

Sunday, May 2, 2021

“Hope-Filled Living”

Summary of the Work of the Living Christ

1 Peter 3:18-22

Wayne Shelton

Make no mistake, First Peter 3:18-22 is by all accounts the most difficult passage to interpret in 1 Peter – some say the entire New Testament. Martin Luther writes in his commentary: ‘A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the New Testament, so that I do not know for a certainty just what Peter means.’ As Ed Clowney notes, ‘Study of the passage may have progressed since Luther’s day, but his confession still warns us against over-confidence!’ Yet, whatever the uncertainties in 1 Peter 3:18-19, the main theme is clear: ‘When Jesus suffered unjustly, God vindicated him, and he will vindicate us, too’ (Dan Doriani). Furthermore, there is a tight connection between verses 18 and 22, where the word usage (in the Greek language) ‘connect[s] what humans did *to* Jesus and what the Father did *for* Jesus’ (Doriani). Hence, a threefold declaration forms the framework for the passage: Jesus was put to death, and then rose to life and ascended into heaven. In other words, Peter wants us to know that if we suffer and even die for the faith, God will raise and vindicate us, too. Indeed, we should find courage in knowing that we will follow the pattern of Christ, through suffering to resurrection and vindication.

Redeemer
Presbyterian