

1 Peter 3:18-22^{iv}

Beloved: Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you— not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

^{iv} About the Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

For many scholars, the excellent Greek style of this letter, its use of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and the lack of direct reference to Jesus' teaching all suggest that the letter was not written directly by Peter, but perhaps by a companion, disciple or scribe of his.

In today's reading, the author seems to have used parts of a hymn to frame statements about Jesus' authority and the meaning of baptism. Christ died "once," not only as a model to be followed but also to bring new access to God.

The author draws parallels between the destructive, but cleansing, waters of the flood and the cleansing, saving waters of baptism. Verse 21b is translated more literally, "a pledge to God from (or of) a good conscience." Thus, the believer's baptism is effective not as a physical washing, but as a sign of one's new life in Christ.