

*Biblical Meaning of Easter Signs and Symbols*  
*Commentary on the Slides of the Accompanying PowerPoint Program*

Edward D. Seely, Th.M., Ph. D.  
Pastor, College and Seminary Professor

*NOTE: This commentary is provided to supply further important information on some of the slides in the PowerPoint program, “[The Biblical Significance of Easter Signs and Symbols](#),” which is located in the Christology section on the [Christian Theology](#) page of my WordPress Website at <https://fromacorntoak12.com/>. Most of the slides are self-explanatory. The following additional comments pertain to the specific slides identified. A slide with a URL contains a link to a brief video accompanying that slide.*

Slide 2: Introduction

1. The use of symbols to convey meanings has been occurring since prehistoric times. In fact, inscribing words is simply a more advanced form of symbolizing realities, as linguists and anthropologists in general attest.
2. God’s people in the Old Testament made much use of symbolism, many symbols being commanded by God (e.g., the tassels in Numbers 15:39), seventy percent of whose children use the right hemisphere of the cerebrum predominately: that hemisphere being the sphere oriented to processing images, visual and nonverbal understanding and communication.
3. The early and medieval church made heavy use of symbolism also as a means of communicating the Gospel to illiterate people, who formed a major segment of the population in those times. Still today, these branches of the global church of Christ employ rich symbolism to convey the Bible’s teaching of God’s plan of salvation. The Eastern Orthodox Church is one example, as is also, the Eastern Catholic Church, that makes extensive use of iconography similar to the Orthodox churches.

Slide 15: The Two Main Aspects of Easter Celebration (2) Easter Sunday

- Source: Francis X. Weiser, quoted in “Alleluia! Christ is Risen!” in *Glimpses: of people, events, life and faith from the Church Across the Ages*, Special Issue Easter, Christian History Institute Issue #100, 1998.

Slide 16: The Two Main Aspects of Easter Celebration (2) Easter Sunday

- In the sixteenth century, the church in the West accepted the new Gregorian calendar, but the church in the East, including the church in Russia, retained the Julian calendar. The use of the two different calendars explains why Easter is celebrated on different dates in the church throughout the world.

Slide 28: Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Video)

- Very significantly, the donkey was a symbol of Davidic royalty. Kings rode donkeys, not horses, thus Jesus was fulfilling a Messianic prophecy by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, also symbolizing humility and peace. (Zechariah 9:9)

- Hosanna means “Save please.” (See Psalm 118:25.)

Slide 32: The Lord’s Supper: Jesus Washes His Disciples’ Feet

The cartoon, though parsimonious and too brief, is closer to the point Jesus is making than too many today who mistakenly want to use this passage as the basis for making another sacrament. Here is a case where we have to be very careful in order to have “no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

The field of Biblical Hermeneutics (< Greek ἐρμηνεύω hermēneuō, to interpret), i.e., the discipline of Biblical interpretation, teaches the importance in Bible study of carefully reading a passage to ascertain whether the point being made is a principle or an application of a principle. In the present text, we see that Jesus is teaching a principle, not making a command. Notice the difference between John 13:15-17 and a little later in the same chapter, in 13:34-35 where Jesus does issue a command. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

In 13:15-17 it is clear in the English, but much clearer in the original Greek text, that Jesus is not making a command but teaching by word and deed a principle. When teaching God’s Word, it is important to consult an accurate commentary based on the Greek by an accredited authority. One such accurate scholar is R. C. H. Lenski who explains this text well.

15) This act of Jesus was free and voluntary, chosen by him for the purpose of teaching the disciples. In his love and his wisdom he “has given” (some copies have the aorist “did give”) them an example to follow. Just what this example covers is stated in the appositional ἵνα (*hina*, that) clause, which, of course, is non-final. This shows that “to be washing each others’ feet” is figurative and means literally, “that you keep doing, even as I did do to you,” καθώς, (*kathōs*, as) not ὅ, “in the same manner,” not “the same identical thing.” The example of Jesus is to guide them in what they do for each other; it is not for mere mechanical repetition in washing of feet. This answers the question as to whether Jesus intends to institute a symbolical rite or an actual sacrament, which his disciples are to repeat formally by actually washing each other’s feet. Such rites belong to the Old Testament only, they have disappeared from the New. The shadows are gone, the substance has come. No sacrament can be intended, for a direct command, “*This do*,” is absent, to say nothing of a promise of heavenly grace attached to the act. We should have to have both the specific command and the promise besides the water to constitute a sacrament. (*Lenski New Testament Commentary – The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel*, p. 927.)

16) Jesus has given the disciples an example, and he intends that they should not merely admire but should actually follow it. He knows what may prevent them from doing so: the feeling that they are just as good as others or even superior to others. Such comparisons he cuts off completely by his own personal example, which substitutes and calls for quite another and far more pertinent comparison. By his example Jesus has placed us where we must drop all other comparisons and compare ourselves only with him. Therefore the solemn declaration with the two “amen” of verity and the assurance of authority, “I say to you” (see 1:51). **Amen, amen, I say to you, A slave is not greater than his lord, nor one sent than the one that sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you keep doing them.** The statement about the slave and the one sent is, of course, axiomatic. It is the connection which lends peculiar force to the statement as here made. If any disciple of Jesus should ever think himself too great to stoop to menial tasks in serving his fellow-disciples, he can do so only by thinking himself greater than Jesus, his Lord, for this Lord had just stooped so low. And at once another comparison is added, for the Twelve are not to be disciples or believers only but are to hold the highest position and office in the church as the Lord's own representatives, ἀπόστολοι, “men sent,” apostles commissioned to found the church and to lead it for all time (by their writings). This high office does not lift them to a plane where they are too great for the menial service of love, for they can never be greater than Jesus, their Lord, who sent them. A far higher commission was his, and yet he had washed their feet. (Lenski, pp. 928-29)

17) It is all so transparent and self-evident and yet it must be made emphatic; for it is one thing to know and quite another to translate that knowledge into action. To procure that action Jesus does not drive with commands but draws with a promise. The first is a condition of reality: “if you know these things,” for Jesus rightly assumes that they do know them. The Greek uses ταῦτα, (*tauta*, these things) a plural, which conceives the object of the knowledge as composed of parts or items; the English cares nothing for this plural view and says simply “this.” Mere knowledge, however, no matter how true and excellent, brings no blessing. The adjective μακάριος (< *makarios*, blessed) is especially significant in this connection, for it denotes the joy and the satisfaction arising from possessing and experiencing the divine favor in the one or the other of its manifestations, C.-K. 711. Whereas he who thinks himself great feels disgraced by a menial task rendered to those beneath him, the true disciple of Jesus regards such a task as a great opportunity and reaps from it the feeling of joy and honor, for the Lord's favor and commendation rest upon him while engaged in such service. In this sense Jesus says, “blessed are you.”

But, of course, only “if you keep doing them.” Doing is emphatic over against mere knowing. The condition is now one of expectancy, “if you shall be doing them.” Jesus expects it of them, yet it is possible that they may disappoint him—will they? the condition asks. The present subjunctive is durative, “keep doing them” always and on every occasion. The very character of the disciples is thus to keep expressing itself. (Lenski, p. 929)

Slide 36: The Mount of Olives (Video)

<https://youtu.be/CfWp0PMSuol>

Slide 37: The Mount of Olives: Gethsemane (Video)

<https://youtu.be/GpvXqGRQ1mg>

Slide 38: The Mount of Olives: Jesus Prays While the Disciples Sleep (Video)

<https://youtu.be/81nOe8sO-Jo>

The accompanying video shows the place where, a strong tradition indicates, Jesus' prayed while the disciples slept in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

Slide 41: The Mount of Olives: The Betrayal of Judas (Video)

[https://youtu.be/\\_p3Qe1Vt8Lw](https://youtu.be/_p3Qe1Vt8Lw)

Slide 43: Jesus' Trek from Mount of Olives to Caiaphas & the Sanhedrin (Video)

<https://youtu.be/zmzVxUIXjOA>

Slide 46: Scourges and Pillar (Video)

<https://youtu.be/LIZc3GmFX8Q>

“Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.” (Mark 15:15)

Excavations at the site of the house of the high priest, Caiaphas, now located under the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu (Cock-Crow), reveal where and how prisoners were flogged, scourged. We see here how physically and emotionally devastating flogging was. Jews used rods and limited the number of stripes to forty, minus one; the number thirty-nine was to avoid a miscount that would exceed the limit of forty. In the scourging or flogging, the prisoner was stripped of his (women, senators, and soldiers, except deserters, were exempt from scourging) clothing, and his arms were inserted and bound in holes in the pillars in the prison, which can still be seen, as in this video. The binding was done not only to keep the prisoner from breaking free but also to keep him from falling on the floor before the full number of lashes were administered. Observe also in this video salt that still remains, which was thrown on the wounds to stop the bleeding and reduce infection for those prisoners who were not intended to be crucified or killed in any other way, which can still be seen on the floor of the prison at the base of the pillar where the prisoner was strapped.

Much worse, Jesus was flogged by the Romans, whose flogging method was so vicious that many prisoners did not survive it. The Romans used short-handled whips with several strips of leather that had pieces of acorn-shaped sheep bone or lead embedded toward and at the ends, which were designed to rip and tear chunks of flesh from the prisoner's back, buttocks, legs, and any part of the arms still exposed with each hit. Two floggers worked in tandem, one from each side. The blows were administered with full force, with the lead officer often shouting orders to produce more vigorous lashing, and there was no limit. As the outstanding New Testament scholar, R. C. H. Lenski, explains in his commentary on Mark 15:15, the effects of these Roman whips were horrific, as the "skin and flesh were gashed to the very bone in every direction, and deep, bloody holes were torn where the armed ends of the lashes struck."

Jesus' scourging took place at the αὐλή (*aulē*), a courtyard, palace, a large open space at the Praetorium (Mark 15:16), the magnificent palace built by Herod the Great and the governor's official residence in Jerusalem. Jesus' flogging was a horrific torture, not only physically, but also emotionally with all the hatred he endured while being flogged and after when he was brought into the Praetorium itself, while being mocked, spat upon, and having the crown of thorns beaten into his head "again and again." (Matthew 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20) Knowing of this practice and what occurred, helps us understand how Jesus started out carrying what some scholars believe to be the cross beam (the patibulum) of his cross (John 19:17)—though other scholars cite reasons to believe it was the whole cross—but since he was so badly whipped in the scourging, and since the cross beam itself typically weighed from 30 or 40 to over 100 pounds, he began to struggle so much with the weight of the beam that the soldiers pressed into service Simon of Cyrene, an important city in the northern Africa country of Libya, to carry the cross for Jesus. (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26)

Now pause for a moment and try to imagine what amazing love Jesus demonstrated for us! And even also for those who hated him! (See Romans 5:6-11) After all this flogging, mocking, spitting, and having a crown of needle-sharp thorns beaten into his head, then spiked to and lifted up in agony on a cross, which even made it hard for him to breathe, he could still say, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) Here, in his death, and in his resurrection to eternal life, and only in Christ Jesus, God's holy, holy, holy being and wrath against sin and evil is justly and righteously propitiated (Hebrews 2:17 NASB; 1 John 4:10 NASB), and we have hope! Christ enables us who repent and believe in him to have his forgiveness and enter the presence of God who is most holy, which was dramatically symbolized by the tearing of the curtain in the temple between the holy place and the most holy place (Matthew 27:51), where God came to meet with his people, but prior to this great event, only the high priest could enter the most holy place, and only he once a year. Thanks be to Jesus and to each person of the triune God for his most wonderful demonstration of love ever, at such great cost to God himself!

Slide 68: Golgotha: Where Jesus Was Crucified and Died (Video)

<https://youtu.be/rjL9cYviDWM>

The video shows the fissure from the earthquake (Matthew 27:54), now preserved in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Slides 69-74: The Monumental Significance of the Tearing of the Temple Curtain

In order to more fully understand the monumental significance of the tearing of the temple curtain, we need to turn to the explanation in Hebrews 6:17-10:39. Here we read of Melchizedek, whose name means king of righteousness, who was king of Salem (Jerusalem) in Abraham's time. Melchizedek held two offices at the same time; he was both king and priest and thus a type, a forerunner, of Christ, and who thus was one of the many ways God prepared his people for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus, who also held those two offices, priest and king, and also the office of prophet. Significantly, Melchizedek's priesthood was not of the line of Levi, and neither was Jesus' high priesthood; Jesus was of the tribe of Judah. (Hebrews 6:20; 7:3ff.) The law of the old covenant stipulated that the priesthood was to be of the tribe of Levi.

The reference is very significant, as the writer of Hebrews explains. The required perfection, necessary to come into the presence of God who is most holy, was provided through the order of Melchizedek not through the order of Aaron in the priesthood of the Levites. (Hebrews 7:11ff.) The Levites' priesthood was only a temporary provision and stipulation in the old covenant, which pointed to what Christ Jesus came to provide completely and forever in a better covenant, the new (*καινός* [*kainos*], i.e., new in nature or quality, more in the sense of renewed) covenant God promised through the Prophet Jeremiah. The new covenant is not brand new, for which there is another word in Biblical Greek (*νέος* [*neos*], new in time or in origin). The new covenant consists of very significant modifications to the old covenant (such as Jesus Christ coming from the tribe of Judah), but it contains continuity with the old covenant, which is everlasting. (Genesis 17:7; Matthew 5:17-18; Galatians 3:26-29) For further explanation of this continuity and how Jesus fulfills the old covenant and institutes new dimensions that constitute the new covenant, see my PowerPoint, [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity](#) on the Christian Theology page of my WordPress [Website](#). Use the Search bar or the Find feature to locate the subject, e.g., Christ, covenant, *kainos*.

Slide 74: The monumental significance of the tearing of the temple curtain is seen in Hebrews 10:19-20, where we read that Jesus' perfect redemption of us, who believe in the efficacy of his shed blood and broken body, now permits us to have access to the presence of God who is most holy and all loving. We read in verse 20 that the "new and living way [cf. John 14:6] opened for us through the curtain" is Jesus' body, which in context with the preceding verse includes also his shed blood. Thus, the

righteousness credited to believers in Jesus' shed blood and broken body (cf., e.g., Romans 4) provides the way to meet with God.

The eminent Greek scholar, R. C. H. Lenski, sees more in the text's reference to the curtain, the Greek word for which (*katapetasmatos*) is also translated veil. Looking closely at the proximity of the words "through the curtain, that is, his body," Lenski sees that Jesus' shed blood and broken body at one and the same time provide the way to God for believers but at the same time also another curtain for unbelievers. He writes, "The crucified Christ is the entrance, the entrance veil. 'No man cometh to the Father but *by me*' John 14:6, by my blood, by my flesh, by this veil. This veil shuts out and forever hides the Father from all those who spurn it as the means of entry." Here, with his exceptionally careful Greek exegesis, is Lenski's further explanation of the meaning of Jesus' opening for us the new and living way "through the curtain, that is, his body."

"20) The relative clause justifies such confident assurance on our part regarding this entrance into the heavenly Sanctuary, for this entrance Jesus 'inaugurated for us as a way newly made and living by means of the veil, that is, of his flesh.' ... The aorist [tense of the verb] states the historical fact, an act done 'once for all.' ... Jesus opened or inaugurated this entrance as a way for us when as our High Priest he entered the heavenly Sanctuary as the writer has so fully explained. Thus it is rightly termed 'the entrance of the Sanctuary in connection with the blood of Jesus' and is now elucidated as 'a way newly made and living,' inaugurated 'by means of the veil, that is, of his flesh.'

"The language is exceedingly rich. This entrance or way is 'for us'; we are to use it when we are confidently approaching God. Πρόσφατος, [prosphatos, "new," newly made] literally, 'freshly killed,' has lost its etymological meaning and is used in the sense of 'recent,' 'fresh,' 'new.' ... More striking is the word 'living.' This does not = 'a way of life,' i.e., leading to life, ὁδὸς τῆς ζωῆς [*hodos tēs zōēs*] Jer. 21:8); the participle is not an objective genitive noun. 'Living way' is also not 'life-giving way'; nor does 'living'='abiding' or permanent way. All ways or roads that we know are lifeless; this way is 'living' because it consists of Christ himself who is 'the Way and the Life' (John 14:6), a way that is itself active and bears those who step upon it. We go farther than to say that it is 'living' because of its *connection* with the living Christ; the living Christ *is himself* the living way.

"Still more striking is the statement that Jesus 'inaugurated' the entrance of the Sanctuary for us, opened it for the first time for our use as a new and living way, 'by means of the veil, that is, of his flesh.' ... The meaning is simple. The means for entrance into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle was the great curtain that hung before it; the means for entrance into the heavenly Sanctuary is Jesus' [broken] flesh. Thus the writer says that the entrance into the heavenly Sanctuary was inaugurated or opened for us as a new and living way 'by means of his flesh.' As the veil in the Tabernacle was the only means of entrance to the inner sanctuary, so Jesus' flesh is the

only means of entrance to the Sanctuary of heaven. In other words, without Jesus' flesh, apart from that, there exists no means by which we may go into the heavenly Sanctuary, may get into saving communion with God.

“Note well ‘for us.’ In the case of the Tabernacle only the high priest dared to use the veil as a means of entry. This new way is for all of us; all of us are to use Jesus' flesh as the great means of entry. Yet we should not extend into an allegory the simple metaphor here used by...making ourselves high priests who, like the Jewish high priests, had to come with blood, who officiated for others, etc. There is no longer an offering for sins, no longer blood to offer (v. 18).

“Note again that ‘his flesh’ follows the designation the entrance of the Sanctuary ‘in connection with the blood of Jesus.’ ‘Flesh’ and ‘blood’ go together as far as this entrance is concerned. It is the slain flesh or body of Jesus that, like a veil, hangs before the heavenly Sanctuary and is the one means of entry. All that the writer has said on the suffering, the death, the blood, the offering of himself, the sacrifice of himself, is here brought to mind. The crucified Christ is the entrance, the entrance veil. ‘No man cometh to the Father but *by me*’ John 14:6, by my blood, by my flesh, by this veil. This veil shuts out and forever hides the Father from all those who spurn it as the means of entry.

“The *διά* [*dia*, through] is here not local: ‘through the veil,’ etc., (our versions, commentators). An entrance is not ‘inaugurated’ (not even ‘dedicated’ as our versions have it) ‘through’ anything in a local sense but only ‘by means’ of something. An incongruity results when we combine ‘new and living through (locally) the veil.’ It is eisegesis to insert the participle *ἄγουσαν* [*agousan*] or some other participle: ‘leading through the veil.’ ‘His flesh’ is also not ‘his human nature,’ for what about ‘the blood’? ‘His flesh’ denotes the body of Jesus as it was sacrificed for us.

“This whole statement aims to strike the readers squarely. No Jew, except the high priest, ever got to enter the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle; the people had no way to the actual mercy seat. But these readers now have the actual entrance into the heavenly Sanctuary; they may pass in with joyful confidence. Yet they are thinking of turning from this entrance, turning back to Judaism, where even the earthly Holy of Holies is closed to them. How can they think of doing such a thing? Is it because Jesus was crucified, because this is an offense to them? But the very connection with Jesus' blood opens this entrance into the heavenly Sanctuary for them; his blood-stained flesh constitutes the very veil, the means of entrance, for them; to despise it means never to enter at all. The convincing force of this is tremendous, indeed. To this day it strikes all who spurn ‘the blood theology.’ This theology fills our epistle.”

*Lenski New Testament Commentary - Lenski New Testament Commentary – The Interpretation of The Epistle to the Hebrews and The Epistle of James*, pp. 343-346.



Slide 75: Preparing Jesus' Body for Burial in the Tomb (Video)

<https://youtu.be/V7bDPuAfVvo>

The video shows the stone where Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus prepared Jesus' body for burial according to first century A. D. Jewish customs. (John 19:38-40) The stone is now in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre near where Jesus' tomb is also preserved.

Slide 78: Jesus' Burial in the Tomb (Video)

<https://youtu.be/FgsY8Ar2Gg4>

The video shows Jesus' empty tomb, which has been preserved in Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Slide 93: What Does It Mean that Christ Jesus Descended into Hell and What Did He Do There?

I've been asked this question many times. Biblical and theological scholars have engaged in much study and theorizing concerning this question. A large part of the discussion has focused on the statement in the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into hell," which is based on 1 Peter 3:19-20. What is an accurate interpretation of these verses and those that form their context?

The interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19-20 that I prefer, and which follows, is from Lenski. His careful attention to the original Greek grammar, includes also an exegesis of the surrounding verses, the context, which is always necessary for a correct interpretation of any writing, and especially for understanding and correctly handling the word of truth, God's inspired Scripture. (2 Timothy 2:15) I summarize Lenski's explanation in the next paragraph.

With his resurrected body and his spirit reunited very early on the third day of his death, Jesus' next act in his state of exaltation, of glorification, was his glorious and immediate descent into hell, where he proclaimed the accomplishment of God's redemptive purposes, specifically the Lord's victory over Satan, the demons, and over all those who have disbelieved and disobeyed the triune God, for example those in Noah's time, and the final judgment to come. The risen and reigning Lord also affirmed his faithful and obedient followers, such as Noah. All of this is to encourage and assure us, when we are persecuted for Christ's sake. As Lenski has explained, "Noah and his family are saved; we, too, are saved 'by the resurrection of Christ,' by this exaltation of Christ at God's right hand."

For those who want more detail, and who understand, or want to skim through or over, the Greek, Latin, and German terms that this eminent New Testament scholar has used, I have included his translation and commentary on this verse in toto through verse 20, so you can see the excellent degree of scholarship and the basis of Lenski's exceptionally thorough reasoning. I have highlighted several key points the author makes.

### **The Exaltation of Christ an Assurance to Those Who Suffer**

v. 18-22

18) The only reason we have for making a special paragraph of this section is the fact that this piece forms a *sedes doctrinae* [lit., seat or basis of doctrine] and throughout deals with Christ. It belongs to v. 13-17 in reality as ὅτι καί, "because also Christ," plainly shows.

It is essential to understand this connective. In 2:21 we also have ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν, "because also Christ suffered," but there Peter at once adds ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμόν, "leaving behind for you a writing-copy in order that you may follow his tracks." Such an addition is not appended here. In 2:21 Peter presents Christ's sufferings as an example which mistreated slaves are to follow. In the present connection Peter does nothing of the kind. Here the sufferings of Christ are combined with his exaltation; this exaltation is presented at length and is made the main thought. We have the picture of Christ being infinitely exalted over the disobedient who are now in hell, who were made to see his triumph. This goes far beyond 2:21-25, far beyond the Sufferer, sinless, patient, never opening his mouth to revile when he was reviled, to threaten when suffering, committing himself to the righteous Judge, carrying our sins up upon the wood to save us, so that we have him as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls.

Here the great point is assurance for us when by the will of God we suffer for righteousness' sake. Then we are μακάριοι, "blessed." Christ's mighty exaltation after his suffering proves this. The proof and the assurance are tremendous. For Christ was not only glorified in his own person; he not only leads us to God as the fruit of his suffering in our behalf; in his exaltation he triumphed over the disobedient who were consigned to prison in hell. Are we, then, not blessed indeed when we suffer for his sake? Now the disobedient exalt themselves and tread us under foot; but see the disobedient in hell! Noah and his family are saved; we, too, are saved "by the resurrection of Christ," by this exaltation of Christ at God's right hand.

It is a misunderstanding of this section to think that Christ is presented as another example for us. To point to ἀγαθοποιούντας, "doing good," to take this to mean that by our suffering we should try to win our persecutors for Christ (to interpret "doing good and suffering" in 2:20 in the same way, the slaves thus seeking to win their mean masters for Christ), is to misunderstand all that follows. Some find the thought in this section that the gospel is still being preached in hell, that continued mission work is being carried on in hades! Some even add the complete *apokatastasis*, the conversion of the devils. The fact that Christ descended to hell in glory while we are to do good in order to save our persecutors by our suffering, is disregarded.

The idea of "doing good" in order to save those who hurt us is found in [v. 1](#). But Peter does not speak of "doing good" when he addresses the wives of unbelieving husbands; he speaks of "being in subjection" when he is addressing all wives, and in the case of those who have pagan husbands he speaks of "your pure conduct in fear (of God)." This missionary idea of "doing good," which is extended into hell, is wanting at its very source. In [v. 17](#) (as in [2:20](#)) suffering while doing good refers to the whole good life of Christians (and so also of slaves, [2:20](#)) as "grace with God," as our *own* sanctification whether *men* appreciate it or not. As far as men are concerned, our being "zealots for the good" ([v. 13](#)) robs them of all just reason for treating us basely ([v. 13](#)); it puts them to shame when they speak against us and abuse our good conduct connected with Christ ([v. 16](#)). That is what Peter says.

**Because also Christ suffered once for sins, One Righteous in place of unrighteous ones, in order that he may bring us to God, (he), on the one hand, put to death by means of flesh, on the other hand, vivified by means of spirit; in connection with which, etc.**

"Because also," etc., connects this section with the whole of [v. 13-17](#) and not only with [v. 17](#). So also this connective joins the whole of [v. 18-22](#) and not only [v. 18](#) to the preceding. As it is impossible to separate [v. 17](#) from what precedes, so it is impossible to separate [v. 18](#) from what follows. We who are saved suffer and are blessed because Christ suffered and was glorified as our Savior. His glorification is the cause (ὅτι) of this our being "blessed," and since our blessedness still lies in the future to so large an extent ([1 John 3:2](#)), this "because" is the guarantee or assurance for us.

Here are the great facts: also Christ *suffered* once for sins, One Righteous in place of unrighteous ones, suffered to the extent that by means of his flesh he, on the one hand (μέν), was actually *put to death*, but, on the other hand (δέ), as the Righteous One who suffered and died in place of the unrighteous, *was vivified* by means of his spirit and thus *did* what follows: assured us that we who suffer for righteousness' sake are, indeed, μακάριοι ([v. 14](#)). The textual question as to whether to read ἔπαθεν, "suffered," or ἀπέθανεν, "died," is a matter for the text critics to decide, seeing that Codex *Aleph* changes "suffered" into "died" also in [2:21](#) and [4:1](#), and both A and C insert ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (ὕμῶν) before ἀπέθανεν in [3:18](#). "Christ suffered" resumes this verb which was used in [v. 13](#) and [17](#); the fact that this was suffering which ended in death is made plain by θανατωθείς, "put to death."

"Once" he suffered "concerning sins." Both the adverb and the phrase bring out the thought that Christ's suffering was one of expiation [extinguishing guilt], and both "once" and the aorist "he did suffer" imply that the expiation was effected; see this valuable "once" (ἅπαξ) in [Heb. 9:26, 28](#). The thought is emphasized by the addition of the apposition: "One Righteous in place of

unrighteous ones"; it was **vicarious, substitutionary suffering**. In [Acts 3:14](#) Peter calls Christ "the Holy and Righteous One" ([Ps. 16:10](#)); Stephen calls him "the Righteous One" in [Acts 7:52](#); Ananias calls him this in [Acts 22:14](#); compare [Luke 23:47](#); [Matt. 27:19, 24](#); [I John 2:1](#). The terms are purposely juridical: "One Righteous—unrighteous ones," and refer to God's verdicts and are thus more significant than "One Sinless—sinners." God's verdicts regarding Jesus appear in [Matt. 3:17](#); [Luke 9:35](#); [John 12:28](#), God's voice from heaven; and the fact of God's raising him from the dead and placing him at his right hand is especially such a verdict.

On ὑπέρ as denoting substitution in the meaning "instead of" in hundreds of connections in the papyri and in the decisive New Testament passages see the pertinent chapter in Robertson, *The Minister and his Greek New Testament*, 35, etc., also his *Grammar*, 630, etc. "It is futile to try to get rid of substitution on grammatical arguments about ὑπέρ." "The papyri forbid our emptying ὑπέρ of this wealth of meaning in the interest of any theological theory." Robertson refers to the theories that deny Christ's substitution and invent something else on the claim that Peter's and Paul's ὑπέρ cannot mean substitution and was used by them to deny this very thought. Ὑπέρ, "over," then "in behalf of," gets the meaning "in place of" in all connections in which "in behalf of" brings no benefit unless there is a substitution "instead of." This is plain both here and in [2:21](#). Here substitution is joined to expiation. One may reject both but one cannot deny that Peter states both here.

We do not think that προσάγω [bring] means what some find in it, namely that Christ brings *us* to God as a pure and holy sacrifice; the verb is used here as it is used in [Lev. 3:12](#); [4:4](#); [8:14](#). Not as sacrificial victims are we brought to God. Others think that Christ enabled us to become priests ([2:5, 9](#)), brought us to draw nigh to God as priests. This thought is sometimes elaborated: we are to do priestly service for others and by our doing good to bring them to conversion, which is the idea noted above. Both sacrifice and priesthood are foreign to Peter's words. **We are brought to God (aorist, effectively, actually) when we who are *unrighteous* are by faith in Christ's vicarious expiation justified and declared righteous.** Beyond that Peter's words do not go. On our "priesthood" see [2:5, 9](#).

**How Christ's having suffered concerning sins just once does, indeed, bring us to God is shown by his glorification.** As a further apposition Peter adds two illuminating participles: "put to death by means of flesh, vivified by means of spirit," and balances them by μέν and δέ, which, however, do not mean *zwar*, "although" (concessive) and *aber*, "but" (adversative), but: "on the one hand—on the other hand" (balance, correlation). The two great facts are to be taken together and are to be construed with "Christ suffered once regarding sins, One Righteous in place of unrighteous ones," with saving effect upon us believers.

All three, the verb and the participles, are aorists [past tense], mighty historical facts.

The participles are passive. They do not say that Christ died and became alive but that he was put to death, was made alive—"whom *you* crucified, *God* made both Lord and Christ" ([Acts 2:36](#)); "whom *you* crucified, whom *God* raised from the dead" ([Acts 4:10](#)). Christ's suffering was of such a nature that he was put to death. That is not said in order to show its greatness or to make some kind of a comparison with our suffering; that is said because the suffering of Christ "concerning sins" was sacrificial, expiatory, "One Righteous in place of unrighteous ones," i. e., substitutionary so that the sacrificial victim must be put to death. "Vivified," brought back to life, is placed beside "put to death." The sacrifice "concerning sins" was all-sufficient, was attested as sufficient by the *vivification*. God accepted the sacrifice of Christ and attests the acceptance by his act of returning Christ to life. The Scriptures add that this includes the glorification; Peter himself adds it in what follows.

Other sacrificial victims remain dead; not so Christ. Whatever the efficacy of such deaths may be, of Christ alone as one who was "vivified" can it be said that "he leads us to God." All the Old Testament sacrifices could only point to Christ's sacrifice and become effective because of the efficacy of his sacrifice; for their value they all depended on him as one who was "put to death and vivified." It is true, "vivified" crowns "put to death"; but this lies in the fact itself and not in the use of μέν... δέ as some have thought. There is no thought of paralleling our suffering with Christ's, our resurrection with his vivification. Christ's resurrection is not mentioned until [v. 21](#). What is here said about Christ's sacrificial suffering and being put to death and then being vivified is intended to be the basis for our being "blessed" when we must suffer "for righteousness' sake" in this hostile world, the basis of our assurance of being thus "blessed" ([v. 13, 14](#)).

One is a bit surprised to note that the dictionaries and the grammars have no reference to the two datives, and that commentators, too, hesitate to classify these datives. The R. V. has: "*in* the flesh—*in* the spirit"; the A. V.: "*in* the flesh—*by* the Spirit"; Luther has two *nach*, "according to." Yet Peter has written neither ἐν nor κατά. Few will attempt to construe the two datives differently as the A. V. does. The discussion centers on the significance of σάρξ and πνεῦμα, especially on the latter, and this is what seems to cause the reluctance in regard to classifying these datives.

They are datives of means. They indicate neither sphere nor norm. On Calvary we see how Christ was "put to death"; they nailed his body to the ξύλον or "wood"; in [2:24](#) "he carried up our sins in his body upon the wood"; compare as being pertinent [Col. 1:22](#): "in the body of his flesh by means of the death." It was "by means of flesh," by having flesh, our human bodily nature, that men

slew Christ; the absence of the article makes "flesh" qualitative. How did Christ die? [Mark 15:37, 39](#) use ἐκπνέω; [Luke 23:46](#) does likewise: "he breathed out," breathed his last, the breath left his body. [Matt. 27:50](#) says more: ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα, "he let go the spirit"; [John 19:30](#), παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα, "he gave up the spirit," which recalls Luke's εἰς χεῖράς παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου: "Father, into thy hands I deposit my spirit." All the Evangelists use choice terms when they describe Jesus' death.

Although in [John 10:15, 17](#) Jesus himself says, τὴν ψυχὴν μου τίθημι, "I lay down my life" (the ψυχή that animates my body), no Evangelist uses this word when he describes Jesus' death. To be sure, Jesus died when his ψυχή or "life" went out of him; but the ἐγώ [I], the real personality, has its seat in the πνεῦμα, in the human spirit. This spirit of his Jesus deposited into his Father's hands, this he let go or gave up in the instant of death. Death sundered its connection with his σῶμα or body ([2:24](#)), which connection was by way of his ψυχή. His spirit went to heaven, to Paradise, to his Father's hands; his body, his flesh was left dead on the cross. See further *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, 1103, etc.; or that of St. John, 1285, etc.

How was Christ vivified? The human spirit which went to heaven returned to the body that was lying in the tomb. Spirit and body, which had been separated in death, were reunited in the vivification. How else than "by means of spirit" (again qualitative) could Christ have been made alive again after having been put to death?

Simple as this is, the comments of some interpreters are rather confusing. Some look upon this as an act of the Holy Spirit (C.-K. 950) and, like the A. V., regard one of these datives as a dative of the agent. Some think that σαρκί means "according to his human nature" and πνεύματι "according to his divine nature," and others oppose this as being wrong. [Rom. 1:4; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 9:14](#) are referred to as proof that "spirit" denotes Christ's divine nature.

The matter regarding the two natures of Christ is simple. As true man Jesus has body, soul, and spirit; but as true God the person and the nature of the eternal *Logos*, the divine ἐγώ, takes the place of what in us is a human, creature ἐγώ. Thus God became man (did not join himself to *some* man). Ever since the incarnation body, soul, spirit (all human) belong to the *Logos*, are his forever in an indissoluble union. Death did not affect this union, did not sunder this union. The lifeless body was still that of the *Logos*; the human spirit, which had been torn from it by death, was in heaven. On Easter morning body and spirit were reunited. That is all. Whether the agent of the passive ζωοποιηθεῖς [having been made alive] is God or Christ himself makes no difference; all the *opera ad extra* [external work] are *indivisa aut communa* [undivided or common].



Do the two aorist participles [having been put to death and having been made alive] denote an action that is *subsequent* to that of the aorist verb [suffered]? The acts, of course, occurred in this order: suffered—put to death—vivified, about which there is no question, grammatical or otherwise. R. [A *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, by A. T. Robertson, fourth edition] 1111, etc., finds no subsequence in aorist participles, but one need not be satisfied with Burton's view, which R. 1114 adopts, that the two participles define the whole preceding clause. They are added appositionally to the subject, each having only its aoristic, punctiliar force. For not merely the fact that Christ suffered enables him to lead us to God; this Sufferer was actually put to death and was vivified.

**19) Peter continues: in connection with which also to the spirits in prison, on having gone (to them), he made herald proclamation, (these spirits) such as were disobedient at one time when the longsuffering of God kept waiting in Noah's days while the ark was being constructed, in which few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water; etc.**

We now see why Peter stops with the *vivificatio* in [v. 18](#) and does not at once proceed to the *resurrectio* by saying "raised up." The latter term is regularly used so as to include both the vivification of Christ's dead body and its appearances to chosen witnesses. Peter must restrict his thought to the vivification because he intends to speak of what occurred *before* Jesus appeared to his disciples on earth. Until Easter morning Christ's body lay dead in the tomb while his spirit (in English we may also say his "soul" because we use "soul" much as we do "spirit"; to use ψυχή in the Greek would be wrong) was in heaven. Then Christ's spirit was suddenly reunited with his body. This is the vivificatio.

In that instant, after body and spirit had been united, Christ left the closed tomb. The linen wrappings were suddenly empty and lay flat, the body having miraculously gone out of them (John 20:5-8), mute, but eloquent, evidence of what had occurred. In that instant, but timelessly, Christ in his human body and spirit descended to hell and did what Peter relates. In the other world time and space as we know both here on earth do not exist. Our minds are chained to both in their thinking and in their language; hence we ask so many useless questions where acts that take place in eternity and in the other world are concerned. In the other world no act requires time for its execution. This is really inconceivable to our minds; we are compelled to speak as if time were involved and must thus ever tell ourselves that this is *not* in fact the case. In this way we are kept from deductions that are based on our concepts of time, knowing that such deductions would be false. How long after the cloud enveloped the ascending body of Jesus did it take that body to reach heaven and the right hand of God in the glory of heaven? This part of the ascension was *timeless*.

The translation "in which spirit" Christ went, etc., is misleading. Not in his human spirit alone did Christ descend to hell. Not in his divine nature alone. This is said to those who think that πνεῦμα in [v. 18](#) refers to the divine nature. Not "by the Holy Spirit" (A. V.; also C.-K.; etc.) was the descent made. Because Christ went to speak to πνεύματα, "spirits," it was not necessary that he himself come to them as a πνεῦμα, "a spirit." Jesus spoke to the devil and to the demons in the possessed without being a bodiless spirit. Peter uses ἐν in its first and original sense: Christ descended into hades "in connection with" the spirit by means of which his body had been made alive in the tomb. The descent followed the quickening which joined spirit and body. The assumption that the body was left behind in the descent does not agree with what Peter says in the plainest way.

This idea led Calvin and his followers to date the descent, not at the time of the *vivificatio* of the body on Easter morning, but at the time of the death on Good Friday, and to make the descent the climax of Christ's humiliation, Christ entered hell to suffer there until Easter morning as though Peter had written: θανατωθεὶς σαρκὶ πορευθεὶς, κτλ., and then ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι, "put to death by means of flesh he went" to hades and after that "he was vivified." Peter states the opposite: the vivification is the entrance of Jesus into the state of glorification and exaltation, and his first act in that state is his glorious descent into hell with body and spirit united. The death pertained to Christ's human nature; the vivification likewise; the descent *ad inferos* also; and, let us add, also the ascent to heaven and the *sessio* at God's right hand.

Peter has the data and the order of the Apostles' Creed: "*suffered* under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, *dead*, and buried; he *descended* into hell; the third day he *rose again* from the dead ([v. 21](#)) and *sitteth at the right hand of God*, etc." ([v. 22](#)). The return to judgment is mentioned in [5:4](#).

The participle πορευθεὶς [having gone] is to be construed with the verb ἐκήρυξεν [he preached]. In English we should coordinate: "he went and made herald proclamation" (as our versions do); the Greek is more exact and by using the participle marks the act of having gone as subsidiary to that of speaking as a herald. The dative states to whom Christ spoke: τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι, "to the spirits in prison"; and these words are placed before the verb because they are emphatic. The Scriptures know of only one φυλακή, "prison," that confines "spirits," namely hell, "hades," "the Gehenna of the fire" ([Matt. 5:22](#); [18:9](#)). To call this the *Totenreich*, the realm of the dead, is to give a strange meaning to the word φυλακή, "prison," for all the dead are supposed to go into this fictitious *Totenreich*, this place between heaven and hell, a recent Romanizing Protestant invention. Note [II Pet. 2:9, 10](#), in fact, all of [v. 4-10](#).

[20](#)) It is to be observed that ἀπειθήσασί ποτε, κτλ., is not added attributively by means of a repetition of the article τοῖς, but predicatively without the article



(R. 778). This is speaking grammatically; but it brings out the thought that Peter intends to say that Christ did not make herald proclamation to those only who were disobedient at the time of the flood, which thought would require τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι (the article repeated), but to all the spirits in prison, all these being *such as* were disobedient (the participle is merely qualitative) when (to instance a notable case) the longsuffering of God waited no less than 120 years, waited in vain, before sending the judgment.

Some suppose that this anarthrous [used without the article] participle means that Christ made herald proclamation *only* to the victims of the flood and thus raise the question: "Why just to these?" and supply such answers as the following: that Peter selects these because they perished by water and because he refers to baptism; that by selecting these Peter does not intend to exclude the rest of the damned in hell. This question is excluded by the anarthrous and qualitative character of the participle. Moreover, these people *perished* in the flood while baptism *saves*; the eight souls of Noah's family were *saved* but not the spirits in prison.

The ὅτε [when] clause leads some to think that in hell Christ dealt only with the antediluvians who perished in the Flood, and they then seek for reasons that Christ singled these out. But ποτε ὅτε, "once when," is not intended as such a restriction or limitation of τοῖς πνεύμασι [to the spirits]. This would be expressed by a second ποῖς before ἀπειθήσασι [having disobeyed] and by a third τοῖς with a participial clause in place of ὅτε, at least by the latter. "Once when" introduces only a sample of the unbelief of disobedience, which is illustrative of all the spirits of the damned in prison. All God's longsuffering could do nothing with these antediluvians as it could do nothing with all these spirits which God had to consign to hell. This sample is the more in point because the Flood is a standing type of the final judgment.

By means of "once when" Peter might have referred to Sodom and Gomorrah as Jesus does in [Matt. 10:15](#), and Paul in [Rom. 9:29](#), Jude in [v. 7](#), and Peter himself in [II Pet. 2:6](#) and made them "an example of those about to be ungodly," which is the same idea that is expressed in our passage. But this "example" would not be fitting. Lot was not saved "by means of" the fire which destroyed these cities, he was saved only *from* this fire. Noah was saved "by means of water," δι' ὕδατος, as we, too, are now saved by means of the water of baptism. As in [II Pet. 2:6](#) the ungodly of Sodom and Gomorrah are a ὑπόδειγμα or "example" of all future ungodliness, so the disobedience of the men who lived at the time of Noah and the flood is the mark and the quality of all the damned in hell. They "disobeyed" has the same meaning it had in [2:8](#), "disobedient to the Word," and in [4:17](#), "those disobeying the gospel of God." Peter has in mind the disobedience of unbelief which, to be sure, includes also moral wickedness, but only as the outgrowth of unbelief's disobedience.

God's longsuffering (his holding out long under heavy provocation) waited in the days of Noah, delayed the judgment, waited for repentance and faith 120 years—alas, in vain! During those 120 years the world had Noah "as a herald of righteousness" ([II Pet. 2:5](#)) who condemned the world because of its unbelief and its unrighteousness ([Heb. 11:7](#); see the exegesis). Noah's preparation of the ark is especially mentioned, the participle in the genitive absolute being the same as the verb used in [Heb. 11:7](#), for this building of the ark was itself a factual preaching of the impending judgment. Peter's brief reference recalls all that [Gen. 6](#) states. Men remained fixed and hardened in their disobedience of unbelief "in the days of Noah." Even all this warning left them unmoved. Did they laugh at Noah for building a big boat on dry land? How would it ever reach water and float? When had the earth ever had a flood of such proportions as to drown all living things? This is the character and the quality of all "the spirits in prison"; this brought them to hell.

We may now look at [ἐκήρυξεν](#) [he preached] in [v. 19](#), about which there has been so much discussion. The verb means to make a herald proclamation, has always meant this. He who [κηρύσσει](#) is a [κῆρυξ](#), "herald"; what he proclaims is a [κήρυγμα](#), "a herald's announcement." The word has never [typo: should be never] been a *vox media* [middle voice: neither active nor passive]. Hence in scores of places, when the announcement made is the gospel, the objects appended say so: to herald the Word ([Mark 1:45](#)), the acceptable year of the Lord ([Luke 4:19](#)), the gospel ([Matt. 4:23](#) and often), Christ or Jesus ([Acts 8:5](#) and often). This verb is sometimes used together with [εὐαγγελίζεσθαι](#), "to proclaim good news." But it is also used when the law is its object ([Rom. 2:21](#), not to steal), when circumcision ([Gal. 5:11](#)) is the object. When it is without an object as we have it here, the context should indicate what the [κήρυγμα](#) or heralded proclamation may be.

It lies in the nature of the case that in the New Testament [κηρύσσειν](#) is used to indicate the heralding of the gospel, for this was to be publicly proclaimed in all the world as if by heralds. With it went the proclamation of the law: "He that believeth not shall be damned." In [II Pet. 2:5](#) Noah is called a [κῆρυξ](#) or "herald," and he certainly proclaimed the coming judgment of the flood. And we are told that because the verb is so often used in the New Testament to indicate gospel heralding it must have this meaning in our passage: Christ preached the gospel to the spirits in prison. It is claimed that when no object is added the verb *must* have this sense. Any substantial difference between [κηρύσσειν](#) [heralding of the gospel] and [εὐαγγελίζεσθαι](#) [evangelize; bring or announce good news] is thus erased. Even some dictionaries agree with this interpretation. Fortunately, they all register the fact that [κηρύσσειν](#) means "to herald." When [C.-K.](#), 599, adds that the thing demands *Nachachtung* [observance], this may be understood correctly: those who hear are to pay attention; yet he, perhaps, intends to say: those who hear are to obey or savingly to believe. When we are further told that [κηρύσσειν](#) is used here because of

ἀπειθήσασι [having disobeyed] we feel that this statement wants to leave the door open for such as were disobedient to Christ but now at last "in prison" obey, believe, and are saved.

Those who claim that Christ preached the gospel in hell have a probation after death. Some elaborate this thought. If Christ did this, it must *somehow* still be done: missionary work will be carried on in hell. Most of them, however, seek to tone down this idea. This probation after death is intended for those who disobeyed *ignorantly*, who *never* heard the gospel. They point to the many babes that perished in the flood as if Peter makes a restriction, as if "disobeyed" does not mean actual disobedience of the Word which Noah preached. As for the eternal fate of babes, this concern is pointless since the question pertains to all babes who die without means of grace, regarding which we have no revelation save the hint in [Matt. 18:14](#) (see the exposition).

The Scriptures teach no probation after death, no missionary work in hell, and none in a *Totenreich* [a fictitious Underworld between hell and heaven], for none exists. [Mark 16:16](#); [Heb. 9:27](#). In hell Dives says to Abraham at the mention of Moses and the prophets: "No, father Abraham!"—the same fixed disobedience of unbelief. We need not elaborate the subject.

Like the fire of Sodom, etc., the flood is recorded in Scripture as a type of the final judgment. Neither could be a type of this judgment if probation and being saved were still possible after judgment. The time of grace ends when the μακροθυμία or "longsuffering" of God is exhausted as it was "in the days of Noah." When Peter wants to speak about εὐαγγελίσεισθαι he uses this word as witness [1:12](#) and [4:6](#); here and in [II Pet. 2:5](#) (which also deals with Noah) heralding alone is the thought; Noah is the herald of a judgment that is impending; Christ is the far greater Herald who has a proclamation for those who are already judged.

Let us note that Peter's interest does not lie in the *contents* of Christ's proclamation. The *fact* that Christ went to hell and made it, went there in the instant of his vivification after his death and made a proclamation to *the damned* in hell—this is the point that Peter impresses. The fact that the proclamation was not evangelical but damnatory goes without saying. When one is answering the question as to why Peter says this about the descent into hell one should not think only of these damned spirits since Peter himself adds all that follows about those who were saved in the flood, what their saving typifies for his readers through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his enthronement in heaven at God's right hand with all angels, authorities, and powers subject to him who died and was vivified in his human nature. The descent and the ascent with its eternal enthronement belong together. Our comment should not separate them.

The ὅτι [that, for, since, because] in [v. 18](#) fortifies the whole of [v. 13-17](#) by the whole of [v. 18-22](#). Even before we look at the details about the eight souls that were saved, our baptism, and the new life, about Christ's resurrection and heavenly enthronement, we see Peter's object in bringing all these facts regarding Christ (passion to final glorification) to the attention of his readers. Μακάριοι are they, "blessed" indeed when suffering for righteousness' sake in this wicked world. This fact is the cause and the assurance of their blessedness, that down to the disobedient in hell all enemies of Christ are under his feet while for the readers, from the time of their baptism onward, there is salvation through him who died and rose again and sits at God's right hand. With all this before them, the readers will count themselves "blessed," will not fear the fear of men or be shaken, will sanctify the Lord, Christ, in their hearts, will be ready to answer men at any time regarding their hope, always keep a good conscience, etc. ([v. 14-16](#)). This is the mighty way in which Peter fortifies his readers in the face of impending persecution.

"While the ark was being constructed" points back to the disobedience of unbelief which had this warning but scorned it. The thought is, of course, not that men, too, should have constructed arks to save them as Noah did but that, if they had repented in obedience to the warning, they would not have been destroyed by a flood (compare Nineveh). The relative clause εἰς ἣν (static εἰς, "wherein," our versions; not the old "into," which still appears in **B.-D.** 205) turns to the blessed side of Noah's deliverance and with this to the salvation of the readers. Only a few, namely eight souls, were saved.

This mention of "few," so very few at that time, is made for the comfort of the readers who are "a little flock" compared with the whole unbelieving world about them. Look at all unbelievers who perished in the flood, whose spirits are now with all the other damned in hell. How they cowered when Christ appeared to them in their eternal prison! Peter correctly writes "eight ψυχαί" and not πνεύματα; "souls" or "persons" or even "lives" is the correct rendering. Those in hell were disembodied "spirits," their bodies were still on earth.

We translate: these eight "were brought safely through by means of water." Διὰ [through, by, with, because of, for the sake of; here with θεόν (God) in the accusative case: on account of] in the phrase is not due to the διὰ in the verb as **R.** 560 supposes but simply states the means by which the eight were brought through with complete safety. It is not local with reference to the ark moving "through the water." Water was the means for destroying all the rest; that same water was the means for floating the ark with its eight souls. Water was a means of judgment in the case of those, a means of saving in the case of these. We may add that Christ also has the same effect upon men ([Luke 2:34](#)); the Christ whom the damned saw in terror in hell is the same Christ who is our hope in heaven. (Lenski New Testament Commentary - The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude, pp. 152-169.)

Slides 102 and 103: The Empty Tomb (Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgsY8Ar2Gg4>

No one could find Jesus' dead body after Sunday morning when he was resurrected. And, you can be sure they tried!

Slide 104: Pomegranate

1. As taught in the Bible, and as the church has proclaimed throughout the centuries in the words of The Nicene Creed, the unity of the church is one of its four main characteristics. The other three are that it is holy (uncommon, separated to God), catholic (global, universal), and apostolic (in accord with the teaching of Jesus' apostles).
2. This and the following are some of the many analogies God has placed in his creation which point to spiritual truths: these to the Resurrection of Jesus and to related realities.

Slide 110: Peacock in a Catacomb

The early church, outlawed by the Roman government (until Emperor Constantine's edict in 313 A. D. that legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire) and thereby unable to have a public place for worship, met in these labyrinthine and cavernous subterranean burial places for worship. They made elaborate as well as simple artistic descriptions of the Gospel accounts and other Biblical events and teachings.

Slide 111: Cross: ICXC and NIKA

1. NIKA is the third person singular present imperfect (he continues to conquer, overcome) of the verb, νικάω *nikaō*, be victorious, prevail, conquer, overcome, win, vanquish, subdue. (See Revelation 5:5.)
2. For your interest if you have a pair of Nike shoes: the noun, νίκη *nikē*, means victory. So if you wear a pair of Nike shoes, you have a potentially powerful witnessing tool for the Lord Jesus Christ, but you'll have to explain it! And now you can.
3. The small marks above the IC and XC indicate that they are abbreviations.

Slide 127: Easter Bunny

My recommendation regarding colored Easter eggs and bunnies related to contemporary Easter festivities is the following:

1. Don't make a big deal out of them: they are tough to Christianize.
2. Do explain the foregoing and the other information on the slides.
3. Above all, emphasize and rejoice in the true and essential reality that Easter mightily proclaims...Jesus' is Risen and Reigning! Hallelujah!