

A REAL RIDDLE
1 PETER 3:18-20 / 10-17-19 / WED

I. THE POSITION OF CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (200 A.D.)

A. His belief about this passage.

1. Jesus went to "hades" during the three days he was in the tomb.
2. He proclaimed salvation to the dead souls of those there since the Flood.

B. Problems with his position,

1. This view indicates people have a second chance to be saved after death.
2. The Bible does not mention any second chance, in fact, it says just the opposite—Heb. 9:27 and 2 Peter 2:4-9.
3. Since Peter's first letter encourages Christians to endure suffering to the end what would be their motive to do so if everyone gets a second chance to be saved when we die?

II. THE POSITION OF AUGUSTINE (400 A.D.)

A. His belief about this passage.

1. The "pre-existent" Christ preached salvation through Noah to those alive before the Flood.
2. We know that Noah was a preacher—2 Peter 2:5.

2 Peter 2:5

.....Noah, a preacher of righteousness....

3. We also know the spirit of Christ spoke to and through the O.T. prophets--1 Peter 1:10-11.

B. Problems with his position.

1. Peter isn't talking about the pre-existent Christ but the Christ who was crucified and raised from the dead.
2. Also the preaching Peter mentioned occurred when the spirits were in prison not people alive before the Flood.

III. A THIRD POSITION.

A. What is this third position?

1. The resurrected Christ proclaimed his victory over death to the imprisoned spirits.
2. These imprisoned spirits were fallen angels or demons—Eph. 6:12 and Col 2:15.

B. Points in support of this position.

1. “spirits” (small s) refers to angels not human beings.
 - a. “Spirit” with a capital S refers to the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The only exception to the word “spirit” not referring to people is in Heb. 12:23. But notice they are called righteous people not disobedient people as Peter wrote about.
2. “prison” is never referred to as a place of punishment.
 - a. Rev. 20:7 says Satan will be placed in prison during the millennium.
 - b. Rev. 18:2 also says there is a place where demons will be held.
 - c. Genesis 6:4-5 may identify the fallen angels Jesus will address according to Peter.
3. The N.T. uses several words for “hell”.
 - a. “Gehenna” is the word referring to a place of punishment.
 - b. “Hades” is the word referring to “the abode or place of the dead”.
 - c. Acts 2:27 quotes from Psalms 16 that the Messiah will go to hades not hell.
 - d. Jewish thought was that when a believer dies they go to hades until they are resurrected and enter into heaven. Another thought is that Jesus emptied heaven when he ascended there—Eph. 4:8.
4. “preached” (KJV) can also mean “proclaimed” rather than evangelize—Rom. 2:21 and Gal. 5:11.