Spring Valley Baptist Church

Confused: Difficult Verses In The Bible

1 Peter 3:18-22 - Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit (some translations say “in the spirit). [19] After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— [20] to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, [21] and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Where Was Jesus Between His Death and Resurrection?

His body was in the grave.

His spirit was proclaiming victory.

Sheol – Old Testament place of the dead

Hades – New Testament place of the dead

Before the resurrection, the souls of all people went to a place for the dead. This place was divided into two compartments:

1) For the righteous, it was a referred to as “Abraham’s Bosom” (Luke 16:19-31) and “Paradise” (Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4, Revelation 2:7). It is a place of peace and rest. After the crucifixion, these people were taken into heaven and Paradise was relocated there.
2) For the wicked and unrighteous, it is a place of torment as they await the final judgement (Revelation 20:11-15).

Jesus And “Imprisoned Spirits” - 1 Peter 3:19-20

The “imprisoned spirits” are the demons of Genesis 6:1-8.

Jude 1:6-7 – The angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. [7] In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

2 Peter 2:4 - For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.

What Was Jesus Doing Between His Death and Resurrection?

Three Views

View 1: He was leading those in Paradise to Heaven.

Ephesians 4:7-10 - To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. [8] This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” [9] (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? [10] He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

View 2: He was proclaiming victory to demons.

1 Peter 3:19-20 - After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— [20] to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

The word “proclamation” was a word that was used for a herald who was bringing news to people. It was often used when a conquering warrior returned with his army leading captives from the opposing side that had been captured in battle. Some mistakenly think that Jesus went to proclaim the gospel to the dead in order to give them a second chance at salvation. However, Peter would have used a different word (*euangelion,* from which we get the word “evangelism”*)* if Jesus had done this.

View 3: Both views are true.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 - Our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. [51] But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! [52] It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. [53] For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. [54] Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. [55] O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” [56] For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. [57] But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. [58] So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.