

A study of 1 Peter 3:18 – 4:6.
An investigation into the historical background of the doctrine of
Christ's descent into Hades

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to prove that neither 1 Peter 3:19 nor 1 Peter 4:6 refers to the Christian doctrine the 'Descensus Christi ad Inferos'. The meaning of these two verses has long been debated (cf. Dalton 1989:27-28), and is very often seen as a reference to Christ's descent into Hades (cf. Feinberg 1986:309). This study will be done by means of a parallel study. The first part of this study will involve the doctrine of the 'Descensus'; looking at its origin and its development. It will be argued in this section that the roots of this doctrine can be found in Jewish-Christianity and not pagan mythology as has been suggested (cf. Bousset 1907:224ff & Beare 1945:145). The discussion of the doctrine is necessary, since we do need to know more about the doctrine to see whether it is the referent in 1 Peter. The second part of the study will then engage in the meaning of 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6. This section will be very context driven. We will start with an introduction to 1 Peter, discussing all the preliminary questions (i.e. author, date, audience & form). This will be followed by a structural analysis of 1 Peter. Here it will be argued that the letter should be understood in terms of metaphors, with the 'Diaspora' as the controlling metaphor (cf. Martin 1992). The verses under discussion, form part of the third metaphor-cluster namely the 'Sufferers of the Dispersion', while the name of our subsection is 'The Righteous Sufferer'. By means of the grammatical analysis, and the influence of the pseudepigraphal book 1 Enoch, it will be shown that these verses do not allow themselves to be interpreted as references to the Descent of Christ into Hades.

KEY WORDS

Afterlife	Jewish-Christianity
Descent	Post-mortem salvation
Diaspora	Sheol
Genesis 6	Suffering
Hades	1 Enoch
Intermediate state	1 Peter

PREFACE

This study would not have been possible without the following people:

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I want to dedicate this study to these people, who have meant so much to me.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, some scholars have interpreted 1 Peter 3:19 and 1 Peter 4:6 as referring to Christ's descent into Hades, during the time between His crucifixion and resurrection, to preach salvation to the souls kept there (cf. Feinberg 1986:309). Furthermore, these verses, within their context, have often been labelled as among the most difficult passages in the New Testament (cf. Westfall 1999:106; Luther in Pelikan 1967:113; Jobes 2005:236). There have been a great variety of opinions on what this passage (and especially these verses) might mean.

These verses (3:19 and 4:6) have given the grounds for two main questions, the first question being 'What is the origin of the *Descensus Christi ad Inferos* doctrine?' and the second question being 'What is the true meaning of 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6, can it be linked to the *Descensus* doctrine?' By means of a parallel study, this study will endeavour to answer both these questions. Both these questions are pursued because we need the data of the first question in order to answer the second question.

The pursuit will be done by the means of several steps, but these steps will mainly be divided into two sections based on the two questions. The first section includes a chronological study of the Christian doctrine the '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*'. The second section will conduct a detailed study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 (which, for the sake of completeness, will include verses 3:13-3:17 because they have a direct influence on 3:18-4:6¹) in itself and within its bigger context namely 1 Peter.

The study will be divided as follows: Section I: The Origin of the Christian Doctrine '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*'; Section II: The meaning of 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6; and Section III: Conclusion

- Section I consists of chapters 1-3. Chapter 1 covers the basic elements of the Christian doctrine of the '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*'. In other words, what did the early Christians mean when they said Christ descended to Hades? In Chapter 2,

¹ Cf. Chapter 7

occurrences of this thought in early Christian literature will be examined up until the fourth century CE, given that the earliest text we have of the Apostles' Creed dates to this time. Because the question here is concerning the origin of the doctrine, only occurrences up to the Apostles' Creed will be shown, since by then the doctrine was officially accepted into the Christian faith. Chapter 3 is an account of the development of the '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*' doctrine. In this account, possible sources for this Christian belief will be traced within other religions with similar thoughts and a Jewish-Christian origin will be proposed. It will be shown that this doctrine does not need to be explained by means of mythic religions, but that it fits well within the development of the Jewish hope – from early Judaism to later Judaism including Jewish Christianity.

- Section II consists of chapters 4-7. In Chapter 4 the elementary remarks on 1 Peter as a whole will be discussed. Remarking on these basic elements (i.e. form; author; audience; place; date) is necessary since they contribute to the context of this passage. Chapter 5 will analyse 1 Peter as a whole - its structure, the controlling theme, the subsections and the place of 3:13-4:6 within this structure and theme. Chapter 6 will look at the history of the interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6; here some of the most influential interpretations of these verses will be given. It will be divided into the interpretations of the early Church Fathers and then the more recent interpretations. In Chapter 7 a thorough grammatical analysis of 1 Peter 3:13-4:6 will be done. This is done in order to see if this passage even allows itself to be interpreted as a reference to Christ's descent. The possible influence of the book of 1 Enoch will also be discussed.
- Section III consists of Chapter 8 and 9. In Chapter 8 a review will be given of Section I, in other words 'The origin of the Christian Doctrine the '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*'. Chapter 9 will draw this study to a conclusion. The parallel study will be brought together. The findings of the study on 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 will be viewed in the light of the findings of the study on the '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*'. This will be done by means of answering certain questions posed by the text.

This study is done in order to prove that neither 1 Peter 3:19 nor 4:6 refers to the descent of Christ into Hades; that they do not refer to the time in between His crucifixion and resurrection; and that these verses are in no way linked as have often been suggested (cf. Reicke 1946:56 & Goppelt 1978:246). It will be shown that the words used in 1 Peter 3:19 (and its context) are closer to that of 1 Enoch 6–11, where an account of the fall of the angels are given. Furthermore, the spirits in 3:19 are definitely not human spirits but that of the wicked angels we read of in Genesis 6. 1 Peter 4:6 will be shown to refer to the dead (people) while they were still alive, and not when they were already dead. This verse is also in no way linked to 3:19, except that they are in the same subsection of 1 Peter.

Preliminary notes:

- * *All Greek Bible citations are from the NA 27th Edition.*
- * *All English Bible citations are from the NRSV, except where stated otherwise. This also includes Old Testament Apocrypha included in the Catholic Canon.*
- * *Where there are no Greek or Latin manuscripts available, only the translation is given.*

SECTION I:
THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE ‘DESCENSUS
CHRISTI AD INFEROS’

CHAPTER 1
BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE DOCTRINE

Much has been written on the Christian teaching of the descent of Christ into Hades (cf. Feinberg 1986; Hanson 1981 and MacCulloch 1930). Most of these writers were concerned with its pagan mythological origin/colouring, its correct interpretation according to its historical context, or the occurrence of the teaching in the New Testament.

Most commonly, the view of the ancient world was that the locale of the dead was in the regions under the earth (cf. Daniélou 1964:233), in other words the *infern*. The term ‘hell’ often used in this doctrine ‘Descent into Hell’ then refers to these regions. These regions were seen as waters upon which the earth rested (cf. Ps 24:2² and Ps 136:6³). All souls passed to this region after death, to live a shadow-like existence (cf. Bernard 1915: 289). The meaning however, was interpreted in a variety of ways, and no one view appears to have become dominant.

Christ’s descent in the *Triduum Mortis* seems to be stated or implied in some New Testament texts, e.g. Matthew 12:40⁴; Acts 2:24⁵; Romans 10:7⁶; and Ephesians 4:9⁷. 1 Peter 3:19 and 1 Peter 4:6 are seen as more ambiguous cases.

² Ps. 24:1-2 ‘The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.’

³ Ps. 136:6 ‘who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;’

⁴ Matt. 12:40 ‘For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth.’

⁵ Ac. 2:24 ‘But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.’

⁶ Rom. 10:7 ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

⁷ Eph. 4:9 ‘When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?’

The interpretation of the descent varied widely:

- 1) According to some, it simply meant that Christ died.
 - 2) Another prominent reading is that Christ descended to proclaim salvation to all who lived justly before his coming.
 - 3) It was understood by some to have brought release only for the prominent and just Old Testament figures.
 - 4) It was seen to represent Christ's victory over death and Satan.
 - 5) Lastly, it was believed by some to refer simply to the Incarnation.
-

CHAPTER 2

OCCURRENCE OF THIS DOCTRINE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

1. CHRISTIAN LITERATURE (Including Jewish-Christian and Gnostic Literature)⁸

- *Acts 2:24-31*⁹

‘But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him,

‘I saw the Lord always before me, for He is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

‘Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’

According to Peretto (1992:229), this is one of the roots of the doctrine in the New Testament.

⁸ In this section most of the translations were taken from Daniélou (1964: Chapter 8), except those explicitly stated otherwise.

⁹ 24 ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἀνέστησεν λύσας τὰς ὤδυνας τοῦ θανάτου, καθότι οὐκ ἦν δυνατὸν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ. 25 Δαυὶδ γὰρ λέγει εἰς αὐτόν· προορώμην τὸν κύριον ἐνώπιόν μου διὰ παντός, ὅτι ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἐστὶν ἵνα μὴ σαλευθῶ. 26 διὰ τοῦτο ἠψφράνθη ἡ καρδία μου καὶ ἠγαλλίασατο ἡ γλῶσσά μου, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ σὰρξ μου κατασκηνώσει ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι, 27 ὅτι οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου εἰς ἄδην οὐδὲ δώσεις τὸν ὀσίόν σου εἰδέναι διαφθοράν. 28 ἐγνώρισάς μοι ὁδοὺς ζωῆς, πληρώσεις με εὐφροσύνης μετὰ τοῦ προσώπου σου. 29 Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐξὸν εἰπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου Δαυὶδ ὅτι καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν καὶ ἐτάφη, καὶ τὸ μνῆμα αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἄρχι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. 30 προφήτης οὖν ὑπάρχων καὶ εἰδὼς ὅτι ὄρκω ὤμοσεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ καθίσει ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ, 31 προῖδὼν ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτι οὔτε ἐγκατελείφθη εἰς ἄδην οὔτε ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ εἶδεν διαφθοράν.

- *Gospel of Peter* 41-42

‘Hast thou preached to them that sleep? And the Cross answered: Yes’

Καὶ φωνῆς ἤκουον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λέγουσης, Ἐκήρυξας τοῖς κοιμωμένοις;
καὶ ὑπακοή ἤκουετο ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ τὸ Ναί.

In this apocryphal gospel, we find the primitive theme of the *Descensus*. This theme refers to the righteous of the Old Testament, who died before the Incarnation of Christ. The verb κοιμάω refers to the sleep of death when used in the Passive or Middle.¹⁰ When compared to Matthew 27:52 this phrase refers to the righteous of the Old Testament. We find the same phrase and meaning in the Apocryphon of Jeremiah.

- Irenaeus (160-230 CE), *Prescriptions Against Heretics* IV, 27:2¹¹

‘the Lord descended into the regions beneath the earth, preaching (*evangelizantem*) His advent there also and the remission of sins received by those who believe in Him’

Et propter hoc Dominum in ea, quae sunt sub terra, descendisse, evangelizantem et illis adventum suum, remissione peccatorum existente his qui credunt in eum.

Irenaeus here quotes an Elder who taught that those ‘who had hoped in Him’ - in other words the Old Testament saints - received salvation (cf. Daniélou 1964:235).

- *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* (must be late first century to beginning second century CE)

‘The Lord God remembered His dead, the saints of Israel that have fallen asleep in the dust of the tomb, and He went down unto them to proclaim the good news of the salvation which He was bringing to them’

¹⁰ Cf. Liddel & Scott (1888: 440)

¹¹ Cf. *Patrologia Graeca* V7, col. 1058

This fragment is quoted by Justin (100-165 CE),

Dialogue with Tryphone Judaeo LXXII, 4¹² ‘ Ἐμνήσθη δὲ Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ Ἰσραὴλ τῶν κεκοιμημένων εἰς γῆν χώματος· καὶ κατέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀναγγελισάσθαι αὐτοῖς τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ.’

and by Irenaeus (130-200 CE),

*(Against Heresies, Book III, 20:4)*¹³ ‘*Et commemoratus est Dominus sanctus Israel mortuorum suorum, qui dormierant in terra sepultionis: et descendit ad eos evangelizare salutem quae est ab eo, ut salvaret eos.*’

IV, 22:1¹⁴ ‘*Recommemoratus est Dominus sanctus Israel mortuorum suorum, qui praedormierunt in terra defossionis, et descendit ad eos, uti evangelizaret eis salutare suum, ad salvandum eos.*’

33:1, 12¹⁵ ‘*1. et commemoratus mortuorum suorum qui ante dormierant et descendens ad eos, uti erueret eos et salvaret eos.*’ ‘*12. Rememoratus est Dominus sanctus mortuorum suorum, qui praedormierunt in terra limi, et descendit ad eos, uti erigeret, ad salvandum ilio;*’

V, 31:1¹⁶ ‘*Commemoratus ist Dominus sanctorum mortuorum suorum, eorum qui ante dormierunt in terra sepelitionis, et descendit ad eos, extrahere eos, et salvare eos.*’

In this text, the author refers specifically to the ‘dead of Israel’, and the place of the dead is specifically in the depths of the earth. It is the descent (κατέβη) in the strict sense of the word with a very specific object, and furthermore, it is a proclamation of the good news. This proclamation according to other versions of the *Apocryphon* is to be seen as the combination of proclamation and deliverance.

¹² Cf. PG V6, col. 646

¹³ Cf. PG V7, col. 945

¹⁴ Cf. PG V7, col. 1046

¹⁵ Cf. PG V7, cols. 1072 & 1082

¹⁶ Cf. PG V7, col. 1208

This is thus the first text where the aim of Christ's descent is the actual deliverance of the righteous and not only the proclamation of their deliverance in the future. It is also obvious that the resurrection is of the bodies and not only the liberation of souls. This shows again on the already established hope in Jewish Christianity of a bodily resurrection.

- Ignatius (35-107 CE), *Concerning Magnetians IX, 2*¹⁷
'How shall we be able to live apart from Him? Seeing that even the prophets, being His disciples, were expecting Him as their teacher through the Spirit. And for this cause He whom they rightly awaited, when He came raised them from the dead.'
quomodo nos poterimus vivere sine ipso; cujus et prophetae, discipuli existentes spiritu, ipsum ut doctorem exspectabant? et propter hoc quod juste exspectabant praesens suscitavit.

In this work of Ignatius of Antioch there are only two elements left; the descent into Hell and secondly the resurrection of the dead. The only object of the *Descensus* is here the resurrection of the Old Testament righteous, and not the proclamation. This was then a widespread view by the end of the first century.

- *Epistle of the Apostles 26-27* (Third quarter of the second century CE)¹⁸
'I willed to give their reward to those whom I had caused to set their hope upon it. Therefore I descended, and spake with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with your fathers and Prophets, and proclaimed to them in Hell that rest in Heaven to which they are to come. With my right hand I gave them the baptism of life, pardon and remission of all evil, as I did for you.'

Here we also find the necessity of baptism for salvation, but Christ is again the one who descended. He also only gave the baptism to 'those who had hoped', in other words the

¹⁷ Cf. PG V5, col. 670

¹⁸ The Epistle was originally written in Greek, but the text has only been preserved in Coptic and Ethiopic translations.

righteous of the Old Testament. There is also no suggestion of an immediate resurrection, but only the remission of sin.

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (137-107 BCE, but the date of the Christian additions were made at different periods¹⁹)

Here a new aspect of the descent appears, that is the conflict with the Devil who has the power over their souls. This means in effect that the struggle with Satan has now moved from the Cross (cf. Col. 2:15²⁰) to the infernal regions during the descent.

- *The Testament of Levi IV, 1*

‘The rocks are rent, and the sun quenched, and the water dried up, ... the invisible spirits mourn, and Hell is despoiled through the Passion of the Most High.’

ὅτε, τῶν πετρῶν σχιζομένων, καὶ τοῦ ἡλίου σβεννύμενου, καὶ τῶν ὑδάτων ξηραينوμένων, ... καὶ τοῦ ἄδου σκυλευομένου ἐπὶ τῷ πάθει τοῦ Ὑψιστου,

According to Daniélou (1964:240), the expression ‘Hell is despoiled’ in this context definitely refers to the resurrection of the saints of Matthew 27:52²¹. However, Daniélou (1964:240) argues that the emphasis is no longer on the resurrection of the saints but on Death, which is overcome.

- *The Testament of Dan V, 10-11*

‘And there shall arise unto you from the tribe of Judah and of Levi the salvation of the Lord; and He shall make war against Beliar and shall obtain the victory of your fathers. And the captivity shall He take from Beliar, the souls of the saints, and turn disobedient heart unto the Lord, and give to them that call upon him eternal peace’

Καὶ ἀνατελεῖ ὑμῖν ἐκ τῆς Ἰούδα καὶ Λεῦ τὸ σωτήριον Κυρίου· καὶ αὐτὸς ποιήσει πρὸς τὸν Βελιάρ πόλεμον, καὶ τὴν αἰχμαλωσιαν λάβη ἀπὸ Βελιάρ

¹⁹ Cf. Charles (1913:291)

²⁰ Col. 2:15 ‘He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.’

²¹ Matt. 27:5 ‘The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.’

ψυχὰς ἀχίων, καὶ ἐπιστρέψει καρδίας ἀπειθεῖς πρὸς Κύριον, καὶ δώσει τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις αὐτὸν εἰρήνην αἰώνιον,

Although the descent into Hell is not expressly mentioned, Bieder (1949:164) is convinced that when compared to other passages in the *Testaments* this without a doubt refers to the combat in Hades.

The three main ideas – captivity, gift, and conversion of the disobedient is also found in Psalm 67:19²² and later as interpreted by Paul in Ephesians 4:8-9²³. It is, however, obvious that this Psalm was very differently interpreted by the writer of the Testament than by Paul.

- *The Testament of Benjamin IX, 5*

‘...And He shall ascend from Hades and shall pass from earth to heaven’

Καὶ ἀνελθὼν ἐκ τοῦ ᾄδου ἔσται ἀναβαίνων ἀπὸ γῆς εἰς οὐρανόν.

The use of the expression ἀνελθὼν makes it quite positive that Christ first went down to Hades.

- *The Ascension of Isaiah IX, 16-17 (first century CE)*

‘And when He hath plundered the angel of death, He will ascend on the third day, ... And then many of the righteous will ascend with Him and He will send His teachers all over the earthly globe and will ascend into heaven’

Once again, the dead are held captive in Hell, Christ wins a combat against the holder of the captives, and it is still the Old Testament righteous who ascend with Him. In this passage, it is also obvious that this despoiling happens on Easter Day.

It is also very important to note that there is a careful distinction in this text between the ascension from Hell, and the ascension proper.

²² Ps. 67:19 ‘Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation.’

²³ Eph. 4:8-9 ‘Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.” (When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

- *The Ascension of Isaiah X, 8-14*

‘Go forth and descend through all the heavens; and after that thou shalt descend to the firmament and the terrestrial world, even as far as to the angel in Sheol; nevertheless to Hagucl thou shalt not go. And thou shalt become like unto the likeness of all who are in the five heavens, and to the form of the angels of the firmament, and also of the angels who are in Sheol... Afterwards from the realms of death thou shalt ascend to Thy place, and thou shalt not be transformed in each heaven.’

In this passage, we do not find any of the popular purposes of the descent: Signifying the death of Christ, the salvation of the patriarchs, or the victory over Satan. It is merely confirming the hidden character of Christ’s coming.

- Shepherd of Hermas (1st or 2nd Century CE), *Ninth Similitude IX, 16:5-7*

‘These, the apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after they had fallen asleep in the power and the faith of the Son of God, preached also... to them that had fallen asleep before them, and themselves gave unto them the seal of the preaching. Therefore, they went down with them into the water, and came up again... So by their means they were quickened into life, and came to the full knowledge of the name of the Son of God.’

Καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔδωκαν αὐτοῖς τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ κηρύγματος. Κατέβησαν οὖν μετ’ αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ πάλιν ἀνέβησαν. Ἄλλ’ οὗτοι ζῶντες κατέβησαν, καὶ πάλιν ζῶντες ἀνέβησαν· ἐκεῖνοι δέ, οἱ προκεκοιμημένοι, νεκροὶ κατέβησαν, ζῶντες δὲ ἀνέβησαν. Διὰ τούτων οὖν ἐξωποιήθησαν, καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Υἱοῦ Θεοῦ·

Here according to Daniélou (1964:237) the water represents the infernal regions, in which the dead abide. In addition, when comparing to the previous passages, ‘who had fallen asleep before’ must be the righteous of the Old Testament. The only curious point in this similitude by the Shepherd of Hermas, however, is that it is not Christ who went down to preach but ‘the apostles and teachers’ after their death. During this descent, they

proclaim salvation but they also give the seal, which is baptism. After this, both parties are restored to life.

In the passage just before this one quoted (*Ninth Similitude* IX, 16:2-3) the Shepherd of Hermas makes it clear that no can be saved without baptism and therefore he found it necessary that the righteous of the Old Testament should also be baptised.

This same passage (IX, 16:5-7) is quoted by Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromata* II, 43-35²⁴. Here he goes even further in extending the baptism to the righteous Gentiles (whether before or after the Law).

- *Sibylline Oracles* VIII, 310-312 (The ones we possess are a compilation of old and new oracles worked up by Jewish and Christian authors who lived at various times between 160 BCE and around the fifth century CE²⁵)

‘He shall go into Hades to proclaim hope to all saints, the end of the ages and eternal day; and He will fulfil the law of death by sleeping for three days.’

ἦξει δ' εἰς Ἀΐδην ἀγγέλλων ἐλπίδα πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις, τέλος αἰώνων καὶ ἔσχατον ἡμᾶρ, καὶ θανάτου μοῖραν τελέσει τρίτον ἡμᾶρ ὑπνώσας·

At first the descent is once again reduced to the proclamation of salvation, while the ‘common law of humanity’ is a purely Greek theme according to Bieder (1949:159).

The Odes of Solomon (2nd century CE)²⁶

According to Daniélou (1964:244), *The Odes* introduces a final stage in this topic, namely the linking of the theme of Christ’s victory over death in Hell and the liturgical theme of baptism.

²⁴ Cf. PG V8, cols. 929-1098

²⁵ Cf. Charles (1913:368)

²⁶ These manuscripts are in Syriac, therefore only a translation is given.

- *Ode XVII*, 8-11

‘I opened the doors that were closed and I brake in pieces the bars of iron; and the iron became red-hot and melted before me; nothing any more appeared closed to me, because I was the Door of everything. Then I went forth to all my prisoners to loose them.’

This is either an allusion to Isaiah 45:2²⁷ or Psalm 106:16²⁸, which were both part of the oldest collections of *testimonia*. They are also both frequently used in connection with the descent into Hell.

- *Ode XXXI*, 1ff

‘The abysses were dissolved before the Lord: and darkness was destroyed by His appearance: error went astray and perished at His hand: and folly found no path to walk in ... He opened His mouth and spake grace and joy ... His face was justified, for thus His holy Father had given to Him. Come forth, ye that have been afflicted and receive joy, and possess your souls by His grace, and take to you immortal life.’²⁹

- *Ode XLII*, 15-26

‘Sheol saw me and was overcome; Death suffered me to return and many with me. I was gall and bitterness to him, and I went down with him to the utmost of his depths. I held an assembly of living men among the dead, and I spake to them with holy lips; and those who had died ran towards me, they cried and said: Son of God have pity on us, and deal with us according to thy loving kindness; bring us out from the bonds of darkness, and open to us the door, that we may come forth to thee. For we see that our death has not come nigh thee. As for me, I heard their

²⁷ Is. 45:2 ‘I will go before you, and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze, and cut through the bars of iron.’

²⁸ Ps. 106:16 ‘For he shatters the doors of bronze, and cuts in two the bars of iron.’

²⁹ Translation was taken from Bernard (1915:291).

voice, and I traced my name upon their heads; therefore they are free men and they are mine.’

It is interesting to note that in this passage, Christ also descends to the deepest part of Sheol i.e. where death abides (cf. Bieder 1949:179). This idea was forthrightly denied in the *Ascension of Isaiah* X, 8-14. Daniélou (1964:247) sees this as proof that Death is here identified with Satan, who is no longer in the firmament but in the bowels of the earth.

This is also the first time that the dead appealed to Christ, and that the preaching of Christ was associated with the theme of the conflict with Death. This whole idea was then to be taken up in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and was to become a common theme. The dead are also baptised, as we first saw in the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

- Clement of Alexandria (150-215 CE) *Miscellaneous* VI, 6³⁰

‘if then, the Lord descended to Hades for no other end but to preach the gospel as He did descend; it was either to preach the gospel to all or to the Hebrews only. If accordingly, to all, then all who believe shall be saved, although they may be of the Gentiles, on making their profession there.’

Εἴ γ’ οὖν ὁ Κύριος δι’ οὐδὲν ἕτερον εἰς ᾄδου κατήλθεν, ἢ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγελίσασθαι, ἢ μόνους Ἑβραίους. Εἰ μὲν οὖν πάντας, σωθήσονται πάντες οἱ πιστεύσαντες, καὶ ἐξ ἔθνων ὄντες τύχωσιν, ἐξομολογησάμενοι ἤδη ἐκεῖ·

Clement is here of the opinion that the salvation in Hades is not limited to the Old Testament righteous. It is open to anyone who believes and makes their profession.

- Hippolytus (170-236 CE), *Demonstration of Christ and Antichrist* 26; 45³¹

26 ‘... all power has been given to Christ ... under the earth because He has been counted among the dead, ... triumphing over Death by his death.’

³⁰ Cf. PG V9, cols. 268; Translation taken from Peel (1979:46)

³¹ Cf. PG V10, cols. 748-749; Translation taken from Peel (1979:43,45)

Καὶ αὐτῷ ἐδόθη ... ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ, ... καταχθονίων δέ, ὅτι καὶ ἐν νεκροῖς κατελογίσθη, ... διὰ θανάτου τὸν θάνατον νικῶν.

45 ‘He (Christ) also ... became a forerunner in Hades when He was put to death by Herod, that there too, He might intimate that the Saviour would descend to ransom souls of the saints from the hand of death.’

Οὗτος προέφθασε καὶ τοῖς ἐν ᾅδη εὐαγγελίσασθαι, ἀναιρέθεις ὑπὸ Ἡρώδου, πρόδρομος γεγόμενος ἐκεῖ· σημαίνειν μέλλων κἀκεῖσε κατελεύσεσθαι τὸν Σωτῆρα λυτρούμενον τὰς τῶν ἁγίων ψυχὰς ἐκ χειρὸς θανάτου.

Hippolytus on the other hand, believed that only the saints would be saved from death. Here we also find the idea of a triumph over death, and the ransom of souls.

- Origen, Homily VI in Exodus 6³²

‘Our Lord descended, not only to earth, but to the lower parts of the earth, and there He found us devoured and sitting in the shadow of death. Hence He led us forth, not to an earthly place to be again devoured, but He prepared for us a place in the kingdom of Heaven.’

‘Et propterea Dominus noster descendit non solum usque ad terras, sed et usque ad inferiora terrae; et ibi nos inuenit deuoratos et sedentes sub umbra mortis, et inde educens non iam locum terrae, ne iterum deuoremur, sed locum praeparat nobis regni caelorum.’

Origen gives the idea that the resurrection from death happened immediately. It also seems that the readers are included in those saved – the same kind of idea that we find in the *Teachings of Silvanus*.

- *The Teachings of Silvanus* in the fourth treatise of Codex VII of the Nag Hammadi Library³³ (End of third to beginning of fourth centuries CE)

³² Cf. PG V12, cols. 331-340; Translation taken from Peel (1979:46)

103, 23-104, 14

“... O soul, laggard, in what ignorance you exist! For who is your guide into the darkness? How many likenesses did Christ take on because of you? Although He was God, He was found among men as a man. He descended to the underworld. He released the children of death. They were in travail, as the Scripture of God has said. And He sealed up the heart of It. And He broke its strong bows completely. And when all the powers had seen him, they fled so that He might bring you, wretched one, up from the Abyss and might die for you as a ransom for your sin. He saved you from the strong hand of the Underworld.”

110, 14-111, 4

“... Know who Christ is and acquire him as a friend, for this is the friend who is faithful. He is also God and teacher. This one, being God, became man for your sake. It is the one who broke the iron bars of the Underworld and the bronze bolts. It is the one who attacked and cast down every haughty tyrant. It is He who loosened from himself the chains of which He had taken hold. He brought up the poor from the Abyss and the mourners from the Underworld. It is He who humbled the haughty powers, He who put to shame the haughtiness through humility, He who cast down the strong and the boaster through weakness, He who in his contempt scorned that which is considered an honor so that humility for God’s sake might be highly exalted; and He who has put on humanity.”

In these accounts, we find the following major motifs:

- The author of the *Teachings* identified the descent into Hades with the Incarnation of Christ. In other words, He saw the present world also as

³³ According to Peel (1979:24) this tractate is viewed as one of the few in the Nag Hammadi Library which is not Gnostic, although we do find passages in it with Gnostic characteristics. Peel (1979:25) also states that the author of the *Teachings* used ideas from Biblical; Philonic; Late Stoic; Gnostic and Alexandrian Christianity. It is also believed that the *Teachings* was written in Egypt, by an Egyptian Christian sometime around the third and fourth centuries CE.

The text is only available in Coptic, therefore only the translation is given. The translation was taken from Peel (1979:28-29)

‘Hades’. We see this in that the readers were also brought up from the Abyss; and in that the descent was undertaken on the reader’s behalf. According to Peel (1979:33), this idea is clearly Gnostic.

- According to the author of the *Teachings* Christ was disguised when He descended. From the text, it would seem that the reason of this disguise was to fool Satan, and the human beings. This is also a familiar Gnostic (cf. Peel 1979:37) theme, but we do find it in Jewish Christian Christology as well (cf. Daniélou 1964:206-10).
 - The purpose of the descent is portrayed as the conquest of Hades. This happened in two phases namely, 1) The destruction of Hades’ defences; and 2) The conquest of Hades’ rulers.
 - The purpose of the descent is also portrayed as the release of the captives. This was the primary purpose of the descent.
- *Gospel of Nicodemus* (Elliott (1993:164-166) dates the work in its current form at around the sixth century CE, but admits that Epiphanius (375 CE) refers to details known to us now from the Acts)³⁴

4(20).1. ‘And while they were all so joyful, Satan the heir of darkness came and said to Hades, ‘All devouring and insatiable one, listen to my words. There is one of the race of the Jew, Jesus by name, who calls himself the Son of God. But He is a man, and at our instigation the Jews crucified him. And now that He is dead, be prepared that we may secure him here. For I know that He is a man, and I heard him saying, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.” He caused me much trouble in the world above while He lived among mortals...’

Ἐν τοιαύτῃ δὲ τῶν ἀπάντων ὄντων χαρᾷ ἦλθεν ὁ Σατάν, ὁ κληρονόμος τοῦ σκότους καὶ λέγει τῷ Ἄδῃ· Παμφάγε καὶ ἀκόρεστε, ἄκουσόν μου τοὺς λόγους. Ἐκ τοῦ γένους τῶν Ἰουδαίων τις Ἰησοῦς λεγόμενος, ὀνομάζων ἑαυτὸν Υἱὸν Θεοῦ. οὗτος δὲ ὢν ἄνθρωπος, ἀπὸ συνέργειας ἡμετέρας ἐσταυρώσαν αὐτόν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Καὶ νῦν αὐτοῦ τελευτήσαντος ἔσω ἠτοιμασμένος ὅπως ὧδε κατασφαλίσωμεν αὐτόν. Ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδα ὅτι

³⁴ Translation taken from Elliott (1993:185-190)

ἄνθρωπος ἐστί, καὶ ἤκουσα καὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι περίλυπος ἐστὶν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου. Ἐποίησέ μοι καὶ πολλὰ κακὰ ἐν τῷ ἄνωθεν κόσμῳ τοῖς βροτοῖς συναναστρεφόμενος.

5(21).1. While Satan and Hades were speaking thus to one another, a loud voice like thunder sounded, ‘Lift up your gates, O rulers, and be lifted up, O everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.’ When Hades heard this, He said to Satan, ‘Go out, if you can, and withstand him.’ So Satan went out. Then Hades said to his demons, ‘Secure strongly and firmly the gates of brass and the bars of iron, and hold my bolts, and stand upright and keep watch on everything. For if He comes in, woe will seize us... 3. Again the voice sounded, ‘Lift up the gates.’ When Hades heard the voice the second time, he answered as if he did not know it and said, ‘Who is this King of Glory?’ The angels of the Lord said, ‘The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.’ And immediately at this answer the gates of brass were broken into pieces and the bars of iron were crushed and all the dead who were bound were loosed from their chains, and we with them. And the King of Glory entered as a man, and all the dark places of Hades were illuminated....’

1. Τοιαῦτα τοῦ Σατανᾶ καὶ τοῦ Ἄδου λεγόντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἐγένετο φωνὴ μεγάλη ὥσπερ βροντὴ λέγουσα· Ἄρατε πύλας οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐπάρθητε πύλαι αἰώνιοι, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης. Ἀκούσας ὁ Ἄδης λέγει τῷ Σατανᾶ· Ἐξελθε, εἰ δυνατὸς εἶ, καὶ ἀνίστηθι αὐτῷ. Ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ἔξω ὁ Σατάν. Εἶτα λέγει ὁ Ἄδης τοῖς δέμοσιν αὐτοῦ· Ἀσφαλίσασθε καλῶς καὶ ἰχυρῶς τὰς πύλας τὰς χαλκᾶς καὶ τοὺς μοχλοὺς τοὺς σιδηροῦς, καὶ τὰ κλείθρα μου κατέχετε, καὶ σκοπεῖτε πάντα ἰστάμενοι ὄρθιοι· ἐὰν γὰρ εἰσέλθῃ αὐτὸς ὧδε, οὐαὶ ἡμᾶς λήψεται. . . 3. Ἦλθεν οὖν πάλιν φωνή· Ἄρατε πύλας, λέγουσα, Ἀκούσας ὁ Ἄδης ἐκ δευτέρου τὴν φωνὴν ἀπεκρίθη ὡς δῆθεν μὴ γινώσκων καὶ λέγει· Τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης; Λέγουσι οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Δεσπότου· Κύριος κραταῖος καὶ δυνατός, Κύριος δυνατὸς ἐν πολέμῳ. Καὶ εὐθὺς ἅμα τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ αἱ χαλκαὶ τύλαι συνετρίβησαν καὶ οἱ σιδηροὶ μοχλοὶ συνεθλάθησαν, καὶ οἱ δεδεμένοι πάντες νεκροὶ ἐλύθησαν τῶν δεσμῶν, καὶ ἡμεῖς μετ’ αὐτῶν. Καὶ εἰσῆλθεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ πάντα τὰ σκοτεινὰ τοῦ Ἄδου ἐφωτίσθησαν.

8(24).1. ‘While Hades was thus speaking with Satan, the King of Glory stretched out his right hand, and took hold of our forefather Adam and raised him up. Then He turned to the rest and said, ‘Come with me, all you who have died through the tree which this man touched. For behold, I raise you all up again through the tree of the cross.’ With that He sent them all out...’

Οὕτω τοῦ Ἄδου διαλεγομένου τῷ Σατανᾷ ἤπλωσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα καὶ ἐκράτησε καὶ ἤγερε τὸν προπάτορα Ἀδάμ. Εἶτα στραφεὶς καὶ πρὸς τοὺς λοιποὺς ἔφη· Δεῦρο μετ’ ἐμοῦ πάντες ὅσοι διὰ τοῦ ξύλου οὗ ἤψατο οὗτος ἐθανατώθητε· πάλιν γὰρ ὑμᾶς διὰ ξύλου τοῦ σταυροῦ πάντας ἐγὼ ἰδοὺ ἀνιστῶν. Πρὸς ταῦτα ἐξέβαλεν ἅπαντας ἔξω. . .

9(25).1. ‘Thus He went into paradise holding our forefather Adam by the hand, and He handed him and all the righteous to Michael the archangel...’

Πορευόμενος οὖν εἰς τὸν παράδεισον κρατῶν καὶ προπάτορα Ἀδάμ ἀπὸ τῆς χειρὸς παραδέδωκε τοῦτον τῷ ἀρχαγγέλῳ Μιχαήλ . . .

These extractions from the *Gospel of Nicodemus* are enough to show us that it is by far the most elaborate of the accounts discussed so far. Firstly, we see that the true identity of Christ is hidden, for Satan thought Christ to be a mere man. Secondly, we find that Christ broke into pieces the gates of brass and crushed the bars of iron. Thirdly, everyone had the opportunity to repent his or her sins. Fourthly, they were raised immediately and went with Him to paradise.

2. EARLY CHRISTIAN CREEDS

The first official creed where we find the article ‘descended into Hades’ is the Apostles’ Creed (cf. Kelly 1960:370), while the Arian Symbol of Sirmium (359 CE) was the first local creed to include this phrase (cf. Bernard 1915:292). Schaff (1931a:19) argues that the Apostles’ Creed developed from the old Roman formula which we find in the Commentary of Rufinus³⁵ on the creed (404 CE). This Roman creed was increasingly enlarged by several clauses from older or contemporaneous forms. The article ‘descended into Hades’ was taken from the Creed of Aquileja (cf. Schaff 1931a:19), the predicate

³⁵ Commentarius in Symbolum Apostolorum 14-28 (cf. Patrologia Latina V21 cols. 352-366)

‘catholic’ was taken from Oriental creeds, ‘the communion of saints’ from Gallican sources, and the concluding ‘life everlasting’ from the symbols of the churches of Ravenna and Antioch. According to Schaff (1931a:19)

These additional clauses were no doubt part of the general faith, since they are taught in the Scriptures, but they were first expressed in local creeds, and it was some time before they found a place in the authorized formula.

However, we cannot trace the present text of the Apostles’ Creed as a whole beyond the sixth century, but according to Schaff (1931a:20) if we look at the articles separately we will find that they are all of Nicene or Ante-Nicene origin while the roots of the creed go back to the apostolic age³⁶.

³⁶ It is interesting to note that the Eastern Church has not included this phrase into their baptismal creed up until today (cf. Bernard 1915:292).

CHAPTER 3
DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE ‘DESCENSUS CHRISTI AD
INFEROS’

1. DEATH AND RESURRECTION BELIEFS IN OTHER RELIGIONS

A) The belief of Ancient Cultures in Death and an Afterlife

Attention will only be given to religions that developed in the region of the Ancient Near East.

i. Ancient Egypt

It was believed that the realm of the dead was located in the west and therefore a euphemism for the dead was ‘westerners’ (cf. Yamauchi 1998:22). Osiris is the god most commonly concerned with the cult of the dead. According to myth Osiris survived death and became the king of the underworld (cf. Yamauchi 1998:22). It is worth noting that the Pharaohs and mortals had separate afterlives. According to Murnane (1992:42), the Pharaohs entered the realm of the gods while the mortals entered the underworld ruled by Osiris. Murnane (1992:42) also states that if a mortal was found to still be filled with sin, he was immediately thrown to a monster.

The Egyptians used magical texts - for example the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom; the Coffin Texts of the Middle Kingdom; and the Book of the Dead in the New Kingdom - so as to achieve immortality (cf. Yamauchi 1998:23). According to Mueller (1972:125), we have guides to the topography of the underworld called the *Amduat*.

Yamauchi (1998:25) gives the reason for this:

The dead had to know every place and obstacle in the underworld in order to traverse safely the dangerous terrain.

Small statues called *shawabtis* or *ushabtis* were placed in the tomb with the deceased to work on their behalf in the afterlife (cf. Yamauchi 1998:28). They did not believe in resurrection from the dead, but they did believe that a part of a person stays active while his body stays in the tomb. Zabkar (1968:162), who did a complete study on this part of a person, concluded that this is the deceased himself in his fullness.

ii. Greece and Rome

Greeks believed that something of the human person survives the death of the body. This is often called the *psyche* (ψυχή), more or less a shade. Whether the body is cremated or buried, the part which survives continues its existence in a location sometimes seen as the tomb, or at the far ends of the world -usually the west. It is however necessary to have funeral rites in order for the deceased to enter the realm of the dead. The existence of these shades is a reflection of their life on earth and they even retain a resemblance to their earthly appearance. The realm of the dead is ruled by Hades the brother of Zeus, and his wife Persephone.

In Homer's Book XI of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus reached Hades by sailing westward across the River of Ocean to the earth's boundary where the sun sets. Tartarus on the other hand is far beneath Hades and the fallen Titans are said to be chained up here. It is seen as an almost bottomless pit of anguish and despair (cf. Harris & Platzner 1998:211). While Hades is seen as the realm of the dead, Tartarus is seen as the place of punishment for bad souls.

There were also quite a few philosophical views on the afterlife. According to Bolt (1998:67-70) the Epicureans denied the idea of any afterlife, and found followers under the Sadducees, while the Stoics also believed everything dissolved at death. Euripides (cf. his *Hippolytus* 189) and Antiphanes (cf. his *Aphrodisius* = fragment in *Stobaeus*) were much more positive. The followers of Orphism dealt with a post-mortem possibility most extensively (cf. Pindar, fragment 131 = Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 120D). Pythagoras said that when the soul is released from the body the good

souls fly to the upper realms and those attracted to the body are reincarnated or hover around the bodily realms (cf. *Diogenes Laertius* 8.31).

iii. Mesopotamia

Death was the fate of all people with the exception of heroes such as Utnapishtim who survived the flood (cf. Yamauchi 1992:31). When a person died, the body became a corpse and He gave up his breath and became a ghost. The underworld was called ‘The Great City’ or ‘The Great Below’, and was conceived of consisting of three levels, 1) the lowest court where the gods of the underworld stayed, 2) in the middle were waters and 3) the level beneath the surface of the earth was the residence of the spirits of men (cf. Yamauchi 1992:33-34).

A Mesopotamian thought the deceased was able to affect the living (cf. Finkel 1983:11-17). To be left unburied was the most terrible doom since the ghost would become restless. According to Bayliss (1973:116), the ghosts of those not buried were especially feared.

iv. Judaism³⁷

Until the time of the Second Temple most Jews believed that the dead were shades in Sheol (cf. Bauckham 1998:80). This belief did not entail that the spirit survived death, but that the spiritual or mental part of the human body continued to live. They were not immaterial; they were ghostly versions of the living. Their existence was joyless and indeed deathly, since they were cut off from God (cf. Bauckham 1998:80). The Jewish tradition had a holistic view of the human person, in other words this existence in death is not the eternal life they hoped for. This eternal life can only be conceived of as a fully embodied life.

The best text to show that the ‘shade’ still had the knowledge of the bodily person who died, according to Bernstein (1993:138), is 1 Samuel 28 where Saul asked a woman necromancer to call Samuel from the dead. According to Bauckham (1998: 81), there are

³⁷ This will be discussed in more detail under Chapter 3.2 B & C

also a few Old Testament texts reflecting the idea of desirable immortality for the righteous and judgment after death for the wicked (cf. Dan 12:2-3³⁸; 13³⁹; Is 26:19⁴⁰; and Ps 49:15⁴¹). He also states that in the post-biblical period it came to be a general belief of Judaism. The one group who denied this belief, were the Sadducees (cf. Bauckham 1998:81). It is nonetheless important to note that the belief in the resurrection was not a distinctively Pharisaic belief as the writer Luke makes it seem (cf. Acts 23:8⁴²).

When attempting to understand why this belief became dominant there are two ways of answering it according to Bauckham (1998:82). The first will be to study the historical circumstances and the second to find out whether the belief is in continuity with the Old Testament faith. The answer to the first question will be that it was the Maccabean period, in which many martyrs died without seeing their reward; this could certainly have helped to spread the belief that God would punish the wicked and reward the righteous in the end. The answer to the second question according to Bauckham (1998:86) is that the belief is in continuity with the Old Testament faith since they derive it from reflection on God and not on human nature. The righteous God, the creator of all life could undoubtedly raise the dead.

Jewish eschatology is not individualistic, but the individual is seen as inseparable from the whole of Israel (cf. Bauckham 1998:86). In later Judaism Sheol is seen as an intermediate state where they await their final destiny. As seen in Second Temple writings (cf. 1 Enoch 22 and 4 Ezra 7:75-101) Sheol was divided into compartments where the righteous awaited the vindication and the wicked awaited condemnation. They thus both already knew what awaited them at the last judgment.

³⁸ Dan. 12:2-3 'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.'

³⁹ Dan. 12:13 'But you, go your way, and rest; you shall rise for your reward at the end of the days.'

⁴⁰ Is. 26:19 'Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will give birth to those long dead.'

⁴¹ Ps. 49:15 'But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.'

⁴² Ac. 23:8 'The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.'

B) The Belief in Rescue from or Survival of the Underworld

The myths / beliefs relating to someone descending to the underworld will be discussed under the same headings as the previous section. These will include 1) Descent to rescue a dead relative, 2) Descent to obtain a boon, 3) Descent to free the damned and 4) the notion of alleviating the pain of dead or transferring them to a state of bliss.

i. Ancient Egypt

- Rhampsinitus (Ramses III) descended to Hades and played dice with Demeter (Isis). Sometimes he won and sometimes he lost. He always returned with a napkin of gold as gift from her.
- Nightly the sun-god Ra passed through each part of the underworld, giving them an hour's joy.

ii. Greece and Rome

- Aphrodite went down to Hades to redeem Adonis from Persephone, after the latter refused to give him back.
- Orpheus went to Hades to seek his wife. Hades and Persephone granted her release on the condition that he did not look back before they reach the upper world. He looked back right before they arrived and lost her forever.
- Dionysus went to Hades through the Alcyonian Lake to bring back Semele.
- Alcestis died on behalf of her husband Admetus. Heracles saw his grief and descended to Hades to rescue her.
- Odysseus descended to inquire of Tiresias
- Aeneas descended to speak with Anchises
- Psyche and Heracles had to complete tasks that included descending to Hades.

iii. Mesopotamia

- The Babylonian myth of the Descent of Ishtar to Aralu (Hades) is about Ishtar descending to weep for the heroes and to rescue Tammuz. She descended violently and threatened to break the gates.
- The adventures of Gilgamesh are an account of where he travelled to the Paradise of Utnapishtim to learn the secret of immortality.

iv. Judaism

In later Judaism there were ideas of rescue from the underworld, and mostly in connection with a Messiah (cf. MacCulloch 1930:31).

- Hosea 13:14 *'I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death...'*
- In 2 Maccabees we find prayers of Jews for those known to have sinned at death⁴³.

The Talmud teaches that the offerings and prayers of the living for the dead shorten their stay in Gehenna.

- Prayers for Adam by angels and the living occur in the Apocalypse of Moses 35-36
- According to the Apocalypse of Zephaniah when an angel blows the trumpet, the righteous dead pray for all in torment.

When these cultures are considered, it becomes clear that there are definite resemblances between the Christian doctrine, and some pagan mythology. The idea of a hero descending to the Underworld was certainly not unknown, although the means and

⁴³ 2 Macc 12: 38ff 'Then Judas assembled his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom, and kept the Sabbath there. On the next day, as had now become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kindred in the sepulchres of their ancestors. Then under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen. So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; and they turned to supplication, praying that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out.' (Translation as in the NRSV)

purposes of these descents did vary. However, we have to conclude that we do not find something completely similar to the Christian doctrine. None of these cultures believed that someone could be saved from the eternal fate of Hades. Although there was several ideas on how one experienced death, the general idea was that everyone descended to Hades. The idea that the righteous and the wicked will each experience a different afterlife was a development in later Judaism, and developed as a response to their historical circumstances. From this developed the idea that God will not forsake his righteous in Hades.

2. THE '*DESCENSUS CHRISTI*' AS A JEWISH CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

The development of the belief of Christ descending into Hades has to be seen together with the development of beliefs in Hades and the forms of hope attested by the Jews. This is important since it was shown in Chapter 2.1 that the very first references to the Descent can be found in rather early Jewish Christian writings.

A) What is understood by Jewish Christianity?

According to Daniélou (1964:7), the term 'Jewish Christianity' has three possible references

- a) It can refer to the Jews who recognised Christ as a prophet or even a Messiah, but who did not accept Him as the Son of God, for example the Ebionites;
- b) It can also refer to the Christian community of Jerusalem, which was dominated by James. After the fall of the temple in 70 CE these Christians, sometimes named the Nazarenes, slowly disappeared;
- c) Lastly it can refer to a type of Christian thought expressing itself in forms borrowed from Judaism. This term covers a much wider field, even including Christians who did not come from Judaism.

Apart from this, Daniélou (1964:9) goes even further in saying that the term ‘Judaism’ also has three possible references:

- a) It can simply refer to the continuing use of the Old Testament, which in itself is of great importance for Christianity;
- b) It can also refer to the Judaism that was contemporary with Christ, in other words the Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots;
- c) The last possibility is the rabbinical, legalistic Judaism, which developed after the fall of Jerusalem. There was a continual war between this type of Judaism and Christianity.

How do we then decide which literature can be classed as the direct product of Jewish Christian thought? The first criterion will be to decide when it was written. According to Daniélou (1964:11), the Jewish Christian period extends from the beginnings of Christianity to approximately the middle of the second century. The second criterion involves the literary genre, with the third criterion being the doctrinal contents. Daniélou (1964:11) argues that Jewish Christian works are constructed more or less to a similar pattern with certain characteristic categories of ideas⁴⁴.

In this study, the term ‘Jewish Christianity’ refers to ‘*a type of Christian thought expressing itself in forms borrowed from Judaism*’, while the term ‘Judaism’ refers to the ‘*Judaism that was contemporary with Christ, in other words the Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots*’, which in itself will include the continuing use of the Old Testament. This, however, also needs to include the literature between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. According to Nickelsburg (1981:1), the study of early Christianity must reckon with this period (inter-testamental) and with the literature that grew out of it and reflects it. He stresses that this is important because fundamental and far-reaching changes⁴⁵ shook the Jewish people during these centuries. These changes made a great impact on their life, religion, and thought.

⁴⁴ For a detailed discussion on the works included under Jewish Christian works, and on which grounds, please consult Daniélou (1964:pp11-54)

⁴⁵ The Persian Empire fell; Alexander the Great conquered the East and introduced the Greek culture and language; the Jews were persecuted by the Macedonian king – Antiochus IV.

Nickelsburg (1981:2) states that the seedbed of the church was first-century Judaism. Jesus and his disciples ‘breathed’ this religious and cultural environment. In this study, the argument of Nickelsburg (1981:3) that theological conceptions do not arise in a vacuum but in response to historical circumstances, is accepted. Therefore, it is extremely important to consider every aspect that could have had an influence on the development of the doctrine of the ‘*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*’.

B) The development of the Belief in Hades

According to Powys (1997:67), the early Old Testament view of death corresponded directly to their view of life - it was simply the dissolution of that which was alive. Hanhart (1966:17) states that it did not mean annihilation, but simply a non-life. It was a fact of life and therefore not the subject of much reflection. Powys (1997:68) also mentions that death was viewed as final and irreversible. In these early traditions, death was seen more as an event than a state, but still the Hebrew language used the word שְׁאוֹל to give reference to the prospect or state of death. Sheol was seen as the general habitat of the dead (Ps. 49:12 & 14⁴⁶); it was under the earth (Deut. 32:22⁴⁷; Is. 7:11⁴⁸); it was a place of darkness and silence, devoid of love, hate, envy, work, thought, knowledge and wisdom (Eccles. 9:6, 10⁴⁹); and no one returned from there (Job 10:21⁵⁰; 17:13-16⁵¹). Hanhart (1966:16) also states that the sentences ‘They are in the grave’; ‘They are in Sheol’; and ‘They are in the grip of death’ all meant exactly the same thing to the people of the Old Testament.

⁴⁶ Ps. 49:12 ‘Mortals cannot abide in their pomp; they are like the animals that perish.’; 49:14 ‘Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; straight to the grave they descend, and their form shall waste away; Sheol shall be their home.’

⁴⁷ Deut. 32:22 ‘For a fire is kindled by my anger, and burns to the depths of Sheol; it devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.’

⁴⁸ Is. 7:11 ‘Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.’

⁴⁹ Eccles. 9:6 ‘their love and their hate and their envy have already perished; never again will they have any share in all that happens under the sun.’; 9:10 ‘Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.’

⁵⁰ Job 10:21 ‘before I go, never to return, to the land of gloom and deep darkness.’

⁵¹ Job 17:13-16 ‘If I look for Sheol as my house, if I spread my couch in darkness, if I say to the Pit, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother,’ or ‘My sister,’ where then is my hope? Who will see my hope? Will it go down to the bars of Sheol? Shall we descend together into the dust?’

During the period of the divided kingdom and the exile, a new understanding of judgment was construed (cf. Powys 1997:82). From this also developed changes to the Israelite conceptions of life and death. Sheol is mentioned more frequently here and was still seen as the place of all the dead. There are, however, eight instances where Sheol is construed as a place of condemnation⁵². This is seen mostly in the Wisdom literature. In Ezekiel 32 we find the first suggestion of distinctions within Sheol while Psalm 16:10-11⁵³ and Psalm 49:14-15⁵⁴ are the closest approach to the idea of post-mortem bliss, a type of protest against a neutral fate of all (cf. Powys 1997:83).

The inter-testamental literature constructed divergent scenarios for the wicked dead, including annihilation (4 Ezra 7:61⁵⁵; 1 Enoch 48:9⁵⁶) and endless torment (Jub. 36:11⁵⁷; 1 Enoch 27:1-3⁵⁸). Through the rise of belief in the resurrection Sheol becomes a temporary dwelling, distinguished from the final place of punishment (1 Enoch 18:9-16; 51:1⁵⁹). Since the idea of judgment and retribution is closely connected with resurrection, this ultimate judgment is foreshadowed in the abode of the dead. This is portrayed very elaborately in 1 Enoch 22:1-14⁶⁰

⁵² Ps. 9:17; 16:10; 49:14,15; Prov. 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:24; 23:14

⁵³ Ps. 16:10-11 'For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.'

⁵⁴ Ps 49:14-15 'Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; straight to the grave they descend, and their form shall waste away; Sheol shall be their home. But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.'

⁵⁵ 4 Ezra 7:61 'And I will not grieve over the multitude of them that perish: for they it is who now are made like vapour,'

⁵⁶ 1 Enoch 48:9 'And I will give them over into the hands of Mine elect: as straw in the fire so shall they burn before the face of the holy: as lead in the water shall they sink before the face of the righteous, and no trace of them shall any more be found.' (Translation from Charles 1913)

⁵⁷ Jub. 36:11 'But on the day of turbulence and execration and indignation and anger, with flaming devouring fire as He burnt Sodom, so likewise will He burn his land and his city and all that is his, and he shall be blotted out of the book of the discipline of the children of men, and not be recorded in the book of life, but in that which is appointed to destruction, and he shall depart into eternal execration;' (Translation from NRSV)

⁵⁸ 1 Enoch 27:1-3 'Then said I: 'For what object is this blessed land, which is entirely filled with trees, and this accursed valley between?' Then Uriel, one of the holy angels who was with me, answered and said: 'This accursed valley is for those who are accursed for ever: here shall all the accursed be gathered together who utter with their lips against the Lord unseemly words and of His glory speak hard things. Here shall they be gathered together, and here shall be their place of judgment...'

⁵⁹ 1 Enoch 51:1 'And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol also shall give back that which it has received, and hell shall give back that which it owes.' (Translation from Charles 1913)

⁶⁰ 22:1 And thence I went to another place, and he showed me in the west another great and high mountain of hard rock.

1 Κάκειθεν ἐφώδευσα εἰς ἄλλον τόπον, καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι πρὸς δυσμὰς ἄλλο ὄρος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, πέτρας στερεάς. **2** καὶ τέσσαρες τόποι ἐν αὐτῷ κοῖλοι, βάθος ἔχοντες καὶ λίαν λείοι, τρεῖς αὐτῶν σκοτινοὶ καὶ εἷς φωτινός, καὶ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀνὰ μέσον αὐτοῦ. καὶ εἶπον Πῶς λεία τὰ κοιλώματα ταῦτα καὶ ὀλοβαθῆ καὶ σκοτινὰ τῇ ὀράσει; **3** τότε ἀπεκρίθη Ῥαφαήλ, ὁ εἷς τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων ὃς μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἦν, καὶ εἶπέν μοι Οὗτοι οἱ τόποι ὁ κοῖλοι, ἵνα ἐπισυνάγονται εἰς αὐτοὺς τὰ πνεύματα τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν νεκρῶν. εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐκρίθησαν, ὥδε ἐπισυνάγεσθαι πάσας τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. **4** καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τόποι εἰς ἐπισύνσχεσιν αὐτῶν ἐποίησαν μέχρι τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς κρίσεως αὐτῶν καὶ μέχρι τοῦ διορισμοῦ καὶ διορισμένου χρόνου ἐν ᾧ ἡ κρίσις ἡ μεγάλη ἔσται ἐν αὐτοῖς. **5** τεθέαμαι ἀνθρώπους νεκροὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ μέχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ προέβαιεν καὶ ἐνετύχανεν. **6** καὶ ἠρώτησα Ῥαφαήλ τὸν ἄγγελον ὃ μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἦν, καὶ εἶπα αὐτῷ Τοῦτο τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐντυγχάνον τίνος ἐστίν, δι’ ὃ οὕτως ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ προβαίνει καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; **7** καὶ ἀπεκρίθη μοι λέγων Τοῦτο τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ ἐξεληθὸν ἀπὸ Ἄβελ ὃν ἐφόνευσε Καὶν ὁ

2 And there were four hollow places in it, deep and very smooth: three of them were dark and one bright; and there was a fountain of water in its midst. And I said: “How smooth are these hollow places, and deep and dark to view”.

3 Then Raphael answered, one of the holy angels, who was with me, and said unto me: “These hollow places have been created for this very purpose, that the spirits of the souls of the dead should assemble therein, yea that all the souls of the children of men should assemble there”.

4 And these places have been made to receive them till the day of their judgment and till their appointed period, till the great judgment comes upon them.

5 I saw the spirit of a dead man making suit, and his voice went forth to heaven and made suit.

6 And I asked Raphael the angel who was with me, and I said unto him: “This spirit which maketh suit, whose is it, whose voice goeth forth and maketh suit to heaven?”

7 And he answered me saying: “This is the spirit which went forth from Abel, whom his brother Cain slew, and he makes his suit against him till his seed is destroyed from the face of the earth, and his seed is annihilated from amongst the seed of men.

8 Then I asked regarding all the hollow places: “Why is one separated from the other?”

9 And he answered me saying: “These three have been made that the spirits of the dead may be separated. And this division has been made for the spirits of the righteous, in which there is the bright spring of water.

10 And this had been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgment has not been executed upon them in their lifetime.

11 Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain till the great day of judgment, scourging and torments of the accursed forever, so that there may be retribution for their spirits. There He shall bind them forever.

12 And this has been made for the spirits of those who make their suit, who make disclosures concerning their destruction, when they were slain in the days of the sinners.

13 And this has been made for the spirits of men who shall not be righteous but sinners, who are godless, and of the lawless they shall be companions; but their spirits shall not be punished in the day of judgment nor shall they be raised from thence.

14 Then I blessed the Lord of Glory and said: “Blessed art Thou, Lord of righteousness, who rulest over the world”. (Translation from Charles 1913)

ἀδελφός, καὶ Ἰαβὲλ ἐντυγχάνει περὶ αὐτοῦ μέχρι τοῦ ἀπολέσαι τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀφανίσθη τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ. **8** τότε ἠρωτήσα περὶ τῶν κυκλωμάτων πάντων, διὰ τί ἐχωρίσθησαν ἐν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνός; **9** καὶ ἀπεκρίθη μοι λέγων Οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐποιήθησαν χωρίζεσθαι τὰ πνεύματα τῶν νεκρῶν· καὶ οὕτως ἐχωρίσθη εἰς τὰ πνεύματα τῶν δικαίων, οὗ ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν αὐτῷ φωτινῇ· **10** καὶ οὕτως ἐκτίσθη τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν, ὅταν ἀποθάνωσιν καὶ ταφῶσιν εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ κρίσις οὐκ ἐγενήθη ἐπ’ αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτῶν. **11** ὧδε χωρίζεται τὰ πνεύματα αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν μεγάλην βάσανον ταύτην, μέχρι τῆς μεγάλης ἡμέρας τῆς κρίσεως, τῶν μαστίγων καὶ τῶν βασάνων τῶν κατηραμένων μέχρι αἰῶνος· ἦν ἀνταπόδοσις τῶν πνευμάτων· ἐκεῖ δῆσει αὐτοὺς μέχρις αἰῶνος. **12** καὶ οὕτως ἐχωρίσθη τοῖς πνεύμασιν τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων, οἵτινες ἐμφανίζουσιν περὶ τῆς ἀπωλείας, ὅταν φονευθῶσιν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν. **13** καὶ οὕτως ἐκτίσθη τοῖς πνεύμασιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔσονται ὅσοι ἀλλὰ ἀμαρτωλοί, καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἀνόμων ἔσονται μέτοχοι. τὰ δὲ πνεύματι, ὅτι οἱ ἐνθάδε θλιβέντες ἔλαττον κολάζονται αὐτῶν, οὐ τιμωρηθήσονται ἐν ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως, οὐδὲ μὴ μετεγερθῶσιν ἐντεῦθεν. **14** τότε ἠύλόγησα τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης, καὶ εἶπα Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης, κυριεύσων τοῦ αἰῶνος.

According to Hanhart (1966:23), the purpose of the pericope seems to be to give assurance that God’s justice will prevail. There is thus a variety of views offered in late Jewish writings. It seems clear, however, that there is an obvious distinction made between the righteous and the wicked. This final place was usually located in a valley south of Jerusalem, known in Hebrew as *Ge Hinnom* and in Greek as *Gehenna*. This valley was notorious for the child sacrifices to Molech during the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, and it was prophesied as the place of God’s future fiery judgment (Is. 30:33⁶¹; 66:24⁶²; Jer. 7:31-32⁶³).

⁶¹ Is. 30:33 ‘For his burning place has long been prepared; truly it is made ready for the king, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it.’

⁶² Is. 66:24 ‘And they shall go out and look at the dead bodies of the people who have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.’

⁶³ Jer. 7:31-32 ‘And they go on building the high place of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire—which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind. Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the LORD, when it will no more be called Topheth,

Hanhart (1966:18) argues that the ideas of resurrection, the afterlife, increased demonology, and angelology betray Iranian influence. He also says that the belief in man's immortal soul may reflect Orphic or Platonic influence among the Jews during the Diaspora. In this study, the footnote (2) of Hanhart (1966:18) is however followed together with the argument that the Jewish belief developed in response to their circumstances. This may include syncretism to some extent but it was mainly due to their difficult situations ever since the exile, their faith in the midst of oppression.

Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 portrays additional features of this state. Here an unbridgeable chasm separates the wicked and the righteous dead. The rich man experiences torment while Lazarus rests in Abraham's bosom. All are still believed to go to Hades while the wicked are punished (2 Pet 2:9⁶⁴) and the righteous are blessed (2 Cor. 5:8⁶⁵; Lk. 23:43⁶⁶).

Hanhart (1966:32) states that according to Jeremias⁶⁷, however, it is fundamental for our understanding of the New Testament to make a sharp distinction between Hades and Gehenna. Hades is used exclusively for the interim period, Gehenna on the other side for a state of punishment after the last judgment. In Hades, the punishment is provisional, in Gehenna eternal. He further states that Paradise can be used for an intermediate state and that it is not located in Hades, but in Heaven. Nevertheless, Jeremias also warns that the ideas were in flux in Jesus' time. He is not certain whether Lazarus was thought to be in a blessed state in Hades or in Paradise. Hanhart (1966:37), however, feels that this is not so clear-cut to him. The terms Hades and Paradise are used only a few times in the New Testament. Hades appears ten times where it does not appear in Mark, John or any of the epistles⁶⁸. A synonym ἄβυσσος appears once in Luke and Romans and five times

or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of Slaughter: for they will bury in Topheth until there is no more room.'

⁶⁴ 2 Pet 2:9 'then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment'

⁶⁵ 2 Cor 5:8 'Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.'

⁶⁶ Luke 23:43 'He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

⁶⁷ Theological Dictionary of the New Testament p22 & p113

⁶⁸ Mt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14

in Revelations⁶⁹. Gehenna appears only in the Synoptics and in James, while Paradise appears in Luke, II Corinthians, and Revelations⁷⁰.

According to Hanhart (1966:33), the term Hades in the New Testament is used in the same way as in the Old Testament. It still means the underworld, the power of death and is still connected with the lowest regions. In Matthew 12:40 Jesus was in the belly of the earth during the *triduum mortis* just as Jonah was. Peter also uses Psalm 16:8-11 (cf. footnote 53) to prove that Christ was meant and not David since David's grave is still with us, but Christ was not abandoned to Hades⁷¹. In Matthew 16:18 the expression is used to emphasise the finality of Hades, which is pictured as enclosed by cliffs⁷². Hanhart (1966:35) also shows that the passages that refer to Gehenna are almost exclusively found in the sayings of Jesus in which He calls men to obedience to the will of God. For Jesus there is no doubt that man will receive either punishment or reward from God. Gehenna indicated the final fate of him who disobeys, but it is not clear whether Jesus foresaw a temporary state of the dead in Hades before their punishment in Gehenna.

C) The development of the Jewish hope

The first forms of hope developed from a covenantal appreciation during the time of exile, expecting that the nation would repent one day and be delivered. This hope, however, ended in this life, while life after death was not an issue (cf. Powys 1997:77-82).

In the later Old Testament traditions, there was a movement towards emphasis on the punitive judgment of God. The rise of this concept had an emphasis on covenant and particularly on blessings and curses to follow. This concept became the unbending literal consequences of faithfulness and sinfulness. The conceptions of 'life' and 'death' as they were understood under this understanding of divine retribution were mostly untenable (cf. Powys 1997:88). Furthermore, life was not like that; the righteous often suffered while the wicked often prospered. This tight system prompted both hope and protest.

⁶⁹ Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 9:1, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:3

⁷⁰ Luke 23:43; II Cor. 12:2; Rev. 2:7

⁷¹ Acts 2:27; 31

⁷² Cf. Is. 38:10; Psalms of Solomon 16:2; Wisdom of Ben Sirach 16:13; and III Maccabees 5:51

They started to believe that God's faithfulness and sovereignty could even transcend death. At first, the expectation was that God would preserve the lives of faithful ones despite death, but this then developed to a hope that one day God would raise the faithful dead⁷³ to participate in the profits of His judgment (cf. Powys 1997:88).

All of these forms of hope survived strongly during the inter-testamental era, although the ones believing in God's faithfulness transcending death gained in prominence. There was no single dominant form of hope which stood out in response to the politico-cultural challenges of the Greek and Hasmonean eras (the inter-testamental era). The hopes evolved from this-worldly forms of hope to forms of hope beyond this existence, although the former were not abandoned. There was a rising sense that the unrighteous would be brought to account after death (cf. Powys 1997:142). In II Maccabees 7 we see how especially martyrdom raised the question of a future life for an individual. According to Hanhart (196:20), the Jews were confronted during this time with the question whether they should or should not stay faithful to the Torah. The concern here is definitely with the afterlife of the individual and not the nation. According to Maccabees 7:40, only the righteous will be resurrected. This righteous only included the martyrs. This variety of concepts and images provided rich resources for eschatological innovation; this can clearly be seen in 1 Enoch.

According to Powys (1997:247), 'fulfilment' is one of the most prominent themes in the New Testament. Throughout the New Testament, the conviction is shared that God's promises to Israel were being fulfilled in Jesus. Powys (1997:247) also states that this hope is mostly strains of the Jewish hope as it developed through the Old Testament and inter-testamental period. Although Christ is the fulfilment in the here and now, the final fulfilment of God's rule will only be made manifest at the future appearing of Christ. The basic expectation of post-mortem compensation is most clearly evidenced in the Palestinian Targums and early Rabbinic materials which according to Powys (1997:228) are the most significant indicators of Jewish beliefs by the end of the Second Temple period. Powys (1997: 228) also argues according to Josephus and the New

⁷³ Is. 25, 26; Dan. 12:2,3

Testament that the Pharisees are the promoters of this expectation from the ‘doctrinal confusion’ we find by the time of the inter-testamental period.

D) The Development of the Descensus Doctrine

In order to discuss the development of the doctrine, we first have to reach a conclusion on the reflection on the ‘Death and Resurrection Beliefs in other Religions’. The biggest difference between these myths and Christ’s descent to the underworld is the fact that in not one account of a myth is the saviour of a soul dead when he visits Hades. It is only in the Christian teaching that the hero had to die in order to go to Hades and save the souls, and then became alive when they reached the outside. The idea of helping the dead who have sinned only developed in later Jewish thought. Moreover, only in the Christian teaching did the saviour descend in order to save such a big group of souls. In the mythology, a lot of detail is given about the journey towards and from the underworld, while in the Christian teaching we only know He descended and then He ascended.

According to Daniélou (1964:233), the descent into hell was a very important subject for Jewish Christianity. Anyone who accepted the Jewish cosmogony believed that at death every soul passed to this region. The death of Christ thus also by definition involved His to first descending to Hades. According to Bernard (1915:28), no one in the Apostolic or sub-Apostolic age would have been prompted to insert the descent as an article in the baptismal creed, since it was just saying that Christ died.

Furthermore, Daniélou (1964:233) shows that the doctrine of the Descent of Christ was also intruded into other themes. The first being the *katabasis* where it is integrated with the general theme of Christ’s descent to earth (cf. Eph 4:9⁷⁴; Phil 2:7⁷⁵). In Philippians 2:10⁷⁶, however, we find a comprehensive cosmology. According to

⁷⁴ Eph. 4:9 ‘When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?’

⁷⁵ Phil. 2:7 ‘but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,’

⁷⁶ Phil. 2:10 ‘so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth’.

Daniélou (1964:234) this prompted writers to amalgamate the two themes in one vision (cf. Ascension of Isaiah 10:8-10). This was also a common development in Gnostic literature (cf. the discussion on the Teachings of Silvanus). Secondly, this doctrine has intruded into Christ's combat with the evil angels in His passion. According to the ideas of the Jewish Christians, the habitat of the fallen angels is in the air, and Christ's struggle with them must take place there. But this intrusion had the effect that by the end of the second century CE this struggle took place in hell after Christ's passion.

In the earliest versions, the aim of Christ was to proclaim the gospel to the patriarchs and prophets (cf. Feinberg 1986:303 & Peel 1979:48). This is in congruence with the discussion on the development of the Jewish hope, where it became obvious that they were only concerned with the afterlife around the time of their oppression. That is why the earliest concern was with the Jewish patriarchs, prophets and the martyrs.

Bernard (1915:290) quotes two passages from the *Bereshith Rabba* to show that this idea was prominent in Jewish literature. He is, however, unsure of the dating of the literature. Nevertheless, it still demonstrates the basic purpose of the descent:

'When they are bound, they that are in Gehinnom, saw the light of the Messiah, they rejoiced to receive him'; and 'This is that which stands written, We shall rejoice and exult thee. When? When the captives climb out of hell, and the Shechinah at their head.'

The only difference here is that the captives are in Gehinnom and not Sheol.

In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, we find the conception the Jews of the first century CE had about Hades. All souls went there, but the righteous and the wicked was separated. If then all souls went there, surely Christ's went there as well. This was also preached by Christ himself in Matthew 12:40⁷⁷.

From this then developed the question of what Christ did there, and the easiest and most natural conclusion would be that He preached there, as He did on earth. They

⁷⁷ Matt. 12:40 'For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth.'

expected God to give mercy to those before Christ as well. We do not find the idea of Christ preaching in Hades in biblical literature (except for the ambiguous 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6). The proclamation is of the salvation that has been wrought. This idea in itself also developed, from the proclamation of their deliverance in the future to the actual immediate deliverance with the resurrection of bodies (first found in the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*).

According to Daniélou (1964:237), by the time of Ignatius of Antioch, the idea of a proclamation is no longer crucial. All that matters is the descent into Hell (which is genuinely Jewish Christian) and the resurrection of the dead (which seems to stem from Matt. 27:52).

By the time of the Christian trimmings to the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a new aspect has appeared. Now Christ is in conflict with the Devil who keeps the souls in Hades, in his power. Christ goes to Hell to defeat him and to snatch the souls from him. This is an important theological development, since Christ's struggle with Satan has now moved from the cross to the descent.

In *Ode XI, 4* we find that Christ himself was now a prisoner of Death. The main objective of the combat with Satan is now Christ's own delivery, and only through this, He was able to rescue the rest.

From the second century onwards the 'breaking of the iron bars' and 'bronze bolts' of the gates of Hades was a common feature (cf. Peel 1979:40). The imagery, however, was a lot older. In the classical world, Tartarus has long been seen as having iron gates and a bronze threshold (cf. Homer, *Iliad* VIII, 15; Virgil, *Aeneid* VI, 576). Nevertheless, we also find this perception in the bible (cf. Ps. 107:16; Is. 45:2).

By the time we reach the *Gospel of Nicodemus* it seems that hardly anything in the narrative is new. It is simply an incorporation of all the thoughts seen in this chapter. From the basic belief that Christ descended into Hades to save the Old Testament prophets and patriarchs, the narrative became more and more descriptive and dramatic until it reached its climax in the Gospel of Nicodemus and then later in Mediaeval

Christianity. It thus becomes clear that the Descensus narrative did not need the aid of pagan mythologies, any ancient beliefs, or even contemporary beliefs (e.g. Gnosticism) to develop. All these ideas are rooted in what the Jews believed and thus the early Jewish-Christians as well.

Bousset's theory that the Descent originated from the idea that Christ fought the Rulers of the Underworld (cf. Bousset 1896) is thus proven wrong. Hoffman (1981:55) also found that the teaching in Christianity does not originate from a Gnostic myth and neither is it influenced thereby. It is also merely analogous but not identical to the Gnostic conception (cf. MacCulloch 1930:310 & Peel 1979:32-36). We never find the idea of a battle in any of this literature, only a conflict at the most.

Until the middle of the fourth century CE, the descent was simply part of the narrative of Christ's saving work for humanity and of God's generosity in rescuing the lost and those who had not heard the proclamation of the gospel during their life. This is true even though we find a wide variety of characteristics in these versions.

SECTION II: THE MEANING OF 1 PETER 3:19 AND 4:6

CHAPTER 4 PREPARATORY REMARKS ON 1 PETER

1. THE FORM OF 1 PETER

There is little disagreement about the epistolary form of 1 Peter (cf. Doty 1969:193), with a clearly defined prescript, thanksgiving, letter-body (body-opening; body-middle; and body-closing), greeting section and farewell.

When looking at the form of the material we find the use of imperatives most striking. According to Moulton (1906:174), there are 28 imperatives in 1 Peter 1:13-5:12. In the larger part of the letter these imperatives are also used with a supporting participle. This use was referred to as paraenesis in ancient literature (cf. Martin 1992:85). Most commentators today have also accepted this letter as paraenetic (cf. Selwyn 1946:438; Lohse 1986:55; and Martin 1992:85, 139). In paraenetic texts, the exhortations are based on the ontological status of the addressed. Martin (1992:140) states that there are two types of paraenetic compositions:

- 1) where the ontological statements and the admonitions are separated in the letter, while in
- 2) the ontological statements and the admonitions are interwoven.

Martin (1992:140) also describes the Pauline letters as fitting into the first composition while 1 Peter fits into the second.

It is also interesting to note the discussion of Martin (1992:120) on the *Composition of Paraenesis*. According to this discussion, we find three compositional forms that are used in paraenetic texts. Two of the three fall under ethical lists and the last one is the

topoi. We find all three of these compositional forms in 1 Peter. The first one is Virtue lists⁷⁸ and Vice lists⁷⁹; the second one *Haustafeln*⁸⁰; and the *topoi*⁸¹.

According to Martin (1992:141), most of the ontological statements in 1 Peter are metaphorical, while Elliott (1989:112) refuses to see any metaphorical language in this letter. Wifstrand (1948:172) argues that metaphors used in Scriptures have become frozen for us today. In other words, it is difficult for us to see the metaphors the way the first readers would have, or the way the author intended.

Since a paraenetic text uses the ontological status of the reader, and since most of the ontological statements are made metaphorically, the metaphors are important for understanding the text. Accordingly, metaphors will be used as the major literary device, together with the seven devices identified by Dalton (1989:93-95). These devices are prior announcement of a theme; inclusio; link-words; repetition of key words; statement to exhortation and vice versa; symmetrical disposition and Old Testament citations.

Regarding the form of 1 Peter it is essential to note that in this study, 1 Peter will be regarded as Jewish-Christian literature. This is according to the definition of Jewish-Christianity as set out in Chapter 4.2A namely, ‘*a type of Christian thought expressing itself in forms borrowed from Judaism*’. This definition, therefore, does not necessarily refer to Christians who converted from Judaism. But the prominent Jewish thought (cf. Elliott 2000:62) and influence⁸² found in this letter seems to be enough to qualify it according to the broad definition given above. According to Daniélou (1964:11), the Jewish-Christian literature ranges from the beginnings of Christianity to the middle of the second century CE, which allows 1 Peter to fall within this classification.

⁷⁸ 1 Pet. 3:8

⁷⁹ 1 Pet 2:1; 4:3; 15

⁸⁰ 1 Pet. 2:18f; 3:8; 5:1-5

⁸¹ 1 Pet. 3:22

⁸² According to Goppelt (1979: 56) the author of 1 Peter was steeped in the tradition of the early church in Jerusalem.

2. AUTHOR AND DATE

Jobes (2005:5) argues that the questions of the author and date are so intertwined that it is best to discuss them together. This is because the answer to the question about the apostolic authorship will immediately place the letter within a certain time frame.

It is a popular opinion that 1 Peter is a pseudonymous work and was written after AD 75 (cf. Elliott 2000:127-30). Elliot (2000:127-30) also presumes that there was a Petrine school/group in Rome during this time. However, there are no specific references to such a school (cf. Jobes 2005:6). An amanuensis has also been suggested hoping to keep the apostolic authority but allowing the possibility of pseudo-epigraphy. Dalton (1989:87) chooses this option, arguing that Peter most probably used a secretary (amanuensis) to write the letter since He felt unsure of his own capabilities in Greek. This is an important factor since many of the arguments against Peter as the author is based on the use of Greek in the letter (Elliott 2000:120). Jobes (2005:7-8) however shows that the Greek in 1 Peter is not nearly as good as has been proposed, which makes it quite possible that the letter has been written by someone using Greek as a second language. Dalton (1989:90-91) consequently argues for the apostle Peter as the authentic author of 1 Peter.

Selwyn (1958:23-24) identifies at least thirty allusions to words of Jesus in 1 Peter. He believes that this points to the author's dependence on the source 'Q'. Gundry (1966-67:345) says:

The most striking feature about the verba Christi in 1 Peter, however, is that they refer to contexts in the gospels which are specially associated with the Apostle Peter or treat topics that would especially interest the Apostle Peter according to the gospel tradition concerning him. There is so to speak a 'Petrine pattern' in the verba Christi reflected in 1 Peter.

Gundry (1966-67:349) states that these *verba Christi* are far too allusive to be a deliberate fake, but Best (1969:111) argues that these *verba Christi* only appear in two blocks of Luke's material. He feels that if Peter were the true author, it would have been distributed more randomly.

The theology of 1 Peter seems to indicate an earlier stage of development. The Christology and eschatology are not as highly developed as that we find in John's Gospel and the Revelation of John (cf. Jobes 2005:18). Jobes (2005:18) also feels that 1 Peter is quite unconcerned with heresies and Gnosticism, which received quite a lot of attention especially in Asia Minor. Schutter (1989:35) concludes that 1 Peter depends more on oral sources than on written sources, and this can also point to an earlier date.

In this study, it will be accepted that the apostle Peter is the authentic author. This decision is made on the following arguments, 1) Until the 19th century the authenticity of 1 Peter has been undisputed throughout the history of the church, 2) None of the evidence against the apostle Peter as the author is conclusive, and 3) there are enough indicators in the letter suggesting it to be from the time of Peter.

3. AUDIENCE

When the recipients are under discussion, the main question is usually whether they (the addressed Christians) were mostly Jewish or Gentile, and whether their description as *ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς* is literal or metaphorical.

While most modern interpreters argue for a mostly Gentile-Christian audience (cf. Michaels 1988:xliv & Elliott 1981:81-82), ancient exegetes like Eusebius perceived 1 Peter to be a Diaspora letter to Jews (cf. Michaels 1988:xlvi). According to Jobes (2005:23), Augustine and Jerome were the only ancient exegetes to not see the recipients of 1 Peter as Jewish. They (those for the Jewish recipients) then also took the phrase *ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς* as literal. This is of course possible since there was a considerable Jewish population in Asia Minor by the first century. According to Mitchell (1993:2.32), the Jewish Diaspora in Asia Minor dates at least from the end of

the third century BCE when Antiochus III sent two thousand Jews from Babylon to colonize Lydia and Phrygia.

v 1:18⁸³ is usually used to prove that the audience was mostly Gentile together with v 4:3⁸⁴. According to Jobes (2005:23), the argument is usually that Jews could never have been described in such spiritually bankrupt terms. However, she also states that it is important to look at the context of v1:18 in v1:19 ‘but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish’. Jobes (2005:23) says

The reference to Christ’s blood as ‘of a blameless and spotless lamb’ clearly alludes to the old covenant’s sacrificial system, which was in fact empty of ultimate redemptive value in comparison with the blood of Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 2:3⁸⁵ and Philippians 3:7-9⁸⁶ we find that Paul also expresses similar thoughts - admitting that ‘all of us’ - including Jews - once lived to gratify the ‘cravings of our sinful nature’. Jobes (2005:24) says correctly that when we look at it this way it does not really matter much whether they were Jewish- or Gentile- Christians since everyone was empty without Christ’s redemption and everyone was guilty in God’s eyes.

Although there is quite a consensus that the phrase ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς should be understood metaphorically (except for Elliott (1981; 2000), there is no consensus on the controlling metaphor. In his discussion of the recipients Best (1971:19) does not even mention the possibility of the Diaspora. To him it was clear that they are Gentiles just living outside Palestine. In this study, the διασπορᾶς will be taken as the controlling metaphor after the convincing study by Martin (1992). The reason for

⁸³ 1 Pet. 1:18 ‘You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold,’

⁸⁴ 1 Pet. 4:3 ‘You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.’

⁸⁵ Eph. 2:3 ‘All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.’

⁸⁶ Phil. 3:7-9 ‘Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.’

this being that it covers the whole letter. Every section and subsection can be explained and understood when seen as part of this metaphor. This will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5.3.

The last difficulty in this section is who evangelised this region? We do not have any extant historical evidence of first-century evangelism in most of the regions mentioned, much less of apostolic evangelism (cf. Jobes 2005:25). There are naturally some suggestions (Selwyn 1958:61 - it was Peter himself, and that is why Paul was not allowed to enter Bithynia; Jobes (2005:26) - that these Christians became Christians somewhere else and made their acquaintance with Peter before his writing to them, and therefore they are now scattered foreigners) but without any evidence, they can only stay mere suggestions.

4. PLACE

Elliot (2000:84) states that the vast area to which the letter is addressed (Pontus, Capadocia, Galatia, Asia and Bithynia) is approximately 129 000 square miles, while the state of California covers about 159 000 square miles. This area mentioned here comprised the part of first-century Asia Minor that laid west and north of the Taurus Mountains (cf. Jobes 2005:20). This enormous area had few small cities that were far between. The population was diversified, consisting of indigenous peoples, Greek settlers, and Roman colonists.

This region became the cradle of Christianity, where well established churches flourished in all five of the regions mentioned in 1 Peter by 180 CE.

CHAPTER 5

THE STRUCTURE OF 1 PETER

1. 1 PETER AS A LETTER

Most scholars today accept 1 Peter to be a unified text written by one author, for one function (cf. Jobes 2005:53; Boring 1999:37; Dalton 1965:68; Horrell 1998:12; Goppelt 1993:21-24). On the subject of the unity, Elliott (2000:7) says that although the final and present form of 1 Peter is a letter, the form of its original components has been the subject of sustained debate. However, he states that there is no support in manuscript evidence for another form of 1 Peter, nor is the suspicion about the literary coherence of the letter verified. Elliott (2000:9) states: ‘The verses of the ‘epistolary framework’ (1:1-2; 5:12-14) are not unrelated to, or isolable from the remainder of the letter but are thoroughly consistent lexically and thematically with the content of 1:3 – 5:11. When we accept the unity of the text, we by implication also reject the theory that 1 Peter was originally a baptismal homily or liturgy to which an epistolary framework was later added. Jobes (2005:54) says that if the unity is accepted, its genre is clearly that of personal correspondence.

Jobes (2005:54) states that 1 Peter is often referred to as a ‘Diaspora Letter’. Elliot (2000:12) found that the form of 1 Peter is closest to that of the ‘Epistle of Jeremiah’⁸⁷. We also find Diaspora letters in 2 Maccabees 1:1-9 and 2 Baruch 78-87. Diaspora letters were seen as a distinctively Jewish form and were written by a recognised spiritual authority who urged a holy life for the recipients who were living in a society not conducive to it. Jobes (2005:55) argues, however, that the Diaspora letter did not form a distinct literary genre, and had no common markers.

The most prominent feature of the form of the material in 1 Peter is the presence of so many imperatives. From 1:13 to 5:12, imperatives are placed throughout the letter (cf. Martin 1992:85). According to Elliott (2000:67), there are fifty-four imperatives

⁸⁷ The Epistle of Jeremiah is a pseudonymous work translated into Greek about 100 BC, and was addressed to the exiles in Babylon.

constructions in 1 Peter. Martin (1992:85) also states that the imperatives with their supporting participles form the framework of the body of 1 Peter. Martin (1992:85) refers to a letter, Pseudo-Isocrates' *Address to Demonicus*, where he uses imperatives as the framework of the address and to carry the thought forward. This was called paraenesis in ancient literature.

1 Peter exhibits this feature of paraenetic prescriptive speech, and it is identified as a complex hortatory letter (cf. Martin 1992:99). Elliott (2000:67-68) lists the features, which illustrate the predominantly hortatory form of the letter as follows:

- 1) The broad semantic field of terms for conduct⁸⁸;
- 2) Fifty-four imperatival constructions;
- 3) The predominant use of the second person plural pronouns;
- 4) The paraenetic use of οὖν;
- 5) The numerous antitheses;
- 6) The sequence of initial imperatives followed by supporting indicatives;
- 7) Persistent stress on the will of God; and
- 8) The exhortation supported by many Old Testament citations or allusions.

Malherbe (1986:136) states on the use of antithesis⁸⁹ as a feature of paraenesis in 1 Peter:

Antithesis is a common feature in the use of examples. An example could, for instance, be described antithetically, or a positive example could be balanced by or juxtaposed to a negative one.

In his article on *Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians*, Malherbe (1983:241) listed several hortatory terms that occur in the letter. Not all of them are present in 1 Peter, but we do find some of them. We find παρακαλέω in 2:11 and 5:1, 12; ἐπιμαρτυρέω occurs in 5:12; and στήριζω is used in 5:10. Martin (1992:100) states that all of these terms indicate that 1 Peter is a paraenetical document with παρακαλέω as the most important.

⁸⁸ Cf. Elliott (2000:63)

⁸⁹ 1:14-15; 1:18-19 / 1:23; 2:1-2; 2:7-9; 2:16 / 2:20; 3:3-4; 3:9; 4:4-5; 4:15-16 and 5:1-3

In this study, it will be accepted that the letter is a paraenetic letter⁹⁰, based on all the paraenetic features found in this letter. It will also be accepted that the author used the form of the Jewish Diaspora letter to write to the Christians scattered in Asia-Minor, based on the study by Elliott (2000:12) that the form of 1 Peter agrees closest to Diaspora letters.

2. CHRISTOLOGICAL AND KERYGMATIC FORMULAS

Jobes (2005:55) says that the question of whether Peter used pre-existing hymns of liturgical material is open to debate. Two Christological passages have been identified as the most likely pre-existing material (2:21-25 and 3:18-22). The biggest problem with this argument is that those who propose their existence cannot agree on which material it can be so identified. Furthermore, the nature of the Christological content identified as hymnic seems to be so general that it could reflect common Christian teaching about Jesus (cf. Elliott 2000:30-31). Achtemeier (1996:242) has given up the attempt to reconstruct a hymn from its form in 1 Peter as futile.

Achtemeier (1996:192-193) and Michaels (1988:xliv) have identified the source of 2:21-24 as the Greek text of Isaiah 53, and Jobes (2005:55) describes this as an adequate identification. Concerning 3:18-22, Michaels (1988:xliv); Achtemeier (1996:242-243) and Elliott (2000:697) agrees that there is not a convincing case for the existence or usage of a fixed creed or hymn in these verses.

Therefore, we must conclude that even if there was a source for these phrases and formulae, the author integrated it so thoroughly that we cannot reconstruct the original form.

Elliott (2000:32) concludes about the use of hymns or credal material in 1 Peter

The most that can be stated with certainty is that 1 Peter incorporates isolated phrases and formulas of Christological and kerygmatic tradition but not that this material was embodied in demonstrable hymnic or credal sources.

⁹⁰ Against the argument of Jobes (2005:55) that the letter might rather have been a letter of consolation.

3. THE METAPHORS AND THE SUBSECTIONS

The Body-middle will be discussed in terms of the major metaphors in the text. The metaphor as a whole will be discussed first, its appearance outside this letter; possible theological meaning of the words; and how the early church applied these images. This discussion will also illuminate the relations between the smaller metaphors within, and their relation with the controlling metaphor.

Minear (1960:66-67) states:

...these configurations dominate at least a broad sector of early Christian thought, that to ignore it would produce a serious distortion.

A. THE DIASPORA (ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς) AS THE CONTROLLING METAPHOR

The phrase ἐκλεκτοῖς (1:1) is describing the addressees in the prescript and the author in the farewell συνεκλεκτῆ (5:13). This is the first *inclusio* in the letter, and the first indication of the importance of this metaphor. Schutter (1989:52) argues that the technique of inclusion conventionally functions to identify the main emphasis of any given passage. Much has been written on the noun supposed by συνεκλεκτῆ in 5:13, but in this study ἀδελφότης used in 5:9 or διασπορᾶς used in 1:1 will be preferred against the proposal of Michaels (1988:310). He used a term not present in 1 Peter; and Best's (1971:177) proposal, a term which is ruled out by the phrase ἐν Βαβυλῶνι is also not accepted.

When we recognise this phrase to be a metaphor, the problem about the addressees (whether they are Jewish or Gentile) is answered. The author is only using the image of the Diaspora to describe his hearer's situation. This is confirmed by the fact that this is a paraenetic text (cf. discussion in Chapter 4.1). Goppelt (1978:76) recognises the importance of the designations in the greeting, and acknowledges that it introduces the theme, but he focuses on παρεπιδήμοις instead of διασπορᾶς. The error of this decision becomes obvious when he then has trouble relating all the sections to one

another, and more definitely their relation to the controlling metaphor. Elliott (1981:129) on the other hand states that the metaphorical understanding of the terms in 1 Peter ‘*has resulted in a serious misconception of the letter as a whole*’.

When the author is speaking to ‘the elect strangers of the dispersion’, he is indicating that the readers have something in common with the Jewish Diaspora. However, the question arises - what can they have in common? Firstly the Diaspora is only temporary (cf. 4 Ezra 7:3, 16), a road which must be travelled. Secondly, they must beware of syncretism. Thirdly, the Diaspora is not because of judgment but through an election that estranges and separates them from the peoples of the world (cf. Goppelt 1978:79). It is interesting to note that the terms ‘elect’ and ‘strangers’ are antonyms. How can one be elected but still be a stranger? It is important to discern what they are elected to, and to whom they are strangers. They are elected to the household of God, and are thus strangers to the world (cf. Minear 1960:61). The journey they need to travel because of this election is described in 1:3-12, starting with their new birth ‘ἀναγεννήσας’ and ending at their salvation ‘κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως (ὑμῶν) σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν’.

The image of a journey of the people of God is thus central in 1 Peter. He is however mostly concerned with their present situation, thus exhorting them on how to conduct themselves during this journey. This is expressed by the term ἀναστροφῆ (life conduct), which appears 6 times in this letter, out of 13 times in the whole New Testament.

The rhetorical strategy the author employs for this letter is suppression, which means that he does not focus on the negatives that his readers should not do, but rather on the positives that they should do.

B. HOUSEHOLD OF GOD (1:14-2:10) AS THE FIRST METAPHOR-CLUSTER

Firstly, an *inclusio* can be noted in 1:15 τὸν καλέσαντα and in 2:9 τοῦ ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος. The word ‘called’ in 1:15 expresses the belief that they had been chosen by God, while it can then also be connected to the word ‘elect’ in 1:1 (cf. Best 1971:86).

Only through election can one become part of the λαὸς θεοῦ in 2:10. Thus true to the text's paraenetic nature the author gives facts about their ontological status and then tells them what is consequently expected of them - to be holy.

Election is presupposed throughout the passage, the election brought about the new birth, and this causes them to now be in the household of God. In this household, they are now in new relations and since they are newborn babies, they must still grow. To describe this ontological status of the readers, the author uses the metaphor of the household of God.

Throughout scripture, the οἶκος can be used for a house, palace, or temple, but due to the lack of a better word, it can also mean household or family. God has proprietary right over His people in his house. In Qumran the community was also described as a house (cf. Verbrugge 2000:899), and similar ideas are found in Eph 2:19 and Gal 6:10.

i. New Relations because of Election and Rebirth:

1:14-16 Obedient Children

The metaphor is introduced by ὡς. Children were expected to obey their parents (cf. Exodus 20; Verbrugge 2000:988). Since they are now elected (their ontological status) to this 'family' they must be obedient. This subsection is concluded with a Scripture quotation from Leviticus 19:2.

1:17-21 New Father

These children now call God their Father. According to Verbrugge (2000:988), the term father denotes above all absolute authority of one who can demand obedience but also love, goodness and care. In the Old Testament, they were more reserved calling God father- especially individually, but from the Diaspora onwards they became more comfortable. It was also more in the sense of divine election and redemption that this term was used in the Old Testament. Here however God is described as the Father, in

other words the head of the household they now formed part of. This together with the previous subsection expects obedience to God.

1:22-25 New Siblings

In their new family, they also have new brothers and sisters, whom they must love. Why must they love them? Because they have been purified (ἡγνικότες) and rebegotten (ἀναγεγεννημένοι). They have been purified and rebegotten when they were elected by God. The spiritual family they belong to is incorruptible and eternal, while human families are corruptible and earthly (1:23). This subsection is also concluded with a scripture quotation from Isaiah 40:6-8.

ii. Growth of Newborn Babies:

2:1-3 Milk for Newborn Babies

Their ontological status as newborn babies is why they should crave the pure spiritual milk, just as babies desire their mother's milk. First, they have to be finished with the old vices in order to crave the milk. For only then can they taste that the Lord is good. This subsection is concluded with a scripture quotation from Psalm 34:8.

2:4-10 Living Stones

This metaphor relates to this section (The Household of God) in the sense that it is now describing the readers as being built into the house (οἶκος) itself, and not as the inhabitants of the house. The ὅν in verse 4 also indicates that this passage is subordinate to the passage 1:14-2:10, whereas the previous metaphor and this one are both linked semantically to the notion of growth (cf. Best 1969:281). Speaking of a building as still growing when not complete was ordinary in New Testament times (cf. Martin 1992: 178 and Minear 1960:49).

The idea of the community being built into a holy temple with the truth as the foundation or rock is found in Qumran (cf. Verbrugge 2000:899), while Christ is the foundation here.

C. ALIENS IN THIS WORLD

This metaphor is related to the Diaspora since it also is a consequence of their election; it is part of their journey. According to Schürer (1986:113) Jewish communities during the Diaspora also lived as aliens within a foreign city. The terms *παρεπιδήμιος* and *παροίκος* both mean something similar to living somewhere foreign or to inhabit as a stranger (cf. Verbrugge 2000:974, 976). *Ἐλεύθερος* in 2:16, meaning free men, is related to the previous two terms because aliens were very rarely slaves according to Martin (1992:192). Important to note however is that this freedom is not to do whatever they want, but freedom as the children of God. The freedom is bound to the giver (cf. Verbrugge 2000:411).

i. Resident and Visiting Aliens:

2:11-15 Exhortation for Resident and Visiting Aliens

The transitional device introducing this section is the vocative *ἀγαπητοί*. There are two exhortations in this passage, 1) to abstain from fleshly desires and 2) to submit to every human creature. Martin (1992:196) explains this according to the legal obligation that aliens should be treated as guests. Now due to their legal and ontological status the aliens must maintain good conduct.

ii. Free Men:

There is only one admonition in this subsection: Honour all. The author then cites specific situations for the conferment of honour.

Ὁμοίως is used to confirm that each subsection relates to the command in 2:17 to honour all (cf. Martin 1992:206). According to Verbrugge (2000:1247), the word used

for honour, τιμάω, is usually used for human honour, and it is used in the context of the social order decreed by God. This subsection is concluded with a scripture quotation from Psalm 34:13-17.

D. SUFFERERS OF THE DISPERSION

This has always been the more difficult part of the letter-body to organise (cf. Schutter 1989:59 and Dalton 1989:81). It is even more difficult to find the relation between this section and the rest of the letter-body if the controlling metaphor has not been identified (cf. Schutter 1989:71). According to Martin (1992:211) the Diaspora is described as a place of hardship in this section (cf. Jer. 32:37-38⁹¹, 42⁹²), and therefore the readers are sufferers.

The passage is introduced with a rhetorical question, ‘who can harm them now they have become zealots of the good?’, but this question is not answered until 5:10 where it is confirmed that they will be restored after their suffering. The *inclusio* in 3:14 (πάσχοιτε) and 5:10 (παθόντας) strengthens the impact of the passage.

i. The Righteous Sufferer

This metaphor is introduced with a conditional sentence καὶ τίς.

3:13-22 Do Not Fear

Although the righteous sufferer is blessed, suffering is a possibility in his life. Berger (1984:145) argues that this exhortation is based on the Jewish martyr-paraenesis. According to this paraenesis there are three perspectives, 1) Instruction on correct and false fear, 2) Do not fear sinners and the wicked, and 3) Devotion to God as creator, the only one to fear.

⁹¹ Jer. 32:37-38 ‘See, I am going to gather them from all the lands to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will settle them in safety. They shall be my people, and I will be their God.’

⁹² Jer. 32:42 ‘For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good fortune that I now promise them.’

3:17 gives a basic conception of the righteous person. In verses 18-22, the author gives the reason for this exhortation - Christ's death and resurrection. According to Martin (1992:225), the Passion of Christ was the 'blueprint' for the understanding of righteous suffering. Verbrugge (2000:184) also mentions that in Isaiah 53:4-6 the emphasis is on the righteous servant, suffering innocently, while in Rabbinic Judaism suffering was intended to lead to repentance; one was to thank God for suffering.

4:1-6 Arm Yourselves

Continuing under the metaphor of the righteous sufferer the transitional marker οὖν marks the new subsection. Here the readers are exhorted to arm themselves with the *ἔννοια* of Christ.

The first question is the meaning of the verb παθόντος. Goppelt (1978:266) opts for 'death' rather than general suffering, but in this study, suffering will be used. The second question is the meaning of *ἔννοια*, Martin (1992:227) chooses 'understanding' rather than 'intention'. The reason for his choice being that the author does not exhort his readers to endure martyrdom, but to understand in order to behave correctly. *ἔννοια* together with the ὅτι phrase means the understanding that 'one who has died has ceased from sin'.

The purpose of the arming is exposed in 4:2, so that they will live, during their remaining time in the flesh, by God's will and not their own desires. That from which they should abstain is given in 4:3 and 4:4. According to Dalton (1989:263-277), 4:5 is the judgment for the Gentiles and 4:6 for the Christians.

4:7-11 Be Sane and Sober

A new subsection starts here and continues the preparation of the righteous sufferer. He begins with two imperatives σωφρονήσατε and νήψατε. These are explained with several situations in which the righteous sufferer must conduct these imperatives. In verse 10, these duties are enhanced with the metaphor of the good steward. This subsection is concluded with a doxology in 4:11.

ii. Partners in the Sufferings and Glory of Christ

The vocative in 4:12 (Ἀγαπητοί) introduces this subsection. There is an *inclusio* in 4:13 (τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν) and 5:9 (τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων), and τῆς δόξης in 4:13 and δόξαν in 5:10. This confirms that this subsection is concerned with the suffering and glory.

4:12-19 Partners in the Sufferings of Christ - Rejoice!

Martin (1992:250) explains the phrase ‘καθὸ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν’ as being of an early eschatological origin in the sense that the Christians share in the Messianic woes. These woes have just begun and will continue for a short while until the final consummation in 5:10.

This is followed by exhortations to not be surprised by the testing (πυρώσει), and that κοινωνέω with the sufferings of Christ is a basis for rejoicing.

5:1-5 Partners in the Glory of Christ

This subsection is introduced by οὖν, and concluded in 5.5 with a scripture quotation from Proverbs 3:34. The author presents these exhortations in a community code, speaking firstly to the elders, comparing them with shepherds; secondly to the young men, perceiving the community as a flock of sheep; and lastly everyone is addressed, commanding them to humility and respect for one another. In other words, this is how Christians in the community should behave towards one another; because of the glory we share with Christ.

Elders - Shepherds

Shepherds were viewed as providers, guides, protectors and constant companions (cf. Ex. 2:15 -3:1 and Ps 77:20). It is important to note that this was also the common perception of shepherds outside the Old Testament (cf. Finney 1997).

Young men - Sheep

Sheep could not survive without a shepherd in Biblical times. This is why the readers are exhorted to be humble - they must become completely dependent. It is also known that the chosen people of God are called a flock of sheep (cf. Ps 28:9; 68:7; 74:1; 1 Kings 22:17; Jer.13:17; and 50:6). This also relates this metaphor to the designation in the prescript.

All - Humility

In Proverbs 22:4, humility is described as fear of God, while Num 12:3; Zeph. 2:3; Acts 20:19 and Phil 2:3 describe it as righteousness.

5:6-11 Partners in the Sufferings and Glory of Christ

This is not a new metaphor, but the first and second of this section brought together; this is consequently a concluding paraenesis. The traditional Jewish and Christian schema of humility turned into exaltation is used (cf. Martin 1992:262). In other words if they let themselves be humbled they will be vindicated.

Humble under the hand of God vv 6-7

The image of the flock of sheep is continued. Humility is a characteristic of sheep. The hand of God denotes authority. The hand can mean power, grace, blessing, curse or fight (cf. Jer. 21:5), but redemption or restoration can also come from the hand of God (cf. Ezek. 20:33-34). This exemplifies the idea that the act of humbling yourself will vindicate you.

Resist the Devil vv 8-10

The devil is described as a roaring lion, also continuing the sheep metaphor, where a lion is one of the biggest dangers for sheep. As a metaphor, it is used for a non-human adversary. In the Old Testament a lion was almost always used to describe something or someone bad or wicked (cf. Is. 5:29; Jer. 4:7; 5:6; 50:17 and Ps. 7:2).

4. COMPOSITION OF 1 PETER ACCORDING TO THE ABOVE READING

1:1-1 Prescript

1:3-12 Blessing

1:13-5:12 Letter-Body

1:13 Body-Opening

1:14-5:11 Body-Middle

1:14-2:10 Household of God

1:14-25 New birth into household

1:14-16 Obedient children

1:17-21 New Father

1:22-25 New siblings (brotherhood)

2:1-10 Conception of growth

2:1-3 Milk for newborn babies

2:4-10 Living stones

2:11-3:12 Aliens in this world

2:11-15 Resident and visiting aliens

2:16-3:12 Free men

2:18-25 Slaves

3:1-6 Wives

3:7 Husbands

3:8-12 All

3:13-5:11 Sufferers of the dispersion

3:13-4:11 Righteous sufferer

3:13-22 Do not fear

4:1-6 Arm yourselves

4:7-11 Be sane and sober

4:12-5:11 Partners in the suffering and glory of Christ

4:12-19 Rejoice

5:1-5	Partners in the glory of Christ
5:1-4	<i>Elders-shepherd</i>
5:5a	<i>Young men-sheep</i>
5:5b	<i>All-humility</i>
5:6-11	Partners in the suffering and glory
5:6-7	<i>Humble-hand of God</i>
5:8-11	<i>Be alert-resist the devil</i>
5:12	Body-Closing
5:13-14a	Greeting
5:14b	Farewell

5. 1 PETER 3:18 – 4:6 AS PART OF THE SUBSECTION ‘*SUFFERERS OF THE DISPERSION*’

According to Martin (1992:211), this metaphor cluster arises from the conception of the Diaspora as a place of testing, misfortune and maltreatment of God’s people. The origins of the Jewish Diaspora were found in the forced exile of the Jewish people from their homeland. The idea of the Diaspora as a place of punishment is found in Isaiah 40:2⁹³; 48:10⁹⁴ and Ezekiel 12:15⁹⁵. In the *Testament of Asher* 7:2-3⁹⁶ the author describes the experience of the dispersed Jews in his time, and the author of *2 Baruch* in 78:5; 82:1⁹⁷ includes a letter for dispersed Jews following the destruction of the

⁹³ Is. 40:2 ‘Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.’

⁹⁴ Is. 48:10 ‘See, I have refined you, but not like silver; I have tested you in the furnace of adversity.’

⁹⁵ Ez. 12:15 ‘And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries.’

⁹⁶ Test. of Asher 7:2-3 ‘For I know that you will sin and be delivered into the hands of your enemies; your land shall be made desolate and your sanctuary wholly polluted. You will be scattered to the four corners of the earth; in the dispersion you shall be regarded as worthless, like useless water, until such time as the Most High visits the Earth.’

⁹⁷ 2 Baruch 78:5 ‘Wherefore I have been the more careful to leave you the words of this epistle before I die, that ye may be comforted regarding the evils which have come upon you, and that ye may be grieved also regarding the evil that has befallen your brethren; and again, also, that ye may justify His judgment which He has decreed against you that ye should be carried away captive – for what ye have suffered is disproportioned to what ye have done – in order that, at the last times, ye may be found worthy of your fathers.’

2 Baruch 82:1 ‘Therefore, my brethren, I have written to you, that ye may comfort yourselves regarding the multitude of your tribulations.’

Jerusalem. According to Marin (1992:213), we also find stories where the suffering of the Diaspora is not the result of the punishment for their sins, but rather the hatred and envy of some of the people living in the provinces, that they had to endure⁹⁸.

The author of 1 Peter then recognises this conception of the Diaspora and in his third section he builds a metaphor around this notion. The metaphor in 3:14 ‘εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην’ controls the subsection 3:13-4:11, and gives the basis for the paraenesis down to the blessing in 4:11.

⁹⁸ Esther; Daniel 1-6; and *Joseph and Asenath*

CHAPTER 6

1 PETER 3:19 AND 4:6

In the introduction, it has been mentioned that the focus will be especially on v3:19 and v4:6, which have both been viewed and interpreted in connection with the descent of Christ into Hades. A thorough study will, however, be done of this whole passage to enhance the meaning of 3:19 and 4:6 within its original context (cf. Chapter 7.1). In this study, the passage under investigation is 3:18-4:6, but as was mentioned in the introduction, 3:13-3:17 will be included in the grammatical study for the sake of comprehensiveness. This is done because of the metaphorical study which puts 3:13-3:22 in one sub-section and because the grammar of 3:18 presupposes 3:13-3:17.

This section will not attempt to list all the scholars who have treated these verses; only those who have made particularly significant contributions will be mentioned.

1. 3:19

Dalton (1989:27) commenced this enquiry by asking the simple question ‘Who are the *spirits* to whom Christ proclaimed’. He came up with three answers and because of his thoroughness, this study will follow the same approach.

There are three key opinions, with some subdivisions:

- The spirits are the souls of Noah’s contemporaries in the under world, and Christ preached to them during the *triduum mortis*.
 - Christ’s soul preached to the spirits in order to convert them and so bring them to salvation.
 - He brought good tidings to those who were converted before death.
 - He proclaimed condemnation to the souls of Noah’s unbelieving contemporaries, who presumably died without conversion.
- The spirits are Noah’s contemporaries, but they are still alive and on earth during the flood. Christ preached to them through Noah before His incarnation.

- The spirits are the fallen angels closely associated in Jewish literature with the wickedness prior to the flood.
 - Christ made his proclamation during the *triduum mortis*
 - Christ made the proclamation after His bodily resurrection, on the occasion of his ascension. The prison is in one of the lower heavens on His way up.

A. INTERPRETATIONS BY SOME INFLUENTIAL CHURCH FATHERS

It is important to note that before Clement of Alexandria 1 Peter 3:19 had never been understood as a reference to Christ's descent to Hades. According to Dalton (1989:28), this is particularly interesting since even before the time of Clement this was a popular belief in Early Christianity.

i. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

In his *Miscellaneous (Stromata 6.6:38-39)*⁹⁹ he clearly links 1 Pet 3:19 with Christ's descent, while in the following discussion (6.6:42¹⁰⁰) he states that pre-Christian pagans could only be converted through the preaching of Christ in the underworld. In his *Outlines on 1 Peter (Adumbrationes)*¹⁰¹, he cited 1 Peter 3:18-20 and interpreted it as a reference to the descent, although it is not clear to what degree he interpreted the text allegorically.

⁹⁹ (PG V9, col. 268) Τὶ δέ; οὐχὶ δηλοῦσιν εὐηγγελίσθαι τὸν Κύριον τοῖς τε ἀπολωλόσιν ἐν τῷ κατακλυσμῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ πεπεδημένοις, καὶ τοῖς ἐν <φυλακῇ> τε καὶ <φρουρᾷ> συνεχομένοις.

¹⁰⁰ (PG V9, col. 268) Εἴ γ' οὖν ὁ Κύριος δι' οὐδὲν ἕτερον εἰς ἄδου κατήλθεν, ἢ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγελίσασθαι, ἢ μόνους Ἑβραίους. Εἰ μὲν οὖν πάντας, σωθήσονται πάντες οἱ πιστεύσαντες, κἂν ἐξ ἔθνων ὄντες τύχωσιν, ἐξομολογησάμενοι ἤδη ἐκεῖ.

¹⁰¹ Cf. PG V8, col. 731) *Christus enim, inquit (v.18), semel pro peccatis nostris mortuus est, Justus pro injustis, ut nos offerret Deo, mortificatus quidem carne, vivificatus autem spiritu. Haec fidem eorum redigens dicit. Hoc est: in nostris vivificatus est spiritibus. Adeniens, inquit (v.20), praedicavit eis qui quondam errant inereduli; speciem quidem ejus non viderunt, sonum vero vocis audierunt. Cum sustinet, inquit (ibid.), Dei longanimitas. Ita est bonus Deus, ut etiam per eruditionem salutis operetur effectum.*

ii. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

In both his *In John's Gospel Book XI 16:16*¹⁰² and *Commentary on Luke 4:18*¹⁰³ he refers to 1 Peter 3:19. In John 16:16 he refers to 1 Peter 3:19 to show that Christ saved not only those on earth but also those who are already dead, and in Luke 4:18 to imply the conversion of the sinners in Hades.

iii. AUGUSTINE

Augustine formulated the view that Christ, in His pre-existent nature, preached to Noah's sinful contemporaries during their lifetime, particularly through the person of Noah. He formulated this in an answer to Euodius¹⁰⁴ who wrote him a letter asking how we can admit that Christ preached in the underworld, but that it was not possible for them to convert there?

¹⁰² Cf. (PG V74, cols. 454-455) Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἀποδημεῖ σαρκί, παραστήσας ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῷ Πατρί, καὶ καθίσας ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ γεννησαντος, ἀλλ' ἐναυλίζεται τοῖς ἀξίοις διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος, καὶ σύνεστι τοῖς ἀγίοις διὰ παντός· ἐπηγγείλατο γὰρ οὐκ ἀφήσειν ἡμᾶς ὀρφανούς. Οὐκοῦν μισροῦ κομιδῆ διείργοντος χρόνου τὴν τοῦ πάθους ἀρχήν, Μικρόν, φησί, καὶ οὐ θεωρεῖτέ με· ἔμελλε γὰρ κατακαλύπτεσθαι πῶς τῷ θανάτῳ βραχύ.

¹⁰³ Cf. (PG V72, col. 537) τοῦτο αὐτῇ τῇ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐπιφοιτήσει ἐχρίσθη· τοῦτο ἡμῖν λαμβάνων, οὐχ ἑαυτῷ· καὶ γὰρ ἀποπτάντος τοῦ Πνεύματος, καὶ μὴ καταμείναντος ἐν ἡμῖν διὰ τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς σάρκα, πένθους ἦν πλήρης ἡ γῆ, ἅτε μετουσίας ἐστερημένη Θεοῦ. Ἐκήρυξε δὲ καὶ αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν, ἣν καὶ ἐνήργησε, δῆσας τὸν ἰσχυρὸν τὸν τυραννικῶς καταδυναστεύσαντα τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν Σατανᾶν, καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ διαρπάσας ἡμᾶς.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. (PL V33, cols. 716) Letter CLXIV Caput VI – 17, Nec moveat ad impediendum istum intellectum, quod eundem Christum dixit apostolus Petrus praedicasse illis in carcere conclusis qui quondam non crediderant in diebus Noe, ut ideo non arbitremus hoc intelligendum quia illo tempore nondum venerat Christus. Nondum enim venerat scilicet in carne, sicut venit quando post haec in terra visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est (*Baruch* III, 38): verumtamen ab initio generic humani, vel ad arguendos malos, sicut ad Cain, ac prius ad ipsum Adam uxoremque ejus; vel ad consolandos bonos, vel ad utrosque admonendos, ut alii ad salutem suam crederent, alii ad poenam suam non crederent, ipse utique non in carne, sed in spiritu veniebat, visis congruis alloquens, quos volebat, sicut volebat... Caput VI – 18, Ipsa quoque Scriptura verba de quibus agitur, satis hoc, ut puto, indicant eis qui diligenter attendant: *Quia Christus*, inquit, *semel pro peccatis nostris mortuus est, Justus pro injustis, ut nos adducat Deo, mortificatus quidem carne, vivificatus autem spiritu: in quo et iis qui in carcere conclusi errant, spiritibus adveniēns praedicavit, qui increduli fuerant aliquando, quando exspectabat Dei patientia in diebus Noe, cum fabricaretur arca. Jam ut arbitror, attenditur ordo verborum, Christus mortificatus carne, vivificatus autem spiritu. In quo spiritu adveniēns praedicavit et illis spiritibus qui increduli fuerant aliquando in diebus Noe: quoniam prius quam veniret in carne pro nobis moriturus, quod semel fecit, saepe antea veniebat in spiritu ad quos volebat, visis eos admonens, sicut volebat, utique in spiritu, quo spiritu et vivificatus est, cum in passione esset carne mortificatus. Quid est enim quod vivificatus est spiritu, nisi quod eadem caro qua sola fuerat mortificatus, vivificante spiritu resurrexit?*

In the early Syriac traditions, we find the same interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19 as the Alexandrians had, and the doctrine of the descent was relatively popular here (cf. Kelly 1960:380). Dalton (1989:31) gives a translation of the Peshitta version of the text.

1 Peter 3:19 *'And He preached to the souls who were shut up in Sheol, who had once been disobedient in the days of Noah'.*

B. RECENT INTERPRETATIONS

Up until the sixteenth century, Augustine influenced western scholars greatly in this matter. The Protestant scholars rejected the idea of conversion after death, while some followed Augustine and thought that Christ preached condemnation to Noah's contemporaries. This view is still held by Feinberg (1986:304) where he says:

I shall attempt to demonstrate that the passage in question has nothing to do with any of those ideas, but should be understood as a reference to Christ preaching by the Holy Spirit through Noah to the people of Noah's day.

In the nineteenth century however, some exegetes came to follow the view of Clement of Alexandria. They saw an example of God's forgiveness in these verses. Dalton (1969:33) names Galot who explained these verses as the way of Christ carrying his grace and salvation into human history before the incarnation, while others e.g. Beare (1945:145) said that it is completely dependent on Oriental myths.

The doctrine of the Descent of Christ into Hades...is nothing else than the appropriation, and the application to Christ, of a fragment of the redemption-mythology of the Oriental religions, best known to us in the ancient story of the Descent of Ishtar to the underworld, and reflected also in a number of Greek myths (Orpheus and Eurydice, Heracles and Alcestis, the story of Persephone, etc.); it is rooted in old vegetation- and sun-myths.

Goppelt (1978:250-254) on the other hand, does not mention any dependence on pagan sources, but sees in it the universal power of the gospel to save. Connell (2001:263) sees 1 Peter 3:18-21 as the only scriptural passage with an explicit warrant for the descent.

The *Book of Enoch* came to be of interest in the interpretation of 1 Pet 3:19 since it was found to be a possible clue - Enoch also proclaimed condemnation to the angels who sinned during the time of the flood. This new tendency was pioneered by Spitta (1890), who recognised the spirits in prison as the rebellious angels who instigated the evilness of the flood, but still agreed with Augustine that the pre-existent Christ proclaimed their doom. This then developed into an opinion that Christ proclaimed damnation to these angels during the *triduum mortis* (cf. Selwyn 1945:314-362). When asking the question whether the angels had the opportunity to convert, Dalton (1969:47) gives a fine statement:

I do not think that the writer of 1 Peter was particularly interested in how the angels reacted to Christ's proclamation, just as he was not particularly interested in the situation of the "angels, authorities and powers" who are presented as "made subject" of the risen Lord in 3:22. The point of Christ's proclamation is not the salvation of the angels, but Christ's presentation of himself as victor and their acknowledgement of the fact.

Lastly, the phrase 'made alive by the spirit' in 3:18 refers to the bodily resurrection of Christ, in which case the activities in 3:19 are probably after the resurrection. The 'going' of Christ is most likely the ascension, while the hostile powers being in the heavens are abundantly illustrated in Jewish-Christian, non-biblical literature (cf. The discussion on 1 Enoch in Chapter 7). This view is supported by Dalton (1989:146-148); and Jobes (2005:247-251). In this study this view is also accepted, and the reasons for this choice will be shown in the exegetical analysis.

2. 4:6

Dalton (1989:51) notes here that although some commentators maintain that the difficulties of 4:6 are greater than those of 3:19, the history of its interpretation is less complicated. There were four main solutions proposed in the past:

- Christ's preaching, during the *triduum mortis* to all the dead, offering everyone who lived in pre-Christian times the possibility of conversion.
- The good news of salvation brought through Christ to the Old Testament just.
- The preaching of the gospel by apostles and others on earth to those who are spiritually dead.
- The dead are those Christians, who heard the gospel on earth, but who had died before Peter wrote the epistle.

A. INTERPRETATIONS BY SOME INFLUENTIAL CHURCH FATHERS

It is notable that the Alexandrian school, which initiated the interpretation of the descent in 1 Pet 3:19, does not find the same meaning in 4:6. The connection of 3:19 and 4:6 appeared for the first time in the writings of liberal Protestants (cf. Dalton 1989:52).

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA; AUGUSTINE; BEDE; AND THEOPHYLACTUS

As we have seen in the interpretations of 3:19, Clement did not have a problem with belief in conversion after death. Therefore, his different interpretation of 4:6 in his *Outlines on 1 Peter (Adumbrationes)*¹⁰⁵, where he describes the dead as the spiritually dead, cannot be because of dogmatic narrow-mindedness. His view was also followed by

¹⁰⁵ (PG V9, col. 732) Ob hoc etiam subjungit (v.6): *Propter hoc enim et mortuis evangelizatus, est, nobis qui quondam videlicet exstabamus infidels. Ut judicentur quidem secundum hominem, inquit (ibid). in carne, vivant autem secundum Deum in spiritu. Quia a fide videlicet exciderunt; dum adhuc in carne sunt, judicantur secundum judicia praecedentia ut poeniteant Idcirco: subnectit, dicens: Vivant in spiritu secundum Deum. Sic Paulus quoque; nam et ipse tale aliquid dicit quem tradidi (inquiens) Satanae, ut vivat spiritu.*

Augustine¹⁰⁶ (in his letter to Euodius), and later Bede¹⁰⁷ (*On Frist Epistle of Peter*) and Theophylactus¹⁰⁸ (*Exposition on Epistle 1 of Saint Peter*).

B. RECENT INTERPRETATIONS

Recent interpreters who have followed Clement of Alexandria are Gschwind (1911), Holzmeister (1937), and Bieder (1949). Gschwind gives the most convincing presentation, concluding that the judging of the living and the dead in 4:5 refers to ‘the spiritually living and dead’, which then in effect determines the meaning of ‘dead’ in 4:6.

Both Reicke (1946:11, 56, 204) and Goppelt (1978:246) have linked verses 3:19 and 4:6 without requiring much proof. According to Dalton (1989:52), those who defend this view find resemblances between this verse and the verse in the *Gospel of Peter* and

¹⁰⁶ Cf. (PL V33, cols. 717-718) Letter CLXIV Caput VII – 21, Proinde etiam illud quod postea dictum est de incredulis, *Qui reddent rationem ei qui paratus est vivos et mortuos iudicare*, non est consequens ut eos hic intelligamus mortuos qui de corpore exierunt. Fieri enim potest ut mortuos dixerit infidels: hoc est in anima mortuos, de qualibus dicitur, *Dimitte mortuos, ut sepeliant mortuos suos* (Matth. VIII, 22); vivos autem qui credunt in eum, non frustra audientes, *Surge qui dormis, et exsurge a mortuis, et illuminabit te Christus* (Eph. V, 14); de qualibus etiam ipse Dominus dicit, *Venit hora, et nunc est, quando mortui audient vocem Filii Dei; et qui audierint, vivent* (Joan. V, 25). Proinde etiam quod sequitur et dicit Petrus, *Propter hoc enim et mortuis evangelizatum est, ut iudicentur quidem secundum hominens in carne, vivant autem secundum Deum spiritu*, non cogit apud inferos intelligi. *Propter hoc enim in hac vita et mortuis evangelizatum est, id est infidelibus et iniquis; ut cum crediderint, iudicentur quidem secundum hominens in carne*, hoc est in diversis tribulationibus, et ipsa morte carnis; unde idem apostolus alio loco dicit, *Tempus esse ut iudicium incipiat a domo Domini* (1 Petr. IV, 17): *Vivant autem secundum Deum spiritu*, quia et in ipso fuerant mortificati, cum morte infidelitatis et impietatis detinerentur.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. (PL V93, col. 61-62) *Qui reddent rationem ei qui paratus est iudicare vivos ac mortuos*. Ideo (inquit) minus curate, minus dolete, si beneficientes blasphemamini a reprobis, quia etsi vos tacueritis, non tamen tacebit, neque compescetur Deus iudex utique Justus, qui et illis blasphemiae suae, et patientiae vestrae vobis praemia digna restitute. *Propter hoc enim et mortuis evangelizatum est*, etc. Tanta Deo cura, tantus amor, tantum est desiderium nos mortificari carne, vivificari autem spiritu, ut his quoque qui majoribus criminibus involuti sunt, et inter mortuos jure nominandi, luxuriis videlicet, desideriiis, vinolentiis, comessationibus, potationibus, et illicitis idolorum cultibus, verbum fidei evangelizare praeceperit, quatenus et illi iudicatis, id est, spretis et abjecis carnalibus desideriiis spiritualiter vivant, unique cum eis quos innocenter viventes Evangelii gratia invenit, vitam exspectent aeternam.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. (PG V125, cols. 1237 & 1240) Εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη. Οἱ μὲν παλαιοὶ τῶν Πατέρων τοῦτο τὸ, <Νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη,> ὡς περικοπὴν ἐξηγήσαντο, οὐδὲν φροντίσαντες τῆς συνεχείας τῶν ἄνω, οὐδ’ ὅτι αἰτιολογικῶς εἰρημένων δεῖ πρὸς τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἀναφέρεσθαι. Τοῦτο γὰρ ὀφείλει τὸ κατ’ αἰτίαν λεγόμενον ἔχειν· ἀλλ’ ὡς εἴρηται, ὡς περικοπὴν αὐτὸ ἐξηγήσαντο οὕτως. <Νεκροὺς> γὰρ ἔφασαν διτιπῶς λέγειν τὴν θείαν Γραφήν, ἢ τοὺς ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἐναποθανόντας, οἳ οὐδὲ ζῶν πότε ἴδοιεν ἢ τοὺς τῷ θανάτῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ συμμορφωθέντας, καὶ ἀποθανόντας μὲν τῷ κόσμῳ, τοῦτ’ ἔστι ταῖς κοσμικαῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, ζῶντας δὲ μόνῳ Χριστῷ· ὡς καὶ Παῦλος φήσιν· <“Ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.> Φασὶν οὖν· Οἱ οὕτως ἀποθανόντες Χριστῷ, τῆ σαρκὶ ἑαυτοῦ κατακρίνουσιν ἐπὶ τῇ προτέρα ἀμελεῖ ζῶν καὶ ῥαθύμῳ. Τοῦτο δὲ ζῆν αὐτοὺς ἔστι πνεύματι, τοῦτ’ ἔστι, τῆ κατὰ Χριστὸν ζῶν.

the *Jeremiah Apocryphon* discussed in Chapter 2.A. Bernard (1915:290) on the other hand simply accepts it on the basis of the words:

But it is plainly stated in 1 P3¹⁹ 4⁶, and the efforts to explain these passages of a preaching of the pre-existent Christ to the patriarchs, or of His mission to the spiritually dead, can only be regarded as after-thoughts of Christology, although they have the authority of Augustine and Aquinas. The words are explicit: τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν ... νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη. It is noteworthy, however, that early Christian belief on this point was not founded on these texts.

The last interpretation was pioneered by Spitta (1890), who was also a groundbreaker in the interpretation of 3:19. This view is also favoured by Selwyn (1947), Kelly (1960) and Dalton (1989). The living and the dead referred to in 4:5 are the literally and physically living and dead, and thus in 4:6 the word ‘dead’ is understood in the same way. Jobes (2005:271) also argues that the ancient understanding that 4:6 refers to the spiritually dead is unlikely. In 4:6 the verb is passive which implies that Christ is the content of the preaching. To include this possibility into post-mortem salvation the preaching has been broadened to the deceased apostles (cf. Jobes 2005:272) with reference to the *Ninth Similitude* of the Shepherd of Hermas¹⁰⁹. Jobes (2005:272-273), however, argues that the dead in 4:6 were still alive when the gospel was preached to them but that they were dead at the time the author wrote First Peter.

¹⁰⁹ Ninth Similitude, 16:5-7 ‘These, the apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after they had fallen asleep in the power and the faith of the Son of God, preached also... to them that had fallen asleep before them’

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF 1 PETER 3:13 – 4:6

The reason for giving a proper analysis of 3:13 – 4:6 needs to be given first.

* The major reason for this is the metaphorical understanding of 1 Peter. As was explained in Chapter 4 the Diaspora is taken to be the controlling metaphor under which the whole letter is to be understood. All of the metaphor-clusters and subsections are then to be seen in the view of the Diaspora, the last metaphor-cluster of the letter being 3:13 – 5:11 the ‘sufferers of the dispersion’. The subsection under discussion here is then 3:13 – 4:11, named the ‘righteous sufferer’.

*The whole of 3:13-22 is to be seen as part of the ontological status statement of the paraenesis. We need to know as much as possible about their situation concerning the verses under discussion, since it will be shown that 3:18-22 does not make sense when read outside of the righteous sufferer explanation.

*The reason for ending the analysis at 4:6 and not including 4:7-11 is because 4:7-11 falls under a second exhortation based on the ontological status given in 3:13-22, and it does not fall within the scope of this study.

1. DETAILED ANALYSIS

3:13

Καὶ τίς ὁ κακῶσων ὑμᾶς ἐὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε;

‘And who will do harm to you if you should become zealous for the good?’

The author of 1 Peter probably uses this rhetorical question to state that no real harm will come to those committed to doing good. The problem of unjust suffering is addressed directly. This may also be an allusion to Isaiah 50:9 LXX *‘Look, the Lord helps me; who will harm me?’* This tone of 1 Peter implies a time before the great persecution: the Greco-Roman community mostly accepted the ‘vices’ required of Christians, and Christianity was not yet seen as evil or illegal.

According to Kelly (1969:140), the confidence we find in this verse is wholly Jewish and can be found throughout the Old Testament¹¹⁰.

3:14

ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε,

'except if you may suffer because of righteousness, you are fortunate. Do not be afraid of their terror and do not be troubled, '

The ἀλλά here is to be understood as except – After a negative clause, or after a question implying a negative answer, ἀλλά or more often ἀλλ' ἢ, may mean except.

But even though the author of 1 Peter does not expect harm to come their way, the reason of this letter is because harm has come to some of his readers (1 Peter 2:12,15; 3:9; 3:14; 3:16; 4:14). The optative here (πάσχοιτε) presents suffering as a possibility, but not a very likely one. At least it is not a present one (cf. Jobes 2005:227). Achtemeier (1996:230) understands the optative as sporadic suffering and not continuous.

To be blessed and to suffer do not seem necessarily to go together, but in both cases where the author has pronounced his readers as blessed, they are being insulted or are suffering. For the author of 1 Peter it is obviously a privilege and a blessing to live rightly for the sake of Christ, and to suffer if necessary. This is in agreement with the late Jewish belief where it is believed that the martyrs will be resurrected and that the unrighteous will not escape God's judgment (cf. Hanhart 1966:20 & Powys 1997:141-142). This then shows that a righteous man could not ultimately be harmed.

Isaiah 8:12¹¹¹ is quoted in 3:14b to show to the readers that they are not the first ones to experience threat as God's people.

¹¹⁰ Ps 56:4; 118:6

¹¹¹ Is. 8:12 'Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what it fears, or be in dread.'

3:15

κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἕτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντῃ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος,

'Venerate the lord Christ in your heart, always be prepared to defend to everyone who asks you to declare about the hope among you, '

It is expected of the readers to be able to explain their faith and their actions at all times. Through the resurrection of Christ, we have received a living hope in salvation, and it is this hope we must be able to declare.

3:16

ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραύτητος καὶ φόβου, συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε καταισχυνθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφὴν.

'but with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that when you are offended those who revile your good lifestyle in Christ may be disgraced.'

According to Achtemeier (1996:234), this φόβος is respect for God and not for others, but elsewhere in 1 Peter (1:17; 2:17; 2:18; 3:1, 7) it is taught that through your respect for others you show your respect for God. This clear conscience refers to knowing your own personal integrity before the Lord when testifying. The reason for this being that you may put those who maligned you to shame.

3:17

κρείττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιῶντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχων ἢ κακοποιῶντας.

‘For it is better to suffer while doing good, if the will of God wills, than to suffer while doing evil.’

This verse is introduced by a *Tobspruch*, which follows the circumstantial construction and confirms the truth of the preceding statements. The substantiation for this *Tobspruch* is given in 3:18-22 as a kerygmatic description of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension.

Even though our humble testimony should defeat the malicious talk of the non-believers, the author of 1 Peter knows that Christians cannot be exempt from suffering.

The verb θέλοι is again in the optative, showing again that it might be a possibility. It is not the purpose of God to let Christians suffer but it may be God’s will (in some sense) at a certain time. Elliott (2000:635) emphasises that the will of God is for his people to live faithfully even if the response of the world causes them to suffer.

3:18

ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι·

‘Because also Christ once died on account of sins, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, so that He might lead you to God. After being killed by the flesh He was made alive by the spirit;’

Beginning with ὅτι καί this phrase is connected with 3:13-17. It is meant to ground the preceding *Tobspruch* that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. The implication is that even if a Christian should suffer unjust martyrdom for the sake of Christ, it would be purposeful since death is not the final word.

The main theme here is Christ portrayed as the righteous sufferer¹¹², where the Passion of Jesus became the centre of the early Christian view of righteous suffering. Christ in other words fulfilled the late Jewish understanding of the privilege in martyrdom. The aim here was then to show that though Christ suffered death, God intervened by raising Him from death, letting Him ascend to heaven and subordinating the angels, powers and authorities to Him.

The ἄπαξ is to emphasise the difference between Christ's death and the ineffective sacrifices of the Old Law (cf. Dalton 1989:130). The same can be said about the insertion of the phrase περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν which according to Dalton (1989:131) implicitly recalled the numerous Old Testament sacrifices for sin¹¹³.

The word ἔπαθεν presents some text-critical problems. According to almost all the manuscripts, it is actually ἀπέθανεν, while the only manuscript supporting ἔπαθεν is B. Although this is an authoritative manuscript, it is difficult to weigh it against all the others. Despite this, ἔπαθεν would still be easier to accept as the correct version. If the meaning was to be 'died' this passage would mean that martyrdom is almost certain, which was not the case. 4:1 also needs the meaning in 3:18 to be suffering. Dalton (1989:133) explains this by means of scribal error, either consciously¹¹⁴ or unconsciously.

δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων refers back to Isaiah 53 where the suffering servant is portrayed. It is thus obvious that the author shared the belief of the early Christians who saw Jesus as the suffering servant.

We find two aorist passive participles θανατωθείς and ζωοποιηθείς each followed by a dative. The μέν and δέ probably shows the contrast to be concessive. There are however four ways of understanding the datives: 1) As locatives (cf. Grudem 1988:156); 2) As datives of respect or reference (cf. Michaels 1988:204; Selwyn

¹¹² The idea of the 'righteous sufferer' is very prominent in Isaiah 53.

¹¹³ περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (Lev. 5:6; 6:30; Ez. 43:21; Ps. 40:7; Is. 50:10) τὰ ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτίας (Ez. 43:22,25; 44:29; 45:17; 46:10)

¹¹⁴ Because of the reference to the sacrificial death of Christ which was usually described by means of πάσχω (cf. Dalton 1989:133)

1958:196); 3) As instrumental (cf. Achtemeier 1996:239) or 4) As a simple conjunction (cf. Goppelt 1993:255). Although Kistemaker (1987:140) have argued that the first is locative and the second instrumental, the structure suggests that the contrast is between the entire phrases. This whole phrase qualifies the following purpose clause. These two participles form an antithesis, and the meaning is imperative for the understanding of the passage.

In the New Testament σῶμα, ατος and ψυχή are mostly used for body and soul respectively, and not σάρξ, σαρκός and πνεῦμα, ατος. ψυχή is used 5 times in 1 Peter (1:9, 22; 2:25; 3:20; 4:19) where it refers to the whole person or the person's life. The author of 1 Peter does not refer to a body-soul dichotomy elsewhere. This understanding of 3:18 arose later under the influence of Greek Platonic dualism (cf. Jobes 2005:241).

Since the two participles explain the phrase 'so that He might bring you to God', it they most probably refer to two aspects of the redemptive event: Christ's death and resurrection. Together with the obvious reference to His ascension in 3:22, the redemptive series is completed.

3:19

ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν,

'and by the power of the spirit He went to preach to the spirits in prison, '

The opening prepositional phrase is fundamental in determining which of the three basic interpretations¹¹⁵ of the passage should be adopted. The question is whether the dative phrase is temporal (at which time also), locative (in which also) or instrumental (by the power of which also). When looking at this phrase, it is also necessary to note that some scholars have interpreted it as Enoch who did the preaching. Bowyer published a Greek New Testament in which he suggested the reading Ἐνώχ instead of ἐν ᾧ (cf. Dalton 1989:143). Dalton (1989:144), however, calls it a pure conjecture, with no support in manuscript tradition.

¹¹⁵ In the first interpretation Christ preached through Noah to Noah's generation; In the second view Christ preached during the three days in the tomb; and in the third view (mostly excepted today) the flesh-spirit contrast refers to Christ's two states of existence - before and after resurrection (cf. Jobes 2005:239)

A third aorist passive participle, πορευθείς, grammatically connected to 3:18 by ἐν ᾧ, forms a series with θανατωθείς and ζωοποιηθείς. The connection between the ‘going’ in 3:19 (which is important to note is not going down) and the resurrection in 3:18 is the ἐν ᾧ of which the antecedent is πνεύματι. The phrase ἐν ᾧ is used four other times in the epistle (1:6; 2:12; 3:16; 4:4) where in each of these instances it referred to a state or condition and not a specific word. In this study it will, however, be accepted to be instrumental, which fits best when the datives in 3:18 is also understood to be instrumental. Bandstra (2003:122) explains the literary characteristic of the letter where a concept is introduced now and only elaborated later. This is according to him why the εἰς οὐρανόν is only added in 3:22 and not 3:19. By means of his going, He preached.

The Jewish pseudonymous writing 1 Enoch undoubtedly provides some background to 1 Peter 3:19 – 20 (cf. Jobes 2005:247; Hiebert 1982:152; Bandstra 2003:122 & Dalton 1989:160-161). It still is, however, too unfamiliar to modern readers to make any more sense of the passage. The tradition documented in 1 Enoch 12-16¹¹⁶ appears to offer a background that fits well with 1 Peter 3:19-20, both involve spirits receiving a proclamation, both are closely associated with the story of Noah and both are followed immediately by the story of Noah (Genesis 6:9-9:29 and 1 Peter 3:20). If this is taken as the assumed tradition then the πνεύμασιν should be understood as fallen angels or demonic spirits. There are some arguing for the πνεύμασιν referring to the human souls who perished in the flood (cf. Goppelt 1978:249-250; Feinberg 1986:321). The word πνεῦμα, ατος almost never refers to human souls in the New Testament. According to many commentators (Achtmeier 1996:255; Best 1971:143; Bandstra 2003:123 and Michaels 1988:208), in the New Testament and in 1 Enoch the word πνεῦμα, ατος especially in its plural form refers to malevolent supernatural beings. The main objection being that only human beings were disobedient during the time of Noah. 1 Enoch however describes the giants as the ones causing the evil among the humans.

¹¹⁶ 1 Enoch tells the story in Genesis 6:1-4 but more elaborately. The Watchers were the fallen angels who slept with human women and produced ‘giants’ who had evil spirits. These spirits will continue to corrupt the earth until the day of the great conclusion. These spirits were the cause of the human evil that led to the flood in the time of Noah (Enoch’s grandson).

Dalton (1989:161) mentions here that the verb *πορευθείς* is to be understood in its most simple and primary meaning of ‘going’. He also stresses (1989:162) that whenever the descent of Christ was mentioned in the New Testament it was stated as *καταβαίνω* ‘He went down’. The verb *πορεύομαι* on the other hand is never used with His descent but rather in connection with His ascent (cf. Dalton 1989:162). It must be noted here, however, that according to Louw & Nida (1993V1:23.101) *πορεύομαι* can be used as an euphemistic reference to death, but they do not give this verse as an example of this use.

The fundamental meaning of *κηρύσσω* seems to be ‘to act as a herald’ (cf. Dalton 1989:154). In the Septuagint, the verb does not seem to have the same religious and sacred meaning as in classical Greek, the only exceptions being Isaiah 61:1¹¹⁷ and Jonah 1:2¹¹⁸, while in the New Testament, this verb can be used to ‘proclaim the good news of salvation’. However, it does have a broader semantic range than *εὐαγγελίζομαι*. In the light of this, it seems as though we do not have the content of the preaching.

Ἐν φυλακῇ meaning ‘in prison’ describes the place where the *πνεῦμα, ἅγιον* finds themselves. We, however, never find the word prison referring to hell in the New Testament (cf. Dalton 1989:160). It is, however, translated as Sheol in the Syriac Peshitta version of 3:19, which must be understood as more of an interpretation than a strict translation (cf. Reicke 1946:34-35). In 1 Enoch 18 the spirits are described as being in prison, which does not appear to be hell. We also find this notion in 2 Enoch 7:1, 3¹¹⁹ where the wicked spirits are to be found in both the second and fifth heavens of the seven. They are expressly referred to as bound.

¹¹⁷ Is. 61:1 ‘The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;

¹¹⁸ Jonah 1:2 “Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.”

¹¹⁹ 2 Enoch 7:1 ‘And those men took me and led me up on to the second heaven, and showed me darkness, greater than earthly darkness, and there I saw prisoners hanging, watched, awaiting the great and boundless judgment,’ (Translation taken from Charles 1913)

2 Enoch 7:3 ‘and I said to the men who were with me: ‘Wherefore are these incessantly tortured?’ they answered me: ‘These are God’s apostates, who obeyed not God’s commands, but took counsel with their own will, and turned away with their prince, who also is fastened on the fifth heaven.’ (Translation taken from Charles 1913)

The final question to answer in this verse is - When did this preaching occur? If we take the three participles θανατωθείς; ζωοποιηθείς and πορευθείς to form a chronological sequence it would mean He was killed, He was raised and He went. This would be in congruence with the story of 1 Enoch where the angels were believed to be held in the lower heavens¹²⁰ and not under the earth.

3:20

Ἀπειθήσασιν πότε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ ἐς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὀκτὼ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος.

'they once disobeyed when the patience of God waited eagerly in the days of Noah, when He was preparing the ark in which few, that is eight souls, were saved through water.'

Jobes (2005:251) shows that the story of Noah and the great flood was of great importance to the culture of Asia Minor, and 1 Peter is also directed explicitly at the Christians of that area. The flood of Noah was an Old Testament event that displayed God's salvation of the righteous few.

The verb ἀπειθέω has one fundamental meaning, which is to be disobedient. In the religious contexts of the Old and New Testament this disobedience is, however, restricted to 'disobeying God'¹²¹.

Noah was seen as one of the outstanding figures of Jewish tradition¹²². In the New Testament Noah is also presented as a just man in a wicked world¹²³. The writer is also stressing the fewness of those saved in order to encourage his readers. By introducing the ark of Noah, the author had the chance to shift his thought from those who were judged to those who were saved.

¹²⁰ Cf. 1 Enoch 21 where the Preliminary and final Place of Punishment of the fallen Angels are described in a vision.

¹²¹ OT Is. 3:8; 59:13; 63:10; 65:2; Zech. 7:11; Ex. 23:21; Lev. 26:15; Deut. 1:26; 7:7, 23-24; NT Rom 2:8; 11:31; 15:31; Acts 14:2; 17:5; 19:9; 1 Pet 2:7

¹²² Ezek. 19:14, 20; Wisdom of Ben Sirach 10:4.

¹²³ 2 Pet. 2:5; 3:5-9; Matt. 24:37-38; Luke 17:26; Heb. 11:7

Here the dative clause δι' ὕδατος is used instrumentally in the sense that the water was the saving agent. The phrase that corresponds with this one is: δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, in 3:21.

3:21

ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σφῶζει βάπτισμα, οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
'and the antitype baptism which saves you now, not washing dirt from the flesh but a pledge of a good conscience to God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, '

The antecedent of ὁ is highly debated; it has also been argued that it should have been in the dative (cf. Jobes 2005:260). The sense of the translation stays quite close. Although water is the symbol relating the flood with baptism, Peter draws his correspondences broader than just the water element.

Ἀπόθεσις occurs only in 2 Peter 1:14 elsewhere in the New Testament. It is however related to the verb ἀποτίθημι, which is used in 1 Peter 2:1 where it refers to putting off all evil and deceit. According to Elliott (2000:677), this verb was used in early Christian baptismal catechesis. σὰρξ is often understood to be synonymous to body, which then would lead to the removal being an external ritual washing. Furthermore, ῥύπος is a very strong noun referring often to moral filth, together with ἀπόθεσις then most likely refers to the putting off of a fleshly existence.

συνείδησις has a broad semantic range, from a conscience to consciousness. In this case, it probably refers to an attitude about life due to your awareness of God. ἐπερώτημα appears only here in the New Testament but is close to the verb ἐπερωτάω which means a request. To take ἐπερώτημα as meaning a request does not fit in with the context very well. Selwyn (1958:205) cites papyri (cf. P.Cair.Preis. 1.16) where ἐπερώτημα means the sealing of a legal contract from both sides, thus a type of pledge. This fits in a bit more in this context.

The efficiency of the water of baptism is thus completely dependent on the resurrection of Christ.

3:22

ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ [τοῦ] θεοῦ πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων.

‘who is on the right hand of God having gone into heaven with angels, authorities and powers subject to Him.’

The topics in 3:18-22 seems to vary quite a bit, but the unity rests on the Christology. The series of redemptive acts structures this passage:

3:18 - Christ suffered for our sins and was put to death by the flesh

And made alive by the Spirit

3:19 –He went and preached to the spirits

3:20 –He went into heaven

Psalm 110:1 have had some influence on this verse: ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ Dalton (1989:216) argues that there is no need to understand the ‘subjection’ as prior to the going. It is considered in the New Testament that the angelic powers inhabited ‘heavenly places’, therefore the two activities of going and subjecting more like coincide. Blass et al (1975: §399) also states *‘The notion of the relative past time, however, is not at all necessarily inherent in the aorist participle’*.

4:1

Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτῶν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας

‘Therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, and you must equip yourselves with the same moral insight, because he who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin’

The resumptive οὖν continues the exhortation based on the readers’ ontological status as righteous sufferers. It is different from the previous section in that this is a military metaphor (cf. Martin 1992:226 & Michaels 1988:225), describing the equipment needed by the righteous sufferer.

The verb $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\omega$ can refer to suffering in general or to death, but Goppelt argues that since it is in the genitive absolute here $\text{‘}\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\alpha\theta\acute{\omicron}\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma\text{’}$ it most probably rather refers to death. Jobes (2005: 263) renders it as suffering without much consideration; and Kelley (1969:166-169) argues that the suffering should probably be seen in connection with the strong baptismal overtones in this passage. It can be seen then as the suffering of Christ, which is in any case equivalent to his death. The $\acute{\omicron}\ \pi\alpha\theta\acute{\omicron}\nu$ then refers to the figurative death of the Christian in baptism. Nevertheless, in this study it will be accepted to refer to the literal sufferings of the readers, since it is still under the subsection ‘the Righteous Sufferer’. Those who suffer unjustly because of their faith in Christ have shown that they are willing to be through with sin, even if it does mean suffering.

What is the meaning of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$? The possibilities presented by Liddel & Scott (1888:264) are a thought in the mind; notion; conception; intention or design. Dalton (1989:241) prefers thought; Michaels (1988:225) prefers an intention; Goppelt (1978:267) also prefers a thought; and Martin (1992:227) states:

Because the author is not exhorting the readers to suffer or to endure martyrdom, Goppelt’s explanation of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$ is preferable to Michael’s. The author exhorts his readers to arm themselves with the understanding that results in the behaviour described in verse two and following.

The next question should ask what is the content of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$? There are two possibilities: it can refer backwards to ‘Christ suffered in the flesh’ or it can refer forwards to ‘whoever has suffered...sin’ (cf. Best 1971:151). According to Martin (1992:227) the answer lies in the meaning of the $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ clause. This also has two possibilities – Windisch (1930:73) refers to the use of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$ in the Septuagint in Proverbs where it often means that mind-set that issues in right moral action. Thus, the same resolve as Christ is expected.

Goppelt (1978:268) argues that the $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ clause does not give the content of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$, but stands as a paraenetical statement giving the substantiation for the exhortation to arm oneself with the $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$. They agree however that the $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ clause is important for the understanding of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$. Goppelt (1978:268) admits that it is philologically possible for the $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ clause to function as a statement of the content of

ἐννοια. Hediscards it, however, because the clause then implicates its subject in the practice of sin and consequently cannot take Christ as its antecedent. Martin (1992:228) gives two reasons why this is a weak argument: The verb πέπαυται can be understood as as avoiding the implication that Christ practiced sin, and early Christian tradition did understand Christ's death as a cessation of His involvement with sin. By comparing 4:1 to Romans 6:3-11 Dalton (1989:244) implies that the ὅτι clause in 1 Peter 4:1 is a proverbial statement that can apply to Christ and Christians¹²⁴. Michaels (1988:228) cites Hebrews 9:28¹²⁵ to show this tradition in early Christianity. For these reasons, Goppelt's argument is not plausible. Furthermore, according to Achtemeier (1996:278) when ὅτι follows ἐννοια it most often gives the content of the resolve. Having determined this we can say that ἐννοια is the insight or understanding that one who has died has ceased from sin.

¹²⁴ Dalton (1989:244) A far more fruitful line of investigation is opened up by a comparison of our text (1 Peter 4:1) with St. Paul's classic treatment of baptism in Rom 6:3-11. In a section parallel to 1 Pet 4:2-5 the Christian is urged to abandon sin: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions...but yield yourselves to God." The basis for this life of renunciation of sin and loyalty to God is expressed by both writers in terms which are very close. Paul insists on the central role of the death of Christ into this death the Christian enters by baptism: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" He justifies the statement that, by baptism, the Christian is freed from the slavery of sin by a sentence which runs like a proverb: "For he who has died is freed from sin" [ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας]. This statement applies directly to the Christian, but, with a remarkably bold expression, Paul goes on to speak of Christ in a way which brings Him also under this proverb: "The death, he died he died to sin, once for all."

¹²⁵ 9: 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

4:2

εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.

'in this a man is to live the time left in the flesh no longer by lust but by the will of God.'

The purpose or result of the reader's arming with the ἔννοια is now explained. This is then an antithesis where the positive and negative sides of righteous behaviour are explained.

The fact that they are willing to suffer demonstrates the true nature of their resolve, and because of this, they can now live the rest of their lives by the will of God.

4:3

ἄρκετος γάρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἔθνων κατειργάσθαι πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἴνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας.

'for enough time has passed to have done the will of the Gentiles, when you lived in licentiousness, lust, drunkenness, town festivals, drinking and lawless idol worship, '

The righteous sufferers are to avoid the βούλημα τῶν ἔθνων, and the will of the Gentiles is set in direct contrast to the will of God in 4:2(cf. Michaels 1988:230).

The human desires referred to in 4:2 are specified here, where the first five involve unrestrained desires and the last to pagan worship. Three of the first five refer to excessive eating and drinking, which would be practiced at the Bacchus and Saturnalia festivals (οἴνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις).

All unbelievers are here referred to as ἔθνη while the readers may also technically have been Gentile. According to Jobes (2005:267), the apostles used terms known to Jewish tradition which divided all people into God's covenant people and the rest of humanity. This verse has often lead commentators to believe that the majority of the readers were Gentile-Christians, but Jobes (2005:268) rightly observes that we often have

a romanticized view of Jewish devotion while it was clear as early as the time of the Pentateuch that Israel had tendencies to idolatry etc.

4:4

Ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν βλασφημοῦντες,

‘in which they are surprised that you do not run with them in their overflow of wastefulness, even as they slander you, ’

The word ἀνάχυσις occurs only here in the New Testament and it refers metaphorically to the indulgent outpouring of excesses in the pagan lifestyle. Instead of following the Christians in their newfound faith, the non-believers attacked them. This abuse and slander are thus a righteous suffering for the sake of Christ.

Dalton (1989: 239) finds a parallel in the reaction of the Gentiles to the Christians in 4:4 and the reaction of the wicked to the righteous person in Jewish tradition¹²⁶.

4:5

οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμῳ ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς.

‘on this they will give a testimony to the one having prepared to judge the living and the dead.’

The merism ‘the living and the dead’ shows the universal scope of God’s judgment. In first century Greco-Roman thought, such a universal claim was offensive, just as it is in today’s pluralistic culture.

The οἱ is here referring to the slandering in 4:4 on which they will be judged. We must also ask the question – who is the judge? In the New Testament, including texts of 1 Peter, God is often the final and universal judge¹²⁷, but whenever this stereotyped phrase

¹²⁶ *Wisdom of Ben Sirach* 2:12-16 ‘Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions... He becomes to us a reproof of our thoughts; the very sight of him is a burden to us, because his manner of life is unlike that of others, and his ways are strange. We are considered by him as something base, and he avoids our ways as unclean.’ (Translation taken from Dalton 1989:239)

¹²⁷ 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:23; Rom 2:6; 3:6; 14:10

‘the living and the dead’ is used, it is exclusively Christ who is the judge¹²⁸. According to Dalton (1989:231), this favours Christ to be the final judge.

4:6

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη, ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

‘for because of this the gospel was preached to the dead, so that even if judged by men in the flesh they may live in the spirit by God.’

The thought of preaching to the dead found here has caused two common interpretations. In the first, post-mortem opportunity for conversion is supported and therefore 4:6 is only a broader explanation of 3:19. The rest take the νεκροῖς to refer to the spiritually dead although they are physically alive. In this context, the author of 1 Peter’s point is that even the dead are not exempted from judgment, which is different from what the pagans believed. Death does not invalidate the gospel of Christ. Jobes (2005:271) therefore argues that in this context it is unlikely that νεκροῖς refers to the spiritually dead.

The idea of post-mortem conversion only developed after the development of the doctrine of the ‘*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*’ (cf. Jobes 2005:271). There is however very little connecting 4:6 here with 3:19. In 3:19 we have spirits, now in 4:6, we have the dead; in 3:19, Christ did the preaching; while in 4:6 the verb is passive with Christ as the content of this preaching. We must also remember that they fall in separate structural units. Goppelt (1993:289) still argues that the preaching is to the dead while they are dead and still connects 3:19 with 4:6. Nevertheless, he sees it as a mythological images that should not be understood as an order of salvation of the dead or as a depiction of a Hades proclamation.

Εἰς τοῦτο γάρ connects 4:6 with 4:5, where the pagans are warned about being judged for their slander. The dead in 4:6 should also have the same referent as in 4:5 since there is nothing to suggest otherwise. In 4:5, the claim is that death does not exempt

¹²⁸ Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 21:34-36; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 4:4-5

you from judgment, and 4:6 starts with ‘for this reason’. 4:6 in other words more probably means those who are dead now but heard the gospel when still alive. The point of evangelism is to prepare people for when they die and will have to give an account of themselves.

The gospel was preached in order that (ζῆνα) the people may live in the realm of the spirit as judged by God despite how they were judged in the realm of the flesh by men. If understood in this way the use of σάρξ, σαρκός and πνεῦμα, ατος is consistent with the use in the rest of the passage.

2. 1 ENOCH

In the analysis of 3:18 – 3:22 we realised that there must have been another influence on the author of 1 Peter’s thought than only the canonical Old Testament. This is supposed because of the reference to the spirits (πνεύμασιν) who were disobedient in the time of Noah. The biblical account of the flood is too vague to help us. Therefore we have to turn to other non-canonical literature which may be of interest, and it was shown that some scholars (cf. Jobes 2005:247; Hiebert 1982:152; Bandstra 2003:122 & Dalton 1989:160-161) have found 1 Enoch of particular interest.

Dalton (1989:166) says that the fact that we have a considerable portion of 1 Enoch in Greek translation (cf. Black 1970) makes it even more significant for comparison with the New Testament. Isaac (1983:6-7)states

There is little doubt that *1 Enoch* was influential in molding New Testament doctrines concerning the nature of the Messiah, the Son of Man, the messianic kingdom, demonology, the future, resurrection, final judgment, the whole eschatological theater, and symbolism. No wonder, therefore, that the book was highly regarded by many of the earliest apostolic and Church Fathers.

The influence of 1 Enoch was greatest in the Catholic Epistles. Jude refers to it explicitly three times (vv 4, 6, 13) and cites it two times (vv 14-15). 2 Peter also depends on 1 Enoch in 2:4 and 3:13. Dalton (1989:166) feels that we can suppose some common

tradition between 1 and 2 Peter, or at least on the basis of the Catholic Epistles look for influence of 1 Enoch on 1 Peter.

The influence of the book of 1 Enoch on the New Testament is stated by Charles (1913:163):

Nearly all the writers were familiar with it, and were more or less influenced by it in thought and diction. It is quoted as a genuine production of Enoch by St. Jude, and as Scripture by St. Barnabas. The author of the Book of Jubilees, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and 4 Ezra, laid it under contribution. With the earlier Fathers and Apologists it had all the weight of a canonical book.

Charles (1913:163) also states that the book did contain much of a questionable character, and lost its authority after the fourth century CE. It then gradually passed out of circulation. According to Charles (1913:163), an Ethiopic manuscript was found in Abyssinia in the eighteenth century, but it was only recently that scholars realised the value the book had. It is practically the only attestation of the religious development of Judaism around 200 BCE to 100 CE. This era is of such a great importance because Christianity developed from it. Charles (1913:163) goes as far as to say that the history of the development of higher theology during the two centuries before Christ cannot be written without 1 Enoch.

Chapters 6-11; 64-69; and 106-108 are fragments of the so-called *Book of Noah*, which are dated by Charles (1913:180) at not later than 161 BCE. 6-11 is the story of the fall of the angels, the consequent sinfulness of human beings and God's judgment on these fallen angels. The fallen angels are then the 'sons of God' who took 'the daughters of men' as wives (cf. Gen. 6:1-4)¹²⁹. Their children were the giants, who corrupted humanity and filled the world with violence and sin.

Chapters 12-16 have been called the *Fragments of Enochic Visions*, and are dated to an early pre-Maccabean period (cf. Dalton 1989:169). The available versions have

¹²⁹ According to Dalton (1989:167) this interpretation prevailed in Jewish and Christian circles until the beginning of the fourth century.

suffered substantial disruption, but we can still follow the line of thought. Enoch is here sent by God to the fallen angels to proclaim their doom. We do have this episode in Greek and will follow it here. In 12:4, God said to Enoch: ‘Enoch, scribe of righteousness, go and make known to the Watchers of heaven who have abandoned the high heaven, the holy eternal place, and have defiled themselves with women.’ In 13:3 the carrying out of the command is given: ‘Then I went and spoke to all of them together.’ Enoch is to convey God’s irrevocable judgment in 14:5: ‘From now on you will not be able to ascend into heaven unto all eternity, but you shall remain inside the earth imprisoned all the days of eternity.’ In 15:4,6 they are called expressly πνεύματα. The passage in 1 Peter then follows on this one, where Christ is now preaching to them in their situation (being in prison) after the proclamation of Enoch that they will be imprisoned. Dalton (1989:170), however, says ‘*The point of the argument does not depend on a mechanical parallel between Enoch’s proclamation and that of Christ, but on a remarkable coming together of common themes.*’

The next unit in 1 Enoch is chapters 17-19, where Enoch’s first journey is described. He visits the earth and Sheol, and on this journey, he sees a prison (18:14) ‘This place is the ultimate end of heaven and earth: it is the prison house for the stars and the powers of heaven.’ While in 19:1-2 Uriel says to Enoch ‘Here shall stand in many different appearances the spirits of the angels which have united themselves with women. They have defiled the people and will lead them into error so that they will offer sacrifices to the demons, as unto gods, until the great Day of Judgment in which they shall be judged till they are finished.’ In Enoch’s second journey, a picture is portrayed of the place of punishment of the stars in 21:6 ‘which have transgressed the commandments of the Lord’ and 21:10 ‘This place is the prison house of the angels; they are obtained here forever.’

When this is taken into consideration, the correspondences between these chapters in 1 Enoch and 1 Peter 3:18 – 22 seems quite convincing. It is definitely referring to the same angels, and the same event of disobedience.

SECTION III: CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 8

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE ‘DESCENSUS CHRISTI AD INFEROS’

Although the doctrine was only accepted into Christian creeds around the fourth century CE, its widespread existence and belief in it is widely attested. According to some (cf. Peretto 1992:229 & Cross 1997:472) it is already demonstrated in the New Testament in Acts 2:24-31; Matt 12:40; 27:52ff; Luke 23:43 and 1 Peter 3:18-22; & 4:6. We find the first proper elaborations of this belief in the earliest Jewish-Christian literature of the first century CE and some first century ante-Nicene fathers such as Irenaeus, Ignatius, and Justin.

In this study, it was shown that this doctrine developed from Jewish hope. In the earlier parts of the Old Testament, the Jews did not really reflect on an afterlife. The belief was simple; once you die you go to Sheol, whether you were good or bad. Sheol was a place of darkness, void of everything that can give pleasure (including God). Sheol was also equal to the grave, and thus the statement ‘He went to Sheol’ meant exactly the same as the statement ‘He died’. From this developed the hope in later Judaism that God’s power and love was able to stretch over the boundaries of death. By the time of the Hasmonean era, the Jews had a prominent hope in a life after death where the righteous would be blessed and the wicked damned (cf. Powys 1997:141-142). This happened because of the persecution of the Jews.

After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the Christians were bound to reflect on the matter. Since Judaism was the cradle of Christianity (meaning that Christianity is based on the same literature as Judaism; Jesus was a Jew; the disciples were embedded in

the Jewish religious and cultural environment)¹³⁰, it is understandable that they were to think first about the righteous of the Old Testament. The Jewish Christians, in other words, were concerned about what happened to those who were righteous before the coming of Christ, and were already in Sheol.

From this concern developed the beginnings of the doctrine '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*'. Originally, Christ descended to proclaim to the Old Testament righteous their future salvation at the second coming of Christ; but this also developed to an immediate resurrection of their bodies and freedom from Sheol. On the other hand, the Christians also started to feel that God's mercy would stretch to all who lived before Christ, and not only the Old Testament righteous.

The purpose of the descent also changed over the centuries. From around the second century the purpose was the victory of Christ over death and Hades, with the inclusion of the release of the souls in its power. In other words, Christ's victory moved from the cross to Sheol. We even find versions where Christ had to defeat death in order to free himself and not only the souls in Hades. Another idea that became prominent was that Christ was disguised when he descended. We read that Satan believed Christ to be a mere man until Christ broke the gates of Hades and defeated Satan and Hades.

The latest occurrence of the doctrine that was considered in this study was the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, where we find a very elaborate account of the doctrine. However, it has been found that it is merely a combination of the earlier accounts, because we do not find any new motifs.

When we take into account that the most primitive forms of this doctrine are clearly Jewish-Christian, and that most of the accounts are in Jewish-Christian literature, we must conclude the origin of this doctrine is Jewish-Christian (which developed in line with Jewish hope). This is not a new argument since to Peretto (1992:229) it is a fact that the *Descensus* doctrine is of Judaeo-Christian origin; and Daniélou (1964: 233) clearly accepts this. Nevertheless, it has been argued that it was influenced by or even originated

¹³⁰ Cf. Nickelsburg (1981: 2)

from pagan mythology (cf. Bousset 1896:244ff & Beare 1945:145). This study, however, has shown that the doctrine originated in Jewish Christianity. This was done through showing the scarce resemblances between the doctrine and ancient mythology, and showing the ample occurrences of the doctrine in Jewish-Christian literature.

CHAPTER 9

THE MEANING OF 1 PETER 3:19 AND 4:6

In order to get to the meaning of these two verses, this study followed a very context-driven approach. We started in Chapter 4 with the context of the whole letter, looking at its introductory questions. From this we deduced:

- that the author was probably the apostle Peter;
- that the audience included both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians;
- that 1 Peter is without a doubt a letter and a unit – written at one time;
- and that 1 Peter can be described as Jewish-Christian literature according to the definition ‘*a type of Christian thought expressing itself in forms borrowed from Judaism*’.

In Chapter 5 we analysed the structure of 1 Peter. It became apparent that the Diaspora is to be taken as the controlling metaphor in the letter. The author described his audience in terms of the Diaspora, and when viewed in this light all the sections and subsections in the letter fit in. The letter can be divided into three metaphor clusters, while the passage under discussion, 3:18 – 4:6, forms part of the last cluster namely *Sufferers of the Dispersion*. The subsection is called the *Righteous Sufferer*, and it is imperative that the passage is understood as part of this.

In Chapter 5, some attention was also given to the argument that certain parts of 1 Peter was taken from existing Christological and kerygmatic traditions. The defenders of this argument, however, are not able to agree on the origin of these passages, and therefore we cannot build on this argument. Whether these traditions are present in 1 Peter or not, the author was able to work them in very fluently into his line of thought, so that they do not change the structure or meaning of the letter.

Chapter 7 is a thorough discussion of the grammar we find in verses 3:18 – 4:6, but for the sake of completeness verses 3:13-17 were also included. Verses 3:13-22 describe

the ontological status of the readers (being Christians in the Diaspora), while verses 4:1-6 are the exhortation based on this status.

Verses 3:13-17 are almost like an introduction, stating that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. It explains that we are fortunate if we should suffer in the will of God. Verse 18 then, presents a turning point, telling us that Christ was the ultimate righteous sufferer. We know that in early Christianity the passion of Christ was seen as the perfect example of righteous suffering. Verses 18-22 are an account of the passion of Christ. By introducing the theme from the book of 1 Enoch the author created the chance to also mention baptism. One can ask why the author referred to a book as obscure as 1 Enoch (in our minds that is) in the middle of a reference to Christ's passion? However, when the discussion of the Jewish-Christian nature of the letter (Chapter 4) is kept in mind, it is not surprising that the author would call on well-known Jewish traditions to make his point.

Verses 4:1-6 start with an explanation that we should equip ourselves with the same moral insight as Christ. This means on the one hand that we must be willing to suffer for righteousness; and on the other hand that we must be finished with sin. Verses 2-5 are then an elaboration of the putting down of sin and willingness to suffer, and what it encompasses. Verse 6 closes this exhortation by saying that the reason for the preaching of Christ to those already dead was to enable everyone who put down sin to live in the spirit by God even if judged in the flesh by men.

When we are then considering 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6 as possible references to the *Descensus* doctrine, we have to answer certain questions concerning the text.

1 Peter 3:19

When did Christ make His proclamation?

As was shown in Chapter 6, the two most prominent beliefs in the past were that Christ preached to the spirits in Hades during the *triduum mortis*; or that He preached to Noah's contemporaries in His pre-incarnated state. However, when we discussed this

passage, it became clear that the aorist passive participles form a sequence. Christ died, He has risen and He went ... When seen as a chronological sequence, the action where He went to preach clearly takes place after He has risen. Moreover, since it was shown that the phrase ἐν ᾧ is understood as instrumental together with the two datives in 3:19, it does not mean that Christ went in a spiritual state but rather by the power of the spirit. Thus we conclude that Christ went to preach during His ascension, together with the going in 3:22. This in itself makes it very difficult to still believe that this verse refers to Christ's descent into Hades.

What did Christ proclaim?

As was shown in the discussion of 3:19 in Chapter 7, κηρύσσω does not necessarily mean to preach the gospel. The background of 1 Enoch, evident in this passage, also makes it hard to believe that Christ would proclaim the gospel to the disobedient spirits. The author of 1 Peter was clearly not interested in the contents of Christ's message. According to Dalton (1989:186), this is because the author is concerned with the salvation of the humans and not of these spirits. The important point of this proclamation is that the spirits are now bound, and cannot harm the Christian believers.

Who are the spirits?

The first important point to mention here is that we have shown in Chapter 7 that the word πνεύμα is almost never used to refer to human souls. It is mostly used to refer to supernatural beings. When we then assume that it refers to disobedient supernatural beings during the time of Noah, to whom can the author be referring here? In Chapter 7, we found that the inter-testamental book 1 Enoch can shed some significant light on this passage. Chapters 6 – 11 of this book form an elaboration on the story we find in Genesis 6, of the angels who defiled themselves with women. According to 1 Enoch these angels are now in prison, bound for eternity.

Where did He make His proclamation?

The spirits in 3:19 are clearly said to be in prison. At this point, it is important to note that neither Hell nor Hades is referred to as a prison in any of the *Descensus* accounts mentioned in Chapter 2. For an explanation of this prison, we then turn to 1 Enoch again. In Chapters 17 – 19, we find a story where Enoch went to visit earth and heaven. On this journey, the angel Uriel showed him the place where the fallen angels, who defiled themselves with women, are kept. This place is said to be in the air, while in 2 Enoch 7 they are described to be bound in the second heaven. This understanding of the prison is in congruence with the argument that Christ made this proclamation during His ascension.

1 Peter 4:6

What was the content of the proclamation?

With this proclamation, we are in quite another situation from the one in 3:19. Here the common verb for the preaching of the gospel is used, $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$, and Christ is the object of the passive verb. It is thus obvious that Christ was not the one doing the preaching, but rather the one preached.

Who are the dead?

This is the most debated question concerning this verse. As was shown in Chapter 6, this verse was often connected with 3:19 as a further reference to Christ's descent into Hades, while others took the dead to refer to the spiritually dead. When we compare 4:6 with 4:5, we see that the dead here refers to the physically dead and not spiritually dead. It is unlikely that the author will use dead in two different ways in two consecutive verses. Therefore, the probable meaning of this verse is that Christ was preached to those who have already died, but were still alive at the time of the preaching.

The outcome of these questions are conclusive: Neither 3:19 nor 4:6 refers to Christ's descent into Hades. Furthermore, these two verses are in no way connected (except for the fact that they are in the same subsection within the letter). 3:19 is part of the account of Christ's passion, but the author is here referring to a well-known Jewish theme from the book of 1 Enoch. It refers to the fallen angels we read of in Genesis 6. 4:6 on the other hand refers to the preaching of Christ (passive), to the believers who have died before 1 Peter was written, while they were still alive.

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