

1Peter 10-12-03b

Let's continue our study now in 1 Peter chapter 1. We or at least I am trying to answer this question, who are these prophets that we're inquiring into our salvation and this wonderful joy through testing that Peter is talking about that he's describing to these Jewish Christians in the first century? Who are these prophets? Is this something I can find in the scripture? And if I can find it, so what? How would that be helpful? Why would Peter even bring it up? If I was writing this epistle, this isn't an idea that would occur to me to put down. I'm thinking about these pilgrims, they're off in these far off lands and I know they're pining for their homeland and for their heritage and for their worship life in God and so on and I'm trying to encourage them and comfort them and I say, you know, God chose you for this, he gave you this plan, you're off and you can enjoy and you can recognize the hope that lies behind this momentary trial and rejoice in it. That's all great.

Then he says, now this salvation is something the prophets were inquiring into a long time ago when they were trying to figure out what time the Lord Jesus would suffer and die and I think, where did that come from? Why is that pertinent? Why would Peter even bring this idea up? Can you think of a reason? Why would Peter, I mean I get the first nine verses, don't you? It lays there and sits up and takes notice, it makes pretty good sense. Then he says, but these prophets were inquiring what time or what manner of time this salvation would be apparent, would be presented and the spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating. Spirit of Christ? I didn't know the spirit of Christ was in the apostles or in the prophets.

How did the apostles know this? That the spirit of Christ was telling the prophets about the salvation that the apostles would preach. I mean, to me, this just gets real convoluted real fast. I think, why is it here? Why wouldn't God make this a little simple? My dad used to say, you know, you need to keep it simple for us rabbit trappers.

I don't know how many rabbits he has actually trapped. I think he's quite a bit smarter than the average trapper of small rodents. But, you know, keep it simple.

It ought to be straightforward. Why would we start talking about prophets and spirits of Christ and what the timing of the sufferings of the Lord is in this connection? Why? Well, we've got to find where these prophets are and see what they said and maybe that will give us a clue. At least that was my thought.

So I started trying to track this down. What prophet of the Old Testament tries to, or says that he was seeking and inquiring into the time that the Lord Jesus would come? You should be able to answer this question. Name me a prophet that takes a stab at the time that Messiah the Prince would come and then be cut off, but not for himself.

It's Daniel, right? So let's flip over to Daniel chapter 9 and see if we can get some light shed on

what Peter is telling us here. Daniel chapter 9 and let's look around verse 20. Now, while I was speaking, praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God.

What's this all about? You remember where Daniel is at this point? Is he in the land? Is he in Jerusalem? He is a eunuch, isn't he? And he's in exile. He's been taken captive. And he started out in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar.

And then you had the whole Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin and Belshazzar in the end of chapter 5. And then in chapter 6, you had Darius the Mede setting 120 satraps over the kingdom. And over those, he set three governors of whom Daniel was one. And then Daniel was praying three times a day.

Remember that whole story? They tried to hatch a plot to get rid of Daniel. And Daniel goes into the lion's den. This is in the days of Darius the Mede.

You got the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. So he's sitting there in the Medo-Persian phase of the captivity. And he's speaking, praying and confessing his sin and the sin of his people, Israel.

Presenting supplication before the Lord for the holy mountain of God. He is still praying for Jerusalem. He's praying for Mount Zion.

He's praying for a return to worship at God's temple. While I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. Remember David in the Psalms? It says in Psalm 55, 17.

Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice. Daniel is praying in the evening. This is the time of the evening sacrifice.

And while I was speaking, the man Gabriel, flying swiftly, reached me. It's interesting he calls him the man Gabriel. He doesn't say the angel Gabriel.

He says the man Gabriel. We won't quibble at this point. That's a study for another time.

But this is a response. God could have picked any time of the day, any day of the week, any occasion to send this message to Daniel. It is significant that he responds while Daniel is speaking, praying, confessing, and offering supplication.

He is praying and praying intently as is his custom. He does it in the morning. He does it at noon.

And he does it in the evening. And he does it so visibly that it was a known custom to the other people he worked with. That's how these overseers of the satraps were able to hatch the plot.

These other two governors. They tried to get rid of number three because they knew he prayed.

Right? Does anybody know that we pray? Do we take a break? How many people know that Muslims pray? Any trouble figuring out that Muslims are praying to Allah? Are they bashful? A Muslim will drop anywhere.

Airport, sidewalk, playground, supermarket. When it is time for prayers and you've got an observant Muslim, he doesn't care. He will squat down and bow toward Mecca wherever he is.

And there's not many things I admire about Islam, but I do admire their dedication. They are faithful literally unto death in some cases. They really believe and practice their religion.

And it's a shame that we aren't nearly so interested in fulfilling the one true religion that God has revealed and granted to us. Does anybody stop and pray? Pray in the morning? Pray in the evening? Pray in the middle of the day? Daniel did. David did.

It seems to be pretty emphatic in the Scripture. I'm not saying you have to make an issue of yourself, but you can at least remember to do it. It's really prayers between us and the Lord, right? You can stop at your lunch break.

Send up all kinds of prayers. You've got plenty of time to pray over your oatmeal or whatever it is. You've got plenty of time to pray in the morning while you're getting ready.

You've got plenty of time to pray in the evening when you're getting ready to retire. You don't have to necessarily stop and kneel and bow your head. You can do that if you like, if it helps.

Whatever suits you. I am personally sort of an incognito prayer. I pray and you can't look at me and tell that I'm praying.

I'm not sure that's a good thing or not, but it's just kind of picking up a continuing conversation. I don't only pray three times a day, but I try to remember to pray at those three times especially, but there's prayers going up all the time. It's just a continual dialogue of going up to God, and that's also something that we're encouraged to do in Scripture.

But here's the thing. Daniel is praying. God chooses that time.

God honors Daniel's prayer, and there are many other examples I could give you of this, but God honors Daniel's prayer and sends Gabriel in the moment and at the hour that he is praying, and this is an answer, and it is designed to be a visible and obvious answer honoring... How many times had Daniel prayed in his life? Praying three times a day? The man is probably pushing 100 years old at this point, and that's a lot of days. What, 3,650 days times three is... I don't know, was that 100,000 prayers or something? I'm not a math guy, but that's a lot of prayers. God chose this day, this time, this prayer, this hour, and sent Gabriel.

Gabriel informed me and talked with me and said, verse 22, O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out. It's as

though God was sitting there and He said, you know what? As soon as Daniel starts praying, we're going to pull the trigger on this response.

What if Daniel had decided he was too tired to pray that day? What if he busted the thong on his sandal and decided he needed to go down to the cobbler or something, and he just, well, you know, I've prayed 98,000 other times, I'm just going to skip. As soon as he began his supplication, as God knew that He would, the command went forth, I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved. Therefore consider the matter and understand the vision.

Then He gives the prophecy of the 70 weeks, and you're probably familiar with that. And having been given this and gone through the explanation and so forth, flip over to Daniel chapter 12, verse 5, just a couple of pages over in your Bible. The prophecy continues here.

At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince, stand watch over the sons of your people. There shall be a time of trouble. This is the time of great tribulation.

But you, Daniel, verse 4, shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase. Look at verse 6. It says, one said, this is probably Daniel saying to the man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the river, how long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be? Now we're getting back to 1 Peter.

Now we're getting back to a prophet and an inquiry into the timing of the deliverance of God's people, the deliverance of Israel, the restoration of the kingdom, the implementation of God's plan and purpose for the nation of Israel, the people of Israel, and the Davidic king. When is this going to happen? How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be? I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, who held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time. And when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, My Lord, what shall be the end of these things? He's saying, what's the outcome? When and how is this all going to come to a consummation? He said, Go, Daniel, for the words are closed and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified and made white and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

It's sealed and closed until the time of the end. The wicked are never going to get it, but the wise are going to understand. When the time comes, and the wise need to know, the wise are going to understand.

For the time the sacrifice is taken away, and notice, he starts getting some specifics about the time. Watch for the taking away of the daily sacrifice. Guess what? You can't take away a daily sacrifice until it's instituted.

There is no daily sacrifice currently going on in Jerusalem. It could easily be instituted. It could easily take place.

It hasn't happened yet. That tells me that the time of the end is not yet. It doesn't necessarily mean the rapture couldn't take place, but before the last half of the tribulation, there needs to be the re-inauguration of animal sacrifices in Jerusalem.

That has to take place in the beginning of the tribulation period. So they need to crank it up shortly before we leave, or shortly after, for this prophecy to be fulfilled. So Daniel is a prophet who inquired and asked and longed to see the time, or what manner of time, this salvation, this deliverance, specifically for the Jews.

Remember I told you how many commentators tried to say Peter is writing to Gentiles? The prophets didn't inquire into the salvation for the Gentiles. They inquired into the salvation for Israel, for Jews, for the people of God. That's what Peter is talking about here.

He says, these prophets that you know about, he wouldn't be writing to a bunch of Macedonians or Gentile Greek-speaking parties up there and say, well, you know what the prophets said. They have no acquaintance with the Hebrew prophets. These are Jews.

These are the Jews of the Diaspora, and they know the prophets. They've heard it all their lives. They've heard it in synagogue, heard it at the temple when they were in Jerusalem, heard it when they came back for the annual feasts, the assembly feasts three times a year.

They know these things well. And Peter says, look, and here's the upshot. Here's the answer to the question.

This is in your Bible. This salvation. Now, Peter talking to these Jews says, you remember the prophets were inquiring, wanting to know.

They were looking ahead to the, when the Spirit of Christ was telling them that Christ would come and suffer and that would initiate the time of glory. But what is the import of this message? What is Peter really telling these people? You know how you can keep that joy? You know how you can remember that the testing of your faith produces patience and that this momentary light affliction is worthy to be compared with the glory that's about to be revealed? You know how you can do this? How you can actually make it happen in your thinking? Read your Bible. Remember what the Bible says.

For these people, remember what the prophets said. Think back to Daniel. Daniel saw it centuries ago that God had a plan.

The clip for Dr. Criswell's Sunday night sermon this week, the title of the sermon is The Entrance of Our Lord Beyond the Veil. This is the ascension and session. This is the death of Christ

leaving this life and going into those realms where, you know, that born from which no traveler returns as Shakespeare put it.

And he makes a statement, and I excerpted this and used it for the little minute and 20-second teaser that was played on the radio today. Dr. Criswell makes a great point. I almost thought about taking it out and playing it for you.

He says, in a nutshell, redemption is God's eternal purpose. Now think about that. Don't be thrown by the theology.

You say, redemption? Oh my gosh. What does that mean? Redemption is our salvation, right? This deliverance that Peter's talking about. Redemption is God's eternal purpose.

And he goes on to say, everything points to it. Everything in God's plan and purpose. Everything in human history centers on redemption.

And here was his special point. See if you agree with this point. Dr. C said, redemption is not a patch on a broken down history.

Redemption isn't a fix for a problem that cropped up. It's not like God had some other plan and then man sinned and it broke and God had to repair it. Man was created.

The universe was brought into being. Everything from the beginning was centered on redemption. This isn't just a, oh, it broke, let me fix it thing.

Our salvation was in God's heart and in God's mind and God's intentional purpose from the outset. That's the purpose. The purpose is salvation.

Salvation is not just a fix. It's the reason we're here. We're here to be saved.

God wasn't just looking for a planet to populate with people and sure hope you stay perfect and then everything will be great. You can just name animals and eat from the fruit and avoid the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that'll just be wonderful. Oh, looky there, that Adam.

Take my eye off him for one minute and now what am I going to do? Well, I'm going to have to think up a plan and try to redeem him. No, it was the intention of God. God knew from the outset how things were going to go and His whole purpose was this salvation.

Now, how tragic would it be for us to wander through this life bumping into things and never grab hold of our salvation. I'm not talking about faith in Christ and not going to the lake of fire. I'm talking about being delivered out of this present evil age.

Leveraging our circumstances, our daily trials, our daily challenges into salvation. That's why we're here. The reason you are here.

I was looking at this picture. All of you here have seen this picture on my laptop. These are my relatives.

This is a picture taken 106 years ago. These are my great-grandfather, his brothers, his father, and his sisters. And as I look at this picture, and it's a really nice, sharp picture, and I look at them, and they're sitting there just as real as you and I are sitting here right now.

They've got their hands folded in their laps. And when you look at their hands, you can see their fingernails. You can see the veins in the back of their hands.

And you can see the natural pose. I love looking at Aunt Lucina's hand here that she's got draped over her brother Doric's shoulder. And there's just this little gesture with her index finger here.

It's just a little natural pose. And you look at these others with their hands, hard-working hands, hands that repaired shoes and worked in the postmaster's office. And I see their hands, and their hands are just as real as my hands.

And I think, where are these people now? There was blood coursing through their veins. They were just as real and substantial as you and me. Every one of them is long gone.

The clothes that they wore, the chairs that they sat on, everything in this picture is long gone. The house, went to Pawnee and looked for it. Not the house, not a stick of it remains.

Everything that was their life that was so real and substantial at the moment this picture was taken is long gone. Can't ever even prove it was here except by this picture. That's you and me.

If God sees fit to run human history for another hundred years, we'll all be gone. You look at your hands, look at the veins, look at the fingernails. These bones, this flesh, this skin, gone.

What's the purpose of your life? What difference did it make that you were here? Well, I had some fun. Your fun's meaningless when you go to sleep and never wake up again. What is the purpose? What is the goal? The purpose of God in creating us, in giving us this flesh, in giving us this existence and this time, this brief grass-withering, flower-fading time on earth is to be delivered.

You are here to be delivered. That's your purpose. That's your fate.

That's your mission. Be delivered. Peter says, Look, if you latch on to this salvation and the hope of it and the expectation of it, you are going to have this kind of joy that Mary had when she found out she was going to be the mother of the Lord.

You're going to have the joy that the saints in glory, wearing white robes and crowns, are going to have when they sing the song to the Lamb. That's the verb. That's the joy.

And these momentary light afflictions aren't going to discourage us. That's God's purpose for us. The prophets saw this coming.

Now, here's my second startling point. Don't ask me what the first one was, but this is my second startling point. The prophets of old and the Old Testament saints in general didn't have this.

That's Peter's point. He says the prophets were trying to figure out when it was going to come. When is this deliverance that you and I take for granted, that the Bible tells us we have as a birthright, they didn't have it.

The Spirit of Christ told the prophets that it was coming. The rest of the Israelites, they didn't know it was coming. They paid attention to the prophets.

They could get the message. But they didn't have the ability to have their faith refined and tested and to store up treasure in heaven. They didn't have that.

You say, oh, that seems horribly politically incorrect. That's sort of anti-Semitic. You're saying the Jews couldn't earn an eternal reward? And I'm telling you, no, they couldn't.

What does Scripture say about the reward of the Old Testament saints? What does it say in Hebrews 11 about Abraham dwelling in tents? Why did he dwell in a tent? What was he waiting for? What does Hebrews say? Tell me. He was waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God. Now, let's think about the future.

We know about two future kingdoms, right? Kingdom of the Son, millennial kingdom, earthly. We know about the kingdom of the Father. New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, city built, four square, etc.

Which kingdom has the city whose founder and builder is God? Go ahead, take a shot. Which kingdom? Kingdom of the Son or kingdom of the Father? Which kingdom was Abraham waiting for? Kingdom of the Father. The earthly Jerusalem that is going to be the capital city for the sons of David who reign in the millennial kingdom wasn't founded by God.

It was founded by David. It was founded by the Jebusites. That Salem thing, Shem lived there.

Melchizedek lived there. That city wasn't founded by God. Abraham wasn't waiting for the millennial Jerusalem.

Abraham wasn't waiting for the millennial kingdom. Abraham was waiting for that city whose founder and builder is God. There's only one city whose founder and builder is God.

God's not building Jerusalem on this earth. There's going to be a bunch of Ezra's and Nehemiah's rebuilding Jerusalem after the destruction of the tribulation period. It is the new Jerusalem.

It is the city built four square. It is the one with 12 gates and 12 pillars and the angelic residence as well as human and where the church and Israel are equal. Who and how... Well, I can't finish that sentence.

How is inheritance going to be earned in that city and who is going to earn it? When will the Israelites have a chance to earn an inheritance in that kingdom of the Father? In the kingdom of the Son. That's why they're all coming back. That's why God is resuscitating them.

They didn't have a shot at this salvation. They didn't have the Spirit of Christ indwelling them. Rare exceptions.

Tabernacle workmen, prophets, kings. It's a rare thing to have the gift of the Spirit in the Old Testament. The endowment, the empowerment.

Maybe you're Samson with a jawbone in your hand. Limited, mission-oriented, temporary visitation of the Spirit. When is it that Israel will get a chance to enjoy this salvation that Peter is telling us about? Millennial kingdom.

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. When? Millennial kingdom. It is the gift of the Spirit.

It is the presence and the power of God in the Spirit and the Word that enables us, that delivers to us this salvation. Why do you think the prophets were so interested in finding out when it would come? Because they didn't have it. If they had it, if there's no big difference in faith in the Old Testament and faith in the New, why would they care? Because they didn't have it.

Why do you think Daniel is down on his knees confessing the sins of his people, confessing his own sins, praying for the mountain of Jerusalem, making supplication? Why is he fervently praying? Why is he praying three times a day? What is he praying about? He looks around and he says, this ain't it. Remember the book of Ecclesiastes we studied? What did Solomon do? He looked around and said, this ain't it. I'm the king.

I've got everything. And I'm bumping my head on the glass ceiling. It's just under the sun.

I'm going to leave all my work to somebody else. I can't take any of this with me. And I can't earn anything that goes beyond this life.

The Apostle Paul, putting himself in the guise of the Old Testament saint. What I want to do, that I don't do. And what I don't want to do, that I do.

Who will deliver me from the body of this death? Who will deliver me? And he's speaking after Christ, but he's impersonating the Old Testament saint. He says, thanks be to God. We have this victory through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was not revealed. The salvation was not revealed. The prophets were pining for it,

were inquiring into it.

Look at what Peter goes on to say. He says, look, the angels have been longing to look into this. There's an angel talking to Daniel.

There's Michael the archangel, the prince of Israel. And they didn't know. They were waiting.

Things into which angels long to look. This is our birthright. This is our heritage.

This is our possession. This is our gift. Don't ignore it.

Don't overlook it. Don't fumble it away. Don't trade it for a mess of entertainment pottage or psychological pottage or relationship pottage or job satisfaction pottage.

This is the most precious thing. People in the Old Testament pined for what you and I were born with. It kind of reminds me of the illegal immigrants, looking across the border saying, if I could just get into that country, I know I would have such a great life.

And they'll risk everything. They'll risk arrest and break laws and do all kinds of things trying to get in to a country that most of us were born in. And what, American citizen? We should take it for granted.

Well, of course. Of course I'm a citizen. Of course I have freedoms and rights and guarantees under the Constitution.

Of course I've got due process. Of course I've got appeal to my congressman. Of course I've got these privileges.

Of course I can cross state lines, go anywhere I want, do whatever I want. God, if you're not an American citizen, you can't. I was in a citizenship debate with somebody who claimed that there would be no reason for our current president's mother to worry about whether he was a citizen or not when he was born.

They had this theory that maybe she had him in Kenya and sneaked him in the back door some kind of way. I have no idea if there's any merit in that or not. But it was an interesting question.

Would she want to ensure that he was conferred American citizenship when he was born? Would she go to the papers and say that he was born in Hawaii even if he wasn't? Would she report his birth to the newspapers and have it printed that he was born in Hawaii even if he wasn't because she was concerned that he had American citizenship? And they said, ah, what's the big deal? American citizenship? And I thought, you really don't know what you're talking about. Citizenship is a big deal. It's a really big deal.

Our heavenly citizenship is a really big deal. And our opportunities day by day are a really important, essential, central feature of our salvation. So, verse 12, to them, to those prophets, it

was revealed that not to themselves, but to us, they were ministering these things.

They weren't ministering it to themselves. They couldn't make the kind of application that Peter is making. They didn't tell their fellow Israelites, count it all joy when you fall into various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Do you see that message anywhere to the Israelites? Think about it. Is there any Old Testament passage that says, well, you know, count it all joy when you fall into various trials because you're piling up inheritance in heaven. Is that anywhere in the Old Testament? Do Job's friends tell him that? Does anybody tell Solomon that? Does he conclude his book with that? No, and you know why? Because it wasn't true for them.

They ministered. They looked ahead and they said there's coming a day. There's coming a time when God is going to pour out His Spirit.

There's coming a time when God is going to deliver this salvation that's already prepared. We can't see it. Balaam says, I see Him now, but not near.

A star is going to rise out of Jacob and smite the brow of Moab, but not near, not soon, not for us. They ministered these things not to themselves, but to us. The things which have now been reported to you through those who have preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.

Those who have preached the Gospel, the Good News, the Word of God to you by the Holy Spirit. In your case, that's anybody you've ever heard teach the Scriptures. It's me.

It's a radio pastor. It's anybody who God the Holy Spirit uses to convey and impart and emphasize and explain and elucidate and illuminate the truth of God's Word. Sent from Heaven.

Things which angels desire to look into. We just take it for granted. We think, boy, wouldn't it be great to be an angel? Angels are thinking, wouldn't it be great to be one of those guys? They long to look into this.

They long to see how it works. How the character of God is going to be revealed and unfolded and reflected in our lives. We've got to catch how important this is.

Peter didn't write this letter on a lark. He didn't dash it off in a moment. It wasn't like a quick text message before he's walking out the door.

It wasn't a slapdash email that he dashed off before he was going to do something else. He took his time. He composed his thoughts.

And under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, he wrote down these truths that are for you and for me just as much as they were for those first century pilgrims. Well, this brings us to verse 13. We'll have a little bit more to say about the angels looking.

But we're going to get into girding up the loins of our mind and being sober next time. If we see this, if we understand it, if it makes sense to us and we say, okay, I get that. So, now what? Peter's going to answer that question in this very next section.

So, I look forward to getting into verses 13 and following next time. But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for how powerfully You have communicated to us the essence and the purpose and the point of Your plan for us. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts, will encourage us and motivate us and uphold us with the right hand of Your righteousness so that we can fulfill this great destiny. We can exploit the victory that the Lord Jesus achieved on the cross.

And we can be prepared not only to perform every good work in this life, but to enter into those things that You have prepared for those who love You in the next. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.