1 Peter 1:10-12 More Privileges than the Prophets

In 1986, Debra Goddard, a woman living in West London, England, visited an outdoor flea market and bought a chunky ring with a large center stone for just £10 (about $13 USD).

For 33 years, Debra assumed the ring was just cheap costume jewelry. She wore it casually, never suspecting it had any real value.

In 2019, when her mother lost all of her savings, Debra took the ring to a jeweler just to see if she could sell it to get some money for her mom. The jeweler looked at the ring and nearly fainted—the stone was not glass; it was an authentic 26.27-carat diamond.

Deborah put the ring up for auction; it sold for a staggering $607,900. Debra used the money to care for her mother and to help others in need.

Sometimes we don't realize or appreciate the value of something we have.

In the opening vss of 1 Peter, the author is trying to show his readers how valuable the Gospel is, or should be, to them. They were suffering persecution, but they had received a very valuable message that would result in great riches for them.

In fact, they had greater spiritual privileges then the OT prophets and even the angels.

That privilege is still true today. Having the Bible is a great privilege that we should appreciate and value. If we have accepted the Gospel message, we have something that will support us through our trials and tribulations. Like Peter's original readers, we too have more privileges than the prophets and angels.

Note several things Peter tells us here about the fact that we have *more privileges than the prophets.*

I. .10a The OT prophets inquired and searched diligently regarding this salvation.

A. .10 "of which salvation" points back to vs. 9 – "the salvation of your souls."

1. God's plan to save souls began long before these believers in Asia Minor were converted. It extends back long before the death and resurrection of Christ. This salvation extends back to revelation God gave to the OT prophets.

2. Jesus' ministry is a fulfillment of the prophecies God revealed long before these people ever heard the Gospel message.

3. So this is not a new or novel message; it is directly connected to the prophets of old.

App: Our salvation is the fulfillment of the prophecies God revealed to the OT prophets.

B. The OT prophets did not fully understand what God revealed to them.

They proclaimed what God told them to say and write, but some of those things were beyond their comprehension.

Daniel 12:8 *Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"*

C. .10a That's why the prophets carefully inquired regarding these things.

These two words are mostly synonymous.

1. "have inquired" (ἐκζητέω) – to seek out, to search for, to seek diligently

2. "searched diligently" (ἐξεραυνάω) – make careful inquiry, examine in great detail

The two words go together to show how urgently and carefully the prophets searched out the meaning of these prophecies. They spoke or wrote the words that the HSp gave them, and then they carefully examined these words to figure out what they meant.

Quote: The *words* of the inspired authors are God's, expressing the mind of the Spirit; the writers themselves searched into the words, to fathom [their] precious meaning, …. [1]

So the prophets spoke/wrote these words through inspiration, but they did not necessarily understand some of it. So they searched diligently to figure it out.

App: We are not prophets, and we do not receive revelation directly from God. But we should follow the pattern of searching the Scriptures diligently (Acts 17:11) to fathom their meaning.

Some things in the Bible are simple, but some things are rather difficult to understand. Understanding requires some effort.

II. .10b The OT prophets prophesied concerning the grace of salvation.

A. The text says, literally, "grace unto you" (εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος)—it refers to grace that belongs to Christians. I.e., grace designated for or intended for NT believers in Jesus.

B. Salvation has always been by grace through faith. OT believers were saved by grace through faith. The *content* of their faith might have been a bit different, but what saved them was God's grace.

C. The OT prophets prophesied regarding the saving grace that would eventually reach the Gentiles of Asia Minor and the whole world. The NT Gospel is based on that same information.

So this OT prophetic information from ancient times was intended for Peter's readers and for us. God's grace was for us, even in the OT.

App: We find great profit in reading the OT; it prophesies God's grace to us, so we must not neglect it. You will not understand the NT if you do not spend time in the OT. E.g., Hebrews

III. .11 The OT prophets searched what the suffering and the glory of Christ might mean.

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[1] David Brown, A. R. Fausset, and Robert Jamieson, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Acts–Revelation*, vol. VI (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), 599.

A. They searched (ἐραυνάω) for what God meant by these OT prophecies. A lot of searching is going on here—cf. vs. 10's two words.

1. What does the "what" refer to? It could be, possibly, "what *things*," (as neut acc pl) but more likely "what *person*" (pronoun, acc, sing, masc).

2. So they were searching for details regarding this coming Messiah—what about this person: who he would be, what he would do, what his character would be—the details of his person and life.

In addition to what kind of person the Messiah would be, …

B. They searched for "what manner of time" God had in view.

1. Sometimes, God revealed specific details about the timing of the Messiah's arrival (e.g., Daniel), but in other cases, the timing is not clear at all.

2. Timing could refer to *when* these things would happen as well as *what* that era would be like—i.e., the state of the world at that time, the characteristics of that era.

C. Today, we understand these prophecies only in light of the person and work of Jesus. These prophecies make sense after we see how Jesus fulfilled them. But they were obscure to the prophets hundreds of years earlier.

In any case, the OT prophets were trying to figure out what God was telling them regarding the coming of the Messiah.

Quote: The prophets predicted these matters but did not know when they would be fulfilled, and they hoped upon hope that they would be fulfilled in their days.[2]

D. .11b They searched because the Spirit of Christ was in them.

1. Since the HSp inspired the OT prophets regarding the coming of Christ, Peter calls him here "the Spirit of Christ."

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[2] Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 73.

2. Of course, in a sense, the HSp is the Spirit associated with Christ in the Trinity. So through the HSp, Christ inspired the prophets to write about himself.

3. This means that OT prophecy did not originate with the prophets themselves. They were not merely proclaiming whatever they felt like saying. They spoke what God told them to speak.

   2 Pet 1:16 *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, …*

   2 Peter 1:21 *prophecy never came by the will of man*

4. The Spirit of Christ "did signify."

   a) The word "signify" (δηλόω) means "make clear, make evident, inform." This is talking about revelation; the Spirit of Christ revealed these things to the prophets.

   b) We see here a clear statement that the prophets got their information from the Spirit of God.

      2 Peter 1:21 *… holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

5. .11c The Sprit of Christ "testified beforehand."

   a) So this is clearly a reference to predictive prophecies that God gave long before Jesus' ministry began.

   b) The OT contains many prophecies regarding the person and work of Christ, and all of these were given hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

      Cf. Isa 7:14—about 750 years before Jesus was born.

      Micah 5:2—he would be born in Bethlehem; revealed at about the same time—700 years before.

      Daniel's vision of the different empires

   c) We believe in genuine predictive prophecy. God knows the future, and he has revealed the future to various prophets at various times.

      Hebrews 1:1 *God, … at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets*

6. .11c The Spirit of Christ revealed information regarding two important things:

a) the sufferings of Christ

Where do we find the suffering of Christ in the OT? Several places in the psalms, but most prominently in Isa 53. That passage is very explicit regarding the suffering of the Messiah. "He was wounded…" The Messiah is called "The Suffering Servant" because of that text.

Cf. also Dan 9:25-27 predicts the timing of the coming of the Messiah and that he would be "cut off," the city destroyed, and the end would come like a flood with war and desolation.

Sadly, the Jewish religious leaders ignored those OT prophesies about the suffering servant.

And Jesus fulfilled those OT prophecies by his great sufferings—he was rejected by his people, betrayed by a friend, opposed, arrested, and tortured, and put to death in horrendous pain and suffering.

Peter knew very well about the sufferings of Christ; he was an eye-witness to Jesus' sufferings.

And the Spirit of Christ revealed both the suffering of the Messiah and also …

b) the glory that should follow

Luke 24:26 *Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?*

(1) The OT highlights the glories of the Messiah much more than his sufferings. All the Jews were expecting a conquering and reigning king to be their Messiah.

E.g., Isaiah 11:4–7

The first part of this describes the *power* of the Messiah and the second part describes the *peace* and security his kingdom will bring in.

But with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. 6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

(2) Peter was a witness to both Jesus' sufferings and his glory. Peter was there when Jesus was transfigured; he saw a glimpse of Jesus' future glory. He saw Jesus after the resurrection and he saw Jesus ascend into heaven.

(3) The Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus because he did not bring in the kind of kingdom they were expecting. They had the right to expect their king to bring in a glorious kingdom; that's what the OT prophets said would happen; that's what they were looking for.

(4) Jesus fulfilled some of the OT expectations for the glories of the Messiah when he rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven. And he will come again in power and glory to reign over the earth.

(5) One of the reasons we expect Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom when he returns is that God revealed that truth through the OT prophets. The clear OT expectation is that the Messiah would experience great glory and power—he will reign over Israel from the throne of David (Isa 9). That did not happen when Jesus suffered for our sin, but it will happen when Jesus returns.

Matthew 13:17 … *many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*

This text may be the basis of what Peter says here.

IV. .12 The information God revealed to the OT prophets was for others, not for themselves.

A. The OT prophets "did minister the things" for us, not for themselves.

I.e., the prophets did not personally experience what they prophesied—the suffering or the glory of the Messiah. These prophecies would await a long time for their fulfillment. The writings of the prophets pertained to future generations, not to themselves. The prophets did not have the privilege of seeing their prophecies fulfilled.

B. Peter says that the OT prophets "did minister" (διακονέω). This implies that the OT writings are, ultimately, for the church. They were serving us in these prophesies.

C. Some of the prophecies regarding the glory of Christ remain as of yet unfulfilled. Those predictions regarding the glory of Christ's coming kingdom will be fulfilled when Jesus returns in power and glory.

D. Even the angels do not know the day or the hour of Jesus' return. Like us, they are awaiting to see how God will fulfill all the prophecies about Jesus.

App: We see here how the Scriptures are the results of both the divine and the human authors. Prophets like Daniel, Isaiah, and Micah spoke and wrote these prophesies, but they spoke as they were "moved by the HSp." We affirm both the human author and God as the source of Scripture.

V. .12b The NT evangelists are reporting (ἀναγγέλλω) what the OT prophets foretold.

A. The Christian converts that Peter is writing to here received the Gospel message from others who had preached the Gospel (εὐαγγελίζω) to them. The message of the OT prophets culminates in the preaching of the Gospel.

When we preach the Gospel, we are, in a sense, participating in the ministry of the OT prophets. The Gospel is not a new message; it goes right back to the message God gave to the OT prophets.

B. Peter distinguishes two groups of people:

1. The OT prophets through whom God communicated information about the future suffering and glory of the Messiah;

2. The NT evangelists or preachers who brought this message about the Messiah to people like Peter's readers, and to us.

3. Both of these groups were inspired by the Spirit and proclaimed God's message.

4. Peter is putting the authority of the Gospel on the same level as the authority of the OT prophets. The Gospel is the fulfillment of those OT prophecies. The NT has the same authority as the OT.

The Bible presents a unified message about the Messiah. Both OT and NT teaching is consistent and harmonious regarding the suffering and glory of the Messiah.

C. .12c The HSp was "sent down from heaven." The Holy Spirit had energized this preaching. The Spirit inspired the OT prophets and he also inspired the message that others had proclaimed to them.

App: The work of the HSp is the only way anyone accepts the preaching of the cross (cf. 1 Cor 1:18f). The Spirit who inspired the prophets of old must work in our hearts so that we accept this message. Cf., Rom 1:16

D. .12end Angels desire to look into such things.

1. Peter drops in this little statement at the end of this section to highlight the privilege his readers have in receiving this message.

2. Angels, of course, know about all these things.

3. But angels do not experience salvation. Jesus did not die for them; they will not be part of his kingdom like Christians will be.

4. Angels would like to "look into" (παρακύπτω) such things. The word means, literally, "to stoop down to look." It refers to stooping or stretching to look at something. And it implies a continuous look, not just a quick glimpse.

Quote: The sense is not one of idle curiosity but of a longing to see the fulfillment of God's promises.[3]

5. The implication is that angels find the process of salvation fascinating and appealing. They look at God's plan of salvation with curiosity and delight.

6. Peter is highlighting the greatness of this gospel message. Angels wish that they could look into the gospel. We, as believers in Christ, get to not only look into the gospel but to fully understand it. We get to experience things that angels can see only from a distance. So this is a great privilege that we should not take for granted. We understand truth that prophets and angels could not fully grasp.

   Matthew 13:16 *But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear*

   Do you understand and appreciate this great message?

App: It's very sad that so many people these days have no interest in the Gospel or the Bible. Those things that rivet the attention of prophets, angels, and Christians has no interest for the average person.

It's like Deborah Goddard thinking that her diamond ring was just a piece of glass costume jewelry. She assumed that the ring had very little value. She saw the value in the ring only when the jeweler told her what it was.

It's only when the HSp is "sent down from heaven" that someone begins to see the value of the Gospel.

Only when the Spirit energizes the message will people understand the value of it. We can't control whether the Spirit will come down, but we can communicate that message and urge others to see the value in it. We can tell others that what they think is a piece of glass is really a very valuable diamond.

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[3] Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 64.

Peter's point here seems to be that his readers should appreciate the great privilege of having received the Gospel message. Even prophets and angels did not have the privilege of understanding this message like believers do. Hearing and receiving the Gospel is a great privilege we must not overlook.

Quote: The most humble believer [can] see what the most distinguished prophet never saw.[4]

God gave this message to the OT prophets through the Spirit of Christ, the apostles proclaimed that message to the readers, the HSp energized this message, and now these Gentiles in Asia Minor are saved because of it. Even the angels marvel at the great salvation that God predicted and then brought to pass for his people.

So the point is that Christians should be very thankful for the Gospel message and cling to it in spite of the difficulties we may be experiencing. It's a great privilege and honor to believe the Gospel message. We might suffer right now in various ways, but suffering led to glory for Christ, and it will ultimately lead to glory for all who follow him.

Perhaps some of us here today fail to see the value in the Gospel message. I urge you to see that what you might think of as a mere chunk of glass is really a very valuable diamond. Accept the message that God gave to the prophets and to the apostles—believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

And those of us who do believe in Jesus are obligated to proclaim this great message to others so they might see the value of the Gospel and enjoy the privileges it brings.

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[4] *Barnes Notes*