noah at the time of the flood.⁶ Bo Reicke also asserts that Christ's proclamation occurred during the descending.⁷ The spirits to whom Christ preached during his descending included not only human beings but also evil angels, according to Reicke's proposition.⁸ However, *πορεύομαι* refers to Christ's ascension in the New Testament (Acts 1:10-11; cf. John 14:2, 3, 12, 28; 16:7, 28) as well as being clearly connected to the resurrection of Christ in the context of 1 Peter 3:18-22.

2. At the Time of Noah

The second interpretation, held by Grudem, is that Christ's spirit preached to the sinners through Noah.⁹ The pre-existent Christ preached to disobedient people to repent at the time of

Munksgaard, 1946), 116-18; F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 144-46; E. Best, *1 Peter* (NCB: London: Oliphants, 1971), 140; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The First Epistle of Peter* (London: SCM, 1960), 103-4; L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 289; Joel Green, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 127-33; Sherman E. Johnson, "The Preaching to the Dead," *JBL* 79 (1960): 48-51.

⁵ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 259.

⁶ Goppelt says, "The spirits in prison are, therefore, the souls of the flood generation preserved in a place of punishment after death." Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 259.

⁷ Reicke, *Spirits*, 118.

⁸ Reicke, *Spirits*, 52-91.

⁹ Grudem, *1 Peter*, 209-10; Edmund Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 154-68; J. S. Feinberg, "1 Peter 3:18-20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State," *WTJ* 48 (1986): 303-36.

Noah. According to this view, the spirits in prison in 1 Peter are disobedient human beings in Noah's time. The preaching of Christ was for people who lived in the time of Noah's building the ark. The preaching was spoken by the Holy Spirit through Noah and the spirits were the people who heard this preaching. Wayne Grudem insists that Genesis is mainly describing the human sin that led to the flood rather than supernatural beings.¹⁰ However, the assumption of Grudem is rarely accepted by scholars with respect to the context of 1 Peter. Additionally, Grudem's assumption is deficient because of the fact that the tradition of the flood is connected with the fallen angels(1 Peter 2:4-10; Jude 6).

3. After Resurrection

Third, a portion of scholarship has viewed that in 1 Peter 3:18-22, the author refers to Christ's proclamation after his resurrection.¹¹ Most commentators who hold this view argue that the spirits are evil angels in the heavens to whom Christ proclaimed his victory after his resurrection and ascension into heaven. On the other hand, J. Ramsey Michaels considers the

¹⁰ Grudem, *1 Peter*, 209-10.

¹¹ E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1947), 198-200; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 245-46; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 152-56; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 648-50; Peter Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 138-41; D. E. Hiebert, "The Suffering and Triumphant Christ: An Exposition of 1 Peter 3:18-22," *Bsac* 139 (1982): 146-58; A. J. Bandstra, "Making Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison': Another Look at 1 Peter 3:19," *CTJ* 38 (2003): 120-21; Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC 37; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 186; Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 125.

spirits to be the giants who are the offspring of evil angels in Jewish tradition.¹² The prison is understood as a state rather than a location.¹³ The ascension after the resurrection is a more compatible setting for 1 Peter 3:19 even though the identity of the spirits should be considered within the context of 1 Peter and Jewish tradition.

III. Proclamation of Christ in 1 Peter 3:19

I will share the view that with respect to 1 Peter 3:19 the victorious proclamation of Christ occurred after his resurrection to the evil angels and dead people who were imprisoned in heaven. Certain aspects of 1 Peter 3:19 are particularly relevant to understanding the link to the post-resurrection of Christ.

1. Christ's Descent

Augustine taught that Christ preached repentance to the imprisoned spirits in the time of Noah by the Spirit of Christ.¹⁴ This suggestion leans on two traditions: Christ's preincarnate activity (1 Cor 10:4; 1 Pet 1:10-11) and Noah's preaching to his contemporaries (1 *Clem* 7.6; 1 *Clem.* 9.4).¹⁵ A different idea, in which Christ's descent and preaching occurred during the time between his death and resurrection, the *triduum mortis*, is widely held.¹⁶ The "descent" of Christ also appears in the Apostles' Creed

¹² J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* (WBC 49; Waco: Word, 1988), 119-20.

¹³ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 120.

¹⁴ Ep. 164.14-18, *Ep. Euod.* And, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, part 3, question 52, art. 2, reply to objection 3.

¹⁵ Also, Grudem, *1 Peter*, 158, 239.

¹⁶ Iren., *Haer.* 5.31.2; Tert., *An.* 55.2. And, also, Beare, *1 Peter*, 173; Reicke, *Spirits*,

and Athanasian Creed.

While Calvin was troubled by 1 Peter 3:19, he understood the “descent” of Christ as his proclamation to the godly that their salvation is secured.¹⁷ Karen Jobes argues, “In the absence of background knowledge contemporaneous with 1 Peter, the Western church used its own traditional understanding of hell as located below and inferred the ‘going’ to be a descent.”¹⁸ Reicke emphasizes that this temporal “ἐν ᾧ” designates the time between death and resurrection because of the parenthetical characteristics of “having been made alive in the spirit.”¹⁹ The assumption is that Christ went down and preached between his death and resurrection. Christ’s death involves his “descent” into hell in 3:19 and, following his preaching his resurrection from the dead, which includes his ascent into heaven in 3:22. However, Luther made a point that “Now He did not descend again into hell after he had assumed a new existence. Therefore one must understand these words to mean that He did this after his resurrection.”²⁰ With Luther’s point, I will show some arguments for Christ’s proclamation after his resurrection.

2. Ἐν ᾧ καί

118: Best, *1 Peter*, 140; Cranfield, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 103.

17 John Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter*, trans. W. B. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 293-94; Institutes 2.16.9.

18 Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 243.

19 Reicke, *Spirits*, 103-13.

20 J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works*, Volume 30 (St. Louis: Concordia; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg and Fortress, 1955-1986), 113.

The relation of the phrase “*Ἐν ᾧ καί*” to the phrase “after resurrection” should first be considered. It is probable that the next words of 3:18, “*ἐν ᾧ*,” speak about the word “in spirit”²¹ or “in Spirit”²² in 3:18. However, it is used as a temporal conjunction in 1:6; 2:12; 3:16; and 4:4. Michaels suggests, “No matter whether *ἐν ᾧ* is translated ‘in the Spirit’ (i.e., in which he was made alive), or ‘in that state’ (i.e., his risen state), or ‘on that occasion’ (i.e., when he rose from the dead), or ‘for that reason’ (i.e., because he was raised), or ‘in which process’ (i.e., the resurrection process), the meaning remains much the same.”²³ “*Ἐν ᾧ καί*” reminds us of the reference to resurrection in 3:18²⁴ and identifies Christ’s proclamation as a direct result of Christ’s resurrection.²⁵

First, the resurrection is stressed in verse 18, “as the *μὲν*... *δὲ* construction indicates that the emphasis is on the second half with the first half subordinated to it.”²⁶ Christ was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit (*ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι*).²⁷ *Ζωοποιηθεὶς* is used to describe the resurrection in the

21 Dalton, *Proclamation*, 137-39; Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18-20,” 318; Beare, *First Peter*, 144-45; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 152-56.

22 Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 183; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 250.

23 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 652; Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 197; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 205-6. Or this phrase may be understood as “wherein,” “thereby,” or “thus.” cf. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 255-56.

24 The verse 18 is composed of “*μὲν*... *δὲ*” that “clearly refer to Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection.” Bandstra, “Making Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison,” 121

25 Michaels, *1 Peter*, 205.

26 Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 249.

27 Achtemeier says, “Yet a most natural construal of *ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι* would be to take it as a dative of instrument: Christ was raised ‘by the (divine) Spirit,’ that is, by God, a central affirmation of the NT.” Cf. Acts 3:15; 4:10;

New Testament (John 5:21; Rom 4:17; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:22, 36, 45; cf. also Eph 2:5; Col 2:13).²⁸ The identity of *πνεῦμα* is understood as the Spirit of God (4:14), the Spirit of Christ (1:11), and the Holy Spirit (1:2, 12) in 1 Peter.²⁹ Jobes says, “This is corroborated by clear reference to his ascension in 3:22, which completes the redemptive sequence: crucifixion (‘put to death’), resurrection (‘made alive’), and ascension (‘gone into heaven’).”³⁰

Second, “καί” explicates the post-resurrection nature of Christ’s going. The conjunction *καὶ* is used as the adjunctive “also” to *πορευθεῖς*. *καὶ* strengthens the connection between Christ’s going with his “having been made alive.”³¹ Paul J. Achtemeier says, “By the position it is clearly adjunctive (‘also’), implying an additional activity rather than copulative (‘and’), indicating the next in a series of steps.”³² There are other examples for using *καὶ* in “ἐν ᾧ καί” as an adjunctive in New Testament (1 Cor 15:1; Eph 1:13; 2:22; Col 2:12).

3. Πορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξεν

While, as noted above, some scholars understand *πορευθεῖς* as descending, *πορευθεῖς* itself does not signify “going down,” because *πορεύομαι* usually refers to the ascending of Christ into heaven (Acts 1:10,11) or to God (John 14:2, 12, 28; 16:7, 28). Additionally, *πορεύομαι* is never employed to mean “descend.”³³

Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; Gal 1:1; Thess 1:10.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 249.

²⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 183.

²⁹ Except in 3:4.

³⁰ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 242.

³¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 253; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 651.

³² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 253.

“καταβαίνω” would be more suitable if Peter intends to refer to a descent.³⁴

Most translate “πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν” as “he went and proclaimed.” However, “πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν” does not have the idea of subsequent actions such as “after he went and proclaimed.” Because πορευθεὶς takes the form of an aorist participle before the main aorist verb ἐκήρυξεν, it is better to understand it as contemporaneous,³⁵ “when he went, he proclaimed.” The time of “πορευθεὶς” and “ἐκήρυξεν” is the very same.³⁶ The going of 1 Peter is closely related with Christ’s proclamation in time and meaning as if Christ’s going joined his proclaiming.³⁷ On the other hand, the same word and form of “πορευθεὶς” are used in 3:22 to show the ascension of Christ “into heaven” (εἰς οὐρανόν). This same form could be considered as a contemporaneous participle, “when he went into heaven.” It is more appropriate to understand “πορευθεὶς” in 3:19 and 3:22 as having the same meaning.³⁸ The phrase “into heaven”

³³ Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 155-56; Dalton, *Proclamation*, 162. cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 255.

³⁴ Bandstra, “Making Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison,” 122.

³⁵ A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 860-61; Daniel D. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 625 n. 33; BDF §339.1.

³⁶ Bandstra says, “It certainly could be taken as a modal participle, expressing the manner or means by which an action takes place: ‘And in that state, by means of his going further, he made proclamation.’” Bandstra, “Making Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison,” 121.

³⁷ Bandstra, “Making Proclamation to the Spirits in Prison,” 121.

³⁸ Dalton, *Proclamation*, 160; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 258; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 209; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 186. Additionally, the employment of πορεύομαι in 1 Enoch is for “going” and proclaiming in 1 Enoch 12:4-6; 13:1-10. Pierce,

in 3:22 also shows the ascending of Christ in 1 Peter 3:19. In addition, “*πορευθείς*” identifies Christ’s ascending to heaven for the proclamation of victory in the frame of 3:19-22.³⁹

In addition, 1 Peter mentions that Christ “proclaimed” (*ἐκήρυξεν*). This word (*κηρύσσω*) is also employed more neutrally in the New Testament (Luke 12:3; Rom 2:21; Rev 5:2) and the LXX (Gen 41:43; Exod 36:6; 2 Kings 10:20; Esth 6:9; Jonah 1:2; Luke 4:19; 8:39; Rev 5:2). The proclamation of victory over imprisoned spirits rather than preaching the gospel after Christ’s resurrection coheres in the context of 3:18-22.

4. The Spirits in the Prison

Concerning the imprisoned spirits of 1 Peter 3:19-20, many scholars have identified the spirits to whom Christ proclaimed victory as the evil angels who had sexual relationship with women as shown in 1 Enoch 12:4.⁴⁰ The “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-4

Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ, 220.

39 Elliott presents the framework of 3:19-21 to support the idea of ascension for *πορευθείς*:

- v.19a. *πορευθείς* to the spirits in prison
- v.20. Noah and family saved through water
- v.21. baptism now saves you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- v.22. *πορευθείς* into heaven with cosmic powers subjected to him

Elliott, *1 Peter*, 653.

40 Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 188. Concerning the relationship between *πνεύματα* in 3:19 and *πνεύματα* in 4:6, some scholars understand that these refer to the same dead people. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 110; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 289; D. J. Horrell, “Who Are ‘The Dead’ and When Was the Gospel Preached to Them?: The Interpretation of 1 Pet 4.6,” *NTS* 49 (2003): 70-89. However, there are differences within these verses. First, different verbs are used, “*κηρύσσω*” and “*εὐαγγελίζω*.” Second, *πνεύματα* can also be differentiated from *νεκρός*. Third, while 4:6 presents encouragement for embattled Christians

were evil angels who were imprisoned (2 Pet 2:4. cf. Jude 6 and Rev 20:3, 7). Thomas Schreiner says, “this interpretation was standard in the Jewish literature of Peter’s day (see 1 Enoch 6-19, 21, 86-88; 106:13-17; Jub. 4:15, 22; 5:1; CD 2:17-19; 1QapGen 2:1; T. Reu. 5:6-7; T. Naph. 3:5; 2 Bar. 56:10-14; cf. Josephus, Ant. 1.73).”⁴¹

However, the identity of the spirits, whether evil angels or disobedient human beings, in text of 1 Peter 3:19 itself is obscure. *Πνεύματα* can refer to “spirits” as human beings in Hebrew 12:23. There are more examples of employing *πνεῦμα* for human beings in the New Testament (Luke 26:37-39, Acts 23:8f.), as well as *πνεύματα* in the LXX (Numbers 16:22; 27:16). In the Jewish tradition, human beings are referred to as *πνεύματα* in 1 Enoch (9:3, 10; 20:3, 6; 22: 5-7, 11-13; 98:3, 10 103:3-4, 8), which is especially connected with 1 Peter 3:19. Additionally, Clad T. Pierce notes that in the Jewish tradition the idea of spirits in prison includes both evil angels and dead people.⁴²

In addition, the sins of human beings are presented in 1 Enoch

regardless of rejection and death, 3:19 shows the sovereignty of Christ over all the spirits. Fourth, these two verses do not have structural agreement. In addition, a second chance for those who died while rejecting the gospel cannot be an acceptable meaning of 4:1-6. Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 290-91; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 206-8; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 730-31.

⁴¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 188.

⁴² Pierce says, “The relevant material contains numerous examples of fallen angels, spirits, and humans being imprisoned either in a remote part of the world or the underworld (I *En* 10:4-8, 11-15; 14:1-7; 18-19 [fiery pit at the ends of earth and heaven]; 22:1-14 [neither in earth nor heaven]; 27:1-5; 46:4-8; 54:2; 67:1-13; 88:3; 103:6 [Sheoll]; *Jub* 5:6; 4Q511 frg. 30 1-3; 11Q11 frg. 4 *iv* 7-12; frg. 4 v 8-10; 1QM *xiv* 17-18; Tob 8:3; Ben Sira_14:16; 17:27; 21:10; 22:11; *Sib. Or.* 1:100-03, 115-19; Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4.” Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ*, 221.

as leading to the flood (1 Enoch 8:1; 9:6; 10:1-3, 16; 11:1; 19:1; 22:8-13; 32:6). Human beings are destroyed in the flood of Noah's time (85:3-8; 86:2; 88:1-89:1; 93:9; 91:5-10; 106:16). Other Jewish tradition connects human sin to the deluge of Noah (Jub 5:3-5, 8; 7:20-25; 2 En 10:4-5; 34:1-3; and T. Reub. 6-7). The account of Genesis 6-8 records God's determination to destroy the earth on account of the evil of humanity. Therefore, the identity of the "spirits" in prison has the possibility of including both evil angels and human beings who are disobedient. If the imprisoned spirits include evil angels, there is no ground for the position that Christ preached the gospel to the dead during his descent.

IV. 1 Peter 3:19 Within the Context of 3:18-3:22

Now I will examine Christ's proclamation after the resurrection in the context of 3:18-22. Christ's resurrection and proclamation of victory to the spirits during his ascension are the main theme in 3:18-22. While considering this main theme, we may examine the characteristics of Christ's proclamation in 1 Peter 3:19, which occurred in the time after his resurrection.

1. The Resurrection of Christ (3:18)

The text in 3:18 supports the idea that what Christ proclaims to the dead people in 3:19 is not the gospel. The suffering of Christ does not support the idea that Christ preached the gospel to unbelievers. The truth of Christ's death and resurrection in

3:18 must not only serve as an example but must also “assure Christians of their own eventual victory and sustain them in their present suffering.”⁴³ The resurrection should result in the proclamation of victory not only over the supernatural angels but also over the persecutors themselves. The proclamation of victory to the evil entities is also connected with the idea that those who persecuted believers in the previous passage will “be ashamed” (3:16). The verb “be ashamed” (*καταισχυνῶσιν*) designates the judgment of the last day.⁴⁴ Believers’ suffering and endurance of persecution will make their enemies ashamed through Christ’s victory that originated with his resurrection. The shame of unbelievers is not compatible with the idea of preaching the gospel to dead people. The idea of Christ’s preaching the good news to the dead, who did not believe, is implausible since these unbelievers will be ashamed.

2. Disobedient Spirits in Noah’s Flood (3:20)

The analogy of Noah in 3:20-21 shows God’s saving victory over the evil generation by the flood.⁴⁵ The ark of Noah is a mark of salvation in connection with water, but this symbol is for the deliverance of the family of Noah, not the disobedient people. The flood was aimed at destroying the disobedient people, while the water carries out Noah’s deliverance from the evil world.⁴⁶ God’s saving of eight persons through water⁴⁷ is

⁴³ Best, *1 Peter*, 143.

⁴⁴ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 177; Also, Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 236.

⁴⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 262.

⁴⁶ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 266.

also intended for the believers of 1 Peter who were also oppressed by enemies.⁴⁸

This idea connects with the victorious proclamation to the spirits in 3:19 because the patient waiting of God means the salvation not of the disobedient spirits in 3:19 but of believers. God saves the righteous through the destruction of their enemies who are disobedient and are symbolized as the spirits in prison.⁴⁹ Elliott asserts, "On the other hand, assurance of the condemnation of all those who disobey, both angels and humans, along with the certainty of Christ's control of the cosmic powers would provide significant comfort to Christian believers who were under attack by disobedient Gentiles and who were wondering about the certainty of God's justice."⁵⁰ Those who "did not obey" (ἀπειθήσασιν) are disobedient people at the time of Noah's flood. The participle "ἀπειθήσασιν" could be considered as causal and gives the reason for the imprisonment in 3:19.⁵¹ God's patient waiting (ἀπεξεδέχετο ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία) is revealed by his postponing of judgment, a merciful act to those who are disobedient people in the New Testament (Rom 2:4; 3:25). In addition, Genesis 6:5-13 shows that the flood mainly resulted

47 "Through water" (δι' ὕδατος) may be understood as locative. The water "led to his deliverance not only from the flood itself, but from the evil which infested the world and which the flood was intended to destroy." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 266.

48 Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 191.

49 Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 191.

50 Elliott, *1 Peter*, 662.

51 Ἀπειθήσασιν is predicative rather than attributive. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 262. Achtemeier translates ἀπειθήσασιν as "because they were disobedient." Also, Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 190-91.

from human sin in the days of Noah.

3. Baptism of Christians (3:21)

The idea of Christ's proclamation of victory in 3:19 is echoed in baptism in 3:21. Believers who are saved from these disobedient spirits "ought to understand the way in which baptism saves by means of Christ's resurrection."⁵² The recipients should consider the power of salvation through resurrection because the deliverance from the evil spirits who persecute believers would be identical with the deliverance of Noah through water.⁵³ The waters of the flood play a crucial role as a type for Christians who are the recipients of 1 Peter.⁵⁴ The baptism of Christians, "συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν" in 3:21 is also "empowered by Christ's defeat of angelic powers that represent the source and power of evil in the world."⁵⁵

"Συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν" is understood as an objective genitive because an objective genitive fits the context of 1 Peter.⁵⁶ This interpretation is based, first, on the understanding of the parallel phrase "σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου" (a removal of dirt from the body) that identifies as objective

⁵² Baptism is considered as a way of redemption in relation to Noah and the flood. Achtemeier 266 "God's salvation has continued within old and new Israel because v.20 intends to relate between flood (type) and baptism (antitype)." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 267.

⁵³ "O in 3:21 most likely has the antecedent "water." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 213-14; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 266-67; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 193.

⁵⁴ Christians are saved from death by his resurrection (Rom 6:3-5; Col 2:12).

⁵⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 272.

⁵⁶ When it is understood as subjective, it says that the pledge to obey baptismal vows originates from a good conscience.

genitive. Second, the pledge of baptisands to “hold fast to sound consciousness of God and so act appropriately is attractive theologically and fits well into the larger context of the letter.”⁵⁷ Third, when we consider the meaning of “*συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθῶν*” in 3:16, “*συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν*” can be considered “a pledge to maintain a constant mindfulness of this will.”⁵⁸ Baptism precedes the mindfulness of God’s will, and the mindfulness of God’s will “follows from baptism.”⁵⁹ That is, in 1 Peter believers can pledge to God with good conscience because they understand the victory of Christ through his resurrection over the evil spirits who persecuted believers.

The proclamation of victory in 3:19 is supported by the characteristics of the pledge with good conscience. Those who pledge with a good conscience “will stand in stark contrast to the ‘disobedient spirits’ of 3:19.”⁶⁰ The identity of these disobedient spirits also has an antitype for those who slander and revile believers in the previous passage. The pledge made with a good conscience in baptism is identical with the imperative in 3:16.⁶¹ As noted above, those who revile the good behavior of believers will be ashamed because of Christ’s victory through the resurrection. When believers in 1 Peter maintain a good conscience (present participle, *ἔχοντες*), the revilers will be put

⁵⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 272.

⁵⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 681. Elliott presents, “In 1 Peter (also 3:16; 21), as elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Acts 23:1; 24:15; Rom 9:1; 1 Tim 1:18-19; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 13:18), *συνείδησις* implies not merely knowledge of God but also sensitivity to the divine will concerning conduct, or ‘compliance with God’s will.’”

⁵⁹ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 681.

⁶⁰ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 681.

⁶¹ “*συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθῶν*” in 3:19. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 630.

to shame (3:16). The focal point that relates 3:16 and 3:19 shows first that the disobedient spirits in 3:19 could not be saved through water. They, consequently cannot receive the gospel of Christ to be saved. Second, these disobedient spirits who include human beings, are related to the revilers in verse 16. Third, the message of Christ should be the victory through the resurrection, not the gospel for disobedient spirits. The pledge⁶² to God with a good conscience is made, “in the light of the act of baptism, which is made salvific by its relationship to Christ’s resurrection.”⁶³

Baptism consoles the believers by assuring Christ’s victory over all evil entities and encourages believers to maintain a good conscience in the course of their suffering.⁶⁴ The death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ are logically connected, and “having been made alive” (3:18-19) resounds in 3:21.⁶⁵ J. N. D. Kelly maintains, “Now he sketches the sure basis of their confidence: this is nothing less than the victory which Christ has won, by His death, resurrection and ascension, over the forces

⁶² ἐπερώτημα is understood as 1) “question,” “inquiry,” and “interrogation,” *TDNT* 2:688-89; 2) “prayer,” or “appeal,” Grudem, *1 Peter*, 163; Beare, *First Peter*, 175; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 217; and 3) “pledge,” or “promise,” Dalton, *Proclamation to Spirits*, 224-29; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 162-63; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 270-72; *NIDNTT* 2:880-81; *EDNT* 2:21; Best, *1 Peter*, 148; Selwyn, *First Peter*, 205-6; Davids, *First Peter*, 145; Hill, “On Suffering and Baptism in 1 Peter,” 59; France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 275; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 679-80; Schreiner, *1 Peter*, 196. Achtemeier maintains, “On the other hand, since the verbal noun itself, along with the verb from which it derives, is frequently used in the papyri as part of contractual language, one can take the word to mean the pledge one takes to uphold the terms of the agreement.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 272. From this view, the idea of “pledge” in the baptismal confession can be accepted.

⁶³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 272.

⁶⁴ Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ*, 236.

⁶⁵ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 644.

of evil, the fruits of which Christians share as a result of their baptism.”⁶⁶

4. The Victory of Christ (3:22)

The victory of Christ over all the supernatural beings emphasizes Jesus' ascension after his resurrection in 3:22.⁶⁷ In 1 Peter the message of the subjugation of evil beings brings hope for the believers who are persecuted. In addition, the allusion to Psalms 110:1 reveals the identity of these supernatural beings who are put under Christ's authority.⁶⁸ As shown above, the same word “*πορευθείς*” in 3:19 refers to Christ's victory over evil supernatural beings after his death and resurrection.⁶⁹ Dalton also maintains, “This began with the same theme as that of 3:22 (ascension of Christ and His triumph over the hostile spirits) and then went on to develop a baptismal catechesis based on the idea of the flood (3:20f).”⁷⁰ In sum, the word “*πορευθείς*” (going) supports the idea of Christ's ascension in 3:19. The subjugation by Christ of all powers and the authority of Christ at the right hand of God demonstrate that the content of the proclamation

⁶⁶ Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 146.

⁶⁷ These phrases are taken from Psalms 2, 8, and 110. These Psalms include the defeat of earthly enemies. The New Testament employs these phrases with reference to the victory of the resurrected Christ. Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ*, 217.

⁶⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 64.

⁶⁹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 188. Elliott also says, “The following verse (3:22) elaborates on the further cosmic implications of Christ's resurrection, and this concluding stress on resurrection unites with v 18e (‘having been made alive’) to set the thought of w 19-21 within the context of Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 677.

⁷⁰ Dalton, *Proclamation*, 237; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 274.

in 3:19 is victory, not the preaching of the gospel.

V. Conclusion

The announcement of his victory is the content of Christ's proclamation to the spirits in prison. The idea of preaching the gospel to dead people is not acceptable in the text of 3:18-22. The order, "Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension," in 3:18-19 is supported by "ἐν ᾧ καί" and the context of verses 3:18-22. In addition, "πορευθείς" identifies Christ's proclamation of victory with his ascension rather than his descent. With this message about Christ's resurrection and victory, 1 Peter comforts the recipients who are being persecuted by enemies. Thus, after his resurrection, Christ's proclamation of victory to the evil entities occurred when he ascended to heaven.

[초록]**베드로전서 3:18-22에 나타난 옥에 있는 영들에 대한
그리스도의 선포**

김명일(시온성교회)

학자들은 그리스도의 사흘 간의 죽음을 이해하는데 영향을 끼친 베드로전서 3:19의 지옥강하의 개념에 대해 논의해왔다. 초대교회 이후, 베드로전서 3:19는 지옥강하를 지지하는 구절로 이해되었다. 그러나, W. J. Dalton 이후, 최근 학자들은 베드로전서 3:19이 지옥으로 내려감 보다는 그리스도의 승귀를 지지하는 구절로 이해하는 경향이 있다. 본 소논문은 베드로전서 3:18-22의 문맥에서 그리스도의 승리의 선포를 제시하고 이 점이 지옥강하와 적합하지 않다는 것을 보이려고 한다. 3:18-22의 문맥에서 죽은 자들에게 복음을 전했다는 개념은 적합하지 않다. 또한, 승리의 선포를 통해 고난받는 성도들을 위로하고자 하는 의도가 이 구절에 있다는 점을 제시하고자한다. 베드로전서 3:19는 3:18-22의 문맥에서 지옥강하보다 오히려 그리스도께서 승귀하실 때, 적들에 대한 그의 승리의 선포가 일어났다는 것을 가르친다.

키워드: 베드로전서, 지옥강하, 사흘 동안의 죽음, 그리스도의 승천, 옥에 갇힌 영들, 그리스도의 선포

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