

1 Peter-Concerning Our Salvation-1 Peter 1:10-12
College Baptist Church
February 12, 2021

I invite you to turn with me to the book of 1 Peter, chapter 1. 1 Peter can be found toward the end of the New Testament, just after the book of James. If you didn't bring a Bible, there are Bibles in the pew racks; I believe you will find 1 Peter 1 on p. 1014. Today's sermon text is also printed in the bulletin along with space for taking notes.

One of the key themes of the book of 1 Peter is hope. As we heard last week in verse 3, Christians are people who have been "*born again to a living hope.*" Christians are people of hope—rock-solid, certain hope. As we sang earlier, Christ alone is our only hope in life and death. We have hope in Jesus Christ, who purchased our "*imperishable, undefiled, and unfading*" inheritance with his blood on the cross of Calvary and who secured our future salvation with his glorious resurrection some 2,000 years ago.

So, our hope in God's promises for future salvation rests by faith in God's redeeming work in the past, which causes us to love God in the present even though we have never seen him. Let me say that again. Our hope in God's promises for future salvation rests by faith in God's redeeming work in the past, which causes us to love God in the present even though we have never seen him.

So, our hope and faith and love are informed by our place in redemptive history. Living on this side of the cross and resurrection, we look "back" by faith at what God has already done—and that informs our love in the present and our hope for the future. But what if you lived "before" the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ—in the Old Testament era? You would have "less information" to understand the Christ, the Messiah, God's only chosen King. Instead of looking back, you would be looking forward to who that Messiah would be...and what that Messiah would do.

And you would look forward based on the words of the prophets—God's spokesmen in the Old Testament era. Prophets, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, foretold things about the coming Messiah. What a privilege it must have been to be an Old Testament prophet—to receive and proclaim predictions about God's anointed one! *But* keep in mind that even the prophets didn't have all the details about their prophecies.

In today's passage, 1 Peter 1:10-12, Peter takes the original recipients of his letter (and us too!) back to the time of the prophets—to consider *our* salvation from *their* vantage point. We need to remember that Peter just wrote about the reality of trials in the Christian life—various, grievous, temporary, and necessary trials. Now being people of trials hardly feels like a privilege. But Peter is reminding his readers that they *are* privileged—privileged to live at a particular time in redemptive history, more privileged than the Old Testament prophets themselves.

Listen along as I read 1 Peter 1:10-12.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

What I want us to see this morning is that the prophets of the Old Testament were indwelt and inquisitive servants. They were indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. They were inquisitive about the identity and arrival of Christ. And they were servants of New Testament believers—who are more privileged than the prophets.

Indwelt by the Spirit of Christ

If you look with me at verse 11, you will see the phrase “*the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.*” Now, I think that is a very significant phrase because it teaches us a lot not only about the Old Testament prophets, but it also teaches us a lot about the Holy Spirit.

First of all, it teaches us that the Old Testament prophets were indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. Peter says the Spirit of Christ was “*in them*”—“them” being the prophets. You see, the “Spirit of Christ” *is* the third person of the Trinity. Peter calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of Christ” because, among other things, the Holy Spirit predicts things about the Christ, the Messiah, the Chosen One whom God had promised to send to rescue his people. The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of Christ” because he points people to Christ. And the Holy Spirit does this by indwelling the prophets. This biblical truth is reflected in the Nicene Creed, which we highlighted in the meditation this morning—the Holy Spirit “*spoke by the prophets.*”

Second of all, this phrase teaches that the Spirit of Christ predicts. Notice that the text says that “*he predicted.*” So, strictly speaking, the prophets did not speak on their own—the Holy Spirit spoke through them; he predicted. The Spirit predicted and the prophets were his mouthpiece.

Now this word predicted needs some decoding, just like we decoded hope last week. Because predictions in our world are nothing more than estimated guesses. Meteorologists predict the weather...and I think we all know they don’t get it right 100% of the time. ESPN has their prediction specialist Joe Lunardi and his “Bracketology”—which he calls “the art and science” of predicting the teams in the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament. Now Lunardi is good—in 2008 he correctly predicted all 65 teams. But his predictions aren’t always perfect. That’s impossible.

In contrast, when you read that the Spirit “*predicted*” it is more than an educated guess. It is more than an “art and science.” The Spirit predicts perfectly. His predictions will come true. When the Holy Spirit predicts, it is as if you are witnessing something in advance of it happening. That’s how the KJV puts it—the Spirit “*testified beforehand.*”

Third of all, we learn from this jam-packed phrase the content of the Spirit's prediction about Christ. The end of verse 11 says that "*he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.*" The Spirit, who indwelt the prophets, predicted that the Messiah would suffer before experiencing glories. Peter is reminding his readers that the suffering and glory of the Messiah was predicted in the Old Testament.

Now I find this is very interesting, when considering the author of this letter. Some of you will remember that we studied the Gospel of Mark a couple years ago. John Mark was the writer of the that Gospel—and there is good reason to believe that Mark wrote based on the eye-witness account of Peter. And if you recall, in Mark's Gospel Jesus predicted his death and resurrection as the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures three times. And each time, Peter struggled to believe Jesus' words. He could not imagine that the Messiah would suffer death. And he was so horrified by the thought of the Messiah's death that he totally missed the prediction of the resurrection. But eventually Peter got it. Not only did he witness the death and resurrection of Jesus first-hand—he came to understand that the suffering and glories of the Messiah were no accident. They were the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies—and he is making sure his readers understand that too.

Now time won't permit us to consider all the predictions of the suffering and glory of the Messiah in the Old Testament. But I would like to consider one of each briefly. Perhaps the most famous prediction of the suffering of the Christ is found in Isaiah 53—which we heard read in part earlier this morning and which we sang about in the song "Man of Sorrows." The prophet Isaiah, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, prophesied about the Christ and described him as a Suffering Servant. Listen to the description of Messiah again.

*For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.*

³ *He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

⁴ *Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.*

⁵ *But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.*

That was one of the Spirit's predictions about the Messiah's suffering, which was fulfilled at the cross of Calvary when Jesus endured the wrath of God for our sin—so that all who believe in him would receive the healing peace of forgiveness.

But the predictions of the Spirit about Christ were not only about suffering—he also predicted subsequent glories. That is, multiple glories. And the most obvious glory was the glory of resurrection, which was predicted by David in Psalm 16. Now technically, David was not a prophet. He was a King. But some of his Psalms have prophetic elements. And Psalm 16 is a great example of a prophetic Psalm. Listen to verses 9-10.

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.
¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.*

Now it sounds like David is speaking of himself. But he is really speaking of his greatest offspring—the forever King whom God had promised to him in 2 Samuel 7—a king who could not be abandoned to the place of the dead or ultimately corrupted in the grave, a king who would rise again—in victory over sin and death. And on that first Easter morning, Jesus fulfilled that prophecy. Peter himself proclaimed the fulfillment of that prophecy on the day of Pentecost when he said this about David in Acts 2:29-32.

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.”

So, from Peter’s perspective, and from his readers’ perspective, and from our perspective this all makes sense—we see things with hindsight 20-20. But if you put yourselves in the sandals of the prophets, that is not the case. Which is why if we back up to verse 10, we see that the prophets were inquisitive about the identity and arrival of Christ.

Inquisitive about the Identity and Arrival of Christ

Look again at the end of verse 10 and the beginning of verse 11. The words used to describe the prophets’ activities are very vivid. They “*searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ was indicating.*” You see, while they had spoken the prophetic word about Christ, they did not fully understand *in whom* and *when* it would be fulfilled.

This searching and inquiring makes me think of a detective or investigator. Sherlock Holmes and Watson trying to crack a case. Magnum P.I. cruising around Hawaii in his Ferrari wearing a Detroit Tigers hat investigating crimes. Or a new favorite at the Cuthbert house—Constable Morse in “Endeavor”—a BBC series which you can watch on Prime Video. Great detectives are inquisitive, they are constantly trying to figure things out.

In a similar way, the prophets of the Old Testament were trying to find out the “who” and the “when” of their prophecies about the Christ. But as much as they searched, as diligently as they inquired, they could not crack the case. They were not able to figure out the identity of the Christ; and they could not pinpoint the date of his arrival. They proclaimed the Spirit’s predictions, but they did not witness their fulfillment.

I suspect this might have been personally frustrating—to lack the details of how their prophecies would be fulfilled. But verse 12 tells us that the prophets weren’t serving themselves, they were serving others—particularly those who would receive the good news of Jesus—who was revealed as the Christ who experienced sufferings and glories in the time of the Roman Empire in fulfillment of their prophetic word.

Servants to New Testament Believers

In other words, the Old Testament prophets did not serve for their own benefit, but for ours. The prophets weren’t self-servants, they were servants of others. The prophets were servants to New Testament believers—believers like Peter’s first readers and believers like us today, who understand the identity and arrival of Jesus as the Christ.

According to verse 12, the same Holy Spirit who indwelt the prophets and predicted the sufferings and glories of the Christ, was *sent from heaven* to empower Evangelists to tell the Good News that Jesus was the Christ—to tell and explain that Jesus was the chosen one who had suffered at Calvary and experienced the glory of resurrection from the grave. And Peter says that the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the Christ is so fascinating that even the angels are interested.

The last phrase of verse 12 tells us that angels “*long to look*” at Gospel and its consequences. Like someone window shopping peers into the store, the angels are on the outside looking in at God’s plan to rescue humanity through Jesus. Angels—God’s mighty messengers—are interested in the affairs of men. Luke 15:10 tells us that angels rejoice when sinners repent and are forgiven. And here we learn that angels long to see how the suffering and glories of Jesus Christ bring salvation to mankind.

Scholar, Karen Jobe, summarizes v. 12 in this way. “[Peter] shows his readers, who were suffering a loss of status in their society because of Christ, that in fact they were more privileged in the perspective of redemptive history than...either the great prophets of old or the angels above. This provides further motivation in the midst of suffering.”

In other words, the prophets help us to understand that both the sufferings and glories of Jesus Christ were part of God’s redemptive plan to bring gracious salvation to his people. We can now see that clearly in the past. We live in a privileged place in redemptive history. Because we can see with hindsight 20-20 that Jesus experienced the most grievous, various, temporary and necessary trials BEFORE he experienced the glory of resurrection. So, when we face trials, we can remain confident—with certain hope and supernatural joy—that God has a great and glorious salvation waiting for us in the future when Jesus the Messiah returns. And we can sing with all our hearts that “*though the wrong seems oft so stong, God is the ruler yet.*”

Benediction—1 Peter 5:10-11

[May] the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ,
...restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and
ever. Amen.