

## Transcription of 15ID1580

1 Peter 1:10-12

"Our Salvation's History"

May 24, 2015

All right. Let's open our Bibles this morning to 1 Peter 1:10, as we continue our verse by verse studies through Peter's letters.

Peter wrote this letter thirty years after Jesus ascended into heaven, and he wrote it to the saints that were on the run - mostly through Turkey, mostly second- and third-generation folks who hadn't really met the Lord but had heard of Him and had been saved through the gospel; and wrote it at a time when, in 64 A.D., Nero would burn down Rome and blame the church. And Christians, for the first time, would face international persecution. They would be killed for their faith. We mentioned a couple times, there's probably no way for us to really relate to that very clearly, but yet it is a book about persecution and, certainly, difficulty. We can relate to that - trials. So, within months after Peter wrote, Nero would turn on the church. People would be burned at the stake and thrown to the lions and crucified. It would be a horrible time. Within three years, both Peter and Paul would be killed as well, in that same persecution. So imagine having the job of encouraging Christians during that time to a) walk with God, not be discouraged; b) continue to share your faith; and c) get ready to get killed, I guess. And this is your lot.

Well this is our sixth week of studies in Peter. You can tell we're moving really fast. But through verse 12, this morning, Peter gives to the church, before he ever gets to dealing with difficulty, foundational truths that can't be affected by what happens on the outside. So these are things that are true whether there's anger or not, whether there's persecution or not, whether life is easy or not, whether things are difficult, whether you live a long time or a short time. These are absolutely things that God has done that can't be changed.

And we began looking at Peter, in verse 1, and who he was and who he came to be, to whom he was writing. Spent an entire week on verse 2 looking at who we are in Christ - how does the Lord see us, and how would He want us to see ourselves as we would walk with Him, especially under pressure? It's good to remember who you are. We studied in verses 3-5 the wonders that God has given us - a hope, an inheritance, a future, a promise to complete what He has begun. And then, in verses 6-7, we listened to Peter say to us, "Look at trials from God's perspective, not

from your own. Look at them from what the Lord would like you to see." And we talked a lot about them being short, and them being purposeful (if need be), and it would cause grief, but it would bring honor. And we spent a week looking at that. And then last week, in verses 8-9, Peter said to them, "You have a relationship with God, not just a religion," and we talked about what ingredients go into a relationship - love and trust. And though we haven't seen the Lord, we trust Him now, we've come to know Him through His Word, and it is to produce in us a kind of joy that you can't describe - inexpressible is the term that Peter used, as we are headed to face the Lord face to face. So these are great subjects, and all of them are there to file away in your heart. Those are things you should know about you. They shouldn't change just because things and circumstances in life change. They are foundational to us.

So, Peter spends a good deal of time at the beginning defining our position, if you will - that we are pilgrims on our way home, that God has chosen us, that this isn't our home, that the Spirit is working to set us apart, that the blood of Jesus assures us of our future, that God has given us abundant mercy, and He has reserved a place in heaven and all. You've got to know those things well as a believer.

But with all of that foundation, the reality was people were still trying to kill you. Imagine if you walked out of the church this morning, and someone grabbed you, and they put you in front of a firing squad and killed you - because you came to church. That's kind of what they were facing. So, there was a theological truth and faith that they needed to embrace. But there was also a reality that they needed to stand in front of. And it all starts, always, with knowing God and then standing upon what you know. A good foundation will help the building to stand.

Now here's what Peter's going to say to us today. We're going to do three verses because we're picking up the pace. Peter will say this to the church (still foundational truth), "Look, I want you to know," he says to God's people, "that this idea that God has to save you is not a new one." We've all probably been faced with situations that we have to come up with last-minute decisions on how we're going to fix this - I didn't know this was coming, I didn't anticipate it, now I'm scrambling to make ends meet or come up with the right solution. And I may or may not have come up with it, and sometimes I'm right, and sometimes I'm not. But when it comes to our salvation, Peter wanted the church that was under duress to know that this wasn't some last-minute consideration; that their needs and what they

were facing and the things that they were going through - all of those things God was very much aware of because not only had He chosen us, verse 2, before the foundation of the world, He has carefully laid out for us over the centuries the salvation that He would bring - the plans that He would make. And his point is going to be - you're part of a bigger deal than just what's going on right now. God has chosen to save, and He's laid that out for generations, and you now get to be a part of all of that which God has planned. It is all in His hands. Nothing has gotten away from Him. He didn't look and go, "Oh, man, I didn't anticipate that or expect that." No. The Lord knew. His spokesmen, the Old Testament prophets, wrote about Jesus. They wrote about His coming. They wrote about our forgiveness. They talked about grace. They penned words of mercy. They even talked about His coming again to rule and reign. Peter would call that our salvation history. And he wants to say to a difficult situation for the church, "You have a history that you belong to, and you are the full recipients of what God's plan is. You are more secure than ever because God has said so, and God will do what He says." So he wanted them to get the big picture, not just the finite day-to-day struggles; but really the broader look, and that is that the Lord has come to save. But it isn't a last-minute idea. It is something that He has come up with, and He came up with, well before we were ever created. So, to the depressed and to the struggling, to those who are way down with their eyes cast down, Peter says, "You should look up, man, and really consider what God has done for you."

Now, the first twelve verses - if you had to pick a theme, the recurrent theme is salvation. In fact, that's pretty much true of the Bible. Notice in verse 5, it talks about you "are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." We said at the end of verse 9, last week, "receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls." And then our verses this morning, "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things which angels desire to look into." So this is all about salvation. In fact, the word salvation or saving or saved is in the Bible well over four hundred times. And Peter wants the people that were running to think about their salvation - the great heritage and the history and God's plan, and he wants you to look at it in terms of prophet and preacher and

angel alike. It can be so easy, I think, for us, and maybe it's just part of our flesh-to get used to what we have, to just kind of settle in, to no longer be thankful. You know the old expression - you don't know what you've got till it's gone. But we tend to do that. We, in our flesh, we're not long for things. They kind of grow cold to us quickly. And it's pretty easy when that's translated over into our salvation to begin to lose gratitude for what we've been given or forget what Jesus did for us or how good we have it. And so Peter wants to impress upon these about their salvation.

I remember when I was first saved, thinking to myself, "Boy, did God get a rotten deal. He gets me, I get Him." And then, when I started pastoring, I was sure of it because I could look at a congregation and say, "Boy, did God get a rotten deal. He gets us, we get Him. How blessed are we!" Well, Peter says, "Not only do you have salvation, but let me just tell you how great it is. Let me remind you of what you've been freely given. Let me tell you that God has had this in the works for a long time! And now you're getting to experience what's been on His heart for a long, long time." I guess it's kind of like insurance, you know? You buy it, you hope you never have to use it, you pay for it, you never read the policy. But then, when you have to make a claim, you just hope they say "Yes, everything is covered." But what they usually say is, "Everything is covered except that bone that you broke. That's not covered."

A couple of years ago I heard a story that was very applicable to what we're looking at this morning - of a young country boy who went on a vacation to Scotland from England. And he wasn't used to the country - he was a real city boy from London. But he went to swim in a small countryside lake, and he went out too far from shore, and he wasn't used to swimming very much. And so, in the middle of the lake, he cramps up, and he's terrified. There's no way he's getting back to the land. So he begins to scream for help. Well, there was a farm boy who was walking out in the fields of his farm nearby, and he heard him screaming. He ran as fast as he could, took off his shirt, dove in the water and eventually saved this English lad's life. A couple of years later, coming back again on vacation, these two boys met together again. And the city boy was obviously very grateful this young man, this farm boy, had saved his life. And so the city fellow said to the farm boy, "You're going to school, still. What do you hope to be when you grow up?" And he said, "Well, I'd really like to be a doctor, but there's no way on a farmer's salary that we're ever going to be able to get me to go to university. It's just not going to work." And so the city boy's parents said, "Well, we'd like to pay for you to go to

medical school," and they did. And this farm boy, in 1928, as a physician and a bacteriologist, discovered Penicillin. In 1945, Alexander Fleming shared the Nobel Prize with two others for discovering the antibiotic. He died ten years later. Now the city boy, the one whose parents paid for this young country boy to go to school and discover Penicillin, also became great. During World War II, he got pneumonia, and his life was saved by Penicillin. Isn't that interesting? In fact, he was saved twice by the same person - both from drowning and in disease. He also got a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953. His name was Winston Churchill.

So, as glorious as it is saving a life - can you imagine? - then saving it twice, far more glorious is what God had planned for you. That's how much He cared - His salvation of your soul for all of eternity. And I think Peter hoped that the saints here would be moved by the thought of it all, that even though things weren't easy, they weren't going to hell; they were going to heaven. And they were delivered from their sin, and God had sent His Son to save, and they would overcome death; that they couldn't save themselves.

So Peter picks three little phrases, and I'll give them to you so that you'll remember them. He said the prophets predicted it, and the preachers preached it, and the angels wonder about it. That's how glorious what we have has been given. Peter saw the importance of the Old Testament Scriptures before us here. Tragically, so many people kind of lay it aside. But notice he said the salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully about, they were prophesying of God's grace and searching what manner, or what manner of time, the Spirit in them was indicating when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. We need God's Word. Salvation is the Bible's theme. If you can put the Bible into one sentence, it would be the first and second coming of Jesus. That's what it's concerned about - His first coming to save and then His coming to rule. But salvation is in the Bible. It's contained in the historical books, early on. It is chanted in the songs of the poetry books. It is contemplated in the prophetic books. It is crystalized in the gospels and confessed in the book of Acts and clarified in the epistles and consummated in the book of Revelation. But it is all about saving. That's what God's interested in.

Now he says, Peter does, that the prophets of old, who God used to write the Old Testament, were not themselves fully able to understand what they had written. We can. We look back and, "Well, that's obviously talking about Jesus." But they didn't know that. They didn't understand that at all. They wrote for us. Now the

prophets were God's Old Testament spokesmen, and maybe the best way to look at some of these prophets is like somebody that, in one generation, just takes a bow and arrow, and he launches an arrow into the air. He doesn't know where it's going. It's like a prophetic arrow - he says something, and there it goes. But he doesn't know where it lands; he doesn't know what it applies to. And then another guy, in another generation, launches some arrows as well, and off they go into the distance, high into the air, go down range. Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Moses, David, Abraham - all of them launching their arrows, proclaiming God's Word, predicting future events, but having no idea what it is that they're writing to. Imagine writing, "And He would be born of a virgin," and you go, "Wait a minute! Time out. That doesn't work." "Just write that down." "All right. No one's gonna buy this. I wonder what that means." Another arrow goes flying.

Some 330 arrows spoke specifically of the first coming of Jesus - each arrow from a prophet, from a different period of time, launched from a different place, with different backgrounds. And they all, we look back, landed on Jesus. But they didn't know that.

- Isaiah 7:14, "He was born of a virgin."
- Micah 5:2, "He is born in Bethlehem."
- Genesis 49:10, "He will be born of the tribe of Judah."
- Isaiah 9:1, "His ministry will begin in Galilee."
- Isaiah 35, "When He comes, the Messiah, He will perform great miracles and signs."
- Zechariah 9:9, "He will enter into Jerusalem riding on the back of a donkey."
- Psalm 41:9, "He will be betrayed by a friend."
- Zechariah 11:12, "He'll be sold out for thirty pieces of silver."
- Isaiah 53:5, "He will be wounded for our transgressions."
- Psalm 22:16, "His hands and His feet will be pierced."
- Isaiah 53:12, "He'll be crucified between two thieves."
- Psalm 22:18, "His garments will be gambled for, lots cast for them."
- Psalm 34:20, "Not a bone of His will be broken."
- Zechariah 12:10, "They will pierce His side with a sword."
- Isaiah 53:9, "He will be buried in a rich man's tomb."
- Psalm 16:10, "He will rise from the dead."

The Old Testament prophets write, and they don't get it. "Pierced My hands and feet." No one's ever been crucified in 1000 B.C. Sixteen prophecies - I just read you sixteen. Sixteen arrows shot out, and all landed, unbeknownst to the prophets, upon Jesus.

The sheer odds of sixteen prophecies, all coming together as true, are astounding. Peter Stoner, who was a Professor of Science and Applied Mathematics at Westmont College wrote a book years ago. In fact, Pastor Lyle worked with him on the Moody Films for publishability. But he wrote a book on the probability of biblical prophecies coming to pass in such great numbers. In fact, his grandson just put the book freely on the Internet. If you are interested in it, it is at a place called ScienceSpeaks.DStoner.net. But, in that book, he said if eight prophecies were absolutely fulfilled (we just gave you sixteen) in one man, but it was prophesied from all these different generations, the odds of those things all being true would be 10 to the 17<sup>th</sup> power, or 10 followed by seventeen zeroes. Now I know that's a big number, but maybe it's hard to relate to. Here's his example of what that would entail. If you took the state of Texas, and you buried it in two feet of silver dollars, then you placed an 'x' on one of those silver dollars, blindfolded a guy, threw him in there and said, "Pick the one with an 'x' " - that would be the same likelihood. Well that's pretty amazing, isn't it? And that was just eight prophecies. So I went to look. What about sixteen, since we had time to read sixteen? When he talks about sixteen being fulfilled, he said the odds jump to 10 to the 45<sup>th</sup> power, or 10 followed by 45 zeroes. He also gives an illustration of how much that would be. Again, you take the same silver dollars, except this time you squeeze them into a ball. And you keep squeezing them until, from the center of that ball to the edge of the ball would be thirty times longer than the distance from the earth to the sun, or 30 x 93 million miles. Put an 'x' on one of them, blindfold a guy, find the one with the 'x.' Look, I can't even win the lottery, so.....nor do I particularly try. But in any event.....

What the Bible has for it, that the twenty-five other books in the world (that claim to be prophetic or Scriptural) don't have, is this quality of predictive prophecy. It's referred to a lot. The Lord said beforehand so that you and I could look back and go, "Yep, He had this all planned. My life, my salvation, the plans for my life. God has it all in control. He's been telling us for thousands of years." The Quran doesn't have that. No predictive prophecy. The Upanishads, the Hindu book, doesn't have it. It's absent from the writings of Confucius. It's not there. But it's in God's Word. He said, "I'll tell you before it happens so when it does, you'll know I'm He."

So notice that Peter says the prophets who wrote prophetically long ago wanted to know about salvation and grace. They didn't get it. Oh, they wrote about it. They wrote about it a lot, but then they inquired and searched carefully as to what was

the grace to come. They searched it out. What about the suffering of the Messiah before that? What's going on with that? They didn't get it. All the prophets had some of the puzzle pieces. None of them had all of the pieces. And nobody had the box to look at the puzzle. "Is this what it looks like when it's finished?" But you do. You, the church, the generation that has been saved - we get all the pictures. We get to put all the pieces together. We get to see it clearly, the way God intended.

When Daniel was finished writing in chapter 12, the Lord said to him, "Daniel, shut up the book until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge will increase." And Daniel said to the Lord, four verses later, "What shall be the end of these things?" And the Lord said, "Daniel, you just put those away. This isn't for you. This isn't for you. This is for those who will follow, at the time of the end." That's you and I, the church.

Peter wants the church, under duress, to know, "Hey, you're a part of God's plan. You're the end result of all that He desired to do," bringing you and me to a saving relationship with Him through His Son.

So, "To them it was revealed," verse 12, "that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering." When Jesus was speaking to the disciples, He began to speak in parables to the Pharisees - not because He didn't want them to know the truth, but He didn't want them to be responsible for a truth they were willing to reject. It was really a gracious thing on God's behalf. He hid the truth from those who were going to be guilty of not following. But then He turned to the apostles, and He said, "I'm speaking plainly to you." "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it" (Luke 10:23-24). If you read Psalm 22, and you read about Jesus' hands and feet being pierced, you immediately say - crucifixion. David didn't write that, that way. He just wrote it down. "What does this mean? Hands and feet pierced? What's going on?" He has no recollection. Read Isaiah 53 about Him being wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, that the Father was pleased to bruise His Son so that through the knowledge of Him many would be made righteous. And you go, "We get that. God is so good to send His Son." Isaiah didn't see it that way. He didn't get it. It was written for you and for me. We have this wonderful privilege of seeing the entire thing laid out. We experience the reality. They saw it in shades. They wondered at its meaning. They were interested in what they



wrote. But they didn't have a clue. And you have it all. "Hey, life is tough." Sure it is, but look at the plan of God.

You remember how Jesus opened the understanding of the saints on Resurrection evening. Or on that afternoon, of those two that were wandering home on the road to Emmaus, so discouraged. And you'll read in Luke 24:45, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." It's a cool thing about when you got saved, isn't it? The Bible started to make sense.....and line upon line and precept upon precept and one verse upon another, and God began to teach you His ways. We're a pretty privileged group, the church. We really have no reason to complain. There are a lot of prophets that went to their deaths knowing far less than you do, and yet believing in God. From Moses to Malachi, the prophets were fascinated with the salvation of the Lord. But it was written for the church age. So the arrows shoot, and they just die, and they fly, and we stand on this side going, "They all hit Jesus." All hit His plans to save. You are their audience. You're the recipients of all God spoke for generation after generation. How blessed are you?! That's Peter's point.

The prophets prophesied, predicted. Sometimes people say to me, "Why do you even bother teaching the Old Testament? We're New Testament now." Maybe so, but the New is in the Old, contained; and the Old is in the New, explained. So the prophets longed to know, but they couldn't see what you see, what you have. Talk about blessed. We're blessed!

And then he says, at the end of verse 12 here, "To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven...." The prophets predicted it, but it didn't originate with them. It came from heaven, through the prophets. It was picked up by the preachers, who preached to anyone who would listen. Peter was the church's first real preacher. He made his debut on Pentecost. (By the way, today is Pentecost, as far as the religious calendar. Did y'all know that? See, you wouldn't have shown up at this Acts 2 meeting then, would you? You'd have missed out). Peter got up, and he tested his wings. He preached. If we have his whole sermon, he spoke for less than two minutes. I don't know if that's the whole sermon, but it's all we were given. Three thousand people, that day, souls were added to the kingdom. A little while later, Peter and John were in the Temple when the lame man came, you remember, that they ministered to. And Peter preached again, that there was

salvation in no other name under heaven whereby men could be saved (Acts 4:12). And all of a sudden, what all of the prophets prophesied, Peter began to preach. The Holy Spirit had fallen on these old timers. They had written what they were told, and Peter, by the Spirit, picked it up and, by the Spirit, began to preach it to others. And the message continued.

Fast forward two thousand years to Whittier, California. And you're here listening to the Word of God because someone was faithful to preach to you, uninterruptedly so. In every generation, this has been God's plan since the beginning. And Peter wants you and me to know that. We were saved, and now we are called to faithfully preach to others the amazing grace of God found in Jesus and to be sent out by His Spirit, to be bold to be witnesses, and the message hasn't changed. Cultures change, but the gospel doesn't. And people change, and needs change, but the gospel is always the same. And what the prophets began to write about, and the apostles first began to fully understand, now we have the obligation to pass it along to others. In fact, notice that the word "Spirit" is mentioned twice in three verses. It's the Old Testament prophets, moving them to write, stirring their interest. It's the same Spirit who, from heaven, came to deliver the good news in the lives of the apostles. It's that same Spirit who would now like to use you to share with others. That's God's plan, and you're a part of that plan.

Finally, in verse 12 at the end, there's a little dash and then kind of a side comment, "things which angels desire to look into." I like that. Angels were really found, and are found, at every step of Jesus' ministry. When He's born, they're there. When He ends up at the Garden, crying out, they show up to minister to Him there. They are at the cross. They show up immediately at the empty tomb. But, look, they're angels. And as angels, they have a different position before God than you and I. There are good angels, there are fallen angels. There're no saved angels. Their decisions were made and created in a different manner. Humans get saved. We've all sinned and fallen short of His grace (Romans 3:23). Only you can experience the grace of God. So, no wonder that we read, then, the angels want to look into the salvation of God, the death of His Son, the grace of God, the mercy of God towards people. They want to understand it. They look at the church. Here's where the angels learn about God's salvation - from you and your experience with God. The words "look into" are the same words that you'll find in John 20, where Peter and John come to the tomb, and it says that they bent over, and they "looked into" the tomb, and they gazed intently to find out what was going on in there. That's the picture Peter uses of the angels in heaven. They're doing this,

"Check out the church....look at them guys." They want to see what God is doing in your life. These angels that are so intent with every aspect of God's work - from creation to opposing demons, from carrying messages to watching over you as guardians - are amazed at what they see.

Here's what Paul wrote to the Ephesians, on that topic - talking about how the Lord revealed Himself to Paul, and he said, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:8-10). The church reveals to the angels God's plan. They sit in wonder. I suspect that at least part of their wonder is wondering why we're not more joyful. "Look what you've been given! I can't believe it! Somber-faced. Really?!" They get to see it from that perspective. We get to see it on this side of the prophets. They get to see it on that side of the grave....and watch. Amazing. Paul said to the Corinthians, "For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9).

When you come to Jesus and honor Him, they throw a party in heaven. They get that part. They've got hats and whistles, and (whistling sound) I'm pretty sure there's punch. There's got to be punch in heaven. But Peter's point is, "Look, the privilege of our salvation - the fact that you are saved, and you are filled with God's Spirit, who has come to dwell in you, is exactly what the prophets sought to diligently understand." It's the exact same thing that Peter preached to the masses in that first generation. It's the very thing that causes the angels to want to lean way over and get a better look. How good is that?! And that's unchangeable. It doesn't vary because life is tough, or things aren't going so well. It's a constant reminder to you that salvation was God's idea. It's a permanent possession. It's the anchor to which you can tie your soul. Salvation is the bedrock of biblical revelation. You should know that.

I've been reading to you some of J.B. Philips' translations (which I really like) out of the New Testament. I won't do it every week, but I wanted to read you these three verses because I thought he captured them so well. So here's the J.B Philips New Testament translation of verses 10-12. "The prophets of old did their utmost

to discover and obtain this salvation. They didn't find it, but they prophesied of this grace that has now come to you. They tried hard to discover it - to what time or to what sort of circumstance the Spirit of Christ working in them was referring, when He foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. It was then made clear to them they were dealing with matters not meant for themselves but for you. It is these very matters which have been made plain to you now by those who preach the gospel by that same Spirit sent from heaven. And these are facts to command even the interest of the very angels."

We're blessed, aren't we? You have a wonderful, illustrious, prophetic history in your salvation. This didn't just happen to you. It wasn't a last-minute idea. This is God's big plan. This is God's big move. This is His only answer for man's needs. And you've been taken in. Oh, is life hard? It may be hard, but look where you're going, and look what part you play. And isn't it good that God included you?

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
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