

## The Book of I Peter – Part Fourteen

### April 3, 2011

1). This week we are going to pick up from where we left off last week and speak a bit more about the disobedient “spirits in prison” of Noah’s day mentioned in I Peter 3:19. These are the fallen angels that Jesus is said to have preached to in His post-resurrection body, fallen angels who are being kept in Tartarus for the day of their judgment, which is still yet to happen. But before we talk a bit more about these fallen angels, and why Peter saw fit to even mention them in his letter, let’s set the overall tone and context of his letter.

a) Peter is writing a letter of encouragement to “pilgrims of the Dispersion,” i.e. faithful kingdom seeking Christians scattered about various regions, many of whom are undergoing severe persecution for their convictions of faith. Many are enduring emotional, mental, and especially physical suffering because of their belief in Christ. Peter is reminding them that this life is fleeting and temporary, and they have born again to a living hope that they will be able to realize (their inheritance) if they would just continue to endure their present sufferings. He adamantly exhorts them to continue to “do good,” no matter what the situation is that they face, and to behave in a godly and upright manner, fixing their hope “completely on the grace that is to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” He goes on to warn them that they need to abstain from all fleshly behavior because it wars against their soul by causing them to be disobedient. Peter has already emphasized that the goal of their faith *is* the salvation of their soul, so it is this that they are to focus on (*future focus*). Peter even emphasizes this point by pointing out that the prophets of old and the angels themselves spoke about and longed to see this salvation which is being revealed to them now. So, if they choose not to behave in a holy manner, they may be disqualified from receiving their inheritance, for there is a very real possibility of stumbling on the Rock of Offense, the Stone of Stumbling, the Chief Cornerstone, just as their parent’s generation – and even their own generation - had done 30 years earlier. There is nothing bigger or more important than this that Peter could say.

b) And so the last month or so we have looked specifically at the exhortations that Peter directs to those Christians in order to give them some idea of what it looks like to behave in a godly manner. Peter’s focus is on their human relationships: starting with the slave and master relationship, moving on to the husband and wife relationship, and ending with the relationships with one another within the body of Christ and with those around us in the world. Remember, Peter doesn’t focus on the rightness or wrongness of the situation of slave ownership (nor did Paul, as we studied in his letter to Philemon) or an unequally yoked marriage; he simply encourages each individual

within that type of relationship to behave in a pleasing manner to the Lord, disregarding the unfairness and the unrighteousness of whatever situation they find themselves in. He doesn't try to change the situation (a man-made creation/institution), he simply states how each person should conduct themselves as they sojourn through this brief life.

c) After Peter speaks about submitting to man's institutions and the dynamics of the slave and master relationship, but *before* Peter moves on to suggest to the wives and husbands how they should behave, he makes sure to mention that we already have an example of what it looks like to have to endure the suffering inflicted on us by unrighteous people – Christ Himself. Peter had already pointed out that we have been “called” to endure suffering in this world, as Christ endured suffering for us. We are reminded that Christ suffered a horrific death *for us*, “[bearing] our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds [we] were healed.” And because of this, the fact that we were redeemed with God's “precious blood” (I Peter 1:19), we are to “conduct [ourselves] in fear during the time of [our] stay on earth” (I Peter 1:17). And this is how we do it – we emulate what Jesus did. Jesus, amidst all His suffering, entrusted Himself to His Father who judges all things righteously, and even though Christ could have at any time called down legions of angels to deliver Him from that situation, He did not, but rather chose to endure the shame because of the joy that was set before Him.

d) So Peter then tells wives to put themselves under their husbands as they both seek after the kingdom, and he tells husbands to live with their wives “in an understanding way.” Peter tells wives that, when your husband is disobedient, fall back and behave properly before the Lord because that is probably the best way you can “help” your husband get back on the road of obedience. Peter makes sure to emphasize how important it is for the wife to be inwardly gentle and quiet and in obedience to the Lord, so as to be recognized as the proper lineage of Sarah and Abraham in order to receive the promise of the inheritance. Peter tells husbands to remember how precious and valuable their wives are... and how *easily broken* they are, as he challenges husbands to behave properly as well. Peter even warns husbands that if they do not behave in the proper way towards their wives, their prayers to God may be “cut off.”

e) The focus on this, from Peter's point of view, is those kingdom seeking Christians who may be tempted to act as they did formerly, as the Gentiles do, but should not and cannot so as to not dishonor their being called to be “a kingdom of priests.”

f) And then Peter transitions his focus to *all* of those kingdom seeking Christians within the hearing/reading of his letter and exhorts them to behave godly in all that they do, “not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead.” This is

easier to say than do, for sure, but the command is there nonetheless. We are to “speak well” of all people, especially those who perpetrate evil against us.

g) Peter points out, by using a quote from the Old Testament, that if we want to “see good days” (relative to receiving our inheritance, so this has a future focus) we will refrain our tongues from evil speech and we will turn away from evil. We are reminded that the eyes of the Lord are on those who practice righteousness and His face is against those who do evil. (I hope you’re seeing Peter’s recurring theme here...)

h) And then Peter again states that there is nothing in this world that can harm you, really, if your focus is where it should be – you need to “do good” regardless of your circumstances...regardless of whether it brings suffering or not. He adds that we (kingdom seeking Christians) need to always be ready to vocalize our convictions of faith, without any fear of worldly, present consequences. We must stand firm for Christ, and Christ Himself will take care of the rest.

i) And Peter reminds us that Christ has already suffered death for us, once for all, a death which made possible our initial salvation and makes possible the salvation of our souls. So really, what could happen to us that would somehow even come close to that which He already did? Since Christ died and that death was a part of a divinely perfect plan, who are we to whine and complain and somehow see as a defeat our physical death? And not only that, but Christ gained ultimate victory in that death... victory for all men (who so choose it) over the world, the flesh, and the devil. That victory is so sure that Christ Himself went and made a proclamation to the “spirits” in prison regarding this victory... so that we should be encouraged and reminded to live for God rather than to live for ourselves, because this life is fleeting and Jesus’ return and reign is imminent and certain.

2) And here we are again, to talk about these “spirits in prison,” particularly why Peter finds it necessary to bring it up and why it is important that Jesus made this trip to speak to them -

#### 1Peter 3:18

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, 19 by whom also He went and preached [literally, “to make a proclamation”] to the spirits in prison, 20 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.

a) As we looked at last week, these fallen angels are also mentioned in 2 Peter and in Jude -

2Peter 2:4

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

Jude 1:6

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

b). A quick word about Tartarus – this is the only place in the NT where this word appears and it is specifically referring to a holding place, as the occupants here are being “reserved for judgment” which will take place in “the great day.” Tartarus is described as a “prison” in 1 Peter that is exclusively for the fallen angels who left their proper abode, and I think we can reasonably presume that their offspring (the Nephilim and Rephaim) are there as well. The use of the word ‘hell’ as a translation for Tartarus causes a lot of confusion for people because most Christians see ‘hell’ as the place of eternal damnation. As we should know by now, the English word “hell” is quite misleading.

c) Apart from Tartarus, ‘hell’ is used to translate two other words in the NT: Hades and Gehenna. Hades is a Greek word meaning the place of the dead, and Scripture makes no distinction in the word itself whether it contains the eternally saved or the eternally lost or both. It is just a place where the souls of the dead go as they await resurrection and judgment. In the OT this same place has the Hebrew name Sheol, which we might remember from –

Psalm 16:10

For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

d) This quote was used by Peter in Acts 2:27 to describe where Jesus’ soul went upon His death... so obviously we must view Sheol/Hades as something quite different than “hell,” the place of eternal damnation.

e). And Gehenna, also translated as “hell” in English, refers to the garbage dump outside the city of Jerusalem, which in the OT is called the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. The picture of “being thrown in Gehenna,” I hope you remember, is almost always used contextually in juxtaposition to the picture of “entering the kingdom of heaven.” In other words, Gehenna is the place used to describe where the *unfaithful though eternally saved* individuals end up.

f). One conclusion that can be made is that Tartarus is a specific location *within Hades* (because of the similarities of both being “holding places for the dead”) where these particular angels are imprisoned.

3). So why did Christ go to Tartarus? And what would Jesus proclaim to them? And why would Peter see it necessary to mention this? Let’s go back to the beginning chapters of Genesis in order to set the stage for what Scripture records happened in Noah’s day -

#### Genesis 3:14

So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

a). Here’s a familiar passage that gives us God’s promise that the Woman shall produce a ‘Seed’ who will bruise Satan’s head (meaning, “deliver a lethal blow”). Notice that God says this “to the serpent” (Satan) and so it is clear that this would be received as the promise that it is.... That from the lineage of Adam, *through the Woman*, will come the Redeemer of man who will replace Satan as the incumbent ruler. (Because remember, man was created to rule in Satan’s stead.) This would now be Satan’s focus as he seeks to stop the inevitable.

4). With this in mind, let’s read Genesis 6 -

#### Genesis 6:1

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.3 ¶ And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 ¶ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 ¶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

a). Notice the timing of when the sons of God took wives from the daughters of men – ‘when men began to multiply on the face of the earth’. This phrase would put the beginning of their action very close to the creation itself, and we should see this within the context of God’s promise in Genesis 3:15. If Satan and his angels could corrupt the lineage of Adam, thereby defiling the families of the earth (all the “seed” coming from woman), then the Redeemer, the Seed of the Woman, would not be able to come and their position as rulers would be maintained.

b). Related Scripture gives us something else rather interesting –

**Genesis 5:21**

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. 22 After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. 25 Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. 26 After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had sons and daughters. 27 So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.

c). Enoch was the 7th generation from Adam, born approximately 687 years from the time of Adam’s creation. Adam would have still been alive when Enoch was born, for Adam died when he was 930. Enoch begot Methuselah at the age of 65, and following Methuselah’s birth, Enoch walked with God for 300 years and then ‘he was not, for God took him.’ So Enoch was taken 122 years after Adam’s death.

d). Commentary about the days of Enoch is given to us in Hebrews –

**Hebrews 11:5**

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

e). This appears to be saying that God had direct contact with Enoch and had revealed certain things to him, as it is only by believing the revelation of God that he could act “by faith.” Enoch must have heard something from God, believed it, and then acted on it in order to be found “faithful.” So what is it that God revealed to him? We can hypothesize a bit...

f). Because, according to Arlen Chitwood, the name Methuselah means, ‘When he is gone it [judgment] will be sent’.

g). And because it is after he begot Methuselah that Enoch walked with God, we maybe could assume that God had revealed to him the impending judgment that would come upon the earth, and that perhaps Methuselah was the countdown clock, so to speak.

i). Methuselah was Noah's grandfather and Scripture tells us he lived for 969 years, and his 969th year is also the 600th year of Noah's life -

**Genesis 7:11**

**In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.**

5). Now we need to take a look at Noah for a moment so that we can better understand these "spirits [that are] in prison" that Peter speaks about.

**Genesis 6:9**

**This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.**

a). Noah was "perfect in his generations," meaning, there was *integrity* in his genealogy. Remembering what God said about the inhabitants of the earth (the work of the fallen angels mingling with women and creating progeny), we can maybe see that this refers to Noah's blood line not being tainted by the work of the fallen angels. This would have to be true for his wife and his daughters in law also, but what we might ascertain from this is just how close Satan came to achieving his purpose of making it impossible for the "seed of the woman" to come.

b). The whole reason for destroying mankind through the Flood, apart from the 8 in the ark, was because of the angelic corruption of the families of the earth, producing a mixed race of partly human, partly angelic beings. This is a complete perversion of God's natural order and could not be allowed to continue.

c). And so the 8 in the ark were to provide the new beginning for Man, a beginning free from angelic corruption.

d). And that segment of an unspecified number of the fallen angels are not only confined in the prison of Tartarus, but are also bound in chains awaiting judgment.

6). And Jude speaks a bit more about them -

Jude 1:6

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

a). The work of Satan and his angels with respect to perverting the human race didn't cease following the Flood (remember Gen. 6:4 "There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward"), but seems rather to have been redirected to focus on the specific land given by covenant to Abraham. Hence with Abraham in the land we find the events described above concerning Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them.

b). The reason for their activity in this particular location would be exactly the same as previously, and exactly the same as Satan's intervention in the Garden - to prevent mankind from fulfilling God's purpose for them, which is to have dominion in Satan's stead.

c). It would now be clear, because of the promises God made to Abraham, that the Seed would come through his lineage and would be intimately connected to the land of promise -

Genesis 22:16

...and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - 17 "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

g). What we would see to be different in the account of fallen angel activity in the cities of the plain is that we are now dealing not only with heterosexual relationships, but also homosexual. The 'strange flesh' referenced in our Jude Scripture might be better understood as a 'different kind of flesh' and seems to be speaking of angel flesh. It is the overpowering lust for this kind of flesh that prompts the action of the men of Sodom on the night that the angels come into Lot's house -

Genesis 19:4

Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. 5 And they

called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally."

h). God's judgment on the cities of the plain is a direct result of this angelic perversion.

7). We see a further reference to these offspring of the fallen angels when Israel is on the cusp of entering into their Promised Land, and it would be no surprise to see Satan focus his attention – and his attempts at perverting the seed of the woman – on Israel, because he is well aware of the special place that Israel holds in relation to God's plans and purposes -

Exodus 4:22

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn."

a). In this statement made to Pharaoh, we can see clearly that Israel as a nation has been adopted as God's firstborn son. God's statement that Israel is His firstborn son makes it abundantly clear that Israel is to be given the rulership of the earth, being in possession of both earthly and heavenly promises, and that their establishment in this position will take place in the land -

Exodus 6:8

'And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.'

c). And what do we find when Israel arrives at the borders of the land?

Numbers 13:33

"There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

e). Giants = Hebrew – 'Nephilim' = fallen ones

f). And why are they there? The same reason they've been in the other places.... To prevent God's plan of a Redeemer coming through the seed of the woman, and specifically here because Satan is well aware that Israel is the one in line to inherit the throne of the earth. Satan, of course, wants to thwart this in order to keep his position as ruler of the world.

g). With this in mind, we may now have a better understanding of God's command to Israel recorded in -

Deuteronomy 7:1

"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 "and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

h). Just as the families of the earth in Genesis, so the nations in the land would be corrupted through the actions of the fallen angels. And the only way to eliminate the corruption would be to destroy all those involved.

i). However, Israel never completely accomplished that which they were told to do.

8) Let's now fast forward a bit to some words spoken by Jesus Himself relative to the end days when He will come again -

Luke 17:24

"For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. 25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 "They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

a). As we find ourselves rapidly approaching the time when the Son of Man is revealed, we will note from the Lord's own words that the same acts of sexual immorality between angels and humans will occur again. And it appears to be both on a heterosexual and homosexual level. Remember that Scripture tells us that Antichrist will be the literal son of Satan, and the scriptural evidence seems to be that during the Tribulation, Antichrist's 10 nation confederacy will have at its head with him the offspring of this group of fallen angels who will have left their proper domain.

9). So now, with all this in mind let's return to 1 Peter -

1Peter 3:18

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, 19 by

whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared,

a). We now know who these 'spirits' are and what they had done and why, so why does Christ go in His resurrected body to Tartarus and what message does He give?

c). The word translated 'preached' here just means "to make a proclamation," and there is nothing in the word itself to indicate what was said. What we can know for certain is that it wasn't the Gospel. Angels are a completely different class of being to Man and after Satan's fall no redemption was set in place; redemption is exclusively for the descendants of Adam, not angels -

Hebrews 2:16

For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

e). So what did He say? Well scripture doesn't say, but undoubtedly it was a proclamation concerning the reason for their sin. Here standing before them was the very One whose advent they had tried to prevent, and not only was He now before them, but He was standing before them in His resurrection body...with His work of redemption completed.

He had met Satan face to face in the wilderness, showing that He was fully qualified to redeem that which Adam had lost in the fall.

He had then paid redemption's price on the cross of Calvary, which was His own shed blood.

As a result of this, not only was man's redemption a completed reality, but redeemed Man was now in a position where he could ultimately realize the purpose for his creation as stated in the beginning, in the Book of Genesis - 'to have dominion'.

f). Although we don't have the words that the Lord spoke, His message would have centered around the fact that their attempt to block the Seed of the Woman was to no effect. Not only would He, as the last Adam, one day take the Kingdom, but a great number of individuals redeemed from the lineage of the first Adam would reign as joint heirs with Him in the age to come.

g). From this point on the angels in Tartarus could only look forward to one thing - remaining chained as they await judgment. And Satan and the angels ruling with him likewise could now only look for one thing - having to wait for the day when Christ

would take the Kingdom from them and cast them in the lake of fire that was 'prepared for the devil and his angels'.

10). And so the last question to ask is, Why did Peter see it necessary to mention Jesus' trip to Tartarus to speak to the fallen angels at this point in his letter?

**1Peter 3:18**

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, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 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. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

a). According to our Scripture, 8 souls were divinely protected through the judgment of the flood through being kept in the ark. And these eight people were saved when God's destruction came upon the entire human race, primarily due to the perversion of these fallen angels who are now in Tartarus.

b). And verse 21 makes it plain that this is a type, the antitype of which 'now saves us' - the antitype being 'baptism'.

c). And our scripture says concerning this that it is 'not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'

d). And next week, if the Lord is willing, we will talk a bit more about it.