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The Greatness of Our Salvation 1 Peter 1:10-12 Part One

The Epistle of First Peter was written to help believers know how they should respond to suffering. Certainly this was extremely appropriate for those whom Peter was writing. These believers were experiencing mounting persecution from the Roman emperor, Nero. Because of this growing persecution these people needed to know how to rise above their circumstances and continue to experience the continued outpouring of the fruit of the Spirit.

A key to this victory for the believer is an appreciation of their salvation. Clearly we see this emphasis in this first chapter of the Epistle.

We saw this emphasis in the very first paragraph of this epistle, which followed the greeting, in **VV. 3-5** **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (4) To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

We saw the emphasis on salvation in the next paragraph of this epistle, in **VV. 6-9** **“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, (7) that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (8) and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. (9) obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.”**

This morning we will again see this emphasis on our salvation. Let us look again at the first chapter and let us read **1 Peter 1:10-12**. **“As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, (11) seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. (12) It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look.”**

An appreciation of our salvation is at the heart of being able to successfully maneuver through trials. Even if at times those trials seem overwhelming there will always be sufficient grace for us to celebrate our salvation. This is the message of the hymn “It is well with my soul.” The words of the first verse go like this, **“When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.”**

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It is a wonderful thing for us to know that no matter what happens around us. It is well with our souls. It may be that our earthly circumstances are extremely distressing, but to know that we have been delivered from sin and its eternal consequences to become a child of the king and joint heir with Christ is extremely comforting.

We need to grow in respect to appreciating the GREATNESS OF OUR SALVATION. And it is with that in view that Peter writes the words we have just read in **VV. 10-12**.

As we examine Peter's words we discover that rather than emphasizing the greatness of our salvation from the recipient's standpoint. Peter rather chooses to emphasize the magnificence of our salvation through the eyes of others. In this case some very special others. Sometimes it helps us to understand the preciousness of something we possess when we see how highly valued it is by others.

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

How do the Old Testament prophets communicate to us the high value that they placed on the salvation that we have received in Christ? Let us again look at **V. 10** **“As to this salvation (the salvation that we have presently entered into) , the prophets who prophesied of grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry.”**

They demonstrated the high value they placed on our salvation by THEIR INTENSIVE SEARCH of prophecy.

The Old Testaments prophets certainly were saved in the same way we are saved and that is by grace through faith. But their faith looked forward in time to the coming of the Messiah and His work on their behalf. While our faith looks back to the Messiah and His work. We have the advantage of reading the historical record concerning the coming of Christ and His death on our behalf at the cross of Calvary. The Old Testament prophets only had the prophetic record to examine to understand the saving work of Christ.

What we discover in this statement is the fact that the Old Testament prophets did not necessarily understand all of what had been revealed. We see this clearly demonstrated by Daniel.

Dan. 9:1-3 **“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans (2) in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.** Before his study of the prophet Jeremiah, Daniel was clueless concerning the time frame of the Babylonian captivity. Prophets, just because they were prophets, did not have an understanding of all that had been revealed.

We see this same problem even in respect to revelations that Daniel himself personally received. Let us consider **Dan. 7:15-16** **“As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.**

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(16) I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things.”

The prophets certainly were at times given special revelation from God, but this privileged position did not keep them from needing to be students of the words as well. If this were true of the prophets, how much more true should this be of our own lives? How could we not apply the same level of effort in the pursuit of truth?

What was the focal point of their search? SALVATION. We can clearly see that this is the case if we just simplify the sentence. If we do this then it reads **“As to this salvation, the prophets..... made careful search and inquiry.”** Of all the truths that had been revealed in the Scriptures there was certainly no theme that intrigued them as much as salvation.

And this is the way that it should continue to be. If we do not have a good understanding of this theme I do not believe we can ever function well as a believer. It is through a clear understanding of the work of the Lord in saving us that moves us able to successfully live for Him. It is the understanding of the mercies of God in our salvation that leads us to present our bodies as living sacrifices. This is exactly what **Romans 12:1** tells us **“I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present yourselves a living sacrifice.”** This is the message of the hymn we sing that is entitled **“When I survey the Wondrous Cross.”** Listen to the words of this great hymn. **“When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ my God; All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small; love so amazing, so divine, demands my souls, my life, my all.”** When we are working with a new believer it is paramount that they helped appreciate what they have been given and at what cost.

The prophets had a wonderful sense of what we were going to enter into in our salvation and were seeking to find out more about it. And this was no passive endeavor. It is clear that they applied themselves to this task with diligence. It tells us that they **“made careful search and inquiry.”** The two terms “search” and “inquiry” are used obviously to intensify the image. The prophets were not at all casual but were very diligent in the pursuit of a greater understanding of “this salvation” that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ had experienced. **WHAT WAS THE SPECIFIC FOCUS OF THEIR SEARCH? THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THEIR SEARCH, THE SOURCE OF THEIR GREATEST PERSONAL PERPLEXITY IS GIVEN TO US IN V. 11.**

Let us look at **V. 11 “seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.”** (NAS) The NIV reads a little differently. **V. 11 “trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”** Grammatically it could go either way, but I believe that the NIV contains the better translation. The primary source of their personal perplexity and their searching of God’s Word was the timing of the coming Messiah.

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The time and the circumstances - We actually see this demonstrated in the writings of various Old Testament writers. **Daniel 12:4-9** makes it clear that the “when” of the fulfillment is what is unknown to the prophet and it is the “when” that he is seeking to find out. This was the same struggle that Christ’s Jewish disciples had. Also, **Matt 24:3** “**when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**” and **Acts 1:6** “**Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?**”

As these prophets through the Spirit of Christ or in other words the Holy Spirit were moved to write concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glories that were to follow they were provoked in their spirit to want to know when all this would take place. They were provoked to this careful search because they saw this time as the beginning of a new day. A glorious new period in the lives of the righteous. It was a time in their minds that was highly valued and treasured.

The suffering and glories of Christ which the prophets predicted could have also been a point of confusion and of prophetic reflection. This is not directly stated but it certainly seems to be a reasonable conclusion considering how confused people were at the time of Christ’s incarnation. The “sufferings” comprehends all the painful experiences that befell Him during His earthly messianic ministry and which were predicted by the prophets. (**Ps. 22, 69:7, 109:25; Is.. 50:6, Is. 53, Micah 5:1, Zech. 11:12-24, Zech. 13:6-7**). The plural “glories” corresponds to the plural sufferings. The plural apparently suggests the various steps in Messiah’s glorification: His resurrection, His ascension, His resumption of glory on the Father’s throne. The problem that anyone certainly must have faced in looking at the Old Testament prophecies concerning the sufferings and glories of the Messiah was to relate both of these aspects to one person.

How did their search go in respect to discovering the time when the Messiah would come? Obviously not very well. THEIR MINISTRY WAS CLEARLY RESTRICTED. Look at **V. 12** “**It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you...**” They were told that they were not setting the table for themselves but rather for us. They were putting out a feast that we were going to enjoy.

CONCLUSION

These prophets longed to indulge themselves at the table of our salvation through Christ. And yet it is for us to enjoy.

But the tragedy is that so many professing believers show very little appreciation for the feast that has been set before them in Christ. Rather than feasting at the banquet table of their salvation they would rather go outside and play with the toys of this world. Rather than feasting at the table of their salvation they would rather stay in their rooms and pout about how badly things have gone in their lives.

If we are ever going to righteously maneuver ourselves through the trials of this life free of despair while filled with the fruit of the spirit it will be done by a full appreciation of our salvation in Christ.