

1 Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 8
(Verses 3-12)
(Entire Chapter)

8 ^uThough you have not seen him, you love him. ^vThough you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

⁸ ^uThough you have not seen him, you love him. ^vThough you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining ^wthe outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, ^xthe prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring ^ywhat person or time ^zthe Spirit of Christ in them was indicating ^awhen he predicted ^bthe sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² ^cIt was revealed to them that ^dthey 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 ^eby the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, ^fthings into which angels long to look.

NASB

and ^athough you have not seen Him, you ^blove Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and ¹full of glory,

⁹ obtaining as ^athe outcome of your faith the salvation of ¹your souls.

¹⁰ ^aAs to this salvation, the prophets who ^bprophesied of the ^cgrace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries,

¹¹ ¹seeking to know what person or time ^athe Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He ^bpredicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories ²to 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 ^apreached the gospel to you by ^bthe Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which ^cangels long to ¹look. (Unattached Footnote)

NIV (1984)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now

been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Today's NIV (TNIV)

⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him^s and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.^t

¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke^u of the grace that was to come to you,^v searched intently and with the greatest care,^w ¹¹trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ^x in them was pointing when he predicted^y the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you,^z when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you^a by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.^b Even angels long to look into these things.

The verb "love" (*agapate*) should be construed as an indicative rather than an imperative. Peter was not exhorting the churches but commending them here. Their sufferings have not made them morose and miserable. They are filled with love for Jesus Christ. He is precious and lovely to them.

“Believe,” as used here, means “to trust or rest your confidence in someone, to depend on them.”

Inexpressible (*aneklalētō*) literally means “higher than speech.”

and ^athough you have not seen Him, you ^blove Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and ¹full of glory,

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him^s and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them.

^qAlthough the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ^q“Peace be with you.” **27** Then he said to Thomas, ^r“Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”

28 Thomas answered him, ^s“My Lord and my God!” **29** **Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? ^tBlessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

The verb "love" (*agapate*) should be construed as an indicative rather than an imperative. Peter was not exhorting the churches but commending them here. Their sufferings have not made them morose and miserable. They are filled with love for Jesus Christ. He is precious and lovely to them.

“Believe,” as used here, means “to trust or rest your confidence in someone, to depend on them.” Having trusted Christ with present salvation from sin, you can also trust him with future salvation from pain and suffering. The result of this active trust is **an inexpressible and glorious joy** even in the midst of suffering. Peter repeated the theme of joy that he introduced in verse 6. This joy issues from gratitude to God for who he is and for what he has provided through salvation. Joy comes especially from our hope of seeing Christ one day. Although our trials may result in temporary grief, this need not extinguish our deep, abiding joy anchored in our hope in Jesus Christ.

Biblical joy does not depend on circumstances. Joy is inseparably connected to love and trust. Even during pain, the fullness of joy comes from a deep sense of the presence of God in our lives. We can experience joy in suffering when we believe our suffering has a redemptive or refining purpose.

MacArthur’s Commentary:

Peter underscores this fact later in the letter, “Unto you therefore which believe he [Christ] is precious” (2:7, kjv; cf. 1 Cor. 16:22; Eph. 6:24; 1 John 4:19). Real joy flows from a love for the unseen Master, the One whom believers also obey (cf. John 14:21).

Peter next commends his readers’ faith and trust in Christ. Obviously to **believe in Him** goes hand in hand with loving Him. The soul that loves Christ cannot help but believe in Him, and the soul that believes cannot help but love. **Though Christians do not see Him now**, still they **believe in Him**. Jesus told Thomas, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:29; cf. Heb. 11:1). Faith accepts the revealed, written record of Jesus Christ (the Gospels; 2 Tim. 3:15; cf. 2 Chron. 20:20; Acts 24:14), which portrays Him in all His glory and leads believers to love Him (cf. Heb. 11:6). The more faith can know of Christ, and the more such knowledge possesses the heart, the stronger believers’ love for Him becomes (cf. 2 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 John 2:5) and the more joy they exhibit (cf. Pss. 5:11; 16:11). Thus love and trust are the two elements that bind believers to a living fellowship with Jesus Christ.

It is possible that Peter here has in mind the words of Jesus to Thomas as recorded in John 20:29 (“Happy are those not seeing and yet believing”). Peter was present and heard the words of Jesus to Thomas, and so he could use them before John wrote his Gospel.

The Greek has it, "Of whom not having had a glimpse." Yet they loved Him. They never saw the Lord Jesus with the physical sense of sight, but ah, what a vivid portrait of Him did the Holy Spirit paint for them on the canvas of their spiritual vision. And that is the perfectly proper order for this Age of Grace. Paul says "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (II Cor. 5:16). The picture of the earthly Lord Jesus in His mortal body, seen by human eyes, is supplanted now by the picture of the glorified Man in the Glory, painted by the Holy Spirit for the spiritual vision of the saint. The poet¹ sings, "I read thy Word, O Lord, each passing day, and in the sacred page find glad employ: But this I pray – Save from the killing letter. Teach my heart, *set free from human forms,*² the holy art of reading thee in every line, in precept, prophecy, and sign, till, all my vision filled with thee, thy likeness shall reflect in me. Not knowledge but thyself my joy! – For this I pray." It is as we free ourselves from the conception an artist may have of what he thinks the Lord Jesus looked like in His life on earth, and depend upon the Holy Spirit through the Word to reveal to us the likeness of our Lord Jesus, that we come to some true conception of Him in His glorified state. We will recognize Him in the Glory over yonder, not by what human artists have conceived Him to be, but by the Holy Spirit's portrait of Him.

These saints loved the Lord Jesus, even though they had never had a glimpse of Him with their physical sense of sight. But one cannot love another unless one has some clear-cut conception of that person. One must know the person in order to love him. It was the clear-cut conception of the Lord Jesus which the Holy Spirit had given these saints through the Word, that caused them to love Him. The distinctive Greek word for "love" here, *agape* (ἀγαπᾷ), refers to a love that is called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the person loved. But even the preciousness of the Lord Jesus would not have made these individuals love Him if God in salvation had not produced in them that divine love which He Himself is, with which to love Him (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22, 23). One must have the nature of an artist to really appreciate and love art. One must have the nature of God (II Peter 1:4) to appreciate and love the Lord Jesus. It is this ideal combination of a study of God's Word and a definite subjection to the Holy Spirit that results in the clear, vivid portrait of the Lord Jesus in the spiritual vision of the saint. To know Him is to love Him. To know Him better, is to love Him better. The secret of an intimate, loving fellowship with the Lord Jesus, the secret of knowing Him in an intimate way, is in the moment-by-moment control of the Holy Spirit over the life of the Christian believer.

IVP New Testament Commentary:

Unlike the original eyewitnesses (including Peter himself) the readers have never seen Christ in the flesh. Despite this they love him. Here is the deepest expression of the Christian's relationship to Christ. It goes beyond feeling personal emotional ties and expresses a commitment similar to that expressed by the word *believe*, but it brings out, as *believe* does not, the warmth of the personal emotion that the believer has for Christ in response to the love which Christ first showed to the believer.

The picture of the Christian life presented by Peter in these opening verses is characterized by hope in what God will do in the future. Christians, he says, look forward to salvation in the world to come. Their lives ought to have a forward-looking and other-worldly dimension that is often lacking among contemporary Christians. As we go through 1 Peter, we will, of course, need to keep in mind Peter's attitude toward the existing world. But we already note that Peter's strong stress on the future does address questions to us. Have we lost the future dimension from the life of the individual Christian and of the church? Have we grown used to a situation in which the coming of Christ and the revelation of salvation do not fall within our expectations? True, we believe in the future hope in principle, but has it lost its importance as a factor in our daily living? And, as a result, do we lay too much stress on salvation now, both in our own lives and in the life of the world, and too little on what Christ has yet to bring?

Excluding Judas Iscariot (Matt. 26:14, 16; Luke 22:47–48), Peter was the one disciple who exhibited the most egregious breach of faith and trust in his Lord. Not long after Peter's three-time denial of Christ (Luke 22:54–62), Jesus confronted him and three times asked him, "Do you love Me?" (John 21:15–22). In humble fashion he reflected on that time and by implication commended his persecuted readers for their relationship to Christ. Peter, even though he was the leader of the apostles and lived with Jesus for three years, in a crucial time failed to sustain his love and trust in Him. In marked contrast, his readers, **though** they had **not seen Him**, maintained a true love for and strong trust in Jesus in the midst of threatening persecution and sufferings.

1 Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 9
(Verses 3-12)
(Entire Chapter)

9 obtaining ^wthe outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Receiving (κομζομενοι [*komizomenoi*]). Present middle participle of κομζω [*komizō*], old verb, to receive back, to get what is promised (5:4; Heb. 10:36).

Generally, *to receive* or *acquire*. Paul uses it of receiving the awards of judgment (2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:25). In Hebrews it is used of receiving the promise (10:36; 11:39), and of Abraham receiving back Isaac (11:19). Peter uses it thrice, and in each case of receiving the rewards of righteousness or of iniquity. See ch. 5:4; 2 Pet. 2:13.

one could literally render **obtaining** (*komizomenoi*), “presently receiving for yourselves.”
The root, *komizō*, means “to receive what is deserved.”

9 obtaining as ^athe outcome of your faith the salvation of ¹your souls.

⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.^t

They have love and joy because of the prospect of future salvation. The idea that the participle is temporal should be rejected because that requires that the verb “rejoice” in v. 8 be understood as a future. The present tense of the verb “rejoice” and the parallelism with the verb “love” in v. 8 indicates that “rejoice” describes the experience of believers now.⁵² Salvation, as we have seen in v. 5, is eschatological, consummated only on the last day. The present participle (*komizomenoi*) does not necessarily indicate that the salvation in view here is present. Indeed, the word “outcome” (*telos*) suggests that a future gift is in view. It is possible that we have here the “now” and “not yet” tension that is so common in the New Testament. Believers now enjoy salvation and yet will experience it fully at the revelation of Jesus Christ.⁵³ In any case, believers are full of love and joy p 71 even now because of the hope of salvation.

MacArthur’s Commentary:

Peter is not looking at the future but at the here and now; one could literally render **obtaining** (*komizomenoi*), “presently receiving for yourselves.” The root, *komizō*, means “to receive what is deserved.” Flowing out of believers’ personal fellowship with Christ is the result due them, **the present outcome of their faith**, namely **the salvation of their souls**. **Salvation** refers to believers’ constant, present deliverance from the penalty and power of sin—from its guilt (Rom. 6:18; Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13–14), condemnation (Rom. 8:1), wrath (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10), ignorance (Rom. 10:3; Gal. 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:13), distress, confusion, hopelessness (1 Cor. 15:17; 1 Peter 1:3), and dominion (Rom. 6:10–12).

There is really no reason for believers to lose their joy when they can tap into all the present and future spiritual realities mentioned in this passage—present proven faith, fellowship with Christ, and deliverance; and a protected future inheritance and promised honor. As Jesus assured the apostles, “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15:11).

Salvation of “souls” could easily be misunderstood by moderns, as if Peter referred to the salvation of our immaterial substance. The word “souls,” however, refers to the whole person and does not suggest in any way that the body is left out. The reference is to “a person’s whole life or self-identity.”⁵⁴

Achtemeier wrongly says that faith means “faithfulness” rather than “belief.”⁵⁵ We have already observed several times that such a judgment is mistaken, and the word “faith” here is closely linked to the participle “believing” (translated “believe” by the NIV) in v. 8. Faith and faithfulness were ultimately inseparable for Peter, but the latter is rooted in the former.

(Peter here confirms Paul's teaching as to *justification by faith*): also receiving *now* the title to it and the first-fruits of it. In 1 Pe 1:10 the "salvation" is represented as *already present*, whereas "the prophets" had it not as yet present. It must, therefore, in this verse, refer to the present: *Deliverance now from a state of wrath*: believers even now "receive salvation," though its full "revelation" is future.

great salvation is the heart of the apostle Peter's concern in this passage. He wanted his believing audience to focus on that full, final rescue from sin, Satan, death, and hell that God so graciously chose to give them through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Peter celebrates salvation's greatness by reminding his readers that no matter how difficult the circumstances or how severe the persecution, they can confidently hold to the hope of eternal salvation.

There is hardly another word as blessed, hopeful, comforting, or assuring as *salvation*. The message of the Bible is that even though man cannot save himself from the eternal, damning consequences of his sin (Gen. 2:17; Jer. 2:22; 18:12; John 3:19; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:25-26), God can and will rescue from condemnation all those who trust in Him and believe His Word (Matt. 11:28-30; Luke 19:10; John 1:12-13, 29; 3:14-17; Acts 10:43; Eph. 1:7; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 7:25; James 1:18).

Above all, salvation is according to God's sovereign plan and purpose (Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Rev. 13:8). Paul reminded Timothy that God "has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2 Tim. 1:9).

That statement also indicates that God designated His Son to be the means of salvation (cf. 2:6; Isa. 53:6, 10; Matt. 20:18-19; John 1:17; Acts 2:22-24; 13:23-32). Paul earlier declared to the Roman believers, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). And God was faithful to ordain preachers to announce that the work of Jesus Christ is the only means of rescuing sinners (cf. Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Cor. 1:21-25).

No matter how adverse their circumstances, Christians should never stop rejoicing over the greatness of their salvation: "Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day" (Ps. 96:2; cf. Pss. 9:14; 21:1; 40:16; 71:23; 1 Chron. 16:23; Isa. 25:9; 35:10; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Thess. 5:16; Rev. 5:9).

1. the Old Testament prophets who studied it,
 - They were God's Old Testament spokesmen
 - They then pursued the meaning of their own prophetic writings to know all they could about God's promised salvation. Of all the truth the prophets received through divine revelation (cf. Hos. 12:10; Amos 3:7; Heb. 1:1; James 5:10), the truth of salvation was their greatest passion.
 - Though the prophets wrote of Messiah, they never fully comprehended all that was involved in Christ's life, death, and resurrection.
 - The focus of the prophets' intense study in trying to comprehend the person and work of Christ was centered on **the grace that would come** to sinners through Him. Salvation concerns primarily the divine act of saving sinners (cf. Matt. 20:28; Luke 24:46-47; John 12:32-33; Titus 3:7; Heb. 9:24-28), whereas grace encompasses the entire motive behind God's saving work (cf. Acts 20:32; Rom. 5:15; Eph. 2:5, 8-10; 2 Thess. 1:11-12). The prophets sought to understand God's **grace** and mercy in Christ, His forgiveness, goodness, unmerited favor, and blessing lavished on undeserving sinners. They knew that God's promise of a salvation by **the grace that would come** extended far beyond Israel to include people from every nation on earth (Isa. 45:22; 49:6; 52:10; cf. John 10:16; Rom. 15:9-12; 1 John 2:2; Rev. 4:8-10; 7:9).
 - It is crucial to emphasize that the phrase **prophesied of the grace that would come** does not indicate that the prophets looked forward to a saving grace that did not exist at all in Old Testament times. By nature God has always been an unchangeably gracious God (Ex. 34:6; Pss. 102:26-27; 116:5; James 1:17). In the Old Testament, He was gracious to those who believed before Christ came (cf. Ps. 84:11), and since then He is gracious to all who believe (John 1:14).
 - Noah received grace from the Lord (Gen. 6:8). Moses was fully aware of that grace when he first recorded the moral and property right principles of God's law, as Exodus 22:26-27 demonstrates: "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets, for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear him, for I am gracious" (cf. 33:19; Gen. 43:29). The prophet Jonah, even as he struggled to accept the Ninevites' repentance, acknowledged God's grace: "He prayed to the Lord and said, 'Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity' " (Jonah 4:2).
 - Salvation has always been available to sinners (Deut. 32:15; Pss. 3:8; 27:1; Isa. 55:1-2, 6-7; Jonah 2:9) and always and only by grace. So there was never any question during the Old Testament whether

or not God was gracious, but the great manifestation of His grace **would come** with the arrival of His Son. Isaiah prophesied of it:

p 53 Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, you fugitives of the nations; they have no knowledge, who carry about their wooden idol and pray to a god who cannot save. Declare and set forth your case; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. They will say of Me, "Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength." Men will come to Him. (Isa. 45:20-24)

2. the Holy Spirit who inspired it,
3. the New Testament apostles who preached it,
4. and the angels who examined it.

The story began one summer's day toward the end of the nineteenth century when an English city boy was on a visit to rural Scotland. That afternoon the boy went swimming in a small countryside lake. After swimming quite a distance from shore, a severe cramp seized him so that he could not continue swimming. He was in great pain and soon cried out at the top of his voice for help. A farm boy working in a nearby field heard the city boy's screams and ran as fast as he could to the lake. There the farm boy threw off his shirt, dived into the water, swam to the imperiled city boy, and brought him safely to the shore.

Several years later the two boys met again. The city boy, still filled p 50 with gratitude that the other boy had saved his life, was thrilled to see the farm boy again and asked him what career the boy had decided to pursue. The farm boy said he had chosen a career in medicine. Since the city boy's parents were quite wealthy and were greatly indebted to the other boy for saving their son's life, upon hearing of the farm boy's career choice they immediately promised to pay for his medical education. They followed through on their promise and the young man went on to have a brilliant career in scientific investigation.

In 1928 that farm boy, then both a physician and bacteriologist, discovered the famous wonder drug penicillin. In 1945 he shared the Nobel prize with two other scientists for the discovery and development of that antibiotic. That Scottish farm boy turned scientific researcher, who died in 1955, was Alexander Fleming.

The rescued city boy also gained great renown. During World War II he contracted a life-threatening case of pneumonia. He recovered at a hospital after receiving penicillin, which meant that indirectly the one-time farm boy Alexander Fleming had saved his life twice. The city boy's name was Winston Churchill, the famous wartime British prime minister and world statesman. Interestingly, just like Fleming, Churchill won a Nobel prize. But in his instance, he won the 1953 award in literature for his incisive writings on the history of the Second World War.

It is wonderful to save a life, and even more wonderful to save someone's life twice, especially when the one saved was such an influential person as Winston Churchill. But the hard-working, selfless contributions of Alexander Fleming are nothing compared to the greatness of saving people's eternal souls. That great salvation is the heart of the apostle Peter's concern in this passage. He wanted his believing audience to focus on that full, final rescue from sin, Satan, death, and hell that God so graciously chose to give them through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Peter celebrates salvation's greatness by reminding his readers that no matter how difficult the circumstances or how severe the persecution, they can confidently hold to the hope of eternal salvation.

1 Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 10
(Verses 3-12)
(Entire Chapter)

10 Concerning this salvation, ^xthe prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,

Searched. Used nowhere else in the New Testament. Compare Septuagint, 1 Sam. 23:23, of Saul's searching out David.

A great Word Picture!

Sought. Used of Esau's seeking carefully for a place of repentance, in Heb. 12:17.

10 ^aAs to this salvation, the prophets who ^bprophesied of the ^cgrace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries,

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,

¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke^u of the grace that was to come to you,^v searched intently and with the greatest care,^w

Peter explains their privileged status because of the knowledge of the gospel they have received. He compares their knowledge of God's redemptive work as superior to that of both the prophets and the angels. (BECNT)

Peter, however, does not press the privileged status of his readers. Rather, he builds on the unity of the OT prophetic message with the Christian gospel as an apology for the cross and a foundation for his exhortations that follow. It does not appear that it was primarily Peter's knowledge of the OT prophecies that led him to the Messiah. Rather, it was actually seeing and hearing Jesus. But *after* he recognized Jesus as the Messiah on the basis of Jesus' teachings and miracles, the prophets' [p 104](#) forewitness provided a biblical basis that helped Peter later come to grips with the necessary suffering and death of the Messiah, the very concept he had once so resisted as unthinkable (Mark 8:31-33). By witnessing to the sufferings of the Messiah before they happened, the prophets provide a confirming forewitness that a crucified man would indeed be the long-awaited Messiah.

The next three verses (vv. 10-12) attempt to increase our appreciation for the great salvation we enjoy in Jesus Christ. The spiritual blessings believers now experience are greater than anything the Old Testament prophets or even the angels imagined. The prophets longed to participate in this salvation and coming period of grace. They thought about it; they searched the subject out as best they could – all in an effort to comprehend more clearly what we seem to take for granted.

The Spirit of Christ revealed those sufferings and glories to the prophets as a forewitness, allowing the prophet's own generation to live with confidence in the salvation that would one day be achieved. But the prophets' forewitness of the sufferings of the Messiah functions for Peter's readers as a confirmation that the crucified Jesus is indeed the Messiah. Consequently, the unity of the prophetic message of the OT and the Christian gospel is the basis on which Peter will use the teachings and ethics of the OT to exhort and instruct his readers. (BECNT)

The prophets sought out and carefully inquired about the salvation that had come to the Christians of Peter's day. By pointing this out, Peter draws a continuity between what had been foretold in the OT and what has been realized in the life of Jesus and preached in the gospel. (BECNT)

Jesus Christ has already been a part of that work, for it is the "Spirit of Christ" who has revealed the sufferings and glories of the Messiah to the prophets. The knowledge imparted by forewitness to the prophets is now being preached by Christian evangelists as having been historically realized in the life of Jesus. Therefore, Peter views the gospel of Jesus Christ as one with the message of the OT. (BECNT)

The link between vv. 9-10 is the term “salvation” (*sōteria*). The salvation believers experience now, which will be consummated in the future, was also prophesied in the past.

The Old Testament prophets “prophesied of the grace that was to be yours” (NRSV).⁵⁶ The NIV translates the verse so that the repetition of “prophets” and “prophesied” is omitted, but in doing so one of the main emphases of the verse is blunted. What was predicted in the past was intended for Peter’s readers.

The prophets “searched intently and with the greatest care” (*exezētēsan* and *exēraunēsan*) into this salvation. The two verbs should be interpreted together, indicating how ardently the prophets investigated the salvation about which they prophesied.

They were already certain of the redemption being about to come. They did not like us fully *see*, but they *desired* to see the one and the same Christ whom we fully see in spirit. “As Simeon was anxiously desiring previously, and tranquil in peace only when he had seen Christ, so all the Old Testament saints saw Christ only hidden, and as it were absent – absent not in power and grace, but inasmuch as He was not yet manifested in the flesh” [Calvin].

Some scholars have argued that the prophets mentioned here are New Testament prophets.⁵⁸ They believe it makes more sense to conceive of New Testament prophets searching the Scriptures rather than the Old Testament prophets who actually wrote them. Most commentators agree, however, that the Old Testament prophets are the subject of discussion. The latter view is almost surely correct for a number of reasons.⁵⁹ First, searching need not be confined to the Scriptures. It can refer to seeking the Lord (Ps 119:2, LXX), and in this instance it likely refers to their attempt to discern the time when their predictions would be fulfilled.⁶⁰ Second, there is evidence that some of the prophets sought to comprehend their prophecies (Dan 8:15; 12:8). Third, possibly some Old Testament prophets reflected on earlier prophetic writings and attempted to grasp when they would be fulfilled. Fourth, the New Testament prophets knew the time of salvation as well as the Petrine community (v. 11).

1 Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 11
(Verses 3-12)
(Entire Chapter)

11 inquiring ^y what person or time ^z the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating ^a when he predicted ^b the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

Clearly there was great interest among the prophets in *when* their visions of the future would be realized, with specific attention to whether the prophet and his generation would still be alive at the time of fulfillment. Because of this external evidence, most interpreters take both *tina* and *poion* as interrogative adjectives, rendering the phrase “what time or sort of time.” On the other hand, Kilpatrick (1986) has shown that in the NT, forms of τίς, τί (*tis, ti, who? what?*), including τίνα (*tina*), are generally and most frequently used not as adjectives but as pronouns.¹ Of the more than one thousand occurrences in the NT, the word occurs less than twenty times as an adjective. Moreover, in all other occurrences in 1 Peter, *tis, ti* function as pronouns. This would seem to tilt the meaning to be that the prophets wanted to know to whom or what sort of time their prophecies pointed. However, even if *tina* here [p 103](#) is taken as a pronoun in agreement with general NT usage, it need not be understood as masculine singular accusative, referring to *who* the Messiah will be. If *tina* is parsed as a neuter plural accusative interrogative pronoun (what things?), the search of the prophets is not centered on *who* the person of the Messiah would be but on *what circumstances* would lead to his suffering.

(3) how should the phrase εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν (*eis tina ē poion kairon*, into which or what sort of time) be translated and understood?

As Michaels (1988: 42–43) points out, the prophets of the OT times, judging from their writings, were in fact more prone to inquire about *when* their prophetic visions would occur than *who* the Messiah would be. For instance, in Dan. 9:2, Daniel is seeking to understand the times previously prophesied by Jeremiah. In 12:6–13, the prophet asks a heavenly messenger, “*How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?*” (NRSV). He receives the answer “Go your way ... because the words are shut up and sealed *until the time of the end*” (NIV). Similarly, Ezra asks the Lord, “*How long? When will these things be [coming to pass]?*” (2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 4:33 NRSV). And later he wonders (4:51): “Do you think that I shall live *until those days?*” (NRSV). In Hab. 2:1–4, the prophet inquires of the Lord and is told that “the vision *awaits its time*. ... If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come. ... The righteous shall live by faith” (all italics added).

What time or what manner of time (εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν [*eis tina ē poion kairon*]). Proper sense of ποῖος [*poios*] (qualitative interrogative) kept here as in 1 Cor. 15:35; Rom. 3:27,

Jesus Christ has already been a part of that work, for it is the “Spirit of Christ” who has revealed the sufferings and glories of the Messiah to the prophets. The knowledge imparted by forewitness to the prophets is now being preached by Christian evangelists as having been historically realized in the life of Jesus. Therefore, Peter views the gospel of Jesus Christ as one with the message of the OT. (BECNT)

The phrase “Spirit of Christ” (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ, *pneuma Christou*) in verse 11 is somewhat unusual, occurring elsewhere only in Rom. 8:9, “And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ], they do not belong to Christ” (TNIV). Similar expressions are found in Phil. 1:19, where Paul rejoices in the help given by “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *to pneumatos Iēsou Christou*). In Acts 16:7, the apostle Paul is prevented from entering Bithynia – one of the very provinces to which Peter now writes – by “the Spirit of Jesus” (τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ, *to pneuma Iēsou*). And in Gal. 4:6, Paul writes that God sent “the Spirit of his Son” (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, *to pneuma tou huiou autou*) into our hearts.

When it testified beforehand (προμαρτυρόμενον). Only here in New Testament.

Peter was especially concerned to show that the sufferings of Christ were in fulfilment of prophecy, because it was a subject of dispute with the Jews whether the Christ was to suffer (Acts 3:18; 26:22, 23).

The glories of Christ followed the sufferings as in 4:13; 5:1, 6.

11 ¹seeking to know what person or time ^athe Spirit of Christ within
them was indicating as He ^bpredicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories ²to
follow.

¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ^x in them was pointing when he predicted^y the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

So I exhort the elders among you, ^mas a fellow elder and ⁿa witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

Jesus Christ has already been a part of that work, for it is the “Spirit of Christ” who has revealed the sufferings and glories of the Messiah to the prophets. The knowledge imparted by forewitness to the prophets is now being preached by Christian evangelists as having been historically realized in the life of Jesus. Therefore, Peter views the gospel of Jesus Christ as one with the message of the OT.(BECNT)

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Peter continued to emphasize that the Old Testament prophets had a predictive ministry and did not live in the days of fulfillment. Their prophecies were inspired by “the Spirit of Christ,” showing that their words are authoritative and accurate. The prophecies were not the invention of the prophets or their best “guess.” They were “revealed” (*edēlou*, my translation)⁶⁵ by the Spirit of Christ.⁶⁶ The “Spirit of Christ” does not refer to Jesus’ human spirit but the Holy Spirit sent from Jesus (cf. Acts 16:7; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19).⁶⁷ (Unattached Footnote)

IVP New Testament Commentary, re: “Spirit of Christ” as the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is of course the same as the Spirit of Christ, so that Peter says, in effect, that the Spirit who inspired the prophets also inspired the evangelists and gave them insight into the true meaning of the prophets. The activity of the Spirit thus creates the connection between the giving of prophecy in the past and the interpretation of prophecy now.

MacArthur’s Commentary:

That Peter used the phrase **Spirit of Christ within them** (cf. Rom. 8:9) demonstrates that the eternal Christ, inseparable from the Holy Spirit, worked from within the Old Testament writers to record God’s infallible revelation. Hence the apostle wrote in his second letter that “no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:21; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16). The Spirit **was indicating** (*edēlou*, “making plain”) to them **as He predicted** (*promarturomenon*, “witnessed beforehand”) what was coming. He was plainly [p 56](#) testifying to the prophets about God’s salvation that would be fully accomplished through Jesus Christ (cf. the kjv and nkjv rendering, “testified beforehand”).

(2) How should the unusual phrase τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα (*ta eis Christon pathēmata*, the sufferings to Christ) be translated and understood?

The latter phrase, *ta eis Christon pathēmata* (and not the prepositional phrase *eis tina ē poion kairon*) is the direct object of the participle προμαρτυρούμενον (*promartyromenon*, witnessing beforehand), a participle that gives the manner or mode of the imperfect indicative verb ἐδήλου (*edēlou*, was revealing). How the syntax of the phrase *ta eis Christon pathēmata* is construed will determine which prophets are in view. As p 99 Warden (1989: 5) observes, “If the phrase alludes to the suffering of Christ, the prophets of the passage are of necessity Old Testament personalities.” However, there has been some exegetical debate. Selwyn (1958: 134) sees here “a phrase with a wider reference than to the O.T. prophets only, and [that] embraces the whole prophetic tradition, including the Christian prophets.” Warden (1989: 12) corroborates Selwyn’s arguments and concludes that “the prophets of 1 Peter 1:10–12 are contemporary prophets among the first readers of the epistle.” Both interpreters have understood *ta eis Christon pathēmata* to be sufferings of God’s people as they experience the messianic woes leading up to the return of Christ (Selwyn 1958: 136; Warden 1989: 6).

The phrase *ta eis Christon pathēmata* is often translated “the sufferings of Christ” (KJV, NIV, TNIV, NASB) even though the genitive Χριστοῦ (*Christou*, of Christ) is not present. Instead, a prepositional phrase, *eis Christon*, adjectivally modifies the head noun *pathēmata*. By taking *eis* to mean “on behalf of,” this syntax has been understood by some interpreters to refer *not* to sufferings experienced by Christ himself but to those experienced by Christians because of Christ. The plural form of *pathēmata* has been taken to refer to the suffering of many, whereas a singular would be expected if it referred to the crucifixion of Christ. (And note that the “glories” that follow are also plural.) The REB translates this phrase in the context of 1 Peter as “sufferings in Christ’s cause.” Selwyn (1958: 136) renders it “the sufferings of the Christward road,” in an apparent attempt to capture the preposition’s sense of directional movement.

A second way of construing the *eis* phrase is to take it in the sense of an extension in time with the meaning of “until.” BDAG 289 gives Gal. 3:24 as an example of this sense, ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν (*ho nomos paidagōgos hēmōn gegonen eis Christon*), which can be translated, “The law was put in charge of us until Christ came” (TNIV). However, the sense of the prepositional phrase in Gal. 3:24 is also disputed, with the NIV and NASB translating that the law was to lead us “to Christ.”

Scott (1905) construes a temporal sense of *eis* in 1 Pet. 1:11, arguing that the sufferings are not those of Christ but refer to the messianic woes leading up to the second coming of Christ, woes to be suffered by God’s people. Thus understood, the Spirit of Christ has foretold through the prophets the very season of sufferings that the Christians of Asia Minor are experiencing and, furthermore, that their sufferings indicate that the return of Christ is close at hand. This interpretation coheres well with 4:17, in which Peter explains that the sufferings of his readers are in some way a part of the eschatological judgment (see comments on 4:17).

Nevertheless, the sense of this syntax elsewhere in the NT indicates that the phrase *ta eis Christon pathēmata* indeed refers to the sufferings p 100 of the Christ, which – as Peter will go on to explain in chapter 2 – are also to be experienced by those who follow him. Elsewhere the prepositional phrase with *eis* adjectivally modifies its head noun by

specifying the recipients of the verbal action implied by the noun. Perhaps the closest syntactical parallel to 1 Pet. 1:10 is 2 Cor. 1:11, where, in the phrase τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα (*ta eis hēmas charisma*, the grace to us), the head noun *charisma* implies the verb χαρίζομαι (*charizomai*, show gracious favor) and the prepositional phrase *eis hēmas* expresses the recipients of the implied verbal action. This understanding yields the translation “the gracious favor granted us.”

A second close parallel is in 2 Cor. 11:3, with its phrase τῆς ἀπλότητος τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν (*tēs haplotētos tēs eis ton Christon*, the devotion to Christ), where the head noun *haplotētos*, “sincere devotion,” implies the verb “to be devoted.” The prepositional phrase *eis ton Christon* indicates the recipient of that sincere devotion, Christ. Seven other similar examples of this adjectival use of *eis* can be found (Acts 20:21; 26:6; 1 Cor. 15:10; 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1; Eph. 1:15).

Furthermore, the syntax of *ta eis Christon pathēmata* in 1 Pet. 1:11 is parallel to the syntax in 1:10: τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος (*tēs eis hymas charitos*, the grace to you), translated “the grace that has come to you.” The head noun, *charitos*, implies the verb *charizomai* (show gracious favor), where the prepositional phrase *eis hymas* indicates the recipients of the grace, namely, “you.” The genitive, “your grace,” is not used here, probably to avoid the possibility of it being taken to mean the gracious behavior of the Asian Christians. It would seem that the parallel syntax of two somewhat unusual adjectival expressions in such close proximity should be understood to have a parallel sense. In 1:11 the head noun is *pathēmata* (sufferings), which implies the verb “to suffer.” Following the pattern observed, the prepositional phrase *eis Christon* indicates the recipient of the sufferings, Christ.

Moreover, the noun *pathēma* occurs two other times in 1 Peter in reference to Christ (4:13; 5:1), where the genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*tou Christou*, of Christ) is explicitly found in both occurrences. Therefore, both general NT usage and evidence specific to the letter indicate that in 1:11 Peter does indeed have in mind the sufferings that Jesus Christ endured. He chooses a prepositional phrase with *eis* rather than the genitive because of the prophetic perspective of the immediate context. In other words, the prophets in view were speaking long before the sufferings occurred, but they knew that sufferings would come to the Messiah. In the parallel syntax of verse 10, those prophets also foresaw the grace that would come and, in Peter’s opinion, had come *eis hymas*, “to you,” the Christians to whom Peter writes. Just as the Messiah would be the recipient of sufferings, God’s people, among whom the Christians of Asia Minor now find themselves remarkably included, will be the recipients of grace.

Selwyn thinks, however, that “the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (v. 11) refer to the sufferings of Christians.⁶¹ This reading is just possible since the Greek could be read “the sufferings with reference to Christ” (*ta eis Christon pathēmata*) or the sufferings “designated or intended for the Christ.”⁶² We should reject this interpretation as well. In v. 10 a similar construction is used “grace ... to you” (*eis hymas charis*), and it refers to the grace that *belongs to Christians*. Similarly, the idea here is of the sufferings and glories that belong to Christ.⁶³ Further, the idea that Christ would suffer and then enter glory is a common feature of New Testament preaching (cf.

Acts 2:14–36; 3:11–26; 13:16–41).⁶⁴ Note, for p 73 example, “Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” (Luke 24:26); “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day” (Luke 24:46); “I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22–23). Fifth, the phrase “have now been told you” in 1 Pet 1:12 indicates that the prophets belonged to a former era, one in which they did not grasp fully the things “now” revealed to believers.

See also 1 Peter 5:1

“So I exhort the elders among you, ^mas a fellow elder and ⁿa witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: “

As Michaels (1988: 42–43) points out, the prophets of the OT times, judging from their writings, were in fact more prone to inquire about *when* their prophetic visions would occur than *who* the Messiah would be. For instance, in Dan. 9:2, Daniel is seeking to understand the times previously prophesied by Jeremiah. In 12:6–13, the prophet asks a heavenly messenger, “*How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?*” (NRSV). He receives the answer “Go your way ... because the words are shut up and sealed *until the time of the end*” (NIV). Similarly, Ezra asks the Lord, “*How long? When will these things be [coming to pass]?*” (2 Esd. [4 Ezra] 4:33 NRSV). And later he wonders (4:51): “Do you think that I shall live *until those days?*” (NRSV). In Hab. 2:1–4, the prophet inquires of the Lord and is told that “the vision *awaits its time*. ... If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come. ... The righteous shall live by faith” (all italics added).

what—Greek, “In reference to what, or what manner of time.” *What* expresses the *time* absolutely: what was to be the era of Messiah’s coming; *what manner of time*; what events and features should characterize the time of His coming. The “or” implies that some of the prophets, if they could not as individuals discover the exact *time*, searched into its characteristic features and events. The Greek for “time” is *the season*, the epoch, the fit time in God’s purposes.

Wuest’s Word Studies:

What they looked for was as to *what time* or if they could not find that, *what kind of time* would usher in this particular unique salvation. The answer to their question would throw light upon the character of that salvation. There are two words referring to time, *chronos* (χρονος) which speaks of time contemplated simply as such, the succession of moments, and *kairos* (καιρος) which speaks of a limited period of time, with the added notion of suitability. Both words appear in the answer of Jesus, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons” (Acts 1:6, 7), the times (*chronos* (χρονος)), the seasons (*kairos* (καιρος)). The seasons (*kairos* (καιρος)) are the joints or articulations of the times (*chronos* (χρονος)). The seasons (*kairos* (καιρος)) represent the critical epoch-making periods when all that has been maturing through long ages comes to a head in grand decisive events which constitute the close of one period and the beginning of another. Such an event the prophets were searching for. If they could find out when it would occur, well and good, and if not, they would attempt to ascertain of what character the event would be.

The great event ushering in a new order of things which they were looking for was Pentecost, the time when the Body of Christ was formed. Paul speaks of this mystery in the words, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:5, 6). That the Gentiles were to be saved, was no mystery to the Old Testament writers, but that the wall of separation so rigidly held in Old Testament times between Gentile and Jew was to be broken down at the Cross, and that the two would become one body, that was the mystery. Peter did not see this truth until eight years after Pentecost (Acts 10:1-48). Here we have the great truth of the Body of Christ, its living Head, the Lord Jesus Himself, its members, all believers of this Age of Grace which began at Pentecost and closes with the Rapture, Jew and Gentile becoming one body in Christ.

Clearly there was great interest among the prophets in *when* their visions of the future would be realized, with specific attention to whether the prophet and his generation would still be alive at the time of fulfillment. Because of this external evidence, most interpreters take both *tina* and *poion* as interrogative adjectives, rendering the phrase “what time or sort of time.” On the other hand, Kilpatrick (1986) has shown that in the NT, forms of *τίς, τί* (*tis, ti, who? what?*), including *τίνα* (*tina*), are generally and most frequently used not as adjectives but as pronouns.¹ Of the more than one thousand occurrences in the NT, the word occurs less than twenty times as an adjective. Moreover, in all other occurrences in 1 Peter, *tis, ti* function as pronouns. This would seem to tilt the meaning to be that the prophets wanted to know to whom or what sort of time their prophecies pointed. However, even if *tina* here p 103 is taken as a pronoun in agreement with general NT usage, it need not be understood as masculine singular accusative, referring to *who* the Messiah will be. If *tina* is parsed as a neuter plural accusative interrogative pronoun (what things?), the search of the prophets is not centered on *who* the person of the Messiah would be but on *what circumstances* would lead to his suffering.

We can infer Christ’s preexistence from what is said here, since the subject is Old Testament prophecy. The preexistence of Christ is also implied in 1:20.⁶⁸ What the prophets desired to know and what they “searched out” (*eraunōntes*, note the link to the verb *exēraunēsan* in v. 10) fervently was “the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated” (NRSV). The words of the NRSV represent an interpretation of the Greek phrase *eis tina ē poion kairon*, and the meaning of this phrase is debated. The NIV provides another interpretation, “trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing.” The NRSV favors the view that the prophecies were both about the person of the Messiah and the time of his appearing.⁶⁹ The NIV, on the other hand, sees only p 74 a reference to time, understanding the two pronouns as overlapping in meaning. A decision is quite difficult since both interpretations are sensible, and both can be defended lexically.⁷⁰ The pronoun *tis* is used both as an interrogative pronoun (e.g., 1 Pet 3:13; 4:17; 5:8; cf. Acts 8:34) and as an interrogative adjective (Matt 5:46; Luke 14:31; John 2:18; Acts 10:21; Rom 3:1).⁷¹ Dogmatism should be avoided, but it seems to me that the interpretation proposed by the NIV is preferable.⁷² First, Michaels probably is correct in noting that the prophets knew they were prophesying about the Messiah, and hence they would not be questioning that fact.⁷³ It seems unlikely that they were wondering precisely which person would fill that role. Second, the entire focus of the text is on the temporal difference between the Old Testament prophets and the Petrine Christians. The prophets prophesied about what was not fulfilled in their day. They “predicted” (*promartyromenōn*) Christ’s suffering and glory (v. 11). His “glories” (*doxas*) refer here to his resurrection and triumph over evil powers (1:3; 3:19–22).⁷⁴ The prophets were serving Petrine Christians, not themselves, and the fulfillment is “now” announced to you (v. 12). Third, the great desire of the prophets was that the prophecies

would be fulfilled in their days, that they would see what they promised coming to pass (cf. Dan 12:5-13; Hab 2:1-4). Therefore I suggest that the words (lit.) "which or what sort of time" are there for emphasis, to stress that the prophets did not know when the prophecies would be fulfilled, whereas Petrine believers live in the days of fulfillment.

Peter further indicates that the Old Testament prophets were not interested in just the general doctrine of salvation or the general teaching about Messiah. They sought to know more precisely **what person** would come as savior, judge, prophet, priest, and king, and during what season or era (**time**) that coming would occur. The queries were about who and when. (It should be noted here that today's believers regularly face the same questions regarding New Testament prophecies of the future. They can know the events revealed in Scripture, but the exact identities of key persons involved and when precisely certain events will occur is an ongoing course of study for all interested in eschatology.) John the Baptist, the last Old Testament prophet and forerunner of Christ, provides a classic illustration of this searching inquisitiveness among the prophets. John's disciples already knew about Jesus' ministry (cf. Matt. 9:14) and had reported to him about it (Luke 7:18). Yet John wanted to know for sure if Jesus was the predicted Messiah:

When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities. Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by [p 55](#) his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" (Matt. 11:1-3)

In response, Jesus gave His credentials – all of which fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (cf. Isa. 29:18-19; 35:5-10; 61:1) about Messiah: "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them' " (vv. 4-5). John had earlier pointed to Jesus and prophesied, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Even though the Holy Spirit inspired him to declare that, he still pondered its meaning and wanted to ascertain if indeed Jesus was the Messiah (Luke 7:18-23).

the "glory" that is to be ours, if we believe, is necessarily tied to sufferings we must endure - after all that's the pattern we see in Jesus' life

In their searching for more, they discovered that Jesus would first of all suffer and only then would glory follow. The pattern seen in the life of Christ is, in fact, the pattern of our lives. Our suffering is not a sign that Christ has betrayed us, or that he is no longer concerned about us, or that he has abdicated his throne. Our suffering is a sign of our fellowship with the resurrected Lord, who first suffered for us. Suffering, in some respects, becomes a sign of the glory that is to follow in our lives when we enter the presence of Christ in heaven.

Knowing Jesus gives us a clearer picture of salvation than the prophets ever knew. It reminds us that our pain and suffering do not diminish the living hope that has been given to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The prophet reveals God's provision of salvation for all the nations. Isaiah and the other prophets did not see that Gentile salvation realized (cf. Rom. 15:8-12; Eph. 3:4-7), but they knew Messiah would effect it (Isa. 53:4-5).

They wrote about a salvation grace that was far more extensive than anything they had observed (cf. Deut. 32:43; 2 Sam. 22:50; Pss. 18:49; 117:1; 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 11:1-5, 10; 28:16; 65:1-2; Jer. 17:7; Hos. 1:10; 2:23), and those prophecies contained several basic facts, some of which were later quoted by New Testament writers such as the apostle Paul (e.g., Rom. 9:25-26, 33; 10:11-13, 20; 15:8-12, 20-21).

1. First, the prophecies declared that Messiah would suffer. Psalm 22 describes His crucifixion, and Isaiah 53 describes other details of His suffering.
2. Second, the Old Testament writers prophesied that Messiah would triumph. The psalmist says God will set His King, Jesus Christ, on His holy hill, where Christ will then rule with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:6-9). Psalm 16:10 says God will not allow His Holy One to undergo decay – and Christ did rise from the grave and ascend to heaven forty days later (Luke 24:1-12; Acts 1:2-9). The prophet Isaiah wrote that the government would be on Messiah's shoulders and He would be a mighty God, reigning from the throne of David (Isa. 9:6-7).
3. Third, the prophets foresaw a Messiah who would save. Isaiah gave the Messiah's mandate: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (Isa. 61:1-2). Jesus read those words to the congregation in His hometown synagogue and proclaimed Himself the fulfillment of them (Luke 4:16-21).

Though the Old Testament prophets knew that their writings described a future manifestation of salvation grace, their desire to understand those prophecies was still so compelling and pervasive that they **made careful searches and inquiries** into their own writings. Those two terms emphasize the intensity with which the prophets had delved p 54 into their prophecies and the diligence with which they had investigated them to better understand the magnitude of salvation grace.

As Jesus told His disciples, "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" (Matt. 13:17; cf. Isa. 6:11; Hab. 1:2). Because the Old Testament prophets, including the last one, John the Baptist, were limited, they were all the more intent on studying their own writings to see the Messiah and comprehend the salvation He would bring.

The prophecies the Holy Spirit revealed to the prophets were divinely inspired and recorded under His superintendence (cf. Jer. 1:9; 23:28; Ezek. 2:7; Amos 3:7-8). And the overall theme of those prophecies was twofold: **the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow**.

1. The Old Testament refers to **the sufferings of Christ** in such passages as Psalm 22:1-31; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Daniel 9:24-26; and Zechariah 12:10; 13:7 (cf. Ps. 89:24-37; Luke 24:25-27; Rev. 19:10).
2. **The glories to follow**, including such truths as the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Christ, appear in passages like Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; and Zechariah 2:10-13; 14:16-17.

Moses and the other prophets were looking ahead to the culmination of Christ's saving work in a future segment of redemptive history (cf. Heb. 1:1-2). The writer of Hebrews provides additional insight, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance" (Heb. 11:13; cf. vv. 39-40).

Still the prophecies had immense value (cf. Luke 1:70; Acts 3:18; 1 Thess. 5:20; 2 Peter 1:19), though their fulfillment was not for the Old Testament prophets to witness. They instead looked ahead to a time when Messiah's saving work would embrace believers from all nations in new covenant blessings (Pss. 22:27-28; 72:8-17; cf. Isa. 42:6; 60:1-3; 62:1-3, 11-12; 66:12-13).

They lived in hope, just as Christians do who anticipate their Lord's Second Coming. Old Testament saints were saved by faith in God based on the fact that Messiah Jesus would in the future bear the full judgment of God for their sins (Isa. 53:4-6). God was always applying the new covenant, always by grace offering forgiveness of sins to those who repented and believed, although the new covenant was not ratified until the cross. Old Testament believers were saved by a future grace, New Testament ones by a past grace – the Cross is the pinnacle of redemption.

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1 Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 12
(Verses 3-12)
(Entire Chapter)

12 ^cIt was revealed to them that ^dthey 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 ^eby the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, ^fthings into which angels long to look.

Compared with the prophets, the generation that saw Jesus had a privileged status that was announced by Jesus himself (Luke 10:23–24 // Matt. 13:16–17): “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it” (TNIV). And again in Matt 11:11, Jesus states, “Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (TNIV). Of all the times to be alive in human history, it is a supreme privilege to be alive in the period of history following the coming of Christ, when the gospel is clearly preached. Through the witness of those who saw and heard Jesus, subsequent generations also see and hear.

Peter knows his readers also needed to understand what he himself had come to know: that the suffering and death of Jesus Christ was not an untimely accident or tragic mistake but rather a necessity that had long been foretold. After the Christ has suffered, the predictive aspect of prophecy recedes, and the prophecy becomes a confirmation for the benefit of the generation who would see the Messiah suffer, and for the generations to follow them, that they might rightly understand the cross of Jesus. They need to know that the foreseen suffering of the Messiah necessarily preceded the expected glory of the Messiah. Peter extends this concept to develop the idea that as followers of Christ, his readers should therefore not be surprised when they, too, suffer (1 Pet. 4:12). Their sufferings for the name of Christ unite them to the experience and purposes of their Lord.

In a move that splits Christian interpretation of the OT prophets from subsequent Jewish interpretation, Peter identifies what was foreknown by the prophets to be the very things that have now been preached to his readers through those who evangelized them:

In the Past	In the Present
Prophets prophesied these things	that evangelists have now preached to you.
The Spirit revealed future things to the prophets.	Now the Spirit has told you [the same things] through evangelists.
Prophets inquired into the circumstances or time of the Messiah's sufferings and glories.	Angels eagerly desire to look into the Messiah's sufferings and glories.

Desire (ἐπιθυμοῦσιν). The word commonly denotes *intense* desire. It is used by Christ in expressing his wish to eat the passover (Luke 22:15); of the prodigal's desire to satisfy his hunger with the husks (Luke 15:16); and of the flesh lusting against the spirit (Gal. 5:17).

Long translates *epithumousin*, which describes having a strong desire or overpowering impulse that is not easily satisfied.

Long translates *epithumousin*, which describes having a strong desire or overpowering impulse that is not easily satisfied. The [p 58](#) term indicates that the angels' interest in salvation is not merely whimsical or an incidental curiosity but a strong passion with them. **Look** (*parakupsai*) literally means to stretch one's head forward or to bend down. Another form of the same word denotes what the apostle John did at Jesus' tomb, "and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there" (John 20:5; cf. v. 11). The angels, as it were, want to get down close and look deeply into the matters related to salvation.

c. The Angels' Interest in the Gospel (1:12b)

Peter notes the privileged status of his readers by observing that even angels are intently interested in these things. Angels (there is no definite article) eagerly desire to παρακύψαι (*parakypsai*, to peer into from without). The verb does not require the preposition *eis* but occurs with it, for instance in John 20:11, where Mary “peers into the empty tomb.” In James 1:25 the expression is used to describe the person who “looks intently into the perfect law.” Jewish apocalyptic writings frequently speak of the angels as observers of earthly events. For instance, in 1 En. 9.1 the great archangels Michael, Surafel, and Gabriel observe the bloodshed and oppression on the earth. In the NT, Jesus himself claimed that angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who repents, implying angelic attentiveness to earthly happenings (Luke 15:10).

The direct object of the angels' interest is the neuter plural relative pronoun ἧ (*ha*, which), referring back to the things (the neuter plural relative pronoun *ha* earlier in 1 Pet. 1:12) that are being preached to Peter's readers. That pronoun in turn refers back to the αὐτά (*auta*), “things the prophets ministered” that were for Peter's generation but not their own. The “things now told you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven” are the same “things” that the prophets

ministered.² Michaels (1988: 48) takes the antecedent p 105 of these pronouns to be “the mystery of God's redemptive plan.” Selwyn (1958: 138) understands the antecedent to be “the circumstances of the Church and the progress of its redemptive work.” However, the things the prophets ministered and into which angels desired to look are specifically the sufferings and glories destined for the Messiah in verse 11 (Achtmeier 1996: 111; Shimada 1981: 146–47). It is specifically the sufferings of Jesus in his crucifixion and the glory of his resurrection that are being preached throughout the Roman world.

There is some debate whether these angels are those who serve God or the fallen angels hostile to God. Peter mentions angels in only one other passage, 3:22, where he states that angels, authorities, and powers are in submission to the resurrected Christ.³ Boring (1999: 66) construes the verb ἐπιθυμοῦσιν (*epithymousin*, eagerly desire) to have the negative connotation of “lusting after” and assumes these are the same beings referred to in 3:19–22. However, there is nothing to suggest fallen angels are in view here, nor would that sense sit well in the flow of thought in 1:12. The point is that the sufferings and glories of Christ that have been preached to Peter's readers not only were the subject of the prophets' attention but are even the center of the angels' interest. He 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 they could have known—more privileged than either the great prophets of old or the angels above. This provides further motivation for joy even in the midst of suffering. Clearly the gospel message is of great value if it is the focus of attention of the prophets of old and the angels of heaven. Christians should therefore rejoice that they have obtained that precious message.

To look into (παρακνυψαι [*parakupsai*]). First aorist active infinitive of παρακνυπτο [*parakuptō*], old compound to peer into as in Luke 24:12; John 20:5, 11; James 1:25, which see.

To look into (παρακύνψαι). A very graphic word, meaning *to stoop sideways* (παρά). Used by Aristophanes to picture the attitude of a bad harp-player. Here it portrays one stooping and stretching the neck to gaze on some wonderful sight. It occurs in Jas. 1:25, describing him who looks into the perfect law of liberty as into a mirror; and in Luke 24:12; John 20:5, 11, of Peter and John and Mary *stooping* and looking into the empty tomb. Possibly the memory of this incident unconsciously suggested the word to Peter. The phrase illustrates Peter's habitual emphasis upon the testimony of *sight* (see Introduction). Bengel acutely notes the hint in παρά, *beside*, that the angels contemplate the work of salvation *from without*, as spectators and not as participants. Compare Heb. 2:16; Eph. 3:10.

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^a preached the gospel to you by^b the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which^c angels long to¹ look. (Unattached Footnote)

¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

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Old Testament prophets longed to see and experience the fulfillment of what they prophesied. But God “revealed” (*apekalyphthē*, it is a divine passive) to them that their ministry of prophecy and foretelling would not be realized in their day. Their ministry was not ultimately directed to themselves or their own generation but to Petrine readers and all those who live on the other side of the death and resurrection of Christ. In other words, the Old Testament prophecies *do not only apply* to Peter’s readers but were *intended* for them.⁷⁵ Further, Peter “claims not only that the Old Testament prophets were ministering ultimately to believers in the *eschaton*, but that the prophets *knew* it by revelation.”⁷⁶ (Unattached Footnote)

Peter’s main point throughout is that believers in Jesus Christ are incredibly blessed to live in the time when the predictions of the prophets have come to pass.⁸⁰ A similar lesson was communicated to the apostles by Jesus himself: “Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it” (Matt 13:16–17).⁸¹ (Unattached Footnote)

...the privilege of enjoying and anticipating salvation comes to the forefront. Old Testament prophets saw it from afar, and angels also marvel when gazing upon what God has done in Christ, while the Petrine readers actually experience it.⁸³

MacArthur’s Commentary:

If the greatness of the salvation yet to come was the intense, preoccupying study of all the prophets, then it ought to be just as precious, if not more so, to those believers today who have the full revelation.

Peter, however, does not press the privileged status of his readers. Rather, he builds on the unity of the OT prophetic message with the Christian gospel as an apology for the cross and a foundation for his exhortations that follow. It does not appear that it was primarily Peter's knowledge of the OT prophecies that led him to the Messiah. Rather, it was actually seeing and hearing Jesus. But *after* he recognized Jesus as the Messiah on the basis of Jesus' teachings and miracles, the prophets' [p 104](#) forewitness provided a biblical basis that helped Peter later come to grips with the necessary suffering and death of the Messiah, the very concept he had once so resisted as unthinkable (Mark 8:31-33). By witnessing to the sufferings of the Messiah before they happened, the prophets provide a confirming forewitness that a crucified man would indeed be the long-awaited Messiah.

IVP New Testament Commentary, re: the connection between how Peters starts in verse 3 and how he continues in verses 10-12:

The use of prayers to exhort the congregation, and even to educate the Lord himself, is not exactly unknown in the church today, and those who adopt such practices can claim excellent precedents. This section, 1:3-12, started off as an expression of thanks to God for the living hope that Christians enjoy, but by the time Peter reaches this paragraph he no longer is giving the reasons for praising God. He is teaching. In fact, from verse 6 onward, he has been giving a theological explanation of his readers' situation in relation to their future salvation.

We do too (benefit).

“Peter knows his readers also needed to understand what he himself had come to know: that the suffering and death of Jesus Christ was not an untimely accident or tragic mistake but rather a necessity that had long been foretold. After the Christ has suffered, the predictive aspect of prophecy recedes, and the prophecy becomes a confirmation for the benefit of the generation who would see the Messiah suffer, and for the generations to follow them, that they might rightly understand the cross of Jesus. They need to know that the foreseen suffering of the Messiah necessarily preceded the expected glory of the Messiah. Peter extends this concept to develop the idea that as followers of Christ, his readers should therefore not be surprised when they, too, suffer (1 Pet. 4:12). Their sufferings for the name of Christ unite them to the experience and purposes of their Lord.”

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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.⁷⁷ 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. Indeed, the gospel fulfills what is found in the Old Testament, and in that sense the prophetic character of the Old Testament can only be grasped in light of the fulfillment now realized in Jesus Christ. It seems fair to conclude from what Peter said here that the fulfillment of the Old Testament in Jesus Christ is “*related to but more than* that which the human authors intended.”⁷⁸ McCartney rightly argues that this text is paradigmatic for Peter’s use of the Old Testament. The Old Testament Scriptures speak of Christ and those who belong to him. Since believers are united with Christ, the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled with reference to Christ and those who believe in him.⁷⁹

IVP New Testament Commentary:

Peter assumes that this theme was what God had done in the coming of Christ (and what he would continue to do) for those who believed.

He then states that the prophets asked God about the significance of the message which they had received from him. The prophets are envisaged as engaging in dialog with God. We know that some of them did talk to God about the message that they were given to deliver. (Jeremiah is the prime example of a person who expostulated with God about his painful message to the people.) But again he puts it from a Christian angle by saying that they asked God concerning *this salvation*; his choice of this phrase is dictated by the fact that he himself had used the word *salvation* in the previous verses to describe God’s gift to Christians.

Peter explains more closely what the prophets did by saying that they enquired in what time and circumstances the prophecies would be fulfilled, which they had been given by the Spirit concerning the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow. Later Peter will cite phrases from Isaiah 53 as prophecies of the suffering of Jesus, and obviously this passage is typical of what he has in mind at this point. The prophets wanted to know in what way this kind of prophecy would be fulfilled.

it was well that they should have this “revealed” to them, lest they should be disheartened in not clearly discovering with all their *inquiry and search* the full particulars of the coming “salvation.” To Daniel (Da 9:25, 26) the “time” was revealed. *Our* immense privileges are thus brought forth by contrast with theirs, notwithstanding that they had the great honor of Christ’s Spirit speaking in them; and this, as an incentive to still greater earnestness on our part than even they manifested (1 Pe 1:13, &c.).

Angels do not any more than ourselves possess an intuitive knowledge of redemption. "To look into" in *Greek* is literally, "to bend over so as to look deeply into and see to the bottom of a thing." See on Jam 1:25, on same word. As the cherubim stood bending over the mercy seat, the emblem of redemption, in the holiest place, so the angels intently gaze upon and desire to fathom the depths of "the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, *seen of angels*" (1 Ti 3:16). Their "ministry to the heirs of salvation" naturally disposes them to wish to penetrate this mystery as reflecting such glory on the love, justice, wisdom, and power of their and our God and Lord. They can know it only through its manifestation in the Church, as they personally have not the direct share in it that we have. "Angels have only the contrast between good and evil, without the power of conversion from sin to righteousness: witnessing such conversion in the Church, they long to penetrate the knowledge of the means whereby it is brought about" [Hofman in Alford].

Wuest's Word Studies:

Peter says that the angels desire to look into these things. The word "desire" is a strong one, referring to a passionate desire. "To look into" is the translation of *parakupto* (παράκλυπτο), used in Luke 24:12 and John 20:5, 11, of Peter, John, and Mary stooping down and looking into the empty tomb. The word means, "to look at with head bent forward, to look into with the body bent, to stoop and look into." Metaphorically it means, "to look carefully into, to inspect curiously." It is used in the latter sense in this passage. The preposition *para* (παρα) prefixed to the verb means "beside" and is used at times with a case denoting separation. Thus the angels peer into the mysteries of Church truth from beside it, like the cherubim bending over the Mercy Seat where man has access to God through a substitutionary sacrifice that cleanses him from sin. They are not participants in the salvation but spectators of it.

Wuest's Word Studies, re: the Church as the teacher and instructor and demonstrator to Angels -

Paul writing in a context of this mystery says, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). The principalities and powers are of course the holy angels. The manifold wisdom of God as seen in the context is the truth of the Body of Christ. "Might be known" is passive and is more properly rendered "might be made known." "By" is the translation of *dia* (δια), the preposition of intermediate agency. That is, this truth is to be made known to the holy angels by means of the instrumentality of the Church. The Church is the teacher of angels. Paul says that the apostles "are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (I Cor. 4:9). How the angels watch the saints. How they wonder at creatures once totally depraved, now living holy lives that glorify God. It is in the Church that they catch the supreme view of God's love, sinners saved by grace, raised to a seat in the heavenly places in Christ. The Church is God's university for angels. The verse reads, "To the intent that now to the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by means of the instrumentality of the church, the manifold wisdom of God."

IVP New Testament Commentary:

4. He adds the interesting statement that *the angels long to look into these things*. We should presume that angels are ignorant of certain things (Mk 13:32; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:6-9), and that they long to know more as they see the fulfillment of God's purposes (Lk 15:10; Rom 8:19). The remark underlines how fortunate are those living to see and experience personally the fulfillment of the prophecies (compare Mt 13:16-17; Lk 10:23-24).

MacArthur's Commentary:

Believers wonder what the angels know and experience in the spiritual and invisible realm. Scripture indicates some of the things angels do (oppose demons, Dan. 10:13; Jude 9; carry messages from God, Dan. 8:16-17; 9:21-23; 10:11; 12:6-7; Matt. 2:13; Luke 1:19, 28; 2:10-14; and perform other divine service, 1 Kings 19:5; Ps. 91:11-12; Matt. 4:11; 13:39-42; Acts 12:7-11; Heb. 1:14). Christians desire to have eternal holiness and experience glory and fellowship with the Trinity as the elect angels do. But conversely the angels wonder what it is like to experience the grace and glory of salvation and God's forgiveness from sin. In fact, Peter says, they are continually looking with fascination into salvation's greatness.

Long translates *epithumousin*, which describes having a strong desire or overpowering impulse that is not easily satisfied. The [p 58](#) term indicates that the angels' interest in salvation is not merely whimsical or an incidental curiosity but a strong passion with them. **Look** (*parakupsai*) literally means to stretch one's head forward or to bend down. Another form of the same word denotes what the apostle John did at Jesus' tomb, "and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there" (John 20:5; cf. v. 11). The angels, as it were, want to get down close and look deeply into the matters related to salvation. They have a holy curiosity to understand the kind of grace they will never experience. The holy angels do not need to be saved, and the fallen angels cannot be saved. But the holy ones seek to understand salvation so that they might glorify God more fully, which is their primary reason for existence (Job 38:7; Ps. 148:2; Isa. 6:3; Luke 2:13-14; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11-12; 7:11-12; cf. Neh. 9:6; Phil. 2:9-11).

The message of the gospel has as its foundation the fulfilled prophecies concerning Jesus' death burial and resurrection

1. What the prophets foretold is now the content of the evangelistic message of the church. From Paul's summary of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 we gain full confirmation of this point. The gospel, as proclaimed by him and by the other apostles, was: "Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*, he was buried, he was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures*, and he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve." This message, although couched in the form of a historical report, is backed up from the Scriptures: his death for our sins and his resurrection on the third day were prophesied in the Scriptures and thus are the fulfillment of these prophecies.

What, then, has this passage to say to modern readers?

1. It reminds us that from a Christian point of view the Old Testament is not just a time-bound book, with prophetic messages meant purely for the original readers. Important though this aspect is, the Old Testament is rightly recognized to have a future orientation. Specific passages look ahead to the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the church, and we will interpret some passages wrongly if we insist on finding in them a message purely for the prophets' own times.
2. There is a continuity in revelation. The church can take over the Old Testament as part of its Scriptures; indeed, it must do so. The same Holy Spirit was active in both Old Testament and New Testament times, bearing witness to Christ. The Old Testament contains expressions of the will and purpose of God which are valid at all times.
3. If the prophets had to learn that some of God's messages were meant for others and not for themselves, perhaps we need to learn that not all of Scripture is meant to speak directly to us nor written with us in mind. It is true that "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful in teaching" (2 Tim 3:16), but we should differentiate between passages written for God's people in general and passages written for specific people with a primary application to them and only a secondary application to us. For example, the prophecy of Obadiah is concerned with a very specific situation in the history of the Israelites and their neighbors in Edom. The details of the message have a strictly local application. If we are to hear in it a word from God for us, we will only perceive it properly when we observe what general principles of divine teaching come to particular expression in it and reapply the message to ourselves. To take a trivial example in this letter, *she who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark (5:13)* conveys a message to Peter's original readers and not to us. The message of the verse to us is an indirect one, an example of the way in which we should express our sympathy and love for Christians sharing in the same difficulties and trials as ourselves.

Years earlier Peter **announced** these **p 57** truths in the first recorded apostolic sermon, delivered on Pentecost, "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself' " (Acts 2:38-39; cf. 2 Cor. 6:2).

Paul illustrates well the singular devotion such preachers had to the greatness of the salvation message. He wrote to the Corinthian believers,

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1-5; cf. Rom. 1:16-17)

It is not that the angels have been uninvolved in God's plan of salvation. They announced Christ's birth (Luke 1:26-35; 2:10-14), ministered to Him during His times of testing (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43), stood by the grave when He arose from the dead (Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:4-7; Luke 24:4-7), attended His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:10-11), and now serve Him by ministering to all believers (3:22; Heb. 1:14). God has made His angels witnesses to what occurs in the body of Christ. They rejoice and praise God whenever He saves a sinner (Luke 15:7, 10). They were watching the apostle Paul and the other apostles (1 Cor. 4:9). God continues to put His saving grace on display before the angels "that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:10).

Though the angels will never experience redemption, the book of Revelation contains a fascinating portrayal of their interest in it:

And He [Christ, the Lamb] came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev. 5:7-12)

p 59 The holy angels will join the song of redemption even though they have not experienced salvation. They have been witnesses to the greatness of God's salvation, and they **long to look** further into it so they might praise and glorify Him more.

No matter how difficult life's trials are, Christians can face them triumphantly because of the greatness of God's grace in giving them a salvation the prophets studied, the Holy Spirit inspired, the apostles preached, and the angels continue to investigate.