

# God's Revelation of Our Salvation



**1 Peter 1:8-12**

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Have any of you ever missed an assembling of the church (maybe you had a good reason to miss but you had to miss) and then afterwards you met someone who had been in the service and you heard God showed up and something amazing happened? While they were talking to you about what happened in the service you were really feeling bad you had to miss it. Can you imagine? It's Resurrection Sunday, it's evening, and the church is meeting behind closed doors. They have locked the doors because a few days earlier they saw their leader crucified, so they're now afraid the Jews might come after them. Then all of a sudden, Jesus shows up, shows them His scars, shows them His side, and John's gospel says He breathed on them the Holy Spirit. He reminded them from this time forward whatever they forgave on earth would be forgiven in Heaven, and whatever they didn't forgive on earth wouldn't be forgiven in Heaven.

Wouldn't it have been terrible if you had missed that service—to have followed Jesus for three and a half years and then missed out on His resurrection appearance to you? Well, that actually happened. The guy's name was Thomas. So, you can imagine when Peter and the other

disciples are telling Thomas about the doors being locked, and then all of a sudden, Jesus showed up, He just appeared. Do you remember what Thomas said? He said... *Unless I see with my eyes the very marks where the nails pierced His wrists and I can put my finger in them—I have to see where the spear went into His side and I have to be able to run my hand in that wound or I will never believe.* Eight days later, Thomas is with the others and again they're behind locked doors, and Jesus just appears. Jesus says... *Thomas, stick your finger in here. Thomas, do you want to see this? Go ahead; put your hand in it?* Then Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus looked at him and said you wouldn't believe unless you saw, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." That is who Peter is writing to. He's writing to a group of believers who are what we call second generation. They did not walk with Jesus. They did not see Jesus. They did not believe in Him because of first-hand information that they gathered themselves. They are believing because someone else has told them about Him. They have never seen Him, kind of like us.

You know, the one thing we all have in common here this morning is none of us have ever seen Jesus. The message this morning is not just a message to the elect Exiles who are scattered throughout the Roman Empire, but it's a message for those of us who gathered this morning at Hardin Baptist Church. Verses 8 and 9 are going to serve as an introduction to our message, and then verses 10 through 12 are going to be the body of the message. Notice that verse 8 is at the end of a paragraph.

## Scripture

***"Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls."* (V. 8–9)**

Now, most of us right now would go to practical application, but Peter doesn't. He wants to tell us something else about this salvation we possess. These next three verses are just mind-boggling. Listen to what Scripture says concerning this salvation.

***"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but 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, things into which angels long to look."(V. 10–12)***

How many of you who have never seen Jesus love Him? I mean, you just can't help it! Inside you, there is this love that just overflows toward Him. You not only love Him you believe in Him. Scholars tell me that when Peter puts this verb and this preposition together, in the way he puts it together, that to believe in Him literally takes on the meaning of 'to rest in Him, to have all of your weight on Him.' You're not supporting yourself at all. I would like for you think just for a moment about that thing you go to completely rest in, physically—where all of your weight is on it, none of your weight is on the floor, you're not holding yourself at all—some of you are thinking of your recliner. Some of you are thinking of the love seat or the couch. Some of you immediately are thinking about your bed. Can I tell you what I'm thinking about, fresh off my trip from Brazil? This is one of things I love most about Brazil. I love to get in my *Rede*, which is a hammock. Now, turning 62, I noticed something this year while I was in Brazil. It was a little more difficult for me to get into my *Rede* than normal. There was just that point of hesitation when I had part of me in it but part of me was still out of it. I wanted to get all in, so I was really careful to make sure that when I took my last foot off the floor the *Rede* was going to support me, but I couldn't know it until I got all in. There was just something that came over me when I got all in; there was a rest. I wasn't holding any of me up, I wasn't counting on anything in me, I was just able to lie there, resting, trusting in my *Rede*.

Is Jesus your *Rede*? Is any part of you still on the floor, or are you totally trusting in Him, though you've not seen Him, to make you right with God in your relationship? If you trust in Him, then this letters to you. We not only

love Him, we not only believe in Him, we rejoice. Now, this is kind of redundant but Peter's making a point—we rejoice with joy inexpressible. If you love Him and you're totally resting in Him because of your relationship with Him (not based on anything that's happening around you but because of being in a right relationship with Him), do you have that joy that's inexpressible? You just can't put words to it, you can't really express it, but it's there and you're filled with glory. Do you know why this is true? It's because you're in the present tense moment of obtaining the outcome, the goal, the end of your faith, and that is the salvation of your soul.

Now, I made you aware that this is concluding a paragraph so if we keep this in context, Peter is writing about salvation from this viewpoint: Our salvation is reserved for us in Heaven, and we who have this possession of salvation reserved in Heaven are being guarded by the power of God, ready for this salvation to be revealed to us at the return of Christ, and we rejoice because we know our faith is genuine. We know our faith is real. There is no doubt in our mind that we possess this faith not because we can go back to a time and a place but because God has designed our life, our particular life, with trials and these trials have been designed to test our faith. It's a picture of the goldsmith purifying gold. To purify gold, you have to liquefy. To liquefy, you have to put it in a crucible and apply some heat. You have to get it really, really hot and all those impurities will rise to the top. The goldsmith could tell the gold was 99.9% pure when they could look down into the gold and see their reflection in the gold. I love that picture. Do you know why God heats up your life? Do you know why you rejoice when we go through those times of suffering? Do you know why we rejoice even when we are grieving? It's because we know God wants us to know that our faith is real. I believe one of the saddest things in this life would be to be a member of a church, go to church every time the doors are open, tithe to the church, read your Bible, pray to God, believe you're saved, and all of a sudden get to Heaven and God say to you, depart from me you worker of iniquity, I never knew you. That would be horrible! So how do you know if your faith is real? Well, how are you doing when tests come? Do trials reveal no faith? If trials reveal no faith, there is no faith. Or do trials reveal a faith that needs some impurities taken out of it? That's the context. We are right now in the present tense moment of having our

full and final salvation when Jesus returns to the Earth. We are not just free from the penalty of sin, not just free from the power of sin, but free from the presence of sin forever.

Now, I don't know about you, but we could go to verse 13 right now because I'm ready for Peter to say "therefore." We love those "therefore's" in the Bible, but he's got three more things he wants to tell us. He now wants us to examine this salvation. Look at how he begins verse 10, "Concerning this salvation..." and then he's going to tell us something, in verse 11 he's going to tell us something, and then in verse 12 he's going to tell us something. The first thing he's going to tell us about God's wonderful revelation of our salvation is our salvation has been prophesied. Next, he's going to tell us it's been investigated, and then he's going to tell us it's being preached right now. This salvation he's been talking about since verse 1, he's now going to summarize everything that he said, and tell us what it's totally based on and why it happened to us. He's going to tell us it's not a new thing, but it's an old thing; it's actually grounded in the very Word of God. At this time, the Word of God didn't have 66 books like our book has. At this time, the Bible is God's Old Testament, His written revelation to the nation of Israel.

Here's what Peter said, "Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours..." and then he's going to tell us what they are doing or did. I want you to hear that first phrase. Our salvation was prophesied by prophets, men who were inspired to see and write what God wanted them to see and write, men who spoke on behalf of God. Yes, they were human and God was using their humanness, but when they spoke their humaneness was being overridden by the divine person of God revealing to them truth. Now, when Peter says "concerning this salvation," he doesn't say the prophets who prophesied about this salvation, notice how he describes salvation "prophesied about the grace that was to be ours." He defines salvation by this term, "the grace." Wow! You realize this, right—salvation is not based on work of man; salvation is based on the grace of God. Salvation is about what God did for us; it's not about what we do for Him. You know I grew up in an evangelical Baptist Church, but I believe I was misled about grace. It doesn't mean I wasn't

saved at that church, I was. But I just had the picture that grace was God doing His part, putting Jesus on a cross, then it was up to me. I don't believe that's true. I think if you read Scripture and you study all the passages in Scripture about salvation being by grace, you'll come to this conclusion that grace is God doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves so that we can now do what He did, and that's live a life that pleases Him. From start to finish, it's grace. That's why Paul could say I am what I am by the grace of God. Grace isn't God doing His part then us doing our part; grace is God doing all of it. Grace is God's enabling power. Can you imagine being one of those prophets, and all of a sudden, you start prophesying and you know there's a time coming when salvation is going to be based totally on God's grace? Listen to this...it's going to be a present possession. Look at what Peter says, "...the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was..." to you. What is the picture here? God gave you and me grace, and grace is picturing salvation here.

What I want you to see is that salvation is a present possession. In the context here, we could be confused, believing that salvation is in the future so that we should say I hope to be saved one day, or I will be saved one day. Yet what we learn about salvation is there are actually three tenses of salvation. It's actually right for us to realize right now we have the present tense possession of salvation, so that I can say I *have been* saved. Now, when I say that, if I'm not careful some of us will think I'm putting salvation in the past tense. No, I just put salvation in the perfect tense. Perfect tense means there has been a past tense activity, but when that past tense activity happened, it brought results of that activity into my present so that what happened in the past is still operating today in my present. So when I say I have been saved, I'm saying I have been saved and still am saved today, and still will be saved tomorrow and still will be saved the next day. Why? Because this is a present tense salvation that I have. But there's a final aspect to it and I will not get that final aspect until Jesus Christ comes the second time. When He comes the second time, He brings to me a glorified body just like His, but until then, I live in this body and I live in a fallen world. So not only can I say I have been saved and I will be saved, I can actually say I am being saved. I know this bothers Baptists.

Now, before I explain that, I just want to say if you're at your house and somebody comes to your house, knocks on your door, and introduces themselves as being from another Baptist Church and you let them into your house, be careful—because they might be there to ask you about your salvation—and when they asked you if you're saved, don't you dare say I am being saved. If you say that, they're going to assume you're not saved. They're going to assume you're talking about a works type of salvation and they're going to jump all over you. So I don't want anybody to misunderstand me; I don't need any letters or emails from any of you. Are you with me? I have been, still am, and always will be right in my relationship with God because it's not based on me; it's based on what God did for me on the cross. But...I'm a believer in Jesus, I'm resting in Him, and He is noticing there are some things in me that look more like Adam than look like Him...so He is doing a work of sanctification in my life to get everything that's not like Him out of my life. Therefore, He allows my life to be tried and tested, and as my faith becomes purified, I confess and repent of all that junk in my life because I want to be like Him. I want to be like Him because of grace. It's a present possession. Hear me say this! You have God's divine enabling in you, and we can live victoriously over sin and move completely away from the image of Adam and more and more into the image of Jesus Christ, and the Old Testament prophets prophesied about this.

Now, watch this. That wasn't Peter's main point. His main point was in verse 11. Do you know what these prophets did as they were prophesying about this? Peter uses two words, "searched" and "inquired," that when together translates in English as 'to investigate.' Have you ever investigated something? I mean, you just didn't accept what was being said, you checked it out. You inquired, you asked questions. That's the picture here. When these prophets started prophesying about our salvation, they struggled with it. They checked it out. I want to say they struggled to believe it was true, so they did a careful search because something had to add up to them. So the two things they researched and searched was the 'who' and the 'when.' Who is going to bring this salvation to the people? What's He going to be like? What's the dynamic of His life going to be? Then the question was when is this going to happen?

I can give you an example of this. One of my favorite prophetic books is the Book of Daniel. Now that I understand Daniel, I love Daniel. I struggled with Daniel for years. I loved those first chapters, didn't like those in chapters, and now I like all the chapters. What we know from Daniel's life is Daniel was an exile, and we know he was gifted by God with the gift to interpret dreams. He interpreted some dreams that saved some people and got him elevated to a high place in the kingdom, so he was a respected man, as an exile, in the kingdom. Then all of a sudden, instead of him interpreting other people's dreams he starts getting dreams as a prophet. He could confidently interpret somebody else's dreams, but when he started getting the dreams himself, he struggled. In chapters 7 and 9, he says to God... *God I don't understand it. I don't get it.* He's asking questions and he's praying because he's just seen a vision of the Son of Man. He's seen the circumstances of the Son of Man. He knows when the Messiah is coming, but it wasn't revealed in his dreams it was about somebody else's dreams, and now, he's actually getting a vision of the Son of Man who is coming. So Daniel is investigating, he's thinking it through, he's trying to make it fit in his mind. Then, I think because of his investigation he's reading another prophet, Jeremiah, and he discovers that Israel's only going to be in captivity to the Babylonians for seventy years. After seventy years, they're going to be set free and get to go back home, and they're going to rebuild their land and build the temple. He checks his calendar and they have been there about 66 years, so that means they were getting ready to go home. Daniel is now an old man, and when he reads Jeremiah chapter 25 in his investigation, he just comes before the Lord and says... *God you got to help me here. Am I seeing this correctly?* God wants him to see that he is seeing it correctly, but he's not seeing the full picture correctly. So all of a sudden after his prayer, God gives him a vision that it's not seventy years but it's seventy times seven years. Whoa! Then he's seeing the coming of the Messiah, he's seeing a sacrifice that's going to do away for sin, he is seeing the eternal Kingdom of God being set up at the end of these weeks! He just can't wrap his mind around it. He continues to investigate and talk to God and finally God says, Daniel just seal up this book. Daniel says I have one more question, am I going to see this?



So, I don't want you to think these guys just prophesied and wrote it down; no, they investigated it, they researched it because they struggled with it. And what they struggled with the 'who' and the 'when.' Here's what blew their mind—here's what Peter says, "...the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories." The prophets got glory, but they don't understand suffering. In other words...*tell us about the one who's going to suffer and then tell us about the one who's going to bring Glory—tell us when He's going to suffer and then tell us when there's going to be glory.* Now, here's the point. Jesus suffered before He was glorified. If you're going to follow Jesus, you want glorification, but you're not going to get it until you suffer. That message doesn't preach in America very well, but it's biblical. If God designed our leader to suffer before glorification, how dare we expect to be glorified without suffering? Did these guys make this up? No. Peter said it was the Spirit of Christ in them indicating and predicting that the Messiah would suffer and glory will follow.

Can you imagine being the prophet and you pen these words in Psalm 22? "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me; a company of

evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

Can I just say, in light of this? Quit your bellyaching! Zip it! This is who we're following—it took this to make us right with God. And God has ordained some heat in you and me to make sure our faith is real.

We have to look at this next one. Isaiah 53, “Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.”

I read this week of a man who was moved by this passage, so he typed it out, printed it off, folded it up, took it with him to work, and he would pull it out and read it. Then he began to show it to those around him.

Immediately, with no Isaiah 53, no verses, being reared in a Christian community everyone knew this is talking about Jesus. Seven hundred years before his crucifixion, the Spirit of Christ in Isaiah predicted His suffering on a cross. He happened to remember that one of his co-workers was Jewish and he thought he ought to show it to him too, and he did. The

man, just like the Christians, recognized it and said, "This is your Jesus." He said to the Jewish man, "Do you know where I got this?" The Jewish man said, "Yes. You got it from your Bible, the New Testament." He said, "No. I got it from your Bible."

Before glory, crucifixion...before resurrection, death—death by crucifixion...before ascension, death...before return, death. Now, can you imagine being a prophet and you're looking forward to the Messiah coming to save, and He's going to die? So, here's what the Jewish people began to believe—there are going to be two Messiahs, one who has suffered, and one who will bring glory. We see this in the gospels. Do you remember when John the Baptist had been arrested and sent word to Jesus through His disciples? John asked are you He or do we look for another? Please don't ever let someone tell you John the Baptist doubted; he did not doubt. He knew Jesus was the Lamb of God who was going to take away the sin of the world. But now he's asking this question. Are you the one or will there be another? Are you the one coming to suffer, and are you the one coming in glory? Or, is there a second? The Jews associated the suffering Messiah with the son of Joseph, but they associated the glorious Messiah as the son of David. Here's what we know—there's just one Messiah. What the prophets could never wrap their mind around was one Messiah, two comings. The first coming, He suffers. The second coming, glorification. We are in between the two, which means we're in the age of suffering. It's not God being mean to you and me; it's God letting you know if your faith is real and you really possess salvation. If you possess salvation, it's not you depending on you, it's you depending on God, and you have God's enabling power and you're transformed from a sinner to a saint.

Now, the last thing is in verse 12. Can you imagine being a prophet (Isaiah and Daniel) and knowing none of this is going to happen in your lifetime? Yet you still serve God anyway because you're not serving you, you're serving others. That's what Peter is trying to say. These prophets still serve, but they served for you not themselves. Then he reminds us we've not seen Jesus. You don't have to see Jesus, but you have to hear about Jesus. He tells us it's been announced to you, and those who preach the good news to you preached it by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven. Wow!

Are you connecting the dots? The Spirit of Christ in the prophets enabled them to prophesy about our salvation. Why did we come to salvation? Because God empowered the ones who shared the message with us with the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven so that when we heard it we would believe. Why? It's because we had been elected according to His foreknowledge, we had been sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God for obedience and the sprinkling with the blood of Jesus.

Now catch this. I don't know that I'm going to be right on this, but Peter adds this little phrase, "...which angels long to look." Have you ever thought about what it'd be like to be an angel? If the Old Testament prophets struggled with this, what about the angels? Do you remember what happened when they fell? Was God graceful to them? No. Did God grant any angel repentance? No! He damned them all to eternal separation from Him forever and ever and ever! So can you imagine what went through the angelic world when man sinned, and then all of a sudden this redemptive story begins to unfold? The angels of God realize, but they can't wrap their mind around it, they desire to know more! Man is saved by grace, they struggle with it, they desire to know more. I feel the same way. I stand before you and God knowing I'm saved by grace, and I have to wonder why. Why me? Why didn't I get justice? I got grace, and so did you.