

Text: 1 Pt 1.10-12

I gave you the illustration of the unfolding flower, as it spreads out to show the full beauty of its bloom.

We are unfolding Peter's long sentence from 1.3-12, step by step as he expands on his topic.

Read 1 Pt 1.3-12, text 10-12

- Blessing God for salvation...
- Salvation gives us a living hope, an imperishable inheritance, and ultimate salvation
- In this we rejoice, even under trial, because tested and true faith produces praise and glory and honor to Jesus Christ
- Which stirs in our hearts love and faith in our unseen Saviour

The last reflection on salvation points us back to the OT and the prophets, showing the immense attraction this salvation had for them, though they couldn't grasp all they wrote about.

I. What the prophets have to do with this salvation (10)**A. This salvation**

1. The theme of the whole sentence (3-12)
2. Coming back around to the main [and first] point
3. Expanding this point once more

B. The prophets

1. Identity: "who prophesied of this grace that would come to you"
 - a. There is a distance in these words, OT prophets in view
 - b. "This grace" – synonym for "this salvation"
 - c. The key concept: this salvation would come to "you"
 - 1) See v. 1: Believers, both Jews *and* Gentiles in these provinces of Asia Minor (modern Turkey)
 - 2) They are the chosen ones, the elect, the born again (v. 3)

Belaboring this point a bit: they were far off, but the grace came to them

d. And the prophets spoke about it “prophesied”

2. Activity: “made careful searches and inquiries”

a. Two verbs: seeking and studying; zeal and diligence

1) Both begin with the preposition *ek*, “out of,” which *intensifies* meaning (digging truth out)

2) One implies zealous consideration of their own prophecies

3) The other implies careful research into all prophecy (may imply they studied the words of other prophets)

b. Let’s put ourselves in their shoes (or sandals)

1) Say it is Isaiah – could be any of the OT writing prophets

a) Isaiah has the Torah

b) He has most of the Psalms

c) He has Joshua, Judges

d) He has probably access to the information in most of the Kings

e) He has some of the earlier prophets, maybe Joel, Obadiah, Amos??

f) He may know some of his contemporaries: e.g. Micah

g) And he has the prophecies God gave him

2) Some themes of the prophecies: the Messiah, redemption of Israel, inclusion of Gentiles

The point: there is much, even of his own prophecies, that he doesn’t understand

“They thus became students and interpreters for themselves of their own predictions. They were not only *prophets*, but *men*. They had souls to be saved in the same way as others. They had hearts to be sanctified by the truth; and it was needful, in order to this, that truth should be applied to their own hearts in the same way as to others. The mere fact that they were the channels or organs for imparting truth to

others would not save them, any more than the fact that a man now preaches truth to others will save himself, or than the fact that a sutler delivers bread to an army will nourish and support his own body.”¹

II. What the prophets thought about this salvation (11)

A. The subject of their inquiries: “what person or time”

1. Searching what, or what manner of time (KJV)
2. trying to find out the time and circumstances (NIV)

Discussion in the commentaries, interpretation in the translations

3. Lit. “searching into what or what manner [of] time”
 - a. Some divide it into two objects of search: person and time
 - b. Others divide it into two aspects of the time (they knew the person, Messiah)
 - 1) When
 - 2) What sort of “when” (*i.e.* “circumstances” as in NIV)

In the end, both options really could be talking about the same thing, but the distinction notes the carefulness and specificity of their search

B. The cause for their confusion

1. The Spirit of Christ moved in them
 - a. A description of inspiration
 - b. A tacit statement of the Lord’s preexistence (*i.e.* deity)

They are prophesying in OT times by the Spirit of Christ, who must, therefore, exist in those times.

- c. They knew their message was from God

¹ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: James to Jude*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884), 120.

2. Their message seemed contradictory
 - a. The Spirit predicted the sufferings of Christ
 - b. The Spirit predicted the glories of Christ
3. The New Testament perspective “to follow”
 - a. We know the glories follow the sufferings
 - b. They did not know this

“Do you wonder if, sometimes, you find in the Bible a truth that you cannot quite comprehend? You ought not to marvel, for even the prophets, who prophesied of the grace that has come to us, did not always fully understand their own messages.”²

Dan 10.14 “Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet *future*.”

Jesus said:

Mt 13.16-17 “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.¹⁷ “For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.”

So the picture we have about “this salvation,” which we greatly rejoice in, is something the prophets knew something, but not everything, and caused them to search carefully.

III. What the prophets did for this salvation (12)

- A. The prophets served the coming generations
 1. God’s revelation to them “apocalypse”
 - a. The full facts were hidden to them

² Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Jessi Strong, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Pt 1.11.

b. They were confused about their own meaning

“The aorist passive, ‘it was revealed,’ shows that the realization came to them not simply as a conclusion drawn from their investigation, but as an answer given by the Spirit.”³

2. The prophets responded by announcing “these things” [“this salvation”] to you (1.1)

a. The message wasn’t for them

b. The message was for us

“What else then was this, but that they spread the table, that others might afterwards feed on the provisions laid on it.”⁴

B. The immediacy of this message

1. “Now”

“But ‘now’ denotes a strong contrast between the time of the prophets and that of the readers.”⁵

In 1971, my dad ran for the provincial legislature as a Social Credit candidate. That was the year Peter Lougheed’s Progressive Conservatives took over with their “Now” campaign. My dad later remarked to me about how powerful the word “Now” was in that campaign.

a. The gospel is the message for now

b. The gospel presses the claims of a now glorified Saviour who by his sufferings enabled your salvation, *Now*

2. The message is urged *now* by “those who preached ... to you”

a. This could be a reference to the apostles

³ D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 78.

⁴ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Galaxie Software, 2002), 1 Pt 1.10.

⁵ Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 79.

- b. More likely a reference to the preachers who came into these regions with the gospel
- c. Notice that the Spirit moves the preachers as he moved the prophets
 - 1) This is not inspiration
 - 2) But the message carries divine authority with it

“We noted in v. 11 that the prophets prophesied by the Spirit of Christ, and here we are informed that those who proclaim the gospel do so by the power of the Holy Spirit. We have an early indication here of the authority of the New Testament message, for the proclamation of the gospel is on the same level as the prophecies of the Old Testament.”⁶

Conclusion:

This leaves us with the question: here we have this glorious salvation, which calls to people *now*, with the authority of God.

We who believe rejoice in it, and we should proclaim it in our communities with wisdom, compassion, and urgency.

The causes of this world have their prophets, the cause of Christ has us.

⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 75.