# 1 Peter 1:10-12 Salvation Prophesied in the OT October 18, 2009

# Introduction

There is no command in this text. In fact, there have been no moral imperatives up to this point in the letter! Evidently, as far as telling his audience how they should live as Christians, Peter is building up a case in the first 12 verses, which he will then use starting in verse 13. Our reading today is still focused on the verses where he is building his case.

In verse 10, Peter speaks of “this salvation” which refers to the salvation that he has been discussing up to this point. It is the salvation characterized by God’s electing grace, the work of the Spirit, belief in Christ, cleansing from sin’s penalty, power, and ultimately its very presence by His blood. It is the “born again” type of salvation, based on God’s mercy (not our works or merit), provided through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, bestowing a secure and incorruptible heavenly inheritance of eternal life and living forever with God. It is the kind of salvation that can never be lost. It is the type of salvation that does not promise health and wealth, but comes with trials that strengthen the very faith through which God keeps the Christian. It is the sort of salvation that is ready to be revealed, but which we do not fully yet possess because there are some “loose ends” that will come together when Christ returns to this earth. This is the *only* real kind of salvation there is; a partaker of it is called a *Christian*, and anyone else has either no hope at all, or a false hope (which amounts to no hope).

# 1. What Did the Prophets Know (and When Did They Know It)?

Sometimes this verse is used to attempt to show how the OT prophets were in the dark, and thus how the NT is needed to give meaning to the OT texts. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Those OT texts stand on their own, having very clear meaning. Certainly the OT prophets did not see everything as clearly as we do; nor did they see all the implications of what they wrote (who would?). Further, there were “mysteries” that God was not pleased to reveal until the NT era (e.g., Eph. 3:4-5). But note the things that the prophets did know:

1. They knew salvation and grace was coming. This does not reflect on a total absence of grace or salvation for them, for they also were saved by grace through faith (e.g. Gen. 15:6). They knew God to be gracious (Psalm 86:15). They had spiritual salvation as well (Psalm 51:12, 14, Isaiah 61:10).

2. They knew that they had the spirit of Christ and He was testifying in them, a la 2 Peter 1:21. They were self-aware of the fact that they had the Spirit of God and that they were receiving revelation from God through the Spirit. It was not an “accident” that what they wrote became Scripture and was preserved down to our day.

3. They knew Christ would suffer. Isaiah 53:1-11, Daniel 9:26.

4. They knew Christ would be glorified following his suffering. Psalm 110:1, Daniel 7:13-14. Note that the prophets knew the facts of suffering and glory, AND the order of these things. After the suffering would come glory, as in Isaiah 53:12. Philippians 2:5-11 covers both the sufferings and the glory of Christ.

5. They knew that they were ministering this information to those who would live in the future, because God told them so. They knew they would not be participants in the times or blessings of the future era of which they prophesied.

To me, one of the most fascinating ideas about the Bible is the prophetic references to the Messiah and how they were (or will be) fulfilled. Luke 24:13-32 is a passage that captures our attention in this regard. From the conversation of Jesus with the Emmaus-road disciples, we glean that there are a lot of Messianic references in the OT. We could add to the ones we’ve visited above the references to a coming prophet (Deut. 18:15), a coming priest (1 Samuel 2:35), and a coming king (Jeremiah 23:5, 2 Samuel 7:16).

# 2. What Did the Prophets Not Know?

The prophets had before them their own writings and the writings of other prophets of God. The diligent and careful search spoken of in v. 10-11 reflects that they were reading, comparing, contrasting, and trying to fit together the information they had from their own writings and the writings of the others. Daniel (9:2), for instance, knew from his studies of Jeremiah (25:11) that Babylon would rule over Israel for 70 years and that this period was about to be completed. So how did Peter know this about all the prophets? First, he would have known of the example of Daniel. Beyond that, God had to reveal to Peter, under inspiration, that this is what was going on. It is certainly not unreasonable to expect that men of God would be interested in Biblical writings. They didn’t just “clock out” on Sunday at noon. They studied it throughout the week!

What they couldn’t quite wrap their brains around was the “sufferings of Christ” and the “glories that would follow.” How could that work—a suffering Messiah and a glorified Messiah? A Messiah who would die but also be king forever? A Messiah who would be cursed by God yet elevated by the same God to prominence? It is easy for us to overlook their perplexity because we have the benefit of hindsight. More particularly, when was all this going to be fulfilled? What would be all the circumstances surrounding the Messiah’s coming?

# 3. What About the Angels?

The angels, Peter says, desire to look into the “things” which includes the gospel. The phrase can be translated “Into which things the angels desire to stoop down and look.” Even today, apparently God’s good angels are intensely interested in what has happened with Christians and the church. And for good reason. A number of their compatriots followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God, forming the company of what we know as demons (fallen angels). Some are “on the loose” and others are bound in the abyss (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6). There is *no indication* that these wicked angelic beings have any chance of salvation. Rather, they failed their test of allegiance to God, and they will be punished for their wickedness. There is no angelic salvation (Heb. 2:16). It must be fascinating to the good angels how God could take on the form of a man, die, atone for sins, and allow sinful men who have rebelled against God to come back to God. Angels are observers of other things too (1 Cor. 11:10, Ephesians 3:10, 1 Tim. 3:16).

# What’s the point?

If nothing else, the text here should encourage us to **respond with interest in God’s salvation**. If the OT prophets were sufficiently interested in this message to diligently look at their own writings and those of the other prophets and try to figure it out…if the angels want to look in on this salvation as well…if it is something new that was not fully understood and was not available before the New Testament era…if the sufferings of Christ are past and the current and upcoming events on the timetable consist in the Christ’s glory…if the NT apostles preached this message…then isn’t it reasonable that we should be at least *a little bit* interested in this salvation?

I’m being sarcastic—we should be *a lot* interested in what God has accomplished at the cross. After all, it is obviously the focal point of God’s view of history—all the OT led up to it, and the NT looks at it and back on it, and even the angels are intensely interested. Many folks, unfortunately, are far more interested in their own circumstances than in the plan of God through the ages of world history!

Second, we would do well to **emulate the OT prophets** who “inquired and searched carefully” in the Scriptures that they had. Many of us know our sports stats better than the Bible. Some of us know the best appliances or cars according to Consumer Reports. Others among us know secular songs or the latest fashions or our own favorite hobby as if these are very important things.

But how is our basic Bible literacy? Can we turn to a passage of Scripture that shows there is only one God? Can we show that Christ receives worship as God? Can we show that salvation is by faith alone apart from works? Can we show that Christ is coming again? And beyond that, do we delve into some of the more involved teachings and truths? Or do we leave all that for the “experts”?

We have a bunch more information on “this salvation” and we would do well, like the prophets, to inquire and search diligently about it so that we become more familiar with the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. We should even mull over things that are coming yet farther into the future because they have a sanctifying and encouraging effect. And don’t forget the OT itself—the prophets, in writing it, were ministering to us! That means a lot of material there is still VERY relevant today.

Third, we ought to **recognize our privilege** in this whole area of salvation. The OT prophets did not have the whole picture clear. Even though they had a lot of the puzzle pieces, we have more of pieces and more of them placed into their proper relation to each other. We can see things more clearly, and thus should be thankful that God’s plan has been spelled out more completely to us, starting with the NT apostles and preachers. For instance, we can see that the coming of Messiah will be in two stages—the first coming and the second coming. This much is very clear now.

But not only can we see more, we are actual *participants* in the fulfillments of the prophecies made by these OT prophets. WOW! Upon us the ends of the ages have come (1 Corinthians 10:11). God should be praised for giving us new life, reserving an inheritance, keeping and purifying us through all trials, and fulfilling His plan which was set in motion centuries ago.

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