

INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

HOPE BEYOND THE CREEDS: FOCUSING FULLY ON JESUS CHRIST

1 PETER 3:18–22



The Heart of the Matter

Little did Peter realize when he wrote this portion of his letter that it would one day be considered the most difficult section of his writings . . . perhaps of the whole New Testament. Qualified and capable interpreters have wrestled with the correct meaning of this paragraph for centuries. At first glance, it may not seem all that significant, but in reality, it represents one of the knottiest problem passages in Scripture. To unravel the difficulties, we must maintain an understanding of the context and a careful grasp of the meaning of the terms Peter used. Without that, we'll miss the point he was attempting to convey.



Discovering the Way

1. General Observations of the Paragraph

Peter illustrated the principle that blessings follow suffering by reminding us of the experience of Jesus Christ—His crucifixion, proclamation, resurrection, and exaltation.

2. Central Theme of the Passage (1 Peter 3:18, 22)

The central theme of this passage is Jesus Christ—His atoning work on the cross and His continued intercession on our behalf.

3. Critical Analysis of the Problems (1 Peter 3:19–21)

If we hope to gain from this passage a greater understanding of Christ's work, we must unravel two problems: the identity of the spirits in prison and the true nature of baptism.

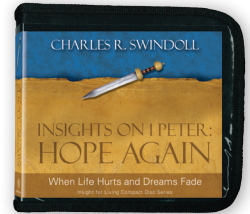


Starting Your Journey

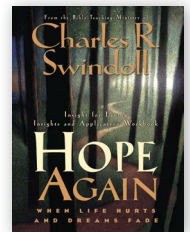
Two pragmatic principles emerge from this text. First, when unjust suffering seems unbearable, remember the cross. And second, when the fear of death steals your peace, remember the resurrection.



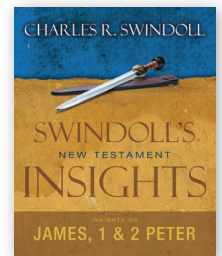
Tools for Digging Deeper



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INSIGHT FOR LIVING

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