

Noah, Baptism, and a Good Conscience (1 Peter 3:19–22)

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I. Introduction

1 Peter 3:19–22—is a passage that’s significantly misunderstood by millions. Various Christian denominations utilize this passage to argue in favor of what is called “**baptismal regeneration**”—the notion that people are born-again the very moment they are baptized in water. This paper will argue that 1 Peter 3:19–22 does not refer to humans obtaining eternal life on the basis of water baptism.

II. Background and Context

Audience: Primarily, _____ believers in Asia Minor

Theme: _____

III. Questions regarding 1 Peter 3:18–22

A. Why is it better to _____ for doing good?

1. We’re _____ (1 Pet 3:14; Matt 5:10–12)
2. This is what Jesus did for _____ (1 Pet 3:18)

B. _____ are these spirits?

1. They are _____ “in prison” (i.e., as Peter wrote his epistle—1 Pet 3:19)
2. In an exclusive section of hell known as _____ (2 Pet 2:4)

C. _____ are these spirits?

1. They are entities who were _____ disobedient to God (1 Pet 3:20a)
2. They are the “sons of _____” (Gen 6:3)—an OT title for _____ beings—both good and bad.
3. They are _____ who took on human form, procreated with human women, and were banished to Tartarus to wait for God’s judgment (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6).

D. When did Jesus make _____ them?

1. In the days of _____ while the ark was being prepared (1 Pet 3:20b)
2. Most likely, Jesus preached to these spirits (not in person, but through the Spirit resting upon Noah) concerning their _____ banishment to Tartarus.

E. Why did Peter address the topic of _____ ?

1. He was writing to people who were suffering due to _____ people empowered by evil spirits (1 Pet 1:6; 2:12, 15, 19–25; 3:1; 13–17; 4:12–16)
_____ wrote of these evil spirits (Eph 2:2; 6:12 *ff.*)
2. The days in which Peter wrote were _____ to Noah's day (Gen 6:5; 6:11)

F. Is Peter writing about gaining eternal life through _____ baptism?

Two reasons he is **not**:

1. The silence of _____ gospel regarding water baptism in relation to eternal life
2. "Saves" is a _____ tense verb "now saving us" (1 Pet 3:21).
"us" = believers (Peter and his Christian readers)

G. What kind of _____ is Peter referring to?

1. Peter is not talking about an _____ type of baptism involving water that cleanses one from ceremonial uncleanness ("not the removal of the filth of the flesh"—see "washed" [*baptizō*] in Luke 11:37–38)
2. Peter is speaking about an _____ kind of washing here—a spiritual one.
3. Peter is writing about baptism _____ and not water baptism.

Zane C. Hodges: "Baptism by the Spirit is that profound spiritual reality which makes us dead to sin and alive to God. It 'divorces' us from sin, giving us a GOOD CONSCIENCE regarding the past and enabling us in the power of a new life to maintain it in the present" (*emphasis in original*).

“There is also an **antitype** [a NT parallel to the OT ark] which is now delivering us [believers]—**Spirit baptism** (not an outward, ceremonial cleansing, but an inward cleansing—the realization of a good conscience toward God)...” (3:21)

The OT Type: Noah’s Ark	The NT Antitype: The Baptism of the Spirit
The <u>ark</u> , which delivered Noah and his family,	Spirit baptism , which is now progressively delivering believers,
from God’s _____ judgment of sinful mankind through the waters of the flood,	from a bad _____ through their union with Christ and the indwelling Spirit,
to a new world after the flood, (see Gen 8:15-17),	to a “walk in newness of life,” (see Rom 6:4),
is a type —an OT example foreshadowing Spirit baptism .	is the antitype —the NT experience foreshadowed by Noah’s ark .

Through our baptism in the Spirit, we’ve been connected to the **death** and **resurrection** of Christ:

Romans 6:3–5----- ...do you not know that as many of us as were baptized [by the Spirit] into Christ Jesus were baptized into His **death**? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through [Spirit] baptism into **death**, that just as Christ was **raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also **should walk in newness of life**. ⁵ For if we have been united together [with Christ] in the likeness of His **death**, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His **resurrection***...

Romans 8:11-----¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who **raised Jesus from the dead** dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you**.

Christ also **ascended** to the Father’s right hand, v. 22:

“...**angels** and **authorities**, and **powers** having been made subject to Him.”

So, through Spirit baptism, we not only share Christ’s death and resurrection, but His _____ as well! Peter is telling his persecuted readers that they do not need to fear the satanically inspired threats or hatred of unbelievers. And neither do we! They were to focus on having a **good conscience**—i.e., on **maintaining their moral integrity**—as they shared their hope in Christ with humility and respect to a lost and dying world.

IV. Conclusion

Christ has brought us to God and has been given all authority in heaven and earth. Therefore, there's no need for us to fear those who hate us (or the evil spirits that enable them). Our baptism in the Spirit has made us dead to sin and alive to God. It's united us to Christ. It's given us **a good conscience** (regarding our past sins) and supplies us the grace to **maintain** our good conscience day-by-day as we walk in newness of life before our adversaries! The Holy Spirit's baptizing work continues to deliver us and helps us maintain our moral integrity. Yes, we live in the midst of a world very much like Noah's, but God has told us what to do:

...**sanctify the Lord God** in your hearts, and always **be ready to give a defense** to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ **having a good conscience**, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to **suffer for doing good** than for doing evil (1 Peter 3:15-17).