

## Hope When Life is Hard...



A VERSE BY VERSE  
EXPOSITION OF  
THE EPISTLE OF  
FIRST PETER

### Glimpses of Gospel Glories

#### 1 Peter 1:10-12

The further we get into 1 Peter the more important it is to maintain a sense of continuity. The title for this nearly yearlong series is “Hope When Life is Hard.” The big idea is pretty simple: *the hope of salvation sustains the believer in time of suffering*. And in the first major section of Peter’s letter, **1:3 – 2:10**, the focus is clearly on the riches, the beauty, the infinite value of that salvation set forth in the gospel (**1:12**).

In **verses 1 and 2** of Chapter 1 the Holy Spirit lifts us above the clouds of time and circumstances into the deep counsels of eternity where we can, at last, get a glimpse of spiritual realities. He shows us that our salvation is a glorious work of all three persons of the Godhead. Peter wants us as the redeemed of the Lord (**1:18**) to know the extraordinary eternal purposes behind all that is happening in our lives. He reminds us of our status, our identity, our privileged standing as the *chosen* (**1:2**) *people of God* (**2:10**).

In **verses 3-5** Peter demonstrates how our redemption (**1:18a**), determined in the deep counsels of the Trinity (**1:2**) and accomplished on the cross of Christ (**1:19; 2:24**) is graciously applied to us in time and in our human experience. In **verse 3**

we are *born again* into the family of God. As children of God we are promised an inheritance *from* God. In **verse 4** we are assured that our inheritance is kept for us (*reserved in heaven for you*). In **verse 5** we are assured that we are kept for our inheritance (*who are protected*).

As we leave verse 5 Peter has communicated enough of the riches of the gospel that he is able to say to us in **verse 6**, *in this you greatly rejoice*. [Achteemeier says, “Christians find as the reason for their rejoicing (1:6, 8) the realities described in the preceding verses (1:3-5)” (1 Peter, p. 100).] Even in the face of *various trials* (1:6), you can rejoice greatly in the fact that you have been born again to a living hope; you can rejoice greatly in the fact that an imperishable inheritance awaits you in heaven; and you can rejoice greatly in the fact that you shall be preserved by the power of God Himself. O, beloved, we rejoice in the riches, the beauty, the infinite value of that salvation set forth in the gospel.

Now we come to **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.*

17<sup>th</sup> C. Scottish minister, Alexander Nisbet (1623 – 1669), gets us headed in the right direction in terms of the purpose for the verses just read. He suggests that Peter’s design is to “further commend the truths of the Gospel as worthy to be rejoiced in and suffered for” (1 Peter, p. 31) ... “to make the truth lovely to us and to confirm us in adhering to it under sufferings” (p. 33) ... “to make the doctrine

of the Gospel lovely to people, and to confirm them in adhering to it, notwithstanding [their] sufferings" (p. 33).

But how does Peter show this worthiness, this loveliness of the gospel? Nisbet says, "the prophets and apostles, yes, the very angels of heaven are all fellow-students of this way of salvation which the Gospel holds forth: and therefore it is worthy to be rejoiced in even under sufferings for it" (*1 Peter*, p. 28). John Kelly seems to agree, "Finally, to highlight his correspondents' privilege, [Peter] asserts that the saving events they have had declared to them, the blessed fruits of which they are beginning to experience, were not only the object of the prophets' vain yearning; they are things into which the angels desire to look" (p. 63). Wayne Grudem adds, "The purpose of this paragraph is to show Peter's readers that the spiritual blessings they now have are greater than anything that was [conceived] by Old Testament prophets or even by angels. Thus Peter seeks to increase his readers' appreciation for their great salvation in Christ" (p. 67).

Such a view of the passage has a rich pedigree. Polycarp's second-century paraphrase of this passage captures the connection between the inexpressible joy of verse 8 and the unsearchable salvation of verses 10-12 better than most modern commentators. [He says], 'in whom, without seeing him, you believe with inexpressible and glorious joy – into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that by grace you are saved, not [by] works, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ' (Pol. *Phil.* 1.3)" (Michaels, *1 Peter*, p. 49). The "many" of whom Polycarp speaks includes prophets and even angels "who are not so much probing the divine mysteries as seeking to enter into the joy of the kingdom of God" (Michaels, *1 Peter*, p. 49).

In **verses 10-12** Peter is highlighting the worth, the value, the preciousness of our salvation. And he does this by arguing that **prophets desired (1:10) and angels long (1:12) to enter into the joy of the gospel (1:10, 11, 12)**. Putting it another way. Those saints who lived on the other side of the cross – Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Malachi – yearned to know what you know and to enter into the joys that those of us on this side of the cross know. We resume our exposition of the text at **verse 10**.

**As to this salvation.** What salvation is this? It is the same salvation mentioned in **1:5**, *who are protected by the power of God through faith for a **salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time*. It is the same salvation mentioned in **1:9**, *obtaining as the outcome of your faith the **salvation** of your souls*. It is the future full possession of all the blessings (**3:9**) of our redemption (**1:18**). It is *all that God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9)*. It is all of the glorious and beautiful promises of God that are ours in the Christ. Beloved, the Christian gospel is the good news that promises acquittal at the bar of God's justice because our guilt has been imputed to Christ and His righteousness imputed to us (**Rom. 8:3**). It promises that we shall be received into heaven at last, fully and forever free from all sin and misery, filled with inconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy in body and soul, joined with the company of martyrs, of innumerable saints, of just men made perfect, and of angels, protected that we might behold and enjoy full communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It promises that every spiritual longing shall be abundantly satisfied.

Now, as to *this* salvation, what does Peter have to say? He says the prophets, those Old Testament messengers of God, were fascinated by and preoccupied with it. **As to this salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace that**

**would come to you made careful search and inquiry.** The words “grace” and “salvation” appear to mean essentially the same thing. Look at **1:13** where Peter says, *fix your hope completely on **the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*** “Like Christ Himself as portrayed by the evangelists and the New Testament as a whole, [Peter] takes it for granted that the men of the Old Testament had their gaze focused on the Messiah; on Jesus the Christ, and His coming” (Kelly, p. 59). In this verse Peter has just associated the prophets of the Old Testament with the gospel of the grace of God in Christ. The prophets were charged, of course, with communicating God’s Word and will to the people in the world in which they lived. Inevitably, however, their attention was directed to the day of the Lord, when the condemnation of the wicked and the salvation of God’s chosen would be finally accomplished, and they scanned the horizon for signs of its advent” (see Kelly, p. 59). Prophets desired and angels long to enter into the joy of the gospel.

We learn here that the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, which is set forth in the New Testament, is not some new thing, hatched in those early days after the resurrection. It is the very same in substance which was known to the prophets under the Old Testament, and by them made known to the church in the Old Testament. Admittedly, the doctrine of salvation is now more clear and the gifts and graces of the Spirit poured out more abundantly ... yet the way of salvation then, and now, is essentially one and the same” (see Nisbet, p. 28). “The prime subject both of the Old and New Testaments ... is the free grace of God, manifested in giving Christ for sinners” (Nisbet, p. 29).

Such was certainly the understanding of Jesus Himself, the living Word of God. Recounting Jesus teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth **Luke 4:17-21** says, *And*

*the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Listen to what Jesus said to two of His disciples as they walked together on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection: **Luke 24:25-27**, And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Later, before His ascension into heaven, Jesus said, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." The He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (**Luke 24:44-47**).*

How was the gospel presented to the prophets? God revealed it to them through earlier Scriptures (**John 1:45**). God disclosed Christ to them through their own prophecies. He showed them Christ in the types, in the sacrifices, in the furnishings and appointments and ordinances of the tabernacle and Temple. And so compelling, so beautiful were those glimpses of the grace of God opened

up to them that the prophets became more and more inquisitive. These glimpses of gospel glories “excited their own hopes; they yearned for fuller and clearer revelation” (Clowney, *1 Peter*, p. 59). What had been revealed was so engaging that they thirsted and hungered for more knowledge of Him who was presented to them; more knowledge of the benefits that were to flow from Him to the redeemed of the Lord. Like hunters stalking a big buck they searched through earlier Scriptures. Like archaeologists digging for treasure they examined their own prophecies; they investigated their own times and circumstances. They did more than merely ponder or wonder. Theirs was an active effort to look for something. What was it that they so desperately wanted to know?

I’m using the New King James translation here for **verse 11**. **Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow**. The Spirit of Christ mentioned here is the same as the Holy Spirit. The primary focus of His activity in the Old Testament prophets was pointing to the Savior to come and so He is here called the Spirit of Christ (see Grudem, p. 69). “It was the Spirit of the Son of God that dwelt in the prophets and made known to them those things concerning the Mediator of whom they spoke” (see Nisbet, p. 30). Did curiosity alone fuel their search? Was their search a purely academic exercise? No. They were asking will we ourselves know these mercies? Shall our own eyes see Him? Shall we ourselves enter into these joys?

You see, the primary objects of their study were Christ’s sufferings and the glories that would follow - in short, the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. Why was that? It was because Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection would be the end of the threatenings of wrath in the Law (**Romans 8:3**). It was because

Christ's suffering and resurrection would be the satisfaction of divine justice. It was because Christ's atoning death on the cross would be the very substance and signification of all the types and sacrifices of the Old Testament (**Hebrews 10:1**). They were preoccupied with the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

**Mark 9:12**, *"And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"* **Luke 24:46**, *And He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day."* **Acts 3:18**, *"But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled."* **Acts 26:22-23**, *"And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."* Prophets desired and angels long to enter into the joy of the gospel. All the same ...

**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.** The Spirit of Christ revealed to these men that the prophecies did not apply to them primarily. Michaels translates the phrase like this: "It was revealed to them that their ministry in regard to all this was not for their own benefit but for yours" (p. 45). "The notion that the ancient prophets ministered (and especially that they wrote) for later Christian believers more than for their contemporaries is a common one in Paul's epistles" (Michaels, p. 46). For example, speaking of the experiences of the Hebrew people in the wilderness, **1 Corinthians 10:11** says, *Now these things happened to them as an*

*example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

One thing verse 12 confirms is the remarkable continuity between the prophets in the Old Testament and the evangelizers in the New Testament - apostles (like Paul), their associates and followers, as well as some like those of us today whose only link to the apostles is the message we bear (see Michaels, p. 47). There is continuity in terms of the origin of the message we bear. It is revealed *from heaven*. Paul wrote to the Galatians, *For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a **revelation** of Jesus Christ (1:11-12)*. There is continuity in terms of the Revealer of the message we bear. It is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit that was fire in the bones of the prophets in verse 11 was the Spirit of Christ ... The same Holy Spirit in verse 12 now fills the apostles who preach the prophecies come true (see Clowney, p. 58-59). There is continuity in terms of the content of the message we bear. It is the gospel. "The sufferings destined for Christ and the glorious events that would follow are here identified as the gospel recently proclaimed in Asia Minor to Peter's readers" (Michaels, p. 46) and proclaimed to believers and unbelievers alike in Arlington, Texas.

One Lord through the ages, one great plan of salvation, one revealed message, heralded by the prophets of old and now announced by the apostles of Christ – all is focused on the lordship of Jesus Christ ... both Testaments bear witness *to* Christ; both are the witness *of* Christ" (Clowney, pp. 58-59). Prophets desired and angels long to enter into the joy of the gospel.

*"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in*

*His name to all the nations" (Lu. 24:46-47). The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.  
Amen.*

## Hope When Life is Hard...



A VERSE BY VERSE  
EXPOSITION OF  
THE EPISTLE OF  
FIRST PETER

### Glimpses of Gospel Glories

#### 1 Peter 1:10-12

**Title:** "Hope When Life is Hard"

**Big Idea:** *The hope of salvation sustains the believer in time of suffering.*

**Focus of first major section (1:3 – 2:10):** the riches, the beauty, the infinite value of that salvation set forth in the gospel (1:12)

**1:1-2** ... The Holy Spirit shows us that our salvation is a glorious work of \_\_\_\_\_ persons of the Godhead.

**1:3-5** ... Peter demonstrates how our redemption (1:18a), determined in the deep counsels of the Trinity (1:2) and accomplished on the cross of Christ (1:19; 2:24) is graciously \_\_\_\_\_ to us in time and in our human experience.

**1:6-9** ... Achtemeier says, "Christians find as the reason for their rejoicing (1:6, 8) the realities described in the preceding verses (1:3-5)" (*I Peter*, p. 100).

**We rejoice in the riches, the beauty, the infinite value of that salvation set forth in the gospel.**

**I 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.*

**Purpose for 1:10-12** ... Peter's design is to "further commend the truths of the Gospel as \_\_\_\_\_ to be rejoiced in and suffered for" (Nisbet, *I Peter*, p. 31).

**But how does Peter show this worthiness, this loveliness of the gospel?**

In **verses 10-12** Peter is highlighting the worth, the value, the preciousness of our salvation. And he does this by arguing that ...

\_\_\_\_\_ *desired* (1:10) and \_\_\_\_\_ *long*  
(1:12) *to enter into the joy of the gospel* (1:10, 11, 12).

**Verse 10 ... As to this salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry**

"The prime subject of both of the Old and New Testaments ... is the free grace of God, manifested in giving \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_."

*Alexander Nisbet*

**See Luke 4:17-21; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47.**

**Verse 11 (NKJV) ... Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.**

They were asking, will we ourselves know these mercies? Shall our own eyes see Him? Shall we ourselves enter into these joys?

The primary objects of their study were Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ that would follow.

**Verse 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.**

There is continuity in terms of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the message we bear.

It is revealed *from heaven*.

There is continuity in terms of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the message we bear.

It is the Holy Spirit.

There is continuity in terms of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the message we bear.

**It is the simple gospel.**