

1. Next - who are these imprisoned spirits in verse 19?
 - A. The description of these spirits is found in verse 20 - as those who had not obeyed God ... *during the days that Noah was building the ark.*
 - B. The people during Noah's time, that is, all the people who perished during the flood. Many have interpreted the text to refer to Christ's preaching through Noah to those who lived while Noah was building the ark. According to this view, Christ was not personally present but spoke by means of the Holy Spirit through Noah. The spirits are not literally in prison but refer to those who were snared in sin during Noah's day.
 - C. Old Testament saints who died and were liberated by Christ between his death and resurrection.
 - D. Christ in the interval between his death and resurrection descended to hell and preached to the sinful human beings who perished during Noah's flood - offering them the opportunity to repent and be saved. Most of those who adopt such an interpretation infer from this that God will offer a second chance to all those in hell, especially to those who never heard the gospel. If salvation was offered to the wicked generation of Noah, surely it will also be extended to all sinners separated from God.
 - E. Angelic beings in general. Linguistically, this can be supported by the use of "spirits" for supernatural beings (for example, "evil spirits," as used in the Gospels). But arguing against it is the reference to the time of Noah.
2. The incarcerated spirits that Peter refers to here seems to be the same ones he mentions in a similar context in his second letter. (2 Peter 2:4-5)
3. What did Jesus preach?
4. Christ did not visit these spirits with an evangelistic message but with a triumphant proclamation.
5. Where did Jesus go to preach?
 - A. In the lower regions, that is, "Sheol" or "Hades," the place of the dead. This would be the natural and logical preference of those who interpret "spirits" as referring to people.
 - B. In the upper regions, which is the logical preference for those who hold that Christ preached to the spirits during His ascension.
6. Two Greek words help further explain the probable location of - prison - seen in verse 19.
7. First is the word *gehenna* - which stems from the Greek word *geenna*. This is a transliteration of the Hebrew *Gaye Hinnom* (the valley of Hinnom - or the valley of the sons of Hinnom). (Matthew 5:29, 10:28, 23:15 - English word "hell")

8. Next is the word *hades* - which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *Sheol*.
(Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:27, 31)
9. The word *hades* was the usual word the Greeks used when they referred to the unseen world.
10. The word occurs 11 times in the N.T. The corresponding Hebrew word *Sheol* occurs 65 times in the O.T.
11. The word *sheol* refers to the state of death. Jesus gives us our best description of *hades* in O.T. times and up until the time of His ascension.
12. It consisted of 2 separate areas divided by an impassable gulf. On one side was a place of conscience torment - the other side was referred to as "Abraham's bosom" or "Paradise" - a place of conscience rest and comfort. (Luke 16)