



Pursuing Christ in a Pagan World

Series: A Glorious Salvation

1 Peter 1:10-12

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In this text that we are looking at today, Peter is calling his readers, and us, to see and to remember the greatness of our salvation. He is calling us to worship, to adore, and to thank God for the privilege of being so favored by God to be saved for all of eternity. So Peter is going to speak of the glorious salvation of the people of God and the first thing we must see from this text is this:

1) Our salvation is glorious -- God has a divine and comprehensive plan to display the riches of His glory through the salvation of a people to praise His name.

Peter, in this passage, brings together the Old and the New Testaments and shows to us the unity of the redemptive plan of God as evidenced in the prophecies and proclamation of the true gospel. God's plan of redemption revealed in the Word of God is not an afterthought, is not a reactionary plan. Instead, it is the divine plan of God to reveal the riches of His glory by redeeming out of a vast number of lost and condemned sinners a people whose hearts He will turn from rebellion to worship and love for Him, a people to praise His name and enjoy His glory forever. That is the overarching truth that we must see reflected in this whole text. Peter again is reminding us of the eternal character of our salvation. First I want us to see the promise behind it all.

This great plan of redemption was formed in the mind of God in eternity past. Before the beginning of time, He purposed to save a remnant of the human race that He would create and who would rebel against Him. The plan to redeem a people from sin was guaranteed by the promise of God in eternity past. Paul acknowledges this fact in the introduction to the book of Titus saying: (Titus 1:1-2) God made a promise to grant eternal life to his chosen people before the ages began, before time. Before the foundation of the world, God promised to save His church for all eternity. The question then, is to whom was that promise made?

2 Timothy 1:9 identifies the answer. Of God, Paul writes that it is He "who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began... (2Ti 1:9) Do you see the connection? Before

the ages began, God made the immutable, unchangeable decision to grant salvation to the redeemed according to His own purpose and grace in Christ to His people. Since there was no one else for God to make that promise too, it was a promise made in the Godhead, a promise made in the Trinity, a promise God made from the Father to the Son.

The plan of God from eternity past was to graciously save a remnant of fallen humanity through the work of the Son – the cross, and for the glory of the Son and for the praise of the glory of the Father. As an expression of love that is too deep for us to understand, God chose to give to His Son a redeemed people as a love gift – a great band of men and women and children whose purpose would be, throughout the ages, to praise and glorify the Son perfectly, reflecting back to Him the wonders of His perfection, worshipping and serving Him as Saving Lord and in so doing bringing glory to the Father’s holy name, exalting Him as the architect of salvation. Angels alone could never fulfill that calling because they could never magnify Jesus as redeemer and Savior, as the sacrificing lover of our souls because they have never experienced redemption. But as the company of the redeemed, saved by the blood of Christ, we can stand forever as an eternal testament to the glory and majesty of God’s mercy and grace in Christ. We are the love gift from the Father to the Son and because we are the love gift of the Father, Jesus receives us. (John 6:37-40, 44)

The Father lovingly draws us for the purpose of giving us as a gift to the Son and Christ eagerly receives us as the gift of the Father’s love, which he counts as so valuable that He saves us and makes us His own by dying for us, in our place, as our substitute, enduring the wrath of God against sin, and giving us His perfect righteousness in exchange. It is why Jesus would cry out in John 17:1-3 these words: (Joh 17:1-3) Glorifying the Father and upholding the glory of His holiness by leaving no sin of His people unpunished, Jesus suffered and died on the cross to redeem us, Peter says in 1 Peter 3:18, “Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.” Having accomplished the work of the cross and having been obedient unto death Paul tells us: (Php 2:9-11)

But there is even more. In 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Paul explains the remarkable conclusion to God’s sovereign plans writing: (1Co 15:24-28) The idea here is this: at the end of all things, the Son will give everything, including Himself and those who are saved in Him, back to the Father. In that way, the Father’s love gift to the Son, His redeemed people, will be presented by the Son back to the Father and the redemptive plan of God, formed in eternity past, will be fully and completely accomplished. God will be all in all and salvation history will be complete. So with David we might say: (1Ch 29:11-13) Our salvation is glorious because God has a divine and comprehensive plan to display the riches of His glory through the salvation of a people to praise His name. Moreover,

2) Our salvation is glorious -- rooted in God's grace.

Peter writes: (1Pe 1:10-11) Notice that Peter speaks of "the grace that was to be yours." Our salvation is rooted, not only in the Father's love for the Son but our salvation is rooted in grace, grace given to us through Jesus Christ, our Savior and King and Lord. Salvation springs forth from God's grace – it is the motive behind God's saving work toward us. What does the Bible mean when it talks about divine grace?

Grace is a big word. Grace is the loving kindness of God that drives God to pour out blessings upon those who do not deserve the very opposite. God's grace is His unmerited favor toward the wicked, unworthy sinners, by which He saves them from condemnation and death and the just wrath of God. It is by grace alone that even when we were dead in our trespasses, God makes us alive together with Christ --by grace you have been saved-- and raises us up with him and seats us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (cf. Eph 2:5-7)

Salvation is all of grace and the fundamental issue of God's grace is that it takes for granted our sin and guilt. God's grace will only mean something to us when we realize that we are spiritually dead, sinful, fallen people – completely unworthy of salvation and completely worthy of eternal wrath. We have to see the truth of God's grace clearly. It is not just that we are undeserving of grace, we deserve the exact opposite. We do not deserve grace and we do deserve hell. That is why I so love the words of Paul to Titus: (Titus 3:3-7) So our salvation is all of grace, but it does not end there. We need to grasp the scope of divine grace.

Grace is more than mercy when we have sinned. Grace is God's empowering gift not to continue in sin. God's grace does not mean that God, by the blood of Christ, accepts men and women and children in all their wickedness and sinfulness, forgives them, and then leaves them in that condition. God does not merely whitewash sins, he transforms sinners. Grace keeps us tethered to Christ when we do sin and His blood cleanses our transgressions. Grace is the means of access to the throne of God. Grace is the source of every blessing that we have. Grace is the source of our spiritual strength. Grace is the very strength of spiritual freedom. CJ Mahaney says: Don't buy the lie that cultivating condemnation and wallowing in your shame is somehow pleasing to God, or that a constant, low-grade guilt will somehow promote holiness and spiritual maturity. It's just the opposite! God is glorified when we believe with all our hearts that those who trust in Christ can never be condemned. It's only when we receive his free gift of grace and live in the good of total forgiveness that we're able to turn from old, sinful ways of living and walk in grace-motivated obedience. Our salvation is glorious because it is rooted in God's multi-faceted saving, transforming, empowering grace.

Now don't misunderstand, beloved, Peter is not saying that God never dealt with His people in grace before Christ came. That is not the point. God is the God of grace. When Moses asked to see God's glory-- (Exo 34:6-7). It is only by grace through faith that anyone is saved. The Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith looking forward to the coming of Christ and His work of salvation just as we are saved by grace through faith in looking back to Christ's finished work on the cross. It is only by God's grace that our hearts are changed from stone to flesh and we are given hearts that desire to follow God and love Him and serve Him.

Still, John testifies: "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (Joh 1:17b) The sense of it is this. Though God has always dealt graciously with His people, the prophets were prophesying of a salvation grace to come that was greater than anything they had experienced, a salvation grace that would extend to every tribe, nation, and tongue of the world. The prophets had received the gift of salvation without ever seeing or fully understanding all that was involved in Christ's life, death, and resurrection or the full scope of it all fully realized. God has always been gracious -- He was gracious to them -- but the greatest and most glorious manifestation of His grace is in Jesus Christ, His Holy Son. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Joh 1:14) Christ had come in, bringing salvation full and free, fully accomplished by the cross, the eternal plan fully and finally revealed, to all who would believe and the readers of Peter's letter were privileged that it took place in their generation. It is the very thing the prophets strained to see and to comprehend.

3) Our salvation is glorious -- the object of the prophets' earnest investigation.

Listen again to these words: (1Pe 1:10-11) Do you see what Peter is saying? Throughout history, the prophets, who spoke on behalf of God, who spoke as they were inspired by the Spirit of Christ, who themselves were the instruments of the revelation of God's redemptive plan, they were continually searching and examining and digging into the very things that they wrote and spoke, attempting to understand who they were writing about and when He would be revealed. They knew they were writing of the Messiah, of God's anointed but they longed to know His identity. They knew they were writing of a glorious salvation, but they longed to understand how and when it would be fully accomplished. They knew they were writing of a salvation that would require suffering but end with glory, but they did not fully and finally see it revealed.

Just consider the prophet Isaiah for a moment. Isaiah was convinced of a salvation that was coming that was great in scope and glorious in nature. He wrote: (Isa 45:18-25) It was a salvation that would encompass the nations. It was a salvation that Isaiah knew would require

the sufferings of the Christ: (Isa 53:1-10) Isaiah knew it was a salvation that would result in great glory for the Christ: (Isa 53:11-12) And even more we know this prophecy -- (Isa 9:6-7)

As much as Isaiah saw, as much as he had figured out – which was a lot, he still did not understand God’s plan of redemption fully. And what was true of Isaiah was true of all of the prophets of old for the same Spirit of Christ that was in him was in them. From Moses to Malachi, all those OT prophets who spoke for God had their gaze on salvation; they were longing to understand it fully. God disclosed Christ to them through their own prophecies. He showed them Christ in the types, in the sacrifices, in the furnishings and appointments and ordinances of the tabernacle and Temple. And so compelling, so beautiful were those glimpses of the grace of God opened up to them that the prophets became more and more inquisitive. These glimpses of gospel glories excited their own hopes; they longed for more complete revelation. Who is the Messiah and when is He coming? When will it all be accomplished? They were earnest in searching out the fullness of God’s salvation, a salvation that would be revealed fully to a future generation. Do we have that same earnestness to embrace the glorious salvation that is clearly revealed in Christ? Do we? Do we delight in the gospel that we can see fully revealed in Christ? Do we love the gospel like we should? Jesus said to the disciples: (Mat 13:16-17)

4) Our salvation is glorious – the constant theme of faithful men filled with Holy Spirit.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is no longer a mystery, but has now been fully revealed to man. As the writer of Hebrews wrote (Heb 1:1-3). In verse 12, Peter writes: It was revealed to them (to the prophets) that they were serving not themselves but you (they were writing prophecy, fulfilled in Christ and that was to be fully explained to you), in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. The same Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, sent forth by the Father and the Son then filled the apostles and now fills the faithful preacher who preaches the prophecies fulfilled. One Lord through the ages, one great plan of salvation, one revealed message, heralded by the prophets of old, now proclaimed by faithful men – all focused on the soul-saving Lordship of Jesus Christ –the gospel. We have the gospel, the fullness of it. We have the most powerful, most mighty, soul delivering, life giving, death destroying, Satan crushing, holiness giving, God magnifying, Christ exalting message in the world – the good news of the gospel -- Christ and Him crucified, risen and coming again to rule and reign in glory and in power. It is the only good news that saves people for eternity; it completely changes someone into a new creation; it gives forgiveness of sin and cleanses us thoroughly from our sin; translates us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light; grants us eternal life; secures heaven as our home forever; it overcomes death; it defeats sin and brings us into

intimacy and peace with God forever; and it is rich in grace and mercy without which we would all be forever lost with no hope. Only through Christ and Him crucified and risen again are we justified; redeemed, God is propitiated, we are reconciled, adopted, sanctified; and glorified. It is the preaching of the gospel that magnifies Christ and that draws lost men and women to life. No wonder Paul cried out: 1Co 9:16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

This is why Paul could say for any faithful preacher of the gospel: (1Co 1:17-18; 1Co 2:1-5; Rom 1:16; 2Co 4:3-6) Jesus is not simply one of whom the prophets speak, but He is the one who speaks through the prophets. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the King of glory, the Lord of life is the one who thunders in the voice of the prophets and of the faithful preacher who preaches in the power of the Spirit of God. And that is the kind of preaching we need today. Charles Spurgeon said: See the kind of preaching that we should all desire to hear, and that all God's ministers should aim at: "them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Nothing but a gospel full of the energy of the Holy Ghost, and set on fire by him, can effect the eternal purposes of God; but this is the kind of preaching that will live, and that will also make men live. God send it to every church and congregation throughout the world! Amen.

5) Our salvation is so glorious, angels long to look into it.

At the end of verse 12, Peter tells us, our salvation is something into which angels long to look. (v. 12) The angels wonder at God's gracious salvation of men and women. They have an overwhelming impulse to comprehend what it is like to experience the grace and glory of salvation and God's forgiveness of sins. They are fascinated by it. How incredible this is. The angels stand in God's holy presence. They are sent out to do His will. They have tremendous authority and power. Though they rejoice when a sinner repents and will be sent out by God to gather the elect on judgment day, they still have a holy curiosity to understand the kind of grace they will never experience. The holy angels do not need to be saved and God did not choose to redeem the angels that fell with Satan in his rebellion. The whole drama of redemption is amazing to them. That Lord of glory would put on human flesh, that He would redeem those who have hated Him, that He would die or even could die for men's souls – it is amazing to them. They cannot fully understand it all but they long to so that they might worship God more fully in all of His glory. How privileged we are to enjoy such a great salvation!

Application Questions:

- 1) Do you know the grace of God in Christ? Not in an academic sense, but as a personal possession of your soul?
- 2) Do you delight in that grace?
- 3) Do you delight in searching out the depths of the gospel which the prophets pursued and faithful preachers proclaim?

Oh, what would the damned in hell give for a sermon, could they but listen once more! They would consent, if it were possible, to bear ten thousand years of hell's torments, if they might but once more have the Word presented to them! If I had a congregation such as that would be, of men who have tasted the wrath of God, of men who know what an awful thing it is to fall into the hands of an angry God, how would they lean forward to catch every word. (C.H. Spurgeon)

- 4) Do we consider as we should the sufferings and glories of Christ?
- 5) Are we unapologetically gospel centered – with lips and life?

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