

Q12) Is there a second chance after death?

Question: Do 1 Peter 4:6 and 1 Peter 3:19 teach that Christ went to hell after He died and that unsaved people have a second chance after death?

*“For for this cause was **the gospel preached also to them that are dead**, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”*

Also in 1 Peter 3:19 we read:

*“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins...being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit. **By which he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.**”*

Was the Gospel preached to the dead, and do they get a second chance?

Answer: 1) To understand 1 Peter 4:6 one must consider the context of the entire First Epistle of Peter, as Kenneth Wuest points out. See *Word Studies - First Peter in the Greek New Testament*. The theme is, suffering for Christ as Christ suffered, as seen in the following Scriptures: 1 Peter 1:7; 2:12,19-23; 3:14-18; 4:1,12-16,19; 5:10.

Chapter 4 begins with the exhortation to be as Christ was. To *“arm yourselves likewise with the same mind”* (1 Peter 4:1). He suffered in the flesh (physically) and Christians are called to suffer for Christ, and if need be, to lay down our lives.

In Peter’s day, some believers had laid down their lives for Christ in the *“fiery trial”* (1 Peter 4:12) about which he writes, and these were the ones who are referred to as *“them that are dead”*. The Gospel had been preached to THEM and they had responded in faith and been saved that they might be judged (tried, condemned) by men but live according to God in the Spirit.

The hatred of the world was stirred because they separated from the ungodly activities of excess and rioting (1 Peter 4:4). The judging referred to is BY MEN, and not by God. Men condemned them for being Christians and they had died for their testimony. The Gospel had been preached to them during their life.

There is no thought anywhere in Scripture that the dead have a second chance. It is *“appointed unto men **ONCE** to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb.9:27).

2) The answer to the second text lies in the first two words - **“BY WHICH...(Spirit)”**. Christ preached to those who were disobedient **“BY HIS SPIRIT”** in the days of Noah. Noah was the human instrument through whom Christ was speaking to men.

We are distinctly told the **timing** of this preaching by the Spirit of Christ. It was *“while the ark was a preparing”* (1 Peter 3: 20). It was **not after Christ died** and went to sheol. The spirits of those ungodly souls who refused the

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witness of the Spirit of God are now in the prison of hell (hades) awaiting the second resurrection and the great white throne where they will finally be sentenced to the lake of fire (Gehenna) (Rev.20:11-15).

In Noah's day God said, "**My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years**" (Gen.6:3). God put a time limit on His Spirit's striving, and when that had expired the day of opportunity had passed forever. There would be no second chance after death.

Those who were disobedient and refused the Spirit-filled preaching of Noah are now in prison in hades awaiting the great white throne judgment at the second resurrection (of the unjust). Christ did not go to hell, to a place of torment, after He died, as the creeds state. He went to paradise (in sheol), with the repentant thief (Luke 23:43).

The confusion comes from a poor translation of the Hebrew word "sheol", which is translated in the OT as "hell" over 30 times, and as "grave" over 30 times and "pit" a few times. It should never be translated "grave" as there is a different Hebrew word, "qeber", meaning "grave".

Sheol means the "place of departed spirits, or, "the unseen realm", and it had two sections as Jesus described in Luke 16. There was a torment section and a place of bliss called "*Abraham's bosom*", separated by a "*great gulf*" (Luke16:26). The torment section was "*afar off*" from paradise (Luke 16:23). It was impossible to pass from one section to the other. Jesus said that "*they which would pass from hence (Abraham's bosom or paradise) to you (torment) CANNOT*" (Luke 16:26).

So what would be the point of Christ preaching to the souls of the damned who had been disobedient in the days of Noah while they were in the place of torment? What would Christ say to such wretched souls? He could not offer them hope, for they had already been given one hundred and twenty years of opportunity and had remained disobedient to the offer of mercy.

Abraham, who was called the father of all who believe, was in paradise and had no word of hope for the rich man in hell. He could not offer any relief from torment nor any assistance to prevent his brethren from going to the same place.

When Jesus rose He took ALL those in the paradise section of sheol into heaven. The resurrection of the OT saints took place then (Matt 27:51-53). See also Eph. 4:8-10 and 2Cor.12:4 which indicate that those in paradise were taken to heaven when Christ ascended. Paradise is now in heaven.

Christ went to the men and women of Noah's day by His Spirit and preached to them through Noah. Those who perished in the Great Flood still are in prison in Hell (Hades).

