

## APPRECIATE YOUR SALVATION

*1<sup>10</sup>With regard to this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that has come to you, searched diligently and with the greatest care. <sup>11</sup>[They were] trying to find out the time and circumstances the Spirit of Christ (who was in them) was indicating when he foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. <sup>12</sup>[But] it was revealed to them that they were not ministering these things to themselves, but to you—these things that now have been proclaimed to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven. [Indeed,] angels desire to look into these things. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, focusing your mind and being [spiritually] sober, set your hope squarely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:10-13)*

### **Introduction**

Let us suppose that you plan a summer vacation trip to Disney World. You are looking forward to visiting “the Magic Kingdom” and all the wonders and adventures it offers.

Your summer vacation arrives; you pack up the car, and head south from Wisconsin to Florida and Disney World. The trip goes smoothly until you hit the traffic of Chicago, then the monotonous cornfields of Indiana. By the time you get to Georgia you are feeling the effects of the southern summer heat. By now you are beginning to wonder if it’s worth it: the distance is so long, the weather is so hot, the road can be so monotonous. You are seriously tempted to say, “Let’s forget about Disney World and go back home!”

When you cross the Georgia/Florida border you need to stop for gas. You decide to take a short break. The kids discover a terrific video arcade. They are having so much fun playing video games that they don’t want to leave. You are enjoying an icy, refreshing soft drink in the air-conditioned restaurant. Across the street you see a luxurious hotel with a spacious pool. You are seriously tempted to say, “Let’s forget about Disney World and spend our vacation right here!”

The Christian’s journey to the kingdom of heaven can be much like that trip to Disney World. In hard times there is the temptation to abandon that spiritual journey to heaven and abandon our great salvation. In good times there is the temptation to forget about our spiritual journey to heaven and neglect our great salvation.

Because we are so often tempted to either abandon or neglect our salvation, we need to heed the exhortation to appreciate that great salvation.

### **I. Appreciate Your Salvation, ...As Something for Which the Prophets Longed**

The great salvation that has been the subject of verses 3-9—a salvation that stands complete and ready to be revealed at the last time; a salvation that presently is experienced by the Christian as he trusts in Christ and thus shares in the divine communion and fellowship of the age to come—is the very salvation that was the object of the Old Testament prophets' keen interest. Peter tells us that concerning this salvation *"the prophets ... searched diligently and with the greatest care."* What were they seeking to discover? They were trying to find out at what time and under what circumstances this salvation revealed to them by God would be accomplished—that is to say, they wanted to know when and how this great salvation would be accomplished and bestowed upon God's people.

According to verse 11, Holy Spirit had revealed this much to the Old Testament prophets: This divine salvation would be accomplished by the Christ, the promised Messiah. In order to gain this salvation for His people, the Christ would have to undergo a great deal of suffering, (note Peter's use of the plural, *"the sufferings of Christ."*) The faithful endurance of those sufferings by the Christ would be followed by an abundance of glory.

In response to the prophets' intense interest and inquiry concerning these things, it was further revealed to them that they were not ministering to themselves, but to us who live in the New Testament era. That is to say, the prophets were informed that they themselves would not see the fulfillment of these things in their own day. On the contrary, they were prophesying of events that would happen in the relatively distant future from their time in history; note, for example, the LORD's testimony to Daniel:

*I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, My lord, what will be the outcome of all these things? <sup>9</sup>But he said, Go your way, Daniel; for the words are preserved and sealed until the time of the end ... <sup>13</sup>But go your way until the end comes; for you shall rest and shall rise [again] to receive your allotted inheritance at the end [of the age.] (Dan. 12:8-9,13)*

Daniel is informed that although the Old Testament prophets would not see the fulfillment of this great salvation in their day, they would share in it at the end of the age.

Consider this: The very things that had been revealed to the Old Testament prophets as mysterious future events, (which events they longed to behold,) have been proclaimed to us as accomplished events, the spiritual benefits of which we experience when we exercise faith in Jesus the Messiah. May God cause us to appreciate the wonder of the time and the position into which He has placed us as New Testament believers.

Let us appreciate our salvation, as something for which the Old Testament prophets longed. Referring to the Old Testament era believers, the writer to the Hebrews declares,

*All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth ... <sup>39</sup>These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. <sup>40</sup>God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (Heb. 11:13,39-40)*

## **II. Appreciate Your Salvation, ...As Something That the Angels Desire**

Peter tells us that this great salvation we possess as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ is something that the angels desire to examine and experience: *“angels desire to look into these things.”* The Greek term translated, “to look into,” (παρακίπτω) has the meaning, “to gaze at with an outstretched neck” (Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary, Peter and Jude*, p. 57.) By way of illustration: A young giraffe cranes his neck to peer over the fence at the zoo, having a great interest in the children at play and a great desire to taste the treats in their picnic basket.

The LORD has granted to His angels very great and awesome privileges. He has granted them to stand before His presence, beholding His glory and praising His Name:

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD seated on a throne—high and exalted, and the train [of his robe] filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him stood the seraphs, each one having six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two wings they covered their feet, and with two wings they flew. <sup>3</sup>They were calling out to one another, “Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.” (Isa. 6:1-3)*

The LORD has granted to His angels the privilege of announcing the Messiah’s birth:

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.” (Lk. 2:8-11)*

The LORD has granted to His angels the privilege of announcing the Messiah’s resurrection:

*The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.” (Matt. 28:5-6)*

The LORD has granted to His angels the privilege of heralding the Messiah's return in glory at the end of the age:

*... the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thess. 4:16)*

The LORD has granted to His angels the privilege of accompanying Him when He comes on that occasion to judge the world:

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (Matt. 25:31-32)*

But there is one thing to which the angels have not been permitted access: the blessing of sonship; the very blessing that is ours by means of the great salvation that has been accomplished by Jesus the Messiah. It is the Christian's adoption and sonship in Christ to which the Apostle Peter is referring when he writes, *"angels desire to look into these things."* The angels long to understand and experience such things as these: What is it like to be one of those to whom the Savior utters the words, *"I ascend to my Father and your Father"* (Jn. 20:17)? What is it like to be one of those on whose behalf the Holy Spirit cries out, "Abba, Father," as the Apostle Paul reports in Galatians 4:6, *"Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, and he is crying out [to God], 'Abba, Father'"*? What is it like to be one of those whom the Holy Spirit inspires to utter with confidence the very words by which the eternal Son of God Himself addresses His Father, the words "Abba, Father"? In Romans 8:15, Paul speaks of the Christian's privilege of addressing God as our Father, *"you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"* The term of address he uses is the same term by which the eternal Son of God addresses His Father; in the Garden of Gethsemane, we hear the Lord Jesus pray, *"Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. However, not what I will, but what you will"* (Mk. 14:36.) The angels desire to know, What is it like to receive the blessed assurance, *"Beloved, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"* (1 Jn. 3:2)?

Consider this: As Christians, there is given to us the privilege to which the angels of God are not granted access: the privilege of adoption and sonship through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us appreciate our great salvation, as something the angels desire. By way of illustration: A Christian watches a famous soccer player score a goal, and he expresses his desire to be in the place of that player so as to be able to do what

he can do and experience what he experiences in terms of athletic ability and the fame that is derived from it. As the Christian expresses such desire, the angels of God seated behind him turn to one another and sigh, "We wish we were in this Christian's position and that we could experience all that he experiences as a child of God!"

### **III. Appreciate Your Salvation, ..By Setting Your Hope on the Grace to Come**

As a Christian, you are instructed to *"set your hope squarely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

The Christian life is fundamentally a life of hope; not only in the sense of future orientation as opposed to immediate gratification, but even more, in the sense of confidence as opposed to despair. The Apostle Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians of their condition prior to their conversion: *"[remember] that you were at that time without Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and being without God in the world"* (Eph. 2:12.) In contrast to the condition of the unbeliever, consider the condition of the Christian, as described, for instance, in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14,16-18,

*Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep [i.e.; Christians who die before Christ's return in glory], or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him ... <sup>16</sup>... the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first, <sup>17</sup>after that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thess. 4:13-14,16-18)*

The Christian's hope is set upon *"the grace ... brought ... at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"* (i.e.; the gracious gift of salvation to be fully revealed at the last time.) As Christians, ours is a hope that is focused upon the divine, the transcendent, the gracious gift of God; as opposed to being focused on what is of this world: temporal, humanistic, and self-achieved. The writer to the Hebrews stresses that this was precisely the hope that motivated Abraham to a life of faithfulness to the LORD:

*By faith [Abraham] made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup>[He did so] because he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Heb. 11:9-10)*

The way we carry out this directive of setting our hope squarely upon the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ is by *“focusing your mind;”* (literally, by *“girding up the loins of your mind.”*) The illustration Peter employs is from everyday life in the first century: the loose flowing robe commonly worn by the men would be bound up at the waist with a belt in preparation for such physical activity as walking or working.

Likewise, a Christian you are being instructed to *“gird up your mind.”* Do not allow your mind to be left like an automobile “idling in neutral,” a situation where it can be stolen—a mind left “idling in neutral,” not focused upon Christ and informed by the Word of God, can be “stolen” by the philosophies and perspectives of this present world. Do not allow your mind to be left like an unmanned sail, for in such a state it can be carried along by the prevailing “breeze” of the surrounding culture, or swept away by a sudden, unexpected “gale” posed by unexpected events or challenges to our faith. If you do not have your mind under control, (that is to say, informed and guided by a biblical perspective,) you will either become distracted by the pleasures and adventures of this life or overwhelmed by the anxieties, tribulations, and challenges of this world.

How does the Christian “gird up his mind”? He is to do so with conscious decision and determination; he must make the kingdom of God and its standard to be the number one priority in his life. Our Lord Jesus instructs us: *“seek first his kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things [i.e.; the necessities of daily life] will be given to you as well”* (Matt. 6:33.) The Christian must cultivate an outlook and orientation that transcends this present world and focuses upon the divine and eternal realities of God and His kingdom:

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things; <sup>3</sup>for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Col. 3:1-4)*

The Christian must focus his mind and heart upon Christ as the goal, the prize, the “finish line” of our presently earthly existence: *“Let us focus our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Heb. 12:2.)

Let us appreciate our great salvation, by setting our hope on the grace to come. May the Apostle Paul’s personal testimony also be our testimony:

*It is not that I have already obtained this or have already been made perfect; rather, I press on so that I may take hold of that for which also I have been taken hold of by Christ. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not regard myself as having [already]*

*taken hold of these things; rather, I do this one thing: forgetting the things that are behind and reaching for the things that lie ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on to the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12-14)*

## **Conclusion**

Because we are so often tempted to either abandon or neglect our salvation, we need to heed the exhortation to appreciate this great salvation. Let us realize that this great salvation we experience in Christ Jesus is something for which the prophets longed, and it is something the angels desire. Let us all the more appreciate our great salvation, and set our hope squarely upon the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.