

Not an Afterthought (1 Peter 1:10-12)

We so underestimate God.

It would be impossible to overestimate God because our God is greater than anything our minds can comprehend. But we are overachievers when it comes to underestimating God. Instead of standing in reverential awe, as we should, we spend most of our time trivializing God and all that He is, all that He does. We fail to consider His Holiness. We don't think about His omniscience. We underestimate His power. We trivialize His wrath, and because we trivialize His wrath, we trivialize His grace and His mercy. Thus, we trivialize our own salvation.

Our salvation is an amazing thing, a wonderful thing. We too often fail to meditate deeply about what it means. That disrespects our God. It disrespects our Savior.

... how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? (Hebrews 2:3-4)

How shall we escape indeed!

I know this world is pretty distracting. That's for sure. It captures our minds and keeps us from thinking about our God. It is a dark dungeon of distraction. The trials and tribulations we inevitably face scream for our undivided attention and so we take our minds off our God, or worse, we blame God for our temporary affliction.

In this first letter, Peter is offering the antidote to the trials and sufferings of this life. Yes, this life is full of disappointments. This life is full of angst. This life is full of suffering. And if you are a Christian, you can expect to suffer for your faith. Paul tells Timothy:

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

And Jesus said:

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you (John 15:20)

Well gee, that's encouraging!

But Peter says that the antidote to the trials of this life is right before us. Do you know what it is? Focus on your salvation. Don't focus on the world; focus on your salvation. If you are a Christian, you have this amazing inheritance waiting for you. You can rejoice in it. You can rejoice in Jesus Christ. He is the outcome of your faith ... the salvation of your souls. You belong to Him. You are absolutely secure in Him.

And you are not an afterthought. You are not a plan B. It's not like God put Adam and Eve in the garden, watched them sin and said to Himself "Whoa; I didn't see that coming!" He wasn't surprised when the Nation Israel proved to be completely incapable of keeping the Law of Moses. God had this worked out from before the beginning. Before the universe was, He knew you, He chose you, He called you to faith and He will perfect you.

The promise of your salvation should be fascinating to you. It should be something you want to study. It should be something you should almost be obsessed with. Because you will never fully comprehend how wonderful it is. It is so deep you will never find the

bottom. It is so high you will never exceed its heights. But the more you look into it, the more you will be amazed and the more you will want to give worship, praise, and glory to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 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. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Now in this passage, we can see four classes of individuals who are obsessed with our salvation. There are the prophets. There is God the Holy Spirit. There are those who preach the word, beginning with the Apostles and continuing to this day and perhaps most surprising, there are the angels. We're going to take them one at a time as we unpack these three verses.

First, the prophets.

Now, understand that to prophesy is to speak forth the word of God. We tend to think of a prophet as one who predicts the future and that might be, but it doesn't have to be. So really, we're talking about all the individuals who brought forth the word of God as recorded for us in our Old Testament. We're talking about everyone from Moses, who wrote the first 5 books, the Pentateuch, all the way to Malachi. But it really doesn't even stop with Malachi. Think of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna. Think of John the Baptist, whom Jesus identified as more than a prophet.

The writer of Hebrews opens his epistle with these words:

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (Hebrews 1:1)

God revealed His plan to these men and women. Later, in Chapter 11 of Hebrews, we read this about these folks:

*Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, **having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise**, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (Hebrews 11:35-40)*

Did you catch what was said about them in verse 39? They obtained a good testimony through faith but they did not receive the promise. God provided something better for us.

Back to First Peter.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, (1 Peter 1:10)

God used them to deliver the message, but they did not fully get it. They wanted to get it. They inquired. They searched carefully. It's like they studied their own work. They wanted to know more. They knew it was wonderful. They knew it would come through Messiah but they didn't know who He was. And they didn't understand when or how it would occur. They were ...

... 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. (1 Peter 1:11)

The Old Testament is full of Jesus. Way back in Genesis chapter 3, God revealed that Jesus was going to suffer and then triumph in glory. It was pretty cryptic, but it is there. Speaking to Satan, God said:

And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." (Genesis 3:15)

The woman's Seed is Jesus. Satan's seed is the devil himself and all who follow him. Jesus suffered on the cross, but He crushed Satan's head in the process. Jesus was the suffering Servant but also the conquering King and these two contrasting themes are carried throughout the Old Testament.

Messiah, the suffering servant:

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3-5)

Messiah, the conquering King:

"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. (Psalms 2:6-8)

I could go on all day reading examples of these two great salvation themes. All those Old Testament prophets were intensely interested. They inquired. They searched carefully. But they did not receive the promise ... then ... so they would not be made perfect apart from us.

Which brings me to the second class of individuals and there is only one Person in this class: God the Holy Spirit. Peter calls Him the Spirit of Christ, and that is completely appropriate. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit exist in perfect unity. They are one in essence. They exist eternally in three distinct persons, but They are essentially one.

"Sh'mah yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad."

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4)

So it is perfectly appropriate for Peter to call the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ. Jesus said:

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13-14)

The Holy Spirit has always declared and glorified God the Son. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets. He spoke through the prophets.

...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

So the Holy Spirit ...

... testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. (1 Peter 1:11)

Yes, He spoke through the prophets who wrote the Old Testament, but the message was given by God Himself. God the Holy Spirit and He didn't stop there. The Holy Spirit also empowered the Apostles to deliver the truth of the Gospel. The good news of salvation through Jesus Christ and we have their testimony recorded for us in the New Testament. So every preacher who delivers the pure message of the New Testament is inspired by the Holy Spirit. These ...

... things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven (1 Peter 1:12)

As your pastor, I am not called to be innovative. I am called to ...

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. (2 Timothy 4:2)

I pray all the time that I would be faithful to that calling because ...

... faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17, ESV)

And ...

*... since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the **foolishness of the message preached** to save those who believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)*

Have you heard the message preached? Do you believe that you are a sinner? Do you believe that the wages of sin is eternal death suffering in the Lake of Fire? Do you believe that God's holiness and pristine justice demands that every sin be punished? Do you believe that God loves you despite your rebellion, despite your cosmic treason? Do you believe that ...

... God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us? (Romans 5:8)

Do you believe Jesus died for you, but that He conquered sin and death by rising to life on the third day? Have you confessed Him as your Lord, counting on Him alone for your salvation? Then you have heard the message preached, and you have been saved.

Your salvation is such an amazing thing. It is something that incredibly powerful, intensely intelligent created beings are absolutely fascinated with. These are ...

... things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:12)

Angels are far more intelligent than we are. That being said, we who cling to Christ will one day judge angels. We see that in 1 Corinthians 6:3. In other words, after we receive the promise of our resurrection, we will be placed in authority over angels.

But these beings are absolutely fascinated with God's plan of salvation. They cannot comprehend it. First of all, the holy angels are sinless. So they can't really identify with us. Satan and the demons can't really identify with it either. They are beyond hope. There is no salvation offered to them. The Lake of Fire is their sure destination.

But your salvation is such a wonderful thing, that it is the object of angel's desire. If angels are obsessed with it, don't you think it's worthy of your continued study? Of course it is. If you dwell on the glory of your promised inheritance, the troubles of this world will simply fade away. As Paul wrote so eloquently in his letter to the Romans:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

Your salvation was not an afterthought to God. It most certainly should not be an afterthought to you!