CHAPTER XIV

EXEGESIS IN PRACTICE: TWO SAMPLES

R. T. France

This chapter is intended to bring the reader down to earth. Many theoretical points have been made in the preceding pages, and many ideals expressed, with carefully selected examples to illustrate the points at issue. But in practice the exegete, be he professional or amateur, is seldom concerned with carefully selected sample verses, but with the actual New Testament text in its entirety. He finds himself faced with the task of determining the meaning not of the odd word or phrase here and there, but of a whole connected passage, which may involve quite complex thought-patterns. He soon finds himself forced, whether he likes it or not, to read the individual words and phrases *in their context.*

This chapter will consist, then, not of lists of rules for correct exegesis, but of an attempt to interpret two actual New Testament passages as a whole (Matthew 8:5–13 and 1 Peter 3:18–22). The passages have been chosen to represent two quite different literary genres, which between them raise many of the problems of method which confront the exegete in practice. We shall not stop to point out at every juncture precisely what methods are being employed. It is for the reader to notice where and how the various techniques of textual criticism, literary criticism, lexical study, study of religious or literary background, etc. are brought into play. These various techniques will not occur in any logical order, but as the passages themselves require them. That is how exegesis must work in practice: it is the passage in front of us that itself dictates the methods to be used.

Only a few preliminary points need to be made before we turn to the selected passages:

(1) We are taking "exegesis" to mean the discovery of what the text means in itself, i.e. the original intention of the writer, and the meaning the passage would have held for the readers for whom it was first intended. This is *exegesis* proper. The further step of *application* of this original meaning to our own situation is strictly a separate discipline (see the chapter by J. E. Goldingay). It is, of course, a necessary step if our study of the New Testament is to be any more than mere antiquarianism, and in practice the exegete is likely to have the contemporary relevance of the text in mind from the start. But the two stages must not be confused, and short cuts must be avoided. Exegesis proper should be as far as possible an objective discipline,

and it is the essential prerequisite for any more existential application of the message of the New Testament. It is with *exegesis*, in this sense, that this chapter is concerned.

(2) Exegesis is seldom a simple case of black and white, where all honest scholars must inevitably reach the same conclusion. The exegesis offered in this chapter is not presented as the last word on the passages concerned. The reader will probably disagree at several points. But this is essentially an essay in *method*. Where the reader disagrees with the proposed exegesis, he should ask himself whether the author has adopted the wrong method to solve this particular problem, or whether he is using the right method, but using it wrongly. Both are, of course, entirely possible!

(3) This chapter presents exegesis as essentially a "do-it-yourself" pursuit. The author believes that no serious exegete should be content merely to follow where some revered commentary or version leads. He should satisfy himself whether the job has been properly done. But this does not mean the abolition of all commentaries, lexica, concordances and versions, leaving the exegete closeted alone with his Greek text (or, ideally, with the original manuscripts!). It will be very clear, particularly in the second passage below, how much the author has in fact leaned on commentaries and works of reference. The exegete needs information, and much of what he needs will not be found in the pages of the New Testament itself. He needs guidance on critical, lexical, textual and other principles. He needs to be aware of the range of suggestions which have been offered on the point at issue. But, in the last resort, the conclusion must be his own. He must weigh the evidence, and decide between the options for himself. If he shirks this responsibility, he is not an exegete.

Without more ado, then, we turn to the two selected passages, trusting that the discussion will throw up most of the major principles and methods which must govern the practice of exegesis. The reader should note how the various methods of study mentioned in preceding chapters are worked out in practice.

I. *Matthew 8:5–13*

This passage has been chosen as an example of a pericope in the Synoptic Gospels where a comparison with the treatment of the same material by another evangelist may help to throw light on the special concerns of the writer, i.e. where exegesis is aided by critical, particularly redaction-critical, considerations.

The incident of the healing of the centurion's servant is recorded only in Matthew and Luke.[1] It may thus be loosely referred to as "Q material"; but a few minutes with a synopsis will reveal that the relation between the two accounts is anything but an exact equivalence. There is nearly verbal equivalence in the dialogue in verses 8b–10 (Lk. 7:6b, 7b–9), but for the rest, while the essential features of the story are the same, they are told in a very different way. Matthew is short and to the point, but includes verses

11–12, a Q saying which Luke records in a quite different context (13:28–29), and which was therefore presumably preserved independently, and inserted here by Matthew because he found it relevant in the context.[2] Luke, on the other hand, is more leisurely and colourful in his telling of the story, including extra detail about the centurion's Jewish sympathies, and in particular the account of his having approached Jesus through his friends, rather than in person as in Matthew's version. Other differences in detail will be mentioned in our discussion of the passage.

Convinced advocates of Q as a single document are therefore reduced to believing that Q preserved the dialogue, with perhaps a brief indication of the narrative setting, and the evangelists were left to supply the details from oral tradition. Those who in any case find a unitary Q hard to swallow find here further evidence for an oral tradition which preserved significant sayings with great fidelity, perhaps jotting them down to aid memory, but was less concerned with the verbatim form of the narrative.

At any rate, the significant point is that what mattered to the early Christians in this incident was primarily the dialogue to which it led. Doctrinaire form-critics will therefore label it a pronouncement-story or apophthegm, rather than a miracle story; those less worried about exact labelling may be inclined to ask why it should not be both![3] But it is certainly not *just* a miracle story: attention is focused on the sayings about authority and faith.

Apart from questions of exact wording and emphasis, the only significant factual discrepancy between the two accounts is the question whether the centurion approached Jesus through his Jewish friends (Luke) or in person (Matthew). Which is the original version? Has Luke added the messengers to emphasise the centurion's humility (see esp. Lk. 7:7a), or has Matthew abbreviated the story by omitting what he regarded as an inessential detail? Here commentators differ, their conclusions depending often on their presuppositions about the "laws of tradition", whether oral material tends to lose inessential details in transmission, or to be elaborated in the interest of story-telling. It must be remembered, however, that it is almost certainly not a question of either evangelist sitting down with a written account of the event in front of him and deliberately either abbreviating or expanding it. It is a question of an orally preserved story which each tells in his own way, including just so much detail as he feels is necessary to make his point. Matthew, as we shall see, is concerned to emphasise the *faith* of the centurion, and for this purpose the messengers are irrelevant. Luke, on the other hand, also wishes to indicate his *humility*, and here the sending of the messengers is significant. Thus to the question whether there actually were any messengers or not, we should probably answer "yes", but we should be missing the point if we therefore accuse Matthew of falsification. His deliberate abbreviation is a valid literary device to throw the emphasis clearly onto the central theme of the story, the centurion's faith. His omission makes no significant difference either to the miracle, or to the crucial dialogue. If anything, it high-lights the latter.

What we have been sketching in this last paragraph is the contribution of redaction-criticism to exegesis in this particular case. A comparison of the handling of the story by the two evangelists has alerted us to Matthew's primary intention in telling the story, to teach about faith. This insight is clearly going to be important in our detailed exegesis.

VERSE 5

Capernaum needs little comment. A Bible dictionary will tell us that it was one of the leading towns of Galilee, a prosperous lake-side community, which was Jesus' base for much of his Galilean ministry. This latter fact accounts for the centurion's awareness of Jesus' healing power: it was, no doubt, the talk of the town.

A Bible dictionary will also supply details about centurions. They were the backbone of the Roman army, the N.C.O.s on whom discipline depended, responsible and respected officers. There were no Roman legions stationed in Palestine, but Herod Antipas had under his control a small force of auxiliaries. These were all non-Jewish troops, drawn largely from the area of Lebanon and Syria. The centurion was, therefore, certainly not a Jew, though Luke makes much of his sympathy for the Jewish religion. It is as the believing Gentile that he finds his significance in Matthew's account. (Is this perhaps another reason for Matthew's omission of the Jewish friends, to avoid blurring the sharp Jew/Gentile contrast which is a prominent feature of his version of the story, coming into sharp focus in his addition of verses 11–12? Luke is concerned only with the man's character, Matthew also with his nationality.)

VERSE 6

This verse raises two points of translation, both of some importance for exegesis. The first is the centurion's address to Jesus, κύριε (repeated in verse 8). Should this be translated "Lord", or, as in Moffatt, NEB, Jerusalem Bible, "Sir"? In other words, is it just a polite form of address, or does it imply more? AG tell us that κύριε is "a form of address to respected pers. gener.". MM show that in secular Greek, apart from its use of a god, it certainly involves an acknowledgement of superiority, particularly in addressing a higher official. But when used as a form of address to Jesus, the precise connotation of such a flexible word obviously cannot be determined by the dictionary, but by what the context tells us of the person's attitude to Jesus. The centurion, as we shall see in verses 8–9, regards Jesus as a superior authority, and a worker of miraculous healing, so "Sir" seems a bit weak. On the other hand, there is no indication that he attributes to Jesus any divine status, as "Lord" might well imply. However it be translated, κύριε should be regarded as acknowledging the superiority of Jesus, but cannot be pressed into an indication of the centurion's christological understanding.

More important is the word παῖς which can mean either "child" or "servant". Traditionally it has always been translated "servant", but this is based on Luke, who has used the unambiguous term δοῦλος (as well as παῖς in 7:7). But was this what Matthew meant? Bultmann[4] pronounces, "Unquestionably παῖς in Matt. 8:6 is to be understood as child: δοῦλος in Lk. 7:2 is an error in reproduction." Like many of Bultmann's "unquestionable" pronouncements, this is not supported by any argument. The exegete should be on his guard against unsupported dogmatic assertions, by however august an authority! What is the evidence?

Παῖς occurs 24 times in the New Testament (see concordance). In only *one* of these does it mean "son" (Jn. 4:51); in eight other cases it clearly means "child", but without implying any relationship to the speaker or to a character in the narrative. In four cases it refers to a "servant" of a man, and in eight cases to a "servant" of God.[5] Thus if παῖς in Matthew 8:6, 8, 13 means the centurion's "son", it would be agreeing with the only use of the word by John against all the other New Testament uses (which are in fact all in Matthew and Luke-Acts). MM also show that both "child" and "servant" were common meanings in secular Greek, but apparently not "son". In Matthew, outside this passage, there are three uses in the sense of "child" (not "son"), and two in the sense of "servant", one of which (14:2) is closely parallel to the sort of "retainer" envisaged here. Thus there seems no reason for driving a wedge between Matthew and Luke at this point, or for doubting that Matthew is using παῖς in exactly the same sense that Luke does in 7:7, where it is parallel to δοῦλος in 7:2.[6] Some commentators (e.g. Lohmeyer, Schlatter) suggest that while δοῦλος was the formal, official term for a slave, παῖς was used for a slave who was held in personal friendship (see Lk. 7:2, ἔντιμος). The use of "boy" for servants in colonial days may be roughly parallel.

Matthew does not emphasise, as Luke does, the centurion's fondness for his servant, which would be remarkable, but not unparalleled, in non-Jewish circles. He is not so interested in the man's character as in his faith. His kind-heartedness, as well as his friendly relations with the Jewish community, are irrelevant to this purpose, and only what is necessary to the story is retained.

VERSE 7

This apparently straight-forward verse in fact poses a significant problem. It all turns on the punctuation: are the words of Jesus a promise, or a question? Greek manuscripts bore no punctuation marks, and such questions frequently arise. Often they are of considerable exegetical importance. Sometimes linguistic considerations help to provide an answer. More often we are entirely dependent on the context.

The one striking linguistic feature is the very prominent ἐγώ. Greek does not usually include personal pronouns in addition to the person indicated by the verb-inflection unless there is need to emphasise the person. When the pronoun comes first in the sentence, the emphasis is unmistakable. So if

these words are treated as a statement, the ἐγώ is a puzzle. It looks either redundant, or uncharacteristically pompous – "I myself will come and heal him." (One is reminded of Longfellow's "I myself, myself! behold me!")

But if this is a question, the emphatic ἐγώ has a real function: "Shall *I* come and heal him?" H.-J. Held[7] regards this as an "astonished or indignant question". It is usually explained on the basis of the racial distinction. For a Jew to enter a Gentile's house was to contract defilement (see Acts 10–11). In fact there is no record of Jesus ever entering a Gentile house, or even touching a Gentile to heal him. His two healings of Gentiles were done by a word, at a distance. Such an apparent reluctance, on racial grounds, would be closely parallel to Jesus' harsh reply to the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mt. 15:24, 26), and the two stories are so closely parallel at many points that this analogy supports an apparent reluctance on Jesus' part in Matthew 8:7, rather than the ready response indicated by punctuating as a statement.

Even if the racial overtone be doubted, an interrogative punctuation makes the dialogue flow more smoothly. The centurion has not, in verse 6, made any formal request, but simply presented the situation. Jesus' question is then drawing out the logical implication: "So you want *me* to come and heal him?" The centurion's deprecatory reply in verse 8 then follows naturally.

If then we accept that verse 7 is a question, what is its implication? The parallel with the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman is illuminating here. Jesus is testing the faith of the supplicant by an apparent refusal (or at least reluctance). In each case, faith triumphs over this obstacle, proving stronger than the racial barrier, and in each case Jesus then effects the cure in explicit response to this faith. Such a build-up to the story gives added point to Jesus' amazement at the centurion's faith (verse 10), that it is able to see beyond racial distinctions, and this leads on naturally to the universalistic pronouncement of verses 11–12. Thus even this question of punctuation proves to have implications for the meaning of the story: the recognition of a question in these words of Jesus, and the implication of a testing of the centurion's faith, introduces already that contrast between Jewish racialism and the faith of the Gentile which is Matthew's concern here and at several points in his gospel. Luke significantly does not record this question, with its apparent reluctance, nor the parallel story of the Syro-Phoenician woman.

VERSE 8

Is the centurion's deferential reply (notice κύριε again) due to a consciousness of racial distinction, and a respect for Jesus' scruples about entering a Gentile home (so many commentators), or is the thought more of his personal unworthiness in contrast with the greatness of Jesus? The whole of his reply in verses 8–9 says no word about race; apparently his faith is such that the concept is irrelevant to him. His words are all concerned with the supreme *authority* of Jesus, and his ability to heal. In the face of such

authority he both feels his personal unworthiness to receive Jesus, and regards a personal visit as unnecessary, since a word will be enough. Thus the context suggests that his feeling of unworthiness is personal, not racial.

This argument from context is reinforced by the Greek word used, ἱκανός, which means at root "sufficient", and thus suggests considerations of character rather than status. A concordance will reveal similar uses, such as Matthew 3:11; 1 Cor. 15:9; 2 Cor. 2:16, all of which are concerned with personal worthiness or adequacy. Hence Rengstorf concludes, "It denotes the impression made by the person of Jesus upon the Gentile centurion ... He is not thinking of the ritual uncleanness which Jesus as a Jew would incur by entering a non-Jewish house. What he has in view is the majesty and authority of Jesus which lift him above everything human, especially in the non-Jewish sphere ... On the lips of the centurion the οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανός is thus a confession of the Messiahship of Jesus." [8] The word "messiahship" seems misconceived, but the exegesis of ἱκανός is both lexically and contextually sound.

In the request for healing by a mere word, uttered at a distance, we are shown the extent of the centurion's faith.[9] No such cures had yet been performed, as far as our records go. The centurion had heard of Jesus' healing work, perhaps seen it, but his faith goes beyond the evidence of his senses. The only other such healings recorded are that of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter, and of the nobleman's son in John 4. The *word* was a normal part of the healing process, but it was usually uttered to the patient in person. The next verse goes on to make explicit the unlimited power with which the centurion credited Jesus.

VERSE 9

The centurion's confession of faith is one of the two key pronouncements in the story. Its main drift is clear: he likens Jesus' authority to that of the army officer, who need only speak the word to receive instant obedience. So Jesus need only speak the word, and the healing will be accomplished. [10]

There is, however, some dispute as to how exactly the comparison is made. The text as usually printed gives the centurion two contrasting observations, (1) that he is under authority (and so must obey orders), and (2) that he has soldiers under him, who must obey him. So he knows his place in a chain of authoritative command. There is, however, evidence of a variant reading, particularly in the old Syriac version (never an authority to be treated lightly), which would substitute for ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν something like ἐν ἐξουσία or ἐξουσίαν ἔχων, thus eliminating the idea of subordination, and restricting the comparison entirely to the authority exercised by the centurion himself.[11] There are, however, good reasons why the reading "under authority" (which is undisputed in Luke) should have been altered to "in authority": firstly, a tidy-minded scribe would be likely to take this simple means of eliminating a contrasting element and reducing the whole verse to a single point of comparison; secondly, the mention of the centurion's sub-

ordination might cause embarrassment if it was felt that there must be exact correspondence at every point – to whom was Jesus "under authority"?

If then we accept the reading "under authority", is not this last point a problem, particularly in view of the phrase *καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ* . . .? Must this not mean, "For I too (like you) am a man under authority . . .", and therefore make Jesus a mere man, and a subordinate at that? However, an examination of the uses of *καὶ γάρ* listed in AG (under *γάρ*) shows many cases where it means simply "for" or, better, "for indeed", and where there is no room for the meaning "also".[12] So here the translation "For I indeed am a man under authority . . ." would be permissible, without drawing the direct comparison between the status of the centurion and that of Jesus. Moreover, even if one were to insist on the meaning "For I *too* am . . .", which is perhaps the more natural translation when *ἐγώ* follows directly after *καὶ γάρ*, it is not legitimate to restrict the point of comparison to the first clause only ("under authority"), when in fact it is the issuing, not the obeying, of orders which is the main theme of the verse. The *καὶ γάρ* governs the whole sentence, not just its first words. The point could be made by paraphrasing, rather tendentiously, "For even I too, set as I am within a chain of authority, know what it is to give orders . . ."

The minor points of text and translation covered in the last two paragraphs are, of course, quite inessential for a basic exegesis of the passage. The main point of the verse is beyond doubt, the assertion of Jesus' absolute authority by analogy with that of a military commander. But the exegete is not on this account entitled to ignore the incidental details, particularly where these have given rise, as in this case, to doctrinal embarrassment.

VERSE 10

This is the second key pronouncement, the point to which the whole narrative has been building up. The punch-line is introduced by the statement that Jesus was "amazed" by what he heard. The concordance will show that *θαυμάζω* is a verb which is not used lightly. In particular, it is used only twice of Jesus himself, here and at Mark 6:6. Here the object of his amazement is faith, there it is unbelief. Good material for the preacher, this!

The saying is introduced by *ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν*, the mark of a solemn, emphatic pronouncement. It is often singled out as one of the characteristic rhetorical devices of Jesus, as a teacher of unique authority, since no other Jewish teacher of the time is known to have used the phrase. A statement thus introduced is to be carefully noted.

The pronouncement is concerned with *faith*. This, as we have seen, is the focal point of the story for Matthew, and it is clinched in the peculiarly Matthean "As you believed let it be done for you" of verse 13. Faith here is a practical confidence in Jesus' power to heal, based on a conviction of his supreme authority: so much we may infer from the centurion's saying in verses 8–9 which gives rise to Jesus' commendation. It would be quite inap-

propriate to the narrative situation to ask whether this was saving, justifying faith in the Pauline sense, or whether it involves a doctrinal acceptance of the divinity of Jesus. These are questions derived from later theological development in the New Testament which are certainly anachronistic when applied to the period of Jesus' ministry. Whether they occurred to Matthew in his telling of the story we must consider shortly. But for the original setting of the story and of Jesus' pronouncement, "faith" must be interpreted in terms of its context, as a practical trust based on a conviction of Jesus' power to heal. It involves a recognition that Jesus has a unique authority, and wields supernatural power. Beyond that the context forbids us to go.

It is this unreserved confidence and acceptance of Jesus' authority which amazes him, and calls forth his commendation. Here is none of that suspicion or reservation of judgment which he had met with among his own people. Here is a man who has grasped more fully than any Jew what sort of person Jesus is, and who is prepared to act decisively on that understanding.

And the man is a *Gentile*. Jesus' mission was first of all to Israel. He deliberately restricted his activity during his lifetime to the chosen people, and forbade his disciples for the time being to preach to Gentiles (Mt. 10:5–6; 15:24). Yet here, spontaneously, there appears in a Gentile that very response which his Jewish mission had failed to evoke. It ignores and overrides racial barriers. The importance of this for Matthew we shall see shortly, but for Jesus and his disciples it is of tremendous significance. A whole new horizon has opened up. This incident is a preview of the great insight which came later through another centurion's faith, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). The barrier between the chosen people and the rest of mankind is beginning to crumble.

The precise wording of Jesus' saying is slightly different in Matthew from that in Luke. Luke has the familiar "Not even in Israel have I found such faith", but the original Matthean form seems certainly to be, "With no-one in Israel have I found such faith." [13] W. Grundmann calls this a "radikalisierten Form" compared with the Lucan.[14] Instead of a general comparison of the centurion with Israel as a whole, the Matthean form states that not a single individual in Israel reaches his standard. It is thus a more all-embracing condemnation of Israel's unbelief, and leads appropriately to the devastating saying added by Matthew in verses 11–12. The Lucan form could even be construed as a veiled compliment to Israel: "Not even in Israel (where I would most expect it) have I found such faith." But the Matthean form leaves no room for a compliment. His emphasis is, as we shall see, single-mindedly on the rejection of Israel as the chosen race.

VERSES 11–12

This is Matthew's own addition to the story of some words of Jesus almost certainly uttered in a different context, and preserved elsewhere by Luke (13:28–29). The addition by Matthew shows clearly what was for him the main point of the story. It is two-fold: (1) the centurion, by his faith,

gives evidence that Gentiles are to find a place in the kingdom of God, and (2) by the same token the Jews who do not have this faith are to be rejected from that kingdom. Thus Matthew sees faith as the means of entry to the kingdom, and race as irrelevant. The days of a chosen race are finished. God's people are now all those who believe, of whatever race.

It may be objected that Matthew is pressing the story too far. There is no mention in the story of *saving* faith, or of entering the kingdom of God. The centurion's faith is simply a practical confidence in Jesus' healing power. Certainly, Matthew is developing the theme beyond the actual narrative context, but is the development illegitimate? Is not the man who recognises in Jesus a uniquely authoritative figure, and whose faith is praised above that of any Jew, rightly taken as a symbol of the coming Gentile church? Matthew is not misunderstanding and allegorizing a simple story; he is drawing the logical conclusion from the key pronouncement which is the focus of that story.

VERSE 11

This verse envisages the Gentiles entering the kingdom. *Πολλοί* does not explicitly mean Gentiles, of course, but in parallelism with the "sons of the kingdom" (verse 12), who are clearly Jews (see below), it could have no other meaning, and the context of Jesus' pronouncement about the centurion's faith in contrast with Israel confirms this.

The words "will come from east and west" echo a recurring Old Testament formula, seen for instance in Psalm 107:3; Isaiah 43:5–6; 49:12. But the significant point is that these are predictions (or retrospective accounts) of God's regathering of dispersed *Jews*. There are similar passages which speak of Gentiles (probably, though the reference could again be to the dispersed Jews) acknowledging and worshipping God in all parts of the earth, but not *coming* (e.g. Isaiah 45:6; 59:19; Mal. 1:11). There are also passages which predict the coming of Gentiles to Jerusalem (e.g. Is. 2:2–3; 60:3–4), but not in the terms used here by Jesus. So it seems that Jesus, in predicting the coming of the Gentiles (itself an Old Testament idea), deliberately does so in words recalling Old Testament hopes of the regathering of *Israel*. Here we see already the idea of the supplanting of the chosen race by others which becomes more explicit as we go on.

The Gentiles are envisaged as gathering for a banquet, *ἀνακλιθήσονται*, literally "recline", is correctly translated "sit at table" by RSV, since it was a common practice in the ancient world to recline on couches by the table rather than to sit on chairs (cf. the disciple *ἀνακείμενος ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* at the Last Supper, Jn. 13:23).[15] This is no ordinary meal, however, but one shared with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is here taking up a common Jewish eschatological idea, where the joys of the Messianic age are pictured as a banquet. Derived from such Old Testament passages as Isaiah 25:6; 65:13f, this theme was richly embroidered by later Jewish writers, both in the apocalyptic and the rabbinic traditions.[16] It

would be tedious to give all the details here, but it is worth mentioning that the presence of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the banquet (together with other great Old Testament figures) is specifically mentioned in two rabbinic passages (Pes. 119b; Ex.R. 25:8): there will be a very polite debate about which of them shall "say grace", and in the end the honour will go to David! But the important point is that in these and most of the other relevant passages the banquet is regarded as being for the Jews only: it is "for the children of Isaac on the day when he (God) will receive them into his favour" (Pes. 119b). Sometimes the banqueters are referred to as "the pious", but it is, often explicitly, the pious within Israel who are in mind.

Jesus is, then, deliberately predicting that the eschatological banquet with the patriarchs to which the Jews looked forward as a national right will in fact include Gentiles as well. For a Jew to sit at table with Gentiles meant ritual defilement, and such an idea in the eschatological banquet would be unthinkable. But Jesus is rejecting all racial barriers. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the very founders of the Jewish race, will, it is assumed, be happy to sit with Gentiles, with no thought of defilement. Jesus is not predicting the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism – that would have been a very acceptable idea to many in his day. He is envisaging their inclusion in the joys of the kingdom *as Gentiles,* apparently on equal terms with the patriarchs. This is revolutionary stuff! And there is worse to come in verse 12.

VERSE 12

The phrase "sons of the kingdom" would have been readily understood by Jews – to mean themselves! "Sons of . . ." is often used in the sense of "belonging to . . .", "destined for . . .", etc. See e.g. "sons of the bridechamber" (Mt. 9:15); "son of hell" (Mt. 23:15). The Talmud frequently uses the phrase "a son of the age to come" (cf. Lk. 16:8; 20:34–35). So the "sons of the kingdom" are those to whom the kingdom belongs by right. And such was the Jewish estimate of themselves: as children of Abraham, it was their birthright. "According to the popular view in the time of Jesus, Israel's superiority over the Gentiles consisted in the fact that Israel, by virtue of its lineal descent from Abraham, enjoyed the benefits of the vicarious merits of the patriarchs, and the consequent assurance of final salvation. It was the current belief that no descendant of Abraham could be lost." [17]

Yet Jesus not only says that they must share the kingdom with the Gentiles, but that they, the rightful heirs, will themselves be excluded. Literally, his words should mean that *all* Jews are excluded, but Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are clearly not rejected. The point is that racial descent will be irrelevant. To claim to be a son of Abraham will be worthless. John the Baptist had said as much (Mt. 3:9), but no other Jew dared to suggest such a thing. By calling them "sons of the kingdom" Jesus emphasises the paradoxical reversal of roles which will take place when believing Gentiles receive what the Jews regarded as their inalienable right.

This theme of the imminent rejection of Israel as a nation from its status

as God's chosen people is a common one in Jesus' teaching, often seen by implication in the way he applies Old Testament passages about Israel to his own disciples,[18] but sometimes quite explicit, as in the parable of the tenants (Mk. 12:1–9), or in Jesus' laments over Jerusalem (Lk. 13:34–35; 23:28–31).[19]

The imagery of "outer darkness", weeping, and gnashing of teeth is all found in Jewish apocalyptic or midrashic sources.[20] The difference here is that it is the "sons of the kingdom" themselves who will be the sufferers, whereas in Jewish apocalyptic it is "the sinners", "the ungodly", and certainly *not* the Jews. Some commentators suggest that the darkness is specifically mentioned in contrast with the bright lights of the banqueting hall, since it is a common apocalyptic theme that the sufferings of the lost will be increased by their being able to see the blessed in Paradise.[21]

Verses 11–12 are designed, then, to express in (for the Jew) the most shocking manner possible the change which is now imminent in the economy of God, when the chosen race will no longer have a special privilege, but the kingdom of God will be for all who believe, from whatever race, while those who do not believe, even though they may be sons of Abraham, will not be able to join their father at the banquet; when "the last shall be first, and the first last."

VERSE 13

Matthew now returns to the narrative, and concludes it with a minimum of words. Yet even in this brief conclusion a comparison with the Lucan version reveals again Matthew's overriding concern – faith. Matthew alone inserts the healing word of Jesus for which the centurion had asked; taking up the theme of verse 10, it focuses on his remarkable faith: "As you have believed let it be done for you." In the Synoptic accounts healing frequently depends on faith; how much more healing at a distance, paralleled only in Matthew 15:21–28 and John 4:46–54. The parallel with Matthew 15:27 is here very close, just as the themes of the two stories have run parallel throughout, both concerned with Jesus' encounter with a Gentile supplicant, both focusing on the trial and the triumph of faith despite the racial barrier, both culminating in healing at a distance. John 4:48, 50 also points out the faith of the father.

CONCLUSION

So a request for healing from a Gentile centurion, which gave rise to a significant dialogue with Jesus about authority and faith, has been taken further by Matthew, both in the details of his telling of the story and particularly by the insertion of an independent saying of Jesus about membership in the kingdom, to provide a more comprehensive piece of teaching on the central importance of faith not only for healing but for salvation, for inclusion in the true people of God for whom his es-

chatological blessings are reserved. Matthew, the evangelist to the Jews, has a great deal to say on this theme. The healing of the Gentile's servant provides him with an excellent paradigm of the universal application of the work of Jesus, and he makes sure by his telling of the story and in particular by his insertion of Jesus' devastating saying that the message is not missed.

This understanding is the result of a "redaction-critical" exegesis of the pericope in comparison with the Lucan parallel.[22] To ignore, or to try to remove, the differences in treatment would have been to lose a vital part of what Matthew wants to emphasise. As a miracle story alone the pericope is of great value, but Matthew is concerned to teach more than the miraculous power of Jesus, and the modern reader, no less than those for whom Matthew originally wrote, stands to gain much from a recognition of his special emphasis.

II. *1 Peter 3:18–22*

In contrast to Matthew 8:5–13, which was a relatively straightforward narrative-cum-sayings Gospel pericope, we turn now to a concentrated piece of doctrinal-cum-hortatory teaching in a letter. We have deliberately chosen a notoriously obscure passage, so as to see the importance of proper exegetical methods in the clearest possible light. As so often in the New Testament letters, the thought is highly concentrated, and not at all easy to follow in a logical sequence. One thought leads to another, apparently unrelated to the main theme, in a way which leaves the tidy-minded Western reader bewildered. The passage contains one notorious centre of controversy, which involves serious doctrinal implications (the "preaching to spirits" in verse 19), and a fairly obscure piece of typology (the Flood as a type of Christian baptism, verses 20–21). The whole passage has given rise to more monographs, additional notes, and excursuses than almost any other. Yet there is probably no more agreement about its exegesis now than there ever has been.

For such a passage, the generous use of commentaries is obligatory. Only so can the new-comer hope to grasp what are the issues involved, and what the nature of the evidence which has led to such controversy. One commentary is not enough, for few commentators (including, no doubt, the present writer) can resist the temptation to make all the evidence point towards their chosen solution, and to play down or even ignore the less convenient facts. By using several reputable commentaries, the reader will not find an agreed answer, but he will be in a fair position to work towards his own exegesis on the basis of a cautious awareness of the issues, not of blissful ignorance. The availability of several such commentaries is assumed in what follows, and the source of basic information is therefore not usually stated.[23]

It will soon be discovered that "the difficulty of the text lies not in the thought of the author, which is neither odd nor fantastic, but in our ignorance of his background and field of reference."[24] The author of those words continues, "More recent studies in later Jewish apocryphal writings

and in early Jewish-Christian literature reveal a whole world of ideas which was powerfully at work, all the more so because simply taken for granted, in the writers of the New Testament. The exegete ... must try to immerse himself as deeply as possible in the mental atmosphere of the biblical writer, his pre-suppositions, his categories of thought, his literary conventions." [25] In fact, if you are not prepared to dirty your hands in the muddy waters of apocalyptic and rabbinic speculations, much of the New Testament must necessarily remain obscure. To try to understand 1 Peter 3:19–20 without a copy of the Book of Enoch at your elbow is to condemn yourself to failure.

Space does not allow a discussion of the standard questions of literary criticism. We shall assume that the letter was written in the second half of the first century (and probably in the earlier part of it) by Peter or someone closely associated with him (Silvanus, writing on Peter's behalf?) to the churches of the northern part of Asia Minor, whose membership was largely, but not exclusively, Gentile. Its occasion was an outbreak of persecution against the Christians of that area, which, if the letter may be taken as a unity, had already begun, and was causing serious distress. A particular connection of the letter with baptism seems probable, but the precise form of that connection is not clear. Earlier views that it was simply a baptismal liturgy or sermon are now generally discounted, and it is accepted as a genuine letter (or "epistle" in the technical sense).

Thus the overall context of our passage is an encouragement to Christians under persecution. How serious that persecution was is disputed. Many commentators write it off as petty local discrimination against converts to Christianity, stopping far short of martyrdom. Some of the language is very strong for such a situation, particularly when it is recognized that *πάσχω* was often used for dying in persecution (cf. its use for Christ's death in 2:21). The parallel with Christ's "suffering" in 3:17–18 and 4:1 suggests martyrdom, as does the entrusting of their souls to God by those who "suffer" in 4:19. And would the "suffering" of a murderer be less than death (4:15)? Moreover, if we are right in interpreting 4:6 to refer to those who have died since hearing the gospel, a martyrdom context fits the verse best, with its contrast between being "*judged* in the flesh" and "living in the spirit"; the verse reads most naturally as an assurance on the ultimate fate of those already martyred. We shall, therefore, assume a context of persecution in which martyrdom was a real possibility. This, as we shall see, increases the relevance of 3:18 and the sequel.

The immediate context of our passage is concerned with this same theme, giving directions for the Christian's deportment under persecution. In 3:13–17 the Christian is envisaged *vis-a-vis* his persecutors. He may not compromise his loyalty to Christ, but neither must he give them proper cause to punish him: if he must suffer, let it be for his good deeds, not for bad. The same theme of uncompromising loyalty to Christ despite the suffering this may bring is taken up again after our passage, in 4:1–6.

Our exegesis must then be consistent with this context. Verses 18–22 must have something relevant to say to those facing fierce hostility in the

name of Christ. It is the fault of many interpretations of the passage that they ignore this requirement, and so accuse the author of inserting an irrelevant doctrinal digression in the middle of his exhortation. The context is not to be thus flouted if the passage will yield *relevant* sense. The importance of this discussion of the context for our exegesis will soon become apparent.

We should notice at this point that many scholars have found in various parts of 1 Peter traces of early Christian hymns or credal formulae, marked by a stylized, rhythmic structure for easy memorization. One such "hymn" is often seen in verses 18 and 22; but the intervening verses are, in comparison, tortuous and prosaic, so that it is not possible to take the whole passage as a hymn. This hymnic or credal origin for verses 18 and 22 is not unlikely, and has a limited importance for exegesis.[26]

VERSE 18[27]

The main drift of this verse, at least up to the penultimate clause, is clear. It is one of the most direct statements in the New Testament of the vicarious significance of the death of Christ. But what is the relevance of such a statement in this context? The obvious answer, given in most commentaries, is that Jesus' death is given as an example of innocent suffering. The persecuted Christians of Asia Minor must be prepared to accept undeserved suffering as their Master did.[28] That such an application is intended cannot be doubted, and the mention that Jesus in his suffering was righteous seems designed to reinforce the lesson. But why then all the emphasis in this verse on the *redeeming* character of Jesus' death? Are his followers called to die for men's sins to bring them to God? Presumably not, unless Peter is here stepping right out of line with the rest of New Testament teaching. Hence the conclusion is generally drawn that Peter, having once mentioned the death of Jesus, is drawn by the attraction of the subject to explore the meaning of that death and its sequel, and forgets the exemplary purpose for which he introduced it.[29] Some would suggest that his use of a set credal formula or hymn leads him to include details from that formula which are irrelevant to his purpose in the context. Then, having indulged his doctrinal interests in a wide-ranging digression, he returns to his theme in chapter 4.

We hope to show more fully as we go on that an exegesis which thus disregards the context is quite inadequate. The emphasis in these verses is on the triumph of Jesus over all opposing powers. This triumph began in his redeeming death, was established through his resurrection, and is now effective through his ascension and sitting at God's right hand. Verse 18 is the beginning of this recital, and its relevance to the context is that the persecuted Christian, facing the powers of evil, may know that these powers are already defeated, that he shares in the triumph of his Master, to whom all powers are subject. The apparent defeat of death was for Jesus the beginning of victory. So it is for the Christian martyr: death leads to resurrection and triumph, because Jesus through his redeeming death has once for all conquered sin and all the powers of evil. This is no digression, but the very

foundation of the Christian hope in which the martyr may die. The justification for this overall exegesis will emerge as we go on.

There are several details in the wording of verse 18 which deserve fuller investigation than space permits us here. It is steeped in Old Testament sacrificial ideas. *ἅπαξ* introduces the thought of the decisive, once-for-all nature of Jesus' atonement, stressed so much in Hebrews.[30] *περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν* recalls the technical term for the Old Testament sin-offering as rendered in the LXX.[31] *δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων* continues the sacrificial allusion by reminding of the substitutionary principle, which required an unblemished animal, and also very likely alludes to Is. 53:11, "By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous." *προσαγάγῃ* introduces the reconciliation aspect of the atonement, reminding us of the *προσαγωγή* mentioned by Paul in Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18. The Old Testament background to this term is exegetically very suggestive, especially in a context of sacrificial language, but we cannot explore it here.[32] So verse 18, up to the penultimate clause, concentrates on the death of Jesus, viewed as a decisive, sacrificial, atoning, reconciling act. It is the doctrine of the atonement in a nutshell.

The last clause of verse 18 begins the transition of thought from the death of Jesus to the triumph which followed. The rhythmically balanced phrases, focusing on the two essential events of Easter, seem clearly to come from a traditional formula, and the close formal parallel of 1 Timothy 3:16 (cf. also Rom. 1:3–4) supports this.

The terms "flesh" and "spirit" need careful handling. In the world of Greek philosophy they would mean the material and immaterial "parts" of a man, of which the former dies but the latter survives. Many have automatically read this clause in such terms, without reflecting that such a distinction is foreign to Jewish thought, and that it is in the world of the Old Testament and later Jewish literature that our author moves. Nor is there any reference here to the divine and human natures of Christ: this is the New Testament, not a fifth-century doctrinal work, and the New Testament never speaks of two natures in Christ, let alone using *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα* to describe them. *σάρξ* in the New Testament denotes the natural human sphere of existence, and *πνεῦμα* in contrast with it denotes the supernatural sphere.[33] The closest parallel to the present use is Paul's careful distinction between two modes of existence, *ψυχικός* and *πνευματικός*, in 1 Corinthians 15:42ff. His distinction there is not between "body" and "soul", but between two types of body, adapted to two different modes of existence. So here the contrast is between Christ's death in the natural sphere, and his risen life in the eternal, spiritual sphere. His earthly life ended, but that was succeeded by his heavenly life. Thus the second phrase does not refer to Christ *disembodied,* but to Christ *risen* to life on a new plane.

The reason for insisting on this is that some commentators have interpreted *ζῳοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι* of something less than, and prior to, the resurrection of Christ, of an intermediate disembodied state. This is to make the clause fit in with an interpretation of verse 19 in terms of a descent of Christ

to Hades between his death and resurrection. We shall come to the exegesis of verse 19 shortly, but we must be clear before we do so that the reference of *ζῳοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι* is to the resurrection of Christ and nothing less, however inconvenient this may prove. An early Christian, reading this formal contrast between Jesus' death and his being "made alive" could not be expected to think of anything other than the resurrection,[34] least of all of so foreign an idea as a disembodied state. Whatever verse 19 may refer to, the last clause of verse 18 refers to the death and resurrection of Jesus.[35]

This last clause has a clear relevance to a persecuted church. Jesus was "done to death" (*θανατωθείς* is a strong word, with special reference to judicial killing), but this was not the end. It terminated his earthly life (*σάρξ*), but issued in a new risen life "in spirit". So the Christian facing martyrdom (*θανατόω* would be very appropriate) may be sure that death is only "in the flesh"; it will be followed by a new risen life. Verses 19 and 22 will go on to show that for Jesus death was the way to triumph, a triumph which his follower can share.

VERSE 19

Here, in these nine words, all the controversy centres. Is this a precursor of the medieval doctrine of the "harrowing of hell"?[36] If not, what is it talking about? Why is it so obscurely worded?

Before we go into detail, it would be as well to observe that Peter presumably wrote to be understood by his readers. What is obscure to us can hardly have been so obscure to them. The problem lies in our not knowing what were the common ideas, the common background of thought, which Peter shared with his readers, and to which therefore he can allude without needing to explain his reference. It is this background of thought which we must try to discover, rather than insist that the verse *must* or *cannot* refer to the harrowing of hell, purgatory, a second chance for the dead, etc. Our own doctrinal predilections are irrelevant: we want to find out what Peter meant, from the meagre words he has provided for us.

Most of the relevant issues will be raised by taking the words of the verse in order, and letting them pose the questions.

(1) *Ἐν ᾧ*. In what? Most recent versions and commentators say "In the spirit", taking *πνεύματι*, the immediately preceding noun, as the antecedent.[37] It is doubtful whether anyone would have disputed this rendering, if it did not lead in a direction incompatible with their chosen exegesis. For *πνεύματι* in verse 18 refers, as we have seen, to Christ's *risen* state. To take *ἐν ᾧ* as "in the spirit" must therefore mean that verse 19 is talking about an activity of Christ *after* his resurrection. If you are committed to referring it to the period between his death and resurrection, such an interpretation must be avoided. Accordingly some commentators take *ἐν ᾧ* as a conjunction without specific grammatical antecedent, meaning "when", i.e. in the course of the events mentioned in the preceding clause, *viz.* the death-resurrection sequence. In support of this interpretation they note that

ἐν ᾧ occurs in this sort of sense elsewhere in 1 Peter (1:6; 2:12; 3:16; 4:4). It is to be noted, however, that in none of these cases is there any masculine or neuter noun in the preceding clause which could be taken as the antecedent. Here the presence of an eligible antecedent *immediately* before ἐν ᾧ places a strong presumption in favour of its translation as a straightforward relative. Dogmatic considerations apart, it would seem that ἐν ᾧ must mean "in the spirit" in the sense of that word in verse 18, i.e. verse 19 must refer to an activity of the *risen* Christ.

(2) *Τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν.* This is the crucial phrase. Who are they? There are two suggested interpretations of πνεῦμα here, either as men who have died, or as supernatural powers. πνεῦμα in the former sense occurs clearly in the New Testament only in Hebrews 12:23;[38] there is another clear use in the Song of the Three Holy Children 64, and 1 Enoch 22:3–13 has many references to "the spirits of the dead", etc. But in none of these cases is πνεῦμα used absolutely: it is always qualified by "of the dead", "of the righteous", etc. If τὰ πνεύματα here meant "men who have died", it would be a unique absolute use in this sense. This does not exclude the possibility entirely, but it casts strong doubt on it. Moreover, ἀπειθήσασιν in verse 20 would go strangely with this sense: one would expect "spirits of those who disobeyed" rather than "spirits who disobeyed", since on this interpretation they were living men, not spirits, at the time of disobedience.

Πνεῦμα in the sense of a supernatural being, usually evil, is common in the New Testament and contemporary literature.[39] Note particularly the title of God in 1 Enoch as "the Lord of Spirits". Used absolutely, πνεύματα would unquestionably be understood in this sense by a contemporary reader, especially one at all familiar with Jewish apocalyptic and other inter-testamental literature. Again, the only obstacle to accepting this meaning of the word is a preconception that verse 19 is about Christ preaching to the dead in Hades. 4:6 is often used to buttress this interpretation, but it should be noted that the word πνεῦμα is not used there, and that there is no reason to suppose that the two verses refer to the same event.[40]

The interpretation of πνεύμασιν on lexical grounds as referring to supernatural beings is confirmed by the sequel. They are those "who were once disobedient in the days of Noah". Here we step into a whole world of Jewish mythology which is foreign to most modern readers. Jewish apocalyptic and other writings make frequent reference to the passage in Genesis 6:1–4 about the sin of the "sons of God". These are regarded as angelic beings (often called "Watchers"), who, because of this sin, were cast out of heaven and imprisoned, awaiting their punishment at the final judgment. Meanwhile, either in person or through their offspring, they are the source of evil on earth.[41] These fallen angels and their punishment are referred to elsewhere in the New Testament in Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4. In the latter passage they are associated with Noah and the Flood, and this connection was commonly made, since the two events are related together in chapter 6 of Genesis. Testament of Naphtali 3:5 specifically states that they were cursed by God "at the Flood", and that the Flood came on their account,

and Jubilees 10:5 regards their sin as taking place in Noah's day.

But it is the Book of Enoch which gives the most detailed account of the sin and punishment of the angels, to which it returns again and again. The story is told in great detail in 1 Enoch 6–16, and the prison where the angels are bound is described in 18:12–19:2; 21:1–10. There are further references in 54:3–6, and throughout chapters 64–69. The story is told again in symbolic form in chapters 86–88, and a further reference occurs in 106:13–17. A bare listing of these references is not enough to indicate the extent of the hold which this mythology had on the minds of the authors of the Enochic literature: the exegete who wants to get inside the skin of the writer and original readers of 1 Peter (and of 2 Peter and Jude at least) should read the relevant parts of 1 Enoch in full. As he does so he will discover numerous points of contact with 1 Peter 3:19–20. He will find the fallen angels referred to as *πνεύματα* (15:4, 6, 8), he will find many references to their imprisonment,[42] and he will find their disobedience (21:6 etc.) connected with Noah and the Flood.[43] But most striking of all is the fact that in chapter 12 Enoch is given a commission to go to these fallen angels and proclaim to them their punishment; this mission is the subject of chapters 12–16. Here is a remarkable parallel to Christ's mission in 1 Peter 3:19 (compare *πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν* with Enoch's commission in 12:4, *πορεύου καὶ εἶπε . . .*).[44]

The evidence is more than sufficient to indicate that *τὰ ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύματα* must be the fallen angels who, according to apocalyptic tradition, sinned at the time of Noah, and are in custody awaiting their final punishment. To us the reference is obscure; to a church which knew and prized the Book of Enoch (as the author of Jude so evidently did too) it would need no explanation.

(3) *Πορευθείς. Where* did he go to, and *when*? Advocates of a reference here to Christ's going down to Hades between his death and resurrection naturally assume that *πορευθείς* indicates "descended". But it does not say so. Indeed, in verse 22 the very same participle is used of his going *into heaven*. In itself it is neutral. Clearly he went to wherever the spirits were in their prison. And on this point Jewish tradition is divided. A prison under the earth is indicated in Jubilees 5:6, 10 ("depths of the earth"), and this tradition is apparently followed in Revelation 20, where the *φυλακή* of verse 7 is presumably the *ἄβυσσος* of verses 1 and 3.[45] In 1 Enoch 17–18, however, the place is reached by a journey to the furthest west, where heaven and earth join, and there, *beyond* a chasm, he finds the prison in "a place which had no firmament of the heaven above, and no firmly founded earth beneath it", which is described as "the end of heaven and earth" (18:12, 14).[46] The prison of the angels is elevated still further by the rather later 2 Enoch, which locates it in the second of seven heavens (2 Enoch 7:1–3; 18:3–6; cf. also Test. Levi 3:2), using a new cosmology developed in Hellenistic circles, and much valued in late Jewish and early Christian works (see e.g. 2 Cor. 12:2). It has therefore been suggested that 1 Peter 3:19 had this view in mind, and regards Christ as visiting the fallen angels in the course of his

ascension (thus taking *πορευθείς* in the same sense as in verse 22), as he passed through the lower heavens towards the seventh. This is attractive, but the text lacks any suggestion of acquaintance with the seven-heavens cosmology, so we may most prudently record a *non liquet* on the precise location of the prison. The main point to be established is that there is no mention of going down, or of Sheol or Hades (which is *never* called *φυλακή* in biblical literature).[47] Christ went to the prison of the fallen angels, not to the abode of the dead, and the two are never equated.

The question of *when* Jesus made this journey has already been raised with reference to the phrase *ἐν ᾧ*, which we argued must refer to his risen state. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, this journey must therefore be dated at some time after the resurrection. It is tempting to connect it with the use of *πορευθείς* in verse 22 for the ascension, but *πορεύομαι* is a very general and common verb of "going", and its repetition here need not be significant. The precise time, like the precise location, may be left undecided. But what does seem clear is that it was not, as some commentators have suggested, *between* his death and resurrection.[48] This conflicts with the natural meaning of *ἐν ᾧ* and also interrupts the sequence of thought which has already reached the resurrection at the end of verse 18, returns to it at the end of verse 21, and proceeds to the ascension in verse 22. This sequence confirms that verse 19 should be read as a sequel to, not a precursor of, the resurrection.

(4) *Ἐκήρυξεν*. What did Jesus preach (or, more literally, "proclaim") to the spirits in prison? The verb means "to act as herald", and so is essentially neutral as to the content of the message. This neutral use is found in Revelation 5:2.[49] But in the vast majority of New Testament uses it refers to preaching the gospel. Here, where it is used absolutely, it would therefore need strong arguments to disprove that it carries its usual New Testament meaning of preaching the gospel of repentance and forgiveness. That is how the majority of commentators take it.

There are, however, strong arguments against this interpretation in this particular case. (a) In the LXX, whose language is clearly familiar to our author, *κηρύσσω* is used as often of bringing bad news as of good: see e.g. Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 4. (b) Enoch's mission to the fallen angels, which was certainly in the author's mind, as we have seen, was to proclaim judgment; when they plead for mercy he has to refuse it (1 Enoch 13–15, esp. 14:4–5). (c) The statement in verse 22 that all spiritual powers are subject to Christ would cohere better with a proclamation of his victory than with an offer of salvation. (d) The purpose of the letter, to boost the morale of persecuted Christians, would be better served by a mention of Christ's triumphing over evil powers than of an offer of salvation to them. This last point we shall develop further shortly. Meanwhile, these arguments seem to the present writer sufficient to demand here the original neutral meaning of *κηρύσσω*, "to make proclamation"; the reference would then be to an announcement to the fallen angels of his triumph over them and all evil through his death and resurrection, which have placed all spiritual powers under his control (v.22).

We conclude then that 1 Peter 3:19 has nothing to do with a descent of Christ to Hades, or a second chance for the dead, but refers to a tradition not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament that after his resurrection Christ proclaimed his victory to the fallen angels in the "prison" where they were awaiting their final punishment. Whether the other New Testament writers did not know this tradition, or knew it but had no occasion to mention it in the writings preserved, it was clearly well-known to Peter's readers. It is closely related to the common New Testament theme of Christ's triumph through the cross over Satan, death, and all powers of evil. [50] It shows the all-embracing sovereignty and control of the risen Christ.

And this was a theme of real practical importance to Peter's readers. They might be called to endure the worst that anti-Christian prejudice could inflict. But even then they could be assured that their pagan opponents, and, more important, the spiritual powers of evil that stood behind them and directed them, were not outside Christ's control: they were already defeated, awaiting final punishment. Christ had openly triumphed over them. Here is real comfort and strength for a persecuted church which took very seriously the reality and power of spiritual forces. These brief allusive words of Peter convey the same message of encouragement as Paul's great "more than conquerors" passage in Romans 8:31–39.

It is the greatest strength of the exegesis here proposed that it yields a sense so pastorally relevant to the context of a persecuted church. [51]

VERSE 20

We have already dealt with the disobedience of the spirits in the days of Noah. The mention of God's patience may reflect a current interpretation of Genesis 6:3, that the 120 years referred not to man's life-span, but to the period of grace granted before the punishment should come. [52] The dating of the angels' sin within this period is in agreement with Jewish tradition, as we have already seen.

The mention of the flood now leads to a change of scene; the fallen angels are left behind, and the Flood, once mentioned, becomes the basis for more teaching relevant to the encouragement of persecuted Christians. Two facts are isolated from the story: (1) that few were saved; (2) that they were saved "through water".

That few were saved was of obvious pastoral application. The persecuted Christians must have been painfully conscious of their small numbers and relative feebleness compared to the pagan majority among whom they lived. But Noah and his crew were an even smaller minority: only eight out of the whole wicked population of the world. Yet they were saved, and the world destroyed. If Peter had known the cliché, he might have added, "One with God is a majority"! [53]

That they were saved *through water* is the means of transition to the next theme, baptism, of which this water is regarded as a type; verse 21 expounds this typology and its significance for the readers. The precise meaning of

"through" is debated: is it local (they passed *through* the water to safety) or instrumental (*by means of* the water)? Both could be true of Noah, though the former is much more obvious: the idea of the water which destroyed the rest of mankind and *from* which Noah escaped being nonetheless the *means* of his salvation (by carrying the ark) is a little whimsical, though certainly not beyond the imagination of a keen typologist. On the other hand, the instrumental sense is much easier when one considers the typological application: the Christian is more easily viewed as saved "by means of" the water of baptism than by passing through it, though the latter is also possible. Probably Peter is deliberately exploiting the ambiguity of the word *διά* to assist his passage from the Old Testament story to its typological application.[54]

VERSE 21

The first seven words, in which the typological relation is succinctly expressed, are almost impossibly difficult to construe from the grammatical point of view.[55] The main questions are: (1) What is the antecedent of *ὅ*? (2) Does *ἀντίτυπον* refer to *ὑμᾶς* or to *βάπτισμα*? (3) Assuming that *ὅ* is the subject, what is the syntactical function of *βάπτισμα* (or, if *βάπτισμα* is the subject, where does *ὅ* fit in!)? Space forbids a discussion of these questions. We shall assume that the antecedent of *ὅ* is the immediately preceding *ὕδατος*, that *ἀντίτυπον* refers to *ὑμᾶς* and that *βάπτισμα* is an explanatory addition, in apposition to *ὅ* (*viz.*, water); this gives the translation, "which (water) now also saves you, the antitype (of Noah and his crew) – that is, baptism." However, a little juggling with the different grammatical possibilities will soon show that the various permutations all yield essentially the same sense, that as Noah and his family were saved through water, so Christians are saved through the water of baptism, the relationship of the latter to the former being described as *ἀντίτυπον*. Exegetically *ἀντίτυπον* is the key.

The only other New Testament use of *ἀντίτυπος* is Hebrews 9:24, where it refers to an earthly sanctuary as a "copy" of the true sanctuary of heaven. But within the same word group we also find *τύπος* used for the "model" or "pattern" from which such a copy is made (Ac. 7:44; Heb. 8:5 quoting LXX Ex. 25:40), for a moral "example" to be copied (1 Pet. 5:3 and several other uses), and, most significantly for our purpose, for Old Testament figures as "types", prefigurations, of New Testament persons (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 10:6, cf. *τυπικῶς* in 10:11, though in 1 Cor. 10 the sense of "example" is probably adequate in context). Here we have all the materials for, and probably the actual beginning of, the technical use of *τύπος* as a hermeneutical term which quickly developed in the Christian church. That typology, by whatever name or none, was widely practised by Christians right from the time of Jesus himself cannot be doubted.[56] Here we have the beginning of its technical terminology.

The essential principle of New Testament typology is that God works according to a regular pattern, so that what he has done in the past, as record-

ed in the Old Testament, can be expected to find its counterpart in his work in the decisive period of the New Testament. Thus persons, events and institutions of the Old Testament, which in themselves need have no forward reference, are cited as "types", models of corresponding persons, events and institutions in the life of Christ and the Christian church.[57] On this principle, then, as *ἀντίτυπον* warns us, Peter takes the salvation of Noah in the Flood as a model of the Christian's salvation through baptism. He has thus accomplished another change of scene, from the story of the Flood to Christian baptism, which is startlingly abrupt to the modern reader, but which would seem quite natural to a reader accustomed to typological application of Old Testament narratives. A grasp of the typological principle will go a long way towards dispelling the exegetical obscurity of some parts of the New Testament.

Peter's confident pronouncement that the water of baptism "saves you" is sure to sound an alarm bell in a faithful Protestant mind. Is this a doctrine of baptismal regeneration, an *ex opere operato* view of the sacrament? Two points may be made in this connection. Firstly, such "realist" language concerning the effect of baptism is by no means unparalleled in the New Testament;[58] any view of baptism which finds it a rather embarrassing ceremonial extra, irrelevant to Christian salvation, is not doing justice to New Testament teaching. But, secondly, Peter is very careful to qualify his statement immediately by pointing out the true nature of baptism, involving two aspects, one negative and one positive, which between them effectively allay fears of a "magical" view of the sacrament.

The negative aspect is given in the strange words, "not a removal of dirt from the body". This is certainly not a straightforward way of saying "not the outward act of washing", but that is the meaning assumed by almost all commentators:[59] Peter is defending the true nature of baptism by asserting that the outward act does not bring salvation in itself, but only as it represents a right inward attitude. The words are unusual, but they are certainly not inappropriate to convey the sense of an outward, physical washing, perhaps with reference to the Jewish ritual washing before meals: baptism is not a matter of washing away ritual uncleanness, but a transaction with God in the sphere of *συνείδησις*.

This brings us to the second, positive, aspect of baptism, and to another very obscure phrase: *συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν*. The two key words are clearly *συνείδησις* and *ἐπερώτημα*. Etymologically, *ἐπερώτημα* (which occurs only here in the New Testament) ought to mean "enquiry", "asking a question". That is the almost invariable meaning of the common verb, *ἐπερωτάω*. In Matthew 16:1 the verb carries the very unusual meaning "request",[60] and on this basis some have translated *ἐπερώτημα* here as "a *request* (appeal) to God for a good conscience". If the more obvious meaning "enquiry" made any sense here, there would be no need to suggest this translation, which would be unique in the whole of Greek literature, but it is not easy to see how baptism could be viewed as an "enquiry" to God, nor how *συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς* would fit in with this meaning. We are, then, ap-

parently faced with a choice between the regular meaning "enquiry", which makes no sense in the context, and an otherwise unknown meaning, "request", which is at least intelligible, but which introduces a view of baptism, as an act of supplication, for which there is no parallel in the New Testament or the early church.

The solution to this dilemma is found in the papyri, where *ἐπερώτημα* appears as a technical term in legal contracts, signifying the formal question addressed by one party to the other *and* the response, a formal undertaking or pledge. Etymologically, *ἐπερώτημα* would be expected to denote only the first of these, but in fact it is used for the total transaction, and so carries the meaning "pledge", "undertaking", "contract".[61] Here we have a meaning clearly relevant to baptism, where the baptizer puts formal questions to the candidate concerning his beliefs and his moral commitment, and the candidate responds with a "pledge". Such a form of baptism is attested very early in the Christian church, and may well be referred to in the New Testament.[62] Most recent commentators accordingly accept the meaning "pledge".

The genitive preceding *ἐπερώτημα* could be related to it either as subjective ("pledge proceeding from a good conscience") or objective ("pledge to maintain a good conscience"). The latter seems more consistent with the New Testament view of baptism as a transition from the old life to the new: it looks *forward* to a life of obedience, rather than being based on an already good conscience.

The precise meaning of *συνείδησις* is never easy to define. It is certainly much wider than "conscience", as even its other uses in this letter (2:19; 3:16) will show. A long discussion in TDNT[63] concludes that in the "Post-Pauline Writings" *συνείδησις ἀγαθή* is "a formula for the Christian life" in all its aspects. Commentators suggest "disposition" or "attitude" as translations for *συνείδησις* here, with sometimes an element of "loyalty" or "sense of duty".[64] Thus the total meaning of the phrase before us will be a pledge to God of a life loyally devoted to his service. The contrast with the preceding negative clause is thus very strong: the saving significance of baptism does not lie in the external, physical act of washing, but in the moral and spiritual commitment to God which it symbolizes.

The verse concludes with an unexpected addition, "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ". The connection of baptism with the resurrection of Christ is expounded by Paul in Romans 6:1–11. It is a uniting with Christ in his death and resurrection, leading to a sharing of his risen life. Some such idea is probably the connection of thought leading Peter to reintroduce the resurrection in his argument here. It erodes still further any mechanical idea of the efficacy of baptism, by adding another aspect of its spiritual significance. Not only is baptism an act of commitment by the candidate: it is also a uniting with the risen Christ giving him the power to live up to his commitment.

We have now examined verse 21 in detail to see just what Peter is saying about the nature of baptism, and why he regards it as the antitype of the

Flood. But why did he mention baptism at all? Was he simply carried away by the fascination of typology, so that, having mentioned the Flood, he could not resist pointing out its typical significance? And then, realizing that he might have laid himself open to misunderstanding, did he feel obliged to qualify his statement that baptism "saves" before he could return to his theme? Or is this perhaps a deliberate turn in the argument, introduced because it was relevant to his readers' situation, and not just an academic digression? We have so far eschewed the suggestion of irrelevant academic theorising; must we admit it here?

If, as many scholars believe, the whole letter is closely connected with baptism, either as incorporating parts of a baptismal liturgy or sermon, or as written for the occasion when baptism was to be administered, here is an obvious explanation for the "digression" of verse 21. But has it no relevance to the overall theme of the Christian under persecution? These were men whose faith was costly, and who were in dire need of assurance that the salvation for which they faced persecution was a reality. Just as Luther was to return in times of doubt and despair to the assurance "baptizatus sum", so Peter reminds his readers of what their baptism means. It marks them out as God's chosen few who, like Noah, will be saved though all around mock them and perish. Their baptismal pledge commits them to unswerving loyalty to God whatever the consequences. And their baptism is a symbol of their being united with the risen Christ, who in his resurrection has triumphed over all the powers of evil. It is a reminder, in fact, of all that they stand for, and of the strength in which they stand, the victory of the risen Christ. It is, properly understood, a real assurance of salvation, and as such is intensely relevant to a persecuted minority. This is no academic digression.

VERSE 22

The last phrase of verse 21 has brought Peter back to the theme of the end of verse 18 and of verse 19, the triumph of the risen Christ. This theme he now concludes with an exultant description of Christ's ascension and sitting at God's right hand with all powers subject to him. The language used is based on Psalm 110:1, and has many parallels in the New Testament. It poses no serious exegetical problems. Verse 19 has shown the victory of Christ over the fallen angels; verse 22 rounds out the picture to include the whole range of spiritual powers.[65] To the modern Western reader this may appear no more than a picturesque way of expressing the universality of the dominion of Christ "at the right hand of God". But experience in African society shows that to a community in which evil spirits are a part of everyday concern, and in which securing protection against the powers of evil ranks very high among life's priorities, such a bold assurance is breathtaking. We may be sure that Peter's readers, who were facing the very real onslaught of evil powers through their persecutors, could find real courage from these words.

CONCLUSION

We insisted at the outset that the key to the exegesis of such a passage is its context. The verses both preceding and following our passage are concerned with the Christian's attitude under persecution. It is the exegete's duty to discover why, *in this context,* Peter feels it right to delve into the rather obscure and complicated doctrinal matters dealt with in verses 18–22. It is not good enough to accuse him of exercising his private theological hobby-horses in an irrelevant academic digression set in the middle of a serious piece of pastoral exhortation.

It has been our aim in the detailed exegesis above to keep this context always in mind, and to show how each point introduced is relevant to the readers' situation. We cannot pretend that the passage is plain sailing. The author does have a tendency to jump from thought to thought extremely rapidly, sometimes with little more obvious logical connection than in a game of word-chains. But he does not lose sight of his readers, and each point, however obscurely connected with what precedes, has a practical bearing on the situation of a persecuted church.

We shall attempt to make this clear by concluding with a paraphrase of 1 Peter 3:18–22, along the lines of the exegesis outlined above, adding in brackets the relevance of the various points to the situation of the original readers.

"... 17. It is better to suffer, if suffer you must, for good deeds than for bad. 18. Because Christ also suffered for no fault of his own when he, the just one, died on behalf of the unjust. (So do not complain if your suffering too is undeserved.) His death was an effective, once-for-all sacrifice to make atonement for (your?) sins, so that you might be restored to fellowship with God. (It is for this faith that you are called to suffer; it is no optional extra, but the only way of salvation; it is worth the cost.) He was put to death (as you may well be), but that was only in the earthly sphere: he has been raised to new spiritual life (as you will be too, if you die for him). (So death was, for Jesus, the way of achievement and victory; do not fear those who can only kill the body.) 19. In the triumph of his resurrection he went to the fallen angels awaiting judgment in their place of confinement, and proclaimed to them the victory won by his redeeming death. (Even the most wicked of spiritual powers have had to recognize the authority of the risen Jesus; whatever the forces against you, they are not his equal.) 20. These were those spirits who rebelled against God in the days of Noah, while God in his mercy was still withholding the punishment of the Flood (as he is now delaying judgment on your persecutors), and the ark was being built, but, when the Flood came, there were few, only eight, who were saved in the ark. (It is nothing new to be a minority standing for God. Noah and his family must have been very conscious of the weight of opposition, but in the end they were saved, and the rest drowned. "Fear not, little flock.") It was through water that Noah and his family were saved, 21. and similarly the water of baptism now saves you, since Noah's experience was a prefiguration of

Christian experience. (So let your baptism be an assurance to you of your ultimate salvation.) Of course, it is not the mere outward washing of the body which is the essence of baptism, but the candidate's commitment to a life of loyal service to God. (Do not forget your pledge. You are committed, and can not go back, however strong the pressure. The ceremony without the commitment is not true baptism, and gives no ground for assurance.) Baptism involves your union with the risen Christ (and hence gives you the power to remain faithful), 22. who has now gone into heaven, where he sits at God's right hand, and all angels and spiritual powers are under his control. (So whom have you to fear? You are on the winning side. Your persecutors, and the spiritual forces which drive them on, can have no ultimate victory. Your Lord reigns!)"

NOTES

1. The vexed question of the relationship of Jn. 4:46–54 to this Synoptic pericope is beyond our scope here. Whether or not the Johannine account refers to the same incident (and this is at least doubtful), it is clearly not derived from the same strand of tradition. See further C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge 1963), pp. 188–195.

2. In such cases it is, of course, always arguable that Jesus made the same point in similar words on two different occasions. There is no inherent improbability in this suggestion, and many of the parallel traditions in the Gospels may most probably be accounted for in this way. In this particular case, however, the force of the saying is so clearly in line with the emphasis Matthew is concerned to bring out by his handling of the rest of the narrative (as the discussion below hopes to show) that it seems more probable that he was responsible for its insertion at this point.

3. See S. Travis above, pp. 157–159.

4. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (E.T. Oxford 1963), p. 38, n. 4.

5. Five of these refer to Jesus, and derive from *'ebed* in Is. 42ff: one (Mt. 12:18) is an actual quotation of Is. 42:1. So here the meaning "servant" is certain. The others are in Luke and Acts referring to David and to Israel as God's παῖς.

6. T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London 1949), p. 64 argues that the original meaning was "son", on the assumption that Jn. 4:46–54 refers to the same incident. This involves the improbable supposition that the δοῦλος of Lk. 7:8 is a different person from the παῖς of 7:7 (and, presumably, the δοῦλος of 7:2!).

7. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H.-J. Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (E.T. London 1963), p. 194.

8. TDNT 3, p. 294, *s.v.* ἱκανός. This article is a good illustration of the direct exegetical usefulness of TDNT at many points.

9. Note Matthew's addition of μόνον, emphasising the miraculous element in the cure requested.

10. Many commentators press the analogy further: the commander represents Jesus; whom then do the soldiers represent? To whom is Jesus envisaged as issuing commands? To this question there can be only one answer – the powers of illness, the demons or spirits to whom the servant's paralysis is supposed to have been attributed. But was this a right question to ask? Must we expect point-for-point correspondence? The point of the analogy lies in the authority which achieves its end by a mere word of command. There is no mention of spirits or demons in this story, or indeed in any story of the healing of *paralysis*. (Acts 8:7 deliberately distinguishes between exorcism of spirits and healing of paralysis.) Good exegesis does not require pressing every comparison or parable to the point of full allegorical correspondence.

11. G. Zuntz argued strongly for this reading in JTS 46 (1945), pp. 183ff; cf. J. Jeremias,

Jesus' Promise to the Nations (E.T. London 1958), p. 30 n.4, arguing that ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν is a mistranslation of the original Aramaic phrase "*in* authority"; also M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford 1967[3]), p. 159, supporting the same reading on grounds of parallelism.

12. E.g. Lk. 1:66; 22:37; Jn. 4:23; 1 Cor. 5:7; 11:9; 12:13, Heb. 5:12; 12:29.

13. Many MSS have substituted the Lucan wording, as frequently happens in Synoptic passages, but a large number of the most reliable early MSS and versions preserve this text.

14. *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Berlin 1971[2]), p. 252.

15. Some commentators (e.g. Lohmeyer, Schlatter) suggest that the reclining in itself indicates a banquet in contrast to an ordinary meal (where one would sit). But ἀναπίνομαι and κατακλίνομαι seem to be more widely used in the New Testament, including the very informal meal of the five thousand (Mk. 6:39), and the meal at the house of Simon the Pharisee whose lack of due ceremony Jesus particularly noted (Lk. 7:36ff).

16. Details of these expectations may be found by consulting SB (under Mt. 8:11, where one is referred to a long excursus in Vol. IV/2 on Jewish ideas of heaven and hell), or, more briefly, by looking up δεῖπνον in TDNT. McNeile's commentary refers one to a useful treatment in G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus* (E.T. Edinburgh 1902), pp. 110–113.

17. J. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (E.T. London 1958), p. 48.

18. For details see R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (London 1971), pp. 60–67.

19. Cf. ibid., pp. 67–74. See further Tyn.B 26 (1975), pp. 53–78.

20. See examples quoted by W. C. Allen, *The Gospel according to S. Matthew* (Edinburgh 1907), p. 78. SB give further examples: see under Mt. 8:12 for references to relevant sections of the Excursus in Vol. IV/2.

21. The Lucan parallel (13:28–29) brings this aspect out more clearly with its use of ὄψεσθε.

22. The discussion of the pericope by H.-J. Held, op. cit., pp. 193–197, provides a valuable example of the redaction-critical approach and its positive contribution to exegesis.

23. The following provide a representative cross-section of good recent commentaries in English: E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London 1947[2]); F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Oxford 1970[3]); B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (New York 1964); J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London 1969); E. Best, *1 Peter* (London 1971).

24. W. J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: a study of 1 Peter 3:18–4:6* (Rome 1965), p. 7. This detailed study by a Jesuit scholar is a fine example of painstaking, responsible and independent exegesis. A few hours with this book would richly repay the serious student, not only as a contribution to his understanding of this text, but as an example of how the job should be done.

25. Ibid., p. 9.

26. See above, pp. 235–241 on such hymns in the N.T.

27. There are several uncertainties about the text of this verse, but none of them affects the exegesis significantly. Whether or not ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, or just ἡμῶν is added after περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν matters little: the thought is of Christ dying for sins, without restriction to any one group. Similarly, whether ὑμᾶς or ἡμᾶς is read, it is Christians in general who are clearly thought of as being brought to God. The variants ἔπαθεν/ἀπέθανεν might seem more significant, but in fact it is not doubted that if ἔπαθεν is read it must refer in this context to the *death* of Christ, as in 2:21, so the reference is the same whichever verb is read.

28. Compare the similar sequence of thought in 2:18–21a, leading to 2:21b–25.

29. Cf. Mk. 10:45, where Jesus' death, introduced as an example of selfless "service", is then described in terms of its redemptive purpose, which presumably the disciples are not called to imitate.

30. Heb. 9:25–28; cf. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10.

31. See e.g. Lev. 5:6–7; Ezk. 43:21; Ps. 39:7 (Heb. 40:7; EVV 40:6). The LXX form is singular, περὶ ἁμαρτίας but the plural is used in this technical sense in Heb. 5:3; 10:26 (cf. 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10), and would be so understood by a reader familiar with the LXX.

32. See TDNT I, pp. 131–134.

33. Among many discussions of these and related terms, see the relevant articles in TDNT and W. J. Dalton, op. cit., pp. 124–134.

34. ζῳοποιεῖν is not in fact used elsewhere of Christ's resurrection; but it is used frequently of believers being raised to eternal life, in Rom. 8:11 in explicit parallel with the resurrection of Jesus.
35. The datives σαρκί and πνεύματι are usually, and rightly, taken as "datives of reference", meaning "as to the flesh", "as to the spirit". Πνεύματι alone could be taken as instrumental, "made alive *by* the spirit", but it would make little sense to speak of Jesus being "put to death *by* the flesh", and the two balancing phrases may be assumed to have the same grammatical structure.
36. The doctrine is already well developed in the *Odes of Solomon* 42, probably written in the second century, so it is not *a priori* impossible that it appears in the New Testament.
37. Selwyn argued against this on the ground that nowhere else in the New Testament does a relative depend on a dative of reference. Kelly replies with reason that the ancient commentators took it that way, and Greek was their native language!
38. In Lk. 24:37, 39 it means a "ghost", probably regarded as man's angelic counterpart or "double"; cf. Acts 12:15. In Lk. 23:46 (cf. Acts 7:59) it is in a quotation from Ps. 31:5, where "my spirit" probably means simply "myself".
39. For some New Testament examples of the absolute use see Mt. 8:16; 12:45; Lk: 10:20; Ac. 23:8–9.
40. Note also that the verb in 4:6 is εὐαγγελίζομαι, not, as here, κηρύσσω, which we shall argue has a quite different meaning in this context. 4:6 is probably to be interpreted with reference to Christians who have died: "This is why the gospel was preached to those (who are now) dead . . ."
41. See e.g. Jubilees 5:1–11; 10:1–13; 2 Baruch 56:10–13. For further references see W. J. Dalton, op. cit., pp. 169–170.
42. See esp. δεσμωτήριον in 18:14; 21:10, and the whole idea of bonds in chapter 10.
43. See the sequence from chapter 6 to chapter 10, and within chapters 65–67; and esp. 106:13–17.
44. So remarkable is the parallel that some have proposed an emendation of 1 Peter 3:19 to read ἐν ᾧ καὶ Ἐνωχ τοῖς . . ., the name of Enoch having been lost from the text because of its similarity in sound to ἐν ᾧ καί. This emendation has even found its way into the translations of Moffatt and Goodspeed. It finds little support today, simply because a narration of *Enoch*'s mission intrudes without justification into the context here, where Christ is the subject both of verse 18 and of verse 22. But the suggestion is evidence of how irresistibly this verse recalls the Enoch literature to those who are acquainted with it.
45. Cf. also 2 Pet. 2:4, ταρταρώσας, though it is questionable whether the word need still convey the classical Greek view of Tartarus as a *subterranean* dungeon.
46. There is also a mention of the fallen angels being *on earth*, in the Lebanon region: 13:9.
47. See W. J. Dalton, op. cit., pp. 157–159.
48. Other New Testament evidence for such a journey is very precarious, the only likely references being Ac. 2:27, 31 (where Jesus' being in Hades simply means being dead – cf. Mt. 12:40), and Eph. 4:9, which can also be interpreted of the "descent to earth" of the incarnation. Rom. 10:7 is a hypothetical suggestion which is mentioned only to be rejected.
49. Cf. Lk. 12:3; Ac. 15:21; Rom. 2:21; Gal. 5:11.
50. E.g. Lk. 10:17–18; Jn. 12:31; 1 Cor. 15:24–28; Eph. 1:20–22; Col. 2:15.
51. B. Reicke, p. 111, takes the application further, and suggests that Christ is still being presented here as an example: as he preached even to the very powers of evil, so they should be prepared to preach to their persecutors. This application would depend on taking κηρύσσω in the sense of "preach the gospel".
52. So Targum Onkelos *ad loc.* Note that 1 Enoch 9:11 also refers to God's patience before the Flood, with reference to the sin of the angels.
53. For attempts to find symbolic meaning in the number eight (which interestingly is mentioned also in 2 Pet. 2:5 in the same connection) see the commentaries of Reicke and Kelly. Reicke takes it of the *totality* of the church, Kelly of the eighth day, the day of resurrection and of baptism. Such numerical symbolism seems to be largely a matter of taste! In context the more obvious significance is to stress how *few* they were.
54. So e.g. Beare and Kelly.

55. So difficult that even the cautious Hort proposed to emend a text which is very firmly supported in the MSS by accepting Erasmus' conjecture of ᾧ for ὅ (for which there is *no* early MS support), thus contravening all the accepted canons of textual criticism!
56. For typology in the teaching of Jesus, see R. T. France, op. cit., pp. 43–80; for Paul see E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh 1957), pp. 126–135.
57. The subject is well treated by G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* (London 1957), pp. 9–38; more briefly, R. T. France, op. cit., pp. 38–43.
58. See e.g. Jn. 3:5; Rom. 6:3–4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; Titus 3:5.
59. The oddity of the language used has caused W. J. Dalton, op. cit., pp. 215–224, to suggest that the phrase refers not to an act of washing but to the Jewish rite of circumcision, commonly regarded as the removal of uncleanness. His case is well argued, but there remains the difficulty of explaining why it would be relevant to mention circumcision at this point to a largely Gentile readership, and the question whether such readers could be expected to recognize such a cryptic way of referring to circumcision.
60. The simple verb ἐρωτάω often carries this meaning, but the only other use of the compound ἐπερωτάω in this sense seems to be LXX Ps. 136:3.
61. See MM *s.v.*; cf. G. C. Richards, JTS 32 (1931), p. 77.
62. Rom. 10:9; 1 Tim. 6:12. Ac. 8:37, which clearly illustrates the point, is not the original reading, but is a Western gloss already known by Irenaeus towards the end of the second century.
63. TDNT 7, pp. 898–919.
64. See esp. 2:19 for this last element.
65. For lists of spiritual beings comparable to the three-fold list here cf. Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16. Such lists are found also in Jewish writings: see SB on Eph. 1:21.

CHAPTER XIV

EXEGESIS IN PRACTICE: TWO EXAMPLES

For essential principles and methods:

O. KAISER and W. G. KÜMMEL, *Exegetical Method: a Student's Handbook* (New York: Seabury 1967), pp. 35–48.

For the "tools" required for NT exegesis:

F. W. DANKER, *Multi-purpose Tools for Bible Study* (St Louis: Concordia 1970[3]). Includes essays on how to use the major tools of biblical exegesis.

R. T. FRANCE (ed.), *A Bibliographical Guide to New Testament Research* (Cambridge: Tyndale Fellowship, 1974[2]).

W. G. KÜMMEL, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM Press 1975[2]), pp. 23–28: "The Most Important Tools for the Study of the New Testament".

D. M. SCHOLER, *A Basic Bibliographical Guide for New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1973[2]).

CHAPTER XV

DEMYTHOLOGIZING – THE PROBLEM OF MYTH IN THE NT

I. G. BARBOUR, *Myths, Models and Paradigms* (London: SCM Press 1974). On the diverse functions of language.

H.-W. BARTSCH (ed.), *Kerygma and Myth* (translated and edited by R. H. Fuller; Vol. I, London: SPCK 1953; Vol. II, 1962; both volumes combined, 1972). Contains Bultmann's famous essay "The New Testament and Mythology" together with other contributions to the debate it sparked off.

C. E. BRAATEN and R. A. HARRISVILLE (eds), *Kerygma and History* (Nashville: Abingdon 1962). Includes several essays on myth in the NT.

R. BULTMANN, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (London: SCM Press 1960). Popular lectures delivered in English in USA.

A. CUNNINGHAM (ed.), *The Theory of Myth: Six Studies* (London 1973). University of Lancaster Colloquium – includes papers on Eliade, Lévi-Strauss and Mary Douglas.

I. HENDERSON, *Myth in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press 1952). A still useful critique of Bultmann.

R. W. HEPBURN, "Demythologizing and the Problem of Validity", in *New*