

# THE GREATNESS OF SALVATION

## 1 Peter 1:10-12

### INTRODUCTION

- There are many frivolous studies being pursued by university academics today, wasting time and resources
- There are also many worthy studies being conducted that will improve the lives of people
- But there is one field of study that surpasses every other for its scope and effects
- The reward to those who diligently search it out is everlasting life
- The doctrine of *the salvation of sinners by the grace of God* is the greatest subject that a man can study
- *Soteriology* is the term used to describe the doctrine of salvation
- At the centre of the doctrine of salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ, his person and work, then the application of salvation to sinners by faith
  - ✓ The *objective* side of soteriology deals with Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, his Second Coming, his ministry as Prophet, Priest, and King
  - ✓ The *subjective* side of soteriology deals with the application of salvation to the believer, including conviction of sin, repentance, faith, sanctification, glorification
- Think of all that salvation entails:
  - ✓ It begins with the eternal God
  - ✓ His creation of all things, particularly man in the image of God
  - ✓ The communion of God with man in Eden
  - ✓ Man's rebellion against God in sinning against him, bringing the curse and death into the world
  - ✓ The mercy of God in not destroying humanity immediately
  - ✓ The mercy of God shown to penitent sinners
  - ✓ The calling of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
  - ✓ The establishment of the nation of Israel
  - ✓ The means of atonement through blood sacrifice

- ✓ The coming of Christ in human flesh for our salvation
  - ✓ His righteous life, atoning death, and justifying resurrection
  - ✓ The work of the Spirit in convicting of sin and working godly sorrow
  - ✓ The Father drawing sinners to a saving knowledge of Christ
  - ✓ The forgiveness of sins, the new birth, the adoption as sons, the sanctification of the Spirit
  - ✓ The resurrection to life eternal, with incorruptible bodies
  - ✓ The eternal tabernacle of God with men
- Is there any theme ever conceived that comes near to the glory and wonder of God's salvation of sinners?
  - As Peter writes to these persecuted believers, he does not begin his letter by instructing them on how to behave under the circumstances they are in
  - The practical instruction starts at v.13, but before that, he lays the foundation in the opening 12 verses of the eternal salvation they possess in Christ
  - As believers, they are chosen by God (v.2), begotten by God (v.3), have an inheritance with God (v.4), are kept by God (v.5), are tried by God (vv.6-7), therefore they can rejoice in God (vv.6,8) no matter what this world throws at them
  - As he closes the introductory section, Peter reiterates how blessed we are as believers in possessing salvation, and he does so by highlighting its importance from four different perspectives: the prophets, the Holy Spirit, the evangelists, and the angels

The greatness of salvation is demonstrated by:

## **I. THE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPHETS**

### **A. The role of the Old Testament prophets**

1. God, throughout history has raised up men to declare his message to the world
  - a. It involved *forthtelling* – proclaiming the word of God to the people of their day
  - b. It involved *foretelling* – predictive prophecy concerning future events
2. The prophets became the medium by which God revealed his otherwise secret counsels to mankind (Amos 3:7)

3. God initiated the means of saving sinful mankind through his Son, and he has conveyed that message of salvation through his prophets
    - a. They proclaimed God's salvation to man
    - b. They prophesied how God would save man through Christ
  4. Their message was of the "grace" (v.10) of God in saving man from sin and its consequences
    - a. This message of salvation has been preached "since the world began" (Luke 1:69-71; Acts 3:21)
- B. The prophets received much revelation regarding the Messiah
1. The theme of the prophets' message was Christ, his suffering and glory (v.11)
    - a. Jacob called him Shiloh (Genesis 49:10)
    - b. Balaam called him "a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre...out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17)
    - c. Moses called him "a Prophet like unto me" (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)
    - d. Job called him "my redeemer" (Job 19:25)
    - e. David called him "thine Holy One" (Psalm 16:10) and "my Lord" (Psalm 110:1)
    - f. Isaiah called him "Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14), "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), the "root of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:10)
    - g. Jeremiah called him the "righteous Branch" of David, and "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:5-6)
    - h. Micah called him the "judge of Israel" (Micah 5:1-2)
    - i. Haggai called him "the desire of all nations" (Haggai 2:7)
    - j. Zechariah called him "The BRANCH" and "thy King" Zechariah 6:12; 9:9)
    - k. Malachi called him "the Sun of righteousness" (Malachi 4:2)
  2. They prophesied of the sufferings of Christ

- a. Isaiah 53 is as clear a gospel message of justification through faith in the atonement of Christ as anything found in the New Testament
  - b. In that chapter, our iniquities are laid upon Christ (v.6); his soul becomes an offering for sin (v.10); he bears the sin of many (v.12); “by his knowledge”, the LORD says, “shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (v.11); and his resurrection is prophesied, “he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand (v.10)
3. They prophesied of the glories of Christ
    - a. Christ’s glories, or exaltation, covers his resurrection, ascension, session, second coming and kingdom
    - b. There are some 500 prophecies in the Old Testament about his Second Coming (compared with 300 about his First Coming)
  4. Every God-fearing Jew anticipated his coming (Luke 2:25,36-38)
- C. The prophets had an incomplete revelation of all that would come to pass
1. Though they knew there was a Messiah coming who would suffer and be glorified, they wanted to know the *what* and the *when* of these things (v.11)
  2. The view of the prophets has been described as seeing “mountain peaks” of prophecy, while not seeing the hidden “valleys” between them
  3. The Old Testament prophets saw the “mountain peak” of Christ’s first coming – the birth of Christ (Micah 5:2), his earthly ministry (Isaiah 61:1), his death (Isaiah 53:8), his resurrection (Psalm 16:10), his ascension (Psalm 47:5), and Pentecost (Joel 2:28-29)
  4. But the prophets saw nothing during this present dispensation, until the events surrounding the “day of the LORD” and the Second Coming of Christ – the next “mountain peak” of prophecy
    - a. In certain places, Christ’s first and second comings are blended together with no apparent distinction (Isaiah 61:1-2; Jeremiah 23:5-6)
    - b. The church, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, was a complete mystery to the Old Testament saints (Colossians 1:24-27)

5. Despite the many prophecies given concerning Christ, even those who saw and heard him had difficulty accepting his servanthood, humility and suffering, expecting him to be exalted as King (Matthew 11:3; Luke 24:25-27)
  6. The Old Testament saints had a dimmed understanding of many things that are now brought to light in this New Testament age (2 Timothy 1:10)
- D. The prophets inquired and searched diligently
1. This shows a heart's desire to know God's will (Matthew 13:17)
  2. They prayed that God would show them his plan and purposes (cf. Matthew 24:3; Acts 1:6)
  3. Their greatest joy was not upon the things of this world, but upon the word of God and their Saviour revealed in it (John 8:56)

## II. THE INSPIRATION OF THE SPIRIT

- A. The Holy Spirit is the author of biblical prophecy
1. Though men were used to pen the words of Scripture, they are inspired by God, and are therefore the words of God
    - a. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
    - b. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:19-21)
    - c. "God...spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1)
    - d. "God...shewed by the mouth of all his prophets" (Acts 3:18)
    - e. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers" (Acts 28:25)
  2. The prophets did not write their ideas, opinions, interpretations or paraphrases of what they thought God said, but wrote down every word directly from God, even to the "jots and tittles" (Matthew 5:18)
  3. In some cases, the prophets themselves did not fully comprehend what they were writing (cf. Daniel 12:4,8-9)
- B. The Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of Christ"

1. He is sent from Christ
2. He is Christ's representative (John 15:26-27)
3. This shows the pre-existence of Christ
4. In a real sense, Christ himself was speaking to and through the prophets of old
  - a. For instance, Noah (1 Peter 3:19)
  - b. And David (Psalm 22)

### **III. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EVANGELISTS**

- A. God's method of conveying his truth is by preaching
  1. God, when he ordained the means by which the world should hear the blessed news of a Saviour, did not entrust angels with the message
  2. It is through the "foolishness of preaching" that God is pleased to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:21; cf. Romans 10:14)
- B. Biblical preaching is not reliant upon the ability of men, but the power of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5)
- C. Of all the themes that men can preach, the greatest and most glorious is the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ
  1. This is the essence of the Great Commission (Luke 24:46-47)
  2. Paul said, "we preach Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:23)
  3. The beautiful feet belong to those "that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation" (Isaiah 52:7)

### **IV. THE FASCINATION OF THE ANGELS**

- A. The ministry of angels
  1. They worship God (Psalm 148:2; Revelation 5:11-12)
  2. They serve and obey God (Psalm 103:20-21)
  3. They minister to and protect God's people (Hebrews 1:14; 13:2)

4. They help in the Great Commission of world evangelism (Ac 8:26; 10:3,7,22)
  5. They watch over believers (Matthew 18:6,10)
  6. They accompany saints to heaven at death (Luke 16:22)
  7. They will return with Jesus from heaven and help establish the kingdom (Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)
  8. An angel will bind Satan (Revelation 20:1-3)
  9. Angels guard the gates of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12)
- B. Angels are not subjects of Christ's redemption
1. Though a great number of angels fell with Satan (Revelation 12:4), there is no hope of salvation for them
  2. Their sin differs from ours in nature and magnitude
  3. Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16), becoming Man to redeem man, not angels
  4. The holy angels have no need of salvation
- C. The angels' interest
1. They desire to "look into" (*parakupto*), which is an intense gaze, the things of salvation
  2. They have a special interest in the ministry of the Lord's churches
    - a. The church witnesses to them the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10)
    - b. The trials and struggles of the church are a spectacle, not only to the world and men, but unto angels (1 Corinthians 4:9)
    - c. The conduct of believers in the church are of special interest to angels (1 Corinthians 11:10; 1 Timothy 5:21)
  3. God's salvation of rebellious sinners is of particular wonder to the angels
    - a. They wonder at God's mercy to such undeserving creatures

- b. They wonder at God's longsuffering in giving men space to repent
- c. They wonder at their Creator becoming a Man
- d. They wonder at him being cruelly mocked, beaten and crucified
- e. They wonder that most of humanity reject the free gift of salvation
- f. They wonder at the miracle of the new birth in those that believe
- g. They wonder at our lack of love and zeal for Christ after all he has done for us

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Every day, most of us will use a "search engine" to make inquiry into those things that interest us
2. What does your search history reveal about your prevailing interests?
3. The Old Testament prophets with their limited revelation gave themselves to diligent study into the truths of salvation
4. How much more ought we, who have the complete word of God, devote ourselves to "search the scriptures daily" to comprehend the depths of God's saving grace (Acts 17:11)
5. The same Holy Spirit that inspired and taught the prophets indwells us and promises to teach us his truth (John 16:13)
6. Faithful preachers have preached the word of God to us; do we have the same beautiful feet, taking the glad tidings of salvation to a lost world?