

Praising God for Your Salvation

1 Peter 1:10–12

80-408

There's little wonder that Peter begins his epistle by calling on us with a doxology of praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the great mercy that He's displayed to us in regenerating us and giving us salvation through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now remember, Peter is writing to some scattered believers but they are scattered in Gentile areas where they are experiencing hostility and persecution. And that would come from Jews, of course, in the area as well as Gentiles.

What do you do when you're an alien? What do you do when you're in a hostile world that is set against you? What do you do when you're suffering persecution, which—by the way—is delineated again and again throughout the remainder of this epistle as Peter goes back to remember their persecution, to identify it and tell them how to cope with it. What do you do when everything in the world around you is coming at you and there is great suffering? What do you do when you are subject, as it says in verse 6, to various trials and the distress that they bring? What do you do?

Peter's answer is, "Focus on your salvation...focus on your salvation. Praise God for your salvation." This is the most glorious theme in Scripture. This is the most glorious theme that exists in the world. And this is that to which we must constantly look in the disappointments and the issues of life. Life is full of trouble. All of us experience it. Not only just trouble that comes to all people, but trouble that comes particularly to Christians from an increasingly hostile persecuting world around us...what do we do? What do we do?

We look to the salvation of our souls...the salvation of our souls. This is Peter's wonderful theme here. By the time you get down to verse 9, that's where that phrase appears. The outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls, always keeping your eyes on that glorious future salvation when we are fully finally rescued from human failure, sin, Satan, death and hell and ushered into the glories of heaven's bliss and everlasting joy.

The word "salvation" has been literally coopted by Christians. There are other things from which people can be rescued. We talk about them all the time. We talk about rescue people might even use the word "saved" I was saved from a fate worse than death, I was saved from a terrible accident by a warning, I was saved from an illness by an operation we would use that. But when the word "salvation" is used, it is always connected first and foremost with the Christian gospel. It is the greatest word in the Christian vocabulary, "salvation." It is where we go to find our assurance, our hope, our joy, our confidence, our freedom from anxiety no matter what is going on. The confidence that we have been rescued eternally from sin and its consequences. This is Peter's focus in this epistle. That's what the chapter is about and the rest of the epistle, from chapter 1 on, in fact it even starts as early as verse 14 of chapter 1 verse 13 as well, is to call believers to behavior consistent

with their salvation. But you start by looking at the glories of our salvation.

That's a popular thing today. There is a lot of talk, as I've been saying to you about the cross/centered life, and looking at the cross and focusing on Christ, and focusing on what He has done for us, and that being the motivation or our sanctification. A lot of that is subjective, a lot of that is trying to sort of mount up a kind of inner kind of intuitive, subjective, mystical kind of emotion attached to what Christ has done at the cross. It looks particularly at His suffering and pain and sin bearing and there is nothing wrong with all of that. But that is not the only view of salvation by any means. In fact, here Peter calls us to look at the salvation of our souls in the midst of trials, in the midst of suffering, in the midst of persecution, to remember that we are to praise God, bless God, honor God, exalt God, express gratitude to God for the salvation of our souls.

But how do we do that? We can certainly muster up subjective gratitude as we look at the realities of the cross. We can look at it subjectively, we can look at it theologically. We can come at our salvation say from the vantage point of the book of Romans and we can look at all of the aspects of salvation, they're bound up in the gospel and in the work of Christ.

But Peter has a different view. He's going to give us, rather than a theological view, rather than a sort of subjective view, He's going to give us an objective historical way to look at our salvation...objective and historical. And, by the way, this is a legitimate motivation for how we live. That is the whole point of verse 13, "Therefore prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit," verse 15, "as obedient children, don't be conformed to the former lusts. Be like the one who called you, be holy." All of those behaviors are the response to an objective historical look at our salvation. That's Peter's approach.

Now backing up just a little bit, we all understand that as sinners we need to be rescued. We need salvation from God, from God's wrath, God's vengeance, God's judgment, God's execution, and God's everlasting punishment in hell. We need salvation. We can't save ourselves. "By the deeds of the Law, no one will be justified before God." It's not by works. It can't happen that way. We need God to save us. The Bible tells us that God is by nature a saving God. He is a Savior. God is by nature a Savior. God loves sinners. God demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Romans 5:8. God is able to save sinners. Salvation belongs to the Lord, says the Psalmist in Psalm 3. We need a Savior. God is a Savior. God loves sinners, God is able to save sinners, God is willing to save sinners. He will have all to come to repentance. He finds no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Because God saves, based on His love for sinners, because He is able to rescue and willing to rescue, He has planned to save sinners. He purposed, according to Paul's letter to Timothy, before the beginning of the world, to save sinners in Christ according to His own purpose and grace established before time began.

We also know that God made Christ and the work of Christ, the means by which He saves sinners. There's no salvation in any other name than the name of Christ. And then God ordained that anyone who believes in Christ can be saved. "God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." So that's what you need to know. We need a Savior, God is a Savior. He loves sinners. He's able to save sinners, He's willing to save sinners. He's planned to save sinners. He has the means to save sinners through the person and work of Christ, and He saves sinners by faith.

There's one other element of it. God has ordained that the means of salvation be the message of preachers, "How will they hear without a preacher? Because faith comes by hearing the word concerning Christ." So God has ordained preachers and witnesses to cover the globe to proclaim His saving interest in sinners. This is the great work of God. Nothing comes close to it. Nothing compares with it. Nothing should even be spoken of in the same category as that great work of God. We should praise the Lord for a lot of things, but mostly, transcendentally, far above all things, we should praise Him for our salvation for the deliverance that He provides us from sin, death, Satan, judgment, hell.

First Chronicles 16:23, Psalm 96:2 says, "Proclaim the good tidings of His salvation day to day. Way back in 1 Chronicles, way back in the Psalms, people were proclaiming on a daily basis the good news of the salvation of God. That has always been the greatest preoccupation of the people of God, to praise Him for salvation.

Revelation 7, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb," that's heaven. All the beings in heaven are praising God and the Lamb for salvation. We will spend forever and ever in heaven praising God for our salvation, and all that is part of that salvation, all that salvation brought to us of an inheritance undefiled that fades not away, reserved in heaven for us. So Peter calls his readers, and us, to worship, to wonder, to praise, to thanksgiving for the reality of being saved eternally, to receive an eternal, imperishable heavenly inheritance that can never ever be taken away, and to receive a faith that holds on to that that endures every trial so that no matter how severe the trial, it becomes the proof of our faith, not the destruction of it. We should celebrate our salvation daily. We should be saying, as the Old Testament says, salvation belongs to God and we should proclaim the good news of His salvation day, to day, to day, to day, to day.

Now let's look at verses 10 to 12. And here we're going to get a perspective on how to look at our salvation in a way that may be a little new to you. Not in the subjective way, but in an objective way. Not in an emotional way, but in a historical way. Let me read 10 to 12. "As to this salvation about which we have been speaking, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 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 preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent to heaven, things into which angels long to look."

This is an incredible piece of Scripture, divine revelation. Peter is saying when everything has gone wrong in your life, when nothing is the way you would prefer it to be, look at the blessedness of your salvation. Get a perspective on your salvation. And then he essentially says, "And don't depend on your own perspective. Borrow somebody else's perspective, namely borrow a perspective from the prophets and the Holy Spirit and the Apostles and the angels." It's an amazing portion of Scripture.

Peter says, "Get outside yourself and look at your salvation from the perspective from the Old Testament prophets, the Holy Spirit Himself, the New Testament Apostles and the holy angels because salvation was the theme of the prophets' study. Salvation was the theme of the Spirit's revelation. Salvation was the theme of the Apostles preaching and salvation was the theme of the angels interest." And all those "was" verbs could be "is" as well because there never will be anything throughout all eternity that will be as captivating to the minds even of perfected saints as the glories

of salvation.

The glory of God, the salvation of human souls is the transcendent reality. It's what occupied the prophets, it's what occupied the Holy Spirit, it's what occupied the Apostles, it's what occupied and occupies the angels. They're all consumed with the subject of salvation, consumed with it.

Now, you know, we can get pretty distracted in the church in general and we can get off on a lot of other subjects. You say, "Well if you talk about salvation all the time, aren't people going to get bored?" Haven't found that to be my experience. I talk about the salvation that God has provided for us a lot, I think about it a lot more than I talk about it. I study about it constantly, every single week of my life, and I've never found the bottom and I can't find the top of the truths that relate to salvation and the richness that these truths convey. It is an absolutely impossible thing to plumb the depths and find the ceiling on the realities of the glories of salvation. It should be the preoccupation of our lives. And where it is, you care less about all the things that go wrong in this life, right?...a whole lot less.

So let's look into this passage, verses 10 to 12, and if not as thoroughly as I'd like, maybe just enough to give you the sense of what Peter's writing. The greatness of our salvation is conveyed to us because it is, first of all, the theme of the prophets' study. It is the theme of the prophets' study. Verse 10, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries seeking to know what person or time," and we'll stop at that point.

The first testimony to the surpassing value of our salvation, the first group that we're going to look at, there will be three groups here and one individual, namely the Holy Spirit, but the first testimony to the surpassing value of salvation comes from the Old Testament prophets. They diligently studied, Peter says, to know everything about what they wrote because they couldn't fully understand what they were writing. They knew they were writing about salvation. They knew salvation was the most important theme. And so they studied their own writings to figure out what person, what time, who are we writing about, when is this going to happen?

Now I want you to just look at a little linguistic thing that will help you. There's no article here, no definite article "the," so it really could read, "As to this salvation, prophets who prophesied," this is general. Prophets...who are they? The people who prophesied. What do you mean prophesied? Spoke for God. any Old Testament preacher, any Old Testament writer, let's assume that he's talking about everybody from Moses to Malachi and everybody in between, anyone given revelation from God would be a prophet of God, a spokesman for God. Not just the minor prophets and the major prophets, as organized in your Bible, but from Moses on. There were prophets who didn't write Bible books. All the ones who did write Bible books would be then considered prophets because they spoke for God. So all of those who wrote down the Old Testament focused on the subject of salvation and the Messiah and who He would be and when He would come.

They understood the importance of salvation. What does that mean? That they understood the Fall, and they understood the corruption of man, and they understood the judgment of God, and they understood the sentence of death, and punishment, and they knew they needed to be rescued. They knew God was a saving God. They knew God was a gracious God. They knew they needed redemption. They knew that that redemption was in the heart of God to do and that God would one day provide a Redeemer. And they started to know that, they started to know that when the promise

came in the third chapter of Genesis that one who would come who would crush the serpent's head. They saw pictures of that provision of Messiah when God killed an animal to cover Adam and Eve's sin. They saw the picture of substitutionary sacrifice in the sacrificial system, and certainly they saw it with Abraham on Mount Moriah when God provided an animal so that he didn't have to kill his own son.

They were writing about this. And they were writing about the grace that would come to you. That's very important, look back at verse 10. "They prophesied of the grace that would come to you, the grace that would come to you." They knew this, they knew they needed salvation and they knew it had to be by grace. The prophets knew that. The true spokesmen for God, the false prophets know, the true prophets—yes, they knew that Abraham was justified by faith. They knew that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. They knew that this was not by works, that God was a God of grace. This goes way, way back. There are some people who have a mistaken idea that grace somehow begins in the New Testament.

Listen to Joseph in Egypt lifting his eyes and seeing his brother Benjamin, and he said, "Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." Here is Joseph, a patriarch in the book of Genesis who knew of the grace of God. He understood that. Moses knew of the grace of God when Moses encountered God on the mount even at the time the Law was being given, the God that he met on the mount is a God who describes himself like this, "I myself will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

So, the prophets, the writers of the Old Testament, the true spokesmen for God were talking about salvation, writing about salvation. They were writing about the Messiah, the One who would come to provide that salvation. They knew that salvation was based on God's undeserved blessing, unearned favor, God's forgiving of sin, God's mercy. That's the God they understood. That's the God they knew. That's all over the Old Testament.

When Nineveh repents, Jonah is upset because he says to God, "I knew You were gracious. I knew You would do this." And when Jesus arrived, He's full of grace cause He's God incarnate.

So the prophets are most consumed with the subject of salvation and they know it has to be by grace. And they know there's going to be one who will provide that salvation. What do they know about Him?

Well, they know that the Messiah, according to verse 11, will suffer and also be glorified...He will suffer and be glorified. They could see that. They knew He would suffer. Psalm 22 even describes the details of crucifixion, death. They knew He would suffer. Isaiah 53 clearly He would die...He would die, He would be cut off. So they knew about that. They knew from Zechariah that He would suffer. They knew from Daniel 9 that His life would be cut off. They knew details about His suffering in Psalm 22, details about His suffering in Psalm 69 and even in other places. They knew He would be betrayed by one of His own. They knew the details. John 5:39, Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures, they speak about Me."

So the prophets, the true spokesmen for God, wrote these things and they studied the very things

they wrote and the very things they wrote and the very things they proclaimed to find out of whom they were writing, who the Savior would be. They knew He would suffer. They also knew He would triumph. They knew He would crush the serpent's head, Genesis 3. They knew He would be a king with a rod who would destroy the nations of the world, Psalm 2. They knew the government would be upon His shoulders. They knew He would be an everlasting King. They knew that He would reign over the whole earth. The prophets were clear on that. The definition of His Kingdom, the description of His Kingdom all through the prophets. They knew He would be mighty to save. They knew He would be one who could deliver His people by His own death, Isaiah 53.

So all of this revelation is coming and they know God is a saving God. You hear the words of Isaiah 55, "Come, anybody who wants to come, come without money, without price." And so they wrote all of this and they proclaimed it all. And then at the end of verse 10 it says, "They made careful searches and inquiries seeking to know what person and what time they were writing about." Careful search.

The words that are used here, very strong, intensive word. This is Peter's heart here and this has to be our attitude as well. The greatness of our salvation, first of all, should be indicated to us by the intensity with which the Old Testament prophets studied their own writings to understand it. They were consumed by the great subject of salvation. You can't get enough of it. You could never get enough of it. I can never get close to getting enough of it. So they made searches. Look at the word "careful searches," *ekzeteo*, it's an intensive word, intensified by the preposition to seek out, to exhaust all of the elements to as...so as to understand it. They didn't fully understand. We even hear them make that confession, Isaiah 6, Daniel 7. They didn't quite understand, but they searched and searched.

The next, they made inquiry. Another strong compound verb that means again intensive search, examination. The first term may be more general. The second refers to the minute process of carefully studying the minutia of everything they wrote. You might say it this way, the prophets of the Old Testament made it their life passion to study the great reality of salvation, serious desire, consuming passion. Not scholarly investigation for the sake of information, but passionate investigation for the sake of doxology and encouragement and hope.

And there's a third reference to this in verse 11, "Seeking to know," *eraunao*, again this is another...this is a participle here, but again it means to search...to search. So here they are, three different words are used to describe the intensity of this search. And what are they looking for? They know God is a Savior. They know He will provide salvation through grace. They know there will be a Messiah who will come and be the Redeemer, but the questions are: what person and what time? What person? Who was this? Who will this be? When will he come? This is still going on with the last prophet. Who is the very last Old Testament prophet? John the Baptist. And in 11 of Matthew he sends his messengers to Jesus and he says through the messengers, "Are you the coming One or do we look for another?" That was always the first question—who?

You say, "Well didn't John know that?" Well he thought he did. But when things didn't go the way he expected them to go, the question came up again. And then even after the ministry of Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples meet with Jesus and what do they ask? "Will You at this time restore the Kingdom?" It was always—who is this and when is this? And so they searched and they searched, and they searched.

How important should the doctrines of salvation be to us? They are at least as important to us as they were to those men because we have the full revelation, don't we? What a privilege. What a privilege! They were held up. They were great, great godly people. Listen to this commendation about them, Hebrews 11, "What more shall I say to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight, the women who received back their dead by resurrection, others were tortured, not accepting their release so that they might obtain a better resurrection? Others experienced mockings, scourgings, chains, imprisonment, they were stoned, sawn in half, tempted, put to death with the sword, went about in sheepskins, goatskins, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, men of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground."

Who were those people? Those are the same people who searched what they wrote to understand the greatness of salvation. Why did they do this? Because they lived in faith. And all these, verse 39, Hebrews 11, having gained approval through their faith didn't receive what was promised. They all died before the promise was fulfilled, because God had provided something better for us." Wow!

Why should I focus on my salvation, the greatness of salvation? Because I have something better than even the prophets for whom this was a lifelong obsession. Is the glory of your salvation a lifelong obsession for you?

So, Peter says focus on your salvation. Make that the obsession of your life, the greatness and glory of your salvation. Why? Because it is the theme of the prophets' study.

Secondly, it is the theme of the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Why was it important to the prophets? Because it was important to the Holy Spirit who inspired them. Go back to verse 11, "Know this, they were only prophesying because the Spirit of Christ was within them indicating and predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." It is the work of the Spirit.

So we can say it is the theme of the Holy Spirit's revelation...the theme of the Holy Spirit's revelation. I will simplify the Bible for you. The main theme in the Bible is salvation, right? That's the theme of the Bible. It goes from corruption to salvation, from the Fall to eternal glory. The theme of the Bible is salvation and so it is the theme of the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Everything that the prophets in the Old Testament knew about salvation was given to them by the Holy Spirit. They...verse 11 says that they were prophesying of the grace that would come because the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating, was communicating, predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories that followed. The Holy Spirit was revealing the sufferings of Christ in Psalm 22, Psalm 69, Isaiah 52, Isaiah 53, Daniel 9, Zechariah 12, Zechariah 13. The Holy Spirit was revealing all of this, the sufferings, death, trial, beating, crucifixion and the glories to follow. The Holy Spirit revealed truth about the resurrection, the ascension, the enthronement. The resurrection, obviously, implied everywhere that the Messiah is seen reigning because if He dies, He has to rise to reign. The resurrection in Psalm 16, the resurrection in Psalm 22, the resurrection in Psalm 69, the resurrection, exaltation of Christ, Isaiah 9, Isaiah 53, the end of the chapter, Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Zechariah 2, Zechariah 14. They were prophesying about His suffering and about His glory because that was the message of the Holy Spirit. Those two things were the theme of Old Testament prophecy.

Go back to Luke 24 for a moment. When Jesus met the disciples on the road to Emmaus, they were

brokenhearted because He had died, and they hadn't really clearly understood the part about suffering and death. They had clearly understood the part about glory. And so they're moaning that the one they had thought was to be the Messiah was dead, verse 25 of Luke 24. Jesus meets them on the road to Emmaus in the middle of their distress and He says, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for the Christ, the Messiah, to suffer these things and to enter into His glory and then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

And where did the prophets get the Scriptures? No Scripture, Peter says, comes by private interpretation, but holy men are moved by the Holy Spirit. All Scripture, says Paul, is by inspiration of God, Spirit-breathed. It is the Spirit of Christ within them indicating the predictions about His suffering and His glory. We can say it simply this way, summing it up, the preoccupation of the Old Testament writers with the salvation of God is because the Holy Spirit was preoccupied with that same glorious salvation. The Holy Spirit was in them, predicting — that's a strong verb, interesting verb, *promarturomai...marturomai* means to give witness or give testimony. *Pro* means before. The Holy Spirit was predicting before it happened the elements concerning the suffering and glory of Christ. That's why it was a preoccupation for them because it was a consuming purpose in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is noted in verse 12 as being sent from heaven. The message came down to heaven, it was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit.

Now it was also revealed to them, verse 12, that they were not serving themselves. It was revealed to them that their ministry, their ministry was not for them because they were talking about something that was coming in the future. The benefit of this in its fullness would come to the nations in the future. It doesn't mean there wasn't salvation then, it simply means the fullness of all the blessing bound up in salvation was yet a future reality. As I read you in Hebrews, it didn't happen, the promise never came to them, they were not perfected without us—is the way the writer of Hebrews puts it.

Sure prophecies had value to the prophets. They could see God as a Savior. God's going to save us by grace. God's going to provide a sacrifice. That's why in Hebrews it says Moses looked forward and bore the reproach of Christ, the reproach of Messiah and would rather suffer the reproach of being committed to the Messiah to come then to enjoy the pleasures of sin in Egypt. The prophets saw Messiah with clarity. They saw Him with accuracy because that's how the Holy Spirit revealed Him. They just didn't know who or when.

So why should you focus on your salvation? Because it is the great preoccupation of the prophets and the great preoccupation of the blessed Holy Spirit. The greatest message the prophets could ever write, the greatest message the Holy Spirit could ever reveal.

Thirdly, salvation is the theme of the Apostles' preaching. It's the theme of the Apostles' preaching. Not only was it what the Prophets studied, it was what the Apostles preached. Let's go back to verse 12. "But you," Peter writing to the believers who are scattered, "in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." And he takes us to the Apostles. Who were those who preached the gospel to these now scattered believers? The Apostles, the New Testament Apostles who preached the gospel. And what did they preach? They preached the Christ crucified, risen which means they preached who and when. They preached the fulfillment certainly of the suffering aspect and reiterated the future glory of the Messiah. They preached the gospel. "In these things, the fact of who, the facts of when, the details of the fulfillment of Old Testament salvation prophecy which have been announced to you through

those who preach the gospel to you.” The early preachers, the Apostles, Peter, the rest of the Apostles, and the others who traveled and accompanied the Apostles, people like Luke and Barnabus and others. They gave their lives to preach this message. That’s all they preached. They didn’t preach social justice. They didn’t try to preach away the iniquities of poverty. They didn’t have to set their focus on abolishing slavery in the Mediterranean world. They preached the gospel. That was their consuming preoccupation to the degree that Paul says, “I’m determined to know nothing among you except Christ in Him crucified.” That’s all the message I ever have to give.

Why? “I’m not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.” They gave their lives to preach the gospel. They were consumed with the gospel. They understood the fulfillment because they were there, they were eye-witnesses. Peter was an eye-witness of His majesty, so he was even an eyewitness of coming glory, so were James and John. The rest were eyewitnesses of His resurrection. That’s what qualified them to be Apostles. And you hear them preaching that message as they go through the book of Acts.

How blessed is your salvation? It is the theme of the prophet’s study. It is the theme of the Spirit’s revelation. It is the theme of the Apostles preaching. And finally, it is the theme of the angels’ interest. This is a wonderful statement at the end of verse 12...things, things. What things? These things. What things? The things concerning the suffering of Messiah and the glories to follow which have to do with salvation. These things into which angels long to look. This is fascinating...fascinating.

Matters of salvation into which angels long to look. Prophets can understand salvation in a way that angels can’t cause they’re sinful. The Apostles can understand salvation in a way angels can’t because they’re sinful. There’s no salvation for demons and there’s no interest on the part of demons in salvation. But the Holy Angels, they long to look—they long to look. Why? Because they have one focus forever and ever, and what is that? To what? Glorify God, Glorify God, Praise God, Exalt God and they feel a little bit cheated because they know there is this massive redemptive work that God has literally created a universe to accomplish, and they can’t personally understand it.

So they long, *epithumeo*, could be a negative word, can mean evil lust. But it has the idea of a passion, an eager, strong, overwhelming, overpowering impulse, a desire that isn’t fulfilled. They have an unfulfilled longing to get it, to understand it. And there’s another interesting word here, to look, *paraskupsi* literally means to stretch forth your head, your neck and to bend down. Now since angels don’t have necks, it’s metaphoric. It is the same verb that is used to describe Peter and John arriving at the tomb and going in and bending down to look into the empty tomb. The angels are stooping low. The angels are stretching their spiritual necks.

Why do they care? They’ve been involved. They knew about the plan. Surely they know about the plan. The demons all know about the plan. The demons knew who Jesus was. They knew why He came. Holy angels knew. O, of course they knew. They announced His coming, didn’t they? It was angels, wasn’t it, who went to Zechariah and Elizabeth? It was angels who went to Mary and Joseph. It was angels who ministered to Jesus at His temptation. It was angels who oversaw everything, so much so that any moment He wanted to could have called a legion of them to His side. It was angels who were there serving as communicators from heaven at His resurrection. It was angels who were there at His ascension. Angels were involved all through His life and ministry.

But they could never be fully aware of what the glories of salvation really are. So we have the

privilege that is beyond the angels. We will have a capacity to worship God forever in heaven in a way that even angels can't...a firsthand experience of salvation. God is displaying His power in the church to the angels. Every time a sinner is converted, Luke 15:10 says the angels rejoice. They rejoice. First Corinthians 4:9 says that faithful servants of the Lord are spectacles to angels. They're looking, examining this unique reality of the redeemed and how God saves them and uses them to advance His name.

In Ephesians 3:10 it says that God puts the church on display to the angels, to demonstrate His attributes of grace and mercy, compassion, forgiveness about which they have no experience. What a salvation. It is the preoccupation of prophets, it is the preoccupation of the Holy Spirit, the preoccupation of the Apostles, and it is even the preoccupation of the angels. How about you? That's one reason we're here, to focus again on the glory of our salvation.

Father, now send us on our way and open up opportunity for us to praise you and to proclaim Your salvation day to day. We thank you in the Savior's name, amen.

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