

ISSUE

18.9

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

February 28,,
2016

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Jack Langley
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Will the Dead Get a Second Chance?

By Kyle Pope

Since the development of the unscriptural concept of Purgatory by the Roman Catholic Church man has often dreamed that an opportunity exists after death for those who are not right with God to be saved. If that were true it would be a direct contradiction of many clear teachings found in Scripture.

Paul, for example, taught, **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”** (2 Cor. 5:10, NKJV). If we will receive judgment for the things done **“in the body,”** it is clear that we cannot change our spiritual condition once the spirit has departed from the body in death (cf. Jas. 2:26). The Hebrew writer taught, **“it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27). If **“the judgment”** is said to follow the one death of the body, any condition the soul faces while awaiting final judgment cannot alter one’s spiritual condition. Finally, while the Bible does teach that departed souls wait for final judgment in the place of the

dead, known in the Old Testament as *Sheol* and in the New Testament as *Hades*, upon death one's spiritual condition (as determined by life **"in the body"**) is set. Two realms are separated from one another in Hades. Jesus called one **"Abraham's bosom"** (Luke 16:22) or **"paradise"** (Luke 23:43) and the other **"torments"** (Luke 16:23). Jesus makes it clear in His account of Abraham's discourse with the rich man that souls within these realms cannot cross from

one place to the other. Abraham declared, **"those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us"** (Luke 16:26).

In spite of this there is a passage in Peter's first epistle that has been used to try to argue for some type of purgatorial second chance after death. The text reads:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

It is clear from Jesus' words to the thief on the cross and from Peter's teaching on the Day of Pentecost that upon Jesus' death He went into Hades (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27-31). The argument is that Peter's phrase **"spirits in prison"** (in the text above) refers to spirits in the hadean realm, and the words **"went and preached to"** describe Jesus teaching souls who were in the hadean realm during His time in Hades prior to His resurrection.

We would agree that the phrase **"spirits in prison"** refers to souls who are presently in the hadean realm. It is clear, however, that the words **"went and preached to"** are not talk-



ing about preaching that was done in Hades, but preaching that was done by “the Spirit of Christ” through Noah to those **“who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared.”**

How can we know this? First, we know to which realm of Hades Jesus went upon His death. He told the thief on the cross, **“today you will be with Me in paradise”** (Luke 23:43). Those in Abraham’s bosom (or paradise) were not the disobedient who perished in the flood, and there is no reason to believe that He crossed from **“paradise”** into **“torments”** during His time in Hades. Second, we should note that throughout Peter’s writings great emphasis is placed on the Divine Spirit’s operation within prophets in the past. For example, in the first chapter Peter addresses prophets of the past who foretold the coming of salvation in Christ. In discussing this he describes Divine inspiration in an interesting way. In their prophecies they were, **“searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating”** (1 Pet. 1:11). Peter says here that prophecy came through the inspiration of **“the Spirit of Christ”**—what a powerful affirmation of the Deity of Christ! Peter would declare in his second epistle that prophets spoke **“as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”** (2 Pet. 1:21), but in 1 Peter

1:11 he says **“the Spirit of Christ”** worked within them. Peter affirms that Jesus is God and there is a unity of work and purpose that exists between the three persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

When Peter says that Jesus **“went and preached to”** these souls he is returning back to the point he made in the first chapter. Just as the **“Spirit of Christ”** worked in the prophets of the past, the **“Spirit of Christ”** worked in Noah **“a preacher of righteousness”** (2 Pet. 2:5)—**“while the ark was being prepared”** (1 Pet. 3:20). Christ’s Spirit was working in Noah to warn the souls who perished in the flood. The words **“souls in prison”** describes their present condition, not the time when the



preaching took place.

Today we hear people use similar language all the time. On the news we may see a mother weeping at the graveside of her son who turned to crime and died through his involvement in criminal behavior. She might say, “I warned that boy in the grave that this is where it could lead!” Now when is she say-

ing that she warned him? We wouldn’t think she was speaking of a warning that happened after death. We would understand that her warning happened when the boy was alive. The words “in the grave” refer to the boy’s present condition, not the time of the warning.

That is Peter’s point. The rebellious souls who lived **“in the days of Noah”** had a chance to respond to the Divine warning, but that chance was while they were alive. Christ’s Spirit preached to them, but He did so through the preaching of Noah in the days prior to the flood **“while the ark was being prepared.”** This passage offers no hope for a second chance after death—it is a solemn warning to us to listen to the words of Christ now, while our spirits are **“in the body”** (2 Cor. 5:10).



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