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The Glory of Salvation, Part 2

The New American Standard Bible titles Psalm 29 “The Voice of the Lord in the Storm.” Clearly inspired by a massive Mediterranean storm that moved over Israel, David wrote of that which truly is powerful... the Lord Almighty! David likens God’s word to thunder, lightning, and the destructive force of a hurricane.

Psalm 29:3-9, “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord is over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is

majestic. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; yes, the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. And He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord hews out flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer to calve, and strips the forests bare, and in His temple everything says, 'Glory!'"

I love the last line. What is man's response when they witness the greatness of God? It simply is to say, in reverential and hushed tones, "Glory!"

What an apt response! As most of you know the word for "glory" comes from the Hebrew, כָּבֵד (*kabed*) – which references that which is "weighty" or "of substance." It is the opposite of the Hebrew word for "vain"- as in, "You shall not take the name [character] of the Lord your God in vain [lightly]" (Exodus 20:7).

Truly the Lord, unlike the false gods of peoples and nations, is of substance. Unlike the idol, God is "a very present help in trouble!" (Psalm 46:1) When He acts, things happen!

Isaiah 64:4, "For from of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, neither has the eye seen a God besides Thee, who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him."

Peter wanted his fellow Christians to know "The Glory of Salvation" was worth their allegiance to Christ when they found themselves in the crucible of pain, sorrow, and hardship. For the salvation for which they are being persecuted is real and of substance! We see this on account of Its Servants!

1 Peter 1:10b, 11b, 12c & d, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit... sent from heaven- things into which angels long to look."

You see it in the movies as well as in life. When something is serious or of grave import, the most trained, qualified, and experienced are the ones who do the work.

Some of you may recall Jessica Morales who in 1987 at the age of 18 months fell down a twenty-two foot well in her grandparent's back yard. Or the thirty-three miners who in 2010 were stuck three miles under the earth on account of a cave-in. Or more recently the twelve boys in Thailand who last year got stuck in a cave which had filled with water on account of a storm. When it came to their rescue, it wasn't a day laborer who operated the equipment or did the dirty work; it wasn't a recent college graduate who planned the extractions, BUT the very best!

This is what happens when things are serious, and the issue is of grave importance. In fact, just by looking at who is involved we can conclude the gravity of the situation!

In this regard, consider those who involved themselves in our salvation that we this day might be able to love, know, and serve the Lord: What does this text say? It declares that at least six different persons or groups of people are involved in our salvation.

1 Peter 1:10b, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you..."

As the prophets are the main focus of this section, we will return to their work next time. For now note that the salvation you and I have and enjoy was brought to us by "the prophets" ... like Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Daniel to name a few. Talk about a list of the "Whose who?" when it comes to men sold out for the Lord! Yet we must understand that each of these men were placed on this earth for the specific purpose of advancing God's salvific purpose — to proclaim, uphold, and defend God's way of grace! God told Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

We see it in Isaiah as well, describing his call to preach the gospel.

Isaiah 49:1, "Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me."

Such was the realization that these, and no doubt all the prophets, had as they fulfilled their call. While for a time they might have thought God existed for them, when God called them, they quickly discovered that from birth God had set them apart for His purpose and pleasure in upholding and proclaiming His salvation. As such, the Old Testament is a compilation of many servants of God who lived and served for the purpose of advancing God's Redemptive Grace! John MacArthur, speaking of this work and witness, wrote this:

...beautiful and important and authoritative as it is, the Old Testament is fragmentary and incomplete. It was delivered over the course of some 1500 years by some forty-plus writers- in many different pieces, each with its own truths. It began to build and grow, truth upon truth. It was what we call progressive revelation. Genesis gives some truth, and Exodus gives some more. The truth builds and builds and builds... To Noah was revealed the quarter of the world from which Messiah would come. To Micah, the town where He would be born. To Daniel, the time of His birth. To Malachi, the forerunner who would come before Him. To Jonah, His resurrection was typified. Every one of those pieces of revelation was true and accurate; and each one related to the others in some way or another. And each one in some way or another pointed to the Messiah, the Christ. (MacArthur, 1983, pp. 4, 6-7)

Isn't that what Christ told the Jews of His day?

John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me."

Or how about the disciples on the road to Emmaus?

Luke 24:27, "And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

Do you understand what all of this means? The Old Testament prophets were NOT men on whom God placed His hand at some point in their lives to further His redemptive cause. Rather, these men were chosen by God *from the beginning* to uphold, advance, and support God's Salvific purpose!! That should humble us and give us a sense of awe when it comes to the redemption that is ours today. How many lived lives of sacrifice and depravation that we might be here this day, serving the Lord? Consider the Hebrew writer's description of the life of faith with the men and women of old sacrificing for our behalf so that we might know the Lord.

Hebrews 11:35b-38, "...others were tortured, not accepting their release... and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground."

Yet it doesn't stop with the prophets. Consider another Servant who devoted His life to the Salvation of God's people. Speaking of the prophets and their "confusion" over message God gave them we read:

1 Peter 1:11, "...seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."

Commentaries are divided when it comes to the meaning of this verse. Some say that this is a reference to Christ Himself.¹ Others say it is a reference of the Holy Spirit driven by Christ. Yet regardless of the position you take, both positions understand that Christ ultimately was and is behind the Salvation you and I enjoy today! And so just as in the New Covenant so it was in the Old, behind our redemption is the Person and Work of Christ! Any competent Bible scholar will tell you that He was and is the Old Testament "Angel of the Lord!" As that is the case, then we see Christ working throughout the Old Testament to advance God's Redemptive purpose — specifically the salvation of His people. Notice a third Servant when it comes to our Salvation, speaking of the Old Testament prophets Peter writes:

1 Peter 1:12b, "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached

the gospel to you..."

Who was it that preached the gospel to the men and women of Asia Minor? First and foremost, it was the Apostles and those that accompanied them. And so, men like the apostle Paul, the apostle John, the apostle Peter, Luke, Timothy, Silas, Philemon, and Titus to name a few! Talk about "heavy hitters" when it comes to the Apostolic age! Yet they too were placed on this earth that we might have and enjoy a salvific relationship with God! Speaking of himself, Paul said that God did this:

Galatians 1:15, 16, "...set me apart, *even* from my mother's womb... that I might preach Him among the Gentiles..."

In this regard, think of all the hardship and struggle Paul went through. Why? That you and I might be saved today. Describing that which our salvation cost him, Paul said this:

2 Corinthians 11:23b-27, "...[I have been] beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure."

Yet Paul is just one of many! We could add to this list the trials and difficulties of Peter, John, Luke, Timothy and so many more. All of these labored on this earth to advance the gospel that we might know Christ today! Now, how is it that these men suffered so much in preaching the gospel? Notice the middle of v. 12.

1 Peter 1:12c, "[They]preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit..."

Herein we have the fourth Servant of the gospel. You and I enjoy a relationship with God this day because of the work of the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit! Talk about a convergence of competence! The salvation you have and enjoy was and continues to be brought to you by God the Spirit- as He works to:

- Convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, John 16:8-11.
- Invite men to come to Christ, Revelation 22:17.
- Build the church, Ephesians 2:22.
- Empower believers to boldness, love, and self-discipline, Acts 4:29; 2 Timothy 1:7.
- Sanctify you, 1 Corinthians 6:11; Romans 15:16; Galatians 5:16-18.
- Produce in you holy fruit, Galatians 5:22-23.
- Engift you for service, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

- And much, much more!

Is your salvation just a silly concept created by a priest somewhere who had a little too much to drink? No way! That brings us to a fifth player when it comes to salvation, God the Father.

1 Peter 1:12d, “[The Apostles]preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit... sent from heaven...”

That the Spirit was “sent from heaven” indicates that He was sent by someone. Well, who is that someone? None other than God the Father!

Sometimes we speak of the love of Christ so much we inadvertently make it sound as though God the Father is the angry one and Jesus the loving one. Yet who ultimately is behind our Salvation? God the Father!

John 3:16a, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...”

Romans 8:31-32, “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

We must understand that behind our salvation is the Ancient of Days, the Lord, God Almighty! And yet there is one more Servant (or group of servants) behind the salvation we currently have and enjoy, the angels.

1 Peter 1:12e, “[The Apostles] preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit... sent from heaven- things into which angels long to look.”

There is a reason the “angels long to look” when it comes to the salvation accomplished and applied by Christ. In Christ’s first advent, they were intimately involved in providing the way of Christ’s redemption:

- They announced Christ’s birth (Luke 1:26–35; 2:10–14).
- They ministered to the Lord during His times of testing (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43).
- They stood by the grave when He arose from the dead (Matthew 28:5–7; Mark 16:4–7; Luke 24:4–7).
- They attended His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:10–11).

Are the Angels still involved in our Salvation? Most certainly they are. Speaking of the angels, the Hebrew writer declares this:

Hebrews 1:14, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?”

This is why some in the body of Christ have “entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2)!²

Such are the “Servants” of our Salvation! Yet what does all this mean? What is the point?

Hebrews 12:1a, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us.”

While the focus in that passage is the Hall of Faith by which the Hebrew writer endeavored to encourage the very same people affected by the Neronian persecution, we must see that Peter has “one-upped” the Hebrew writer. Never before or after in Redemptive History have so many participated in providing that which we have and hold in Christ this day: Salvation!

And so today, you may be suffering! Today you may be living in the bitterness of trial, hardship, persecution, and difficulty! Yet, you must see, it is all worth it! The salvation you have and enjoy is real!

- You really are reconciled with God!
- You really will spend eternity with God in a paradise.
- The New Heavens and Earth are NOT an ethereal land of shades, BUT a real, physical universe in which we really shall dwell for eternity- yet now without sin!

God has gone to great lengths to secure this salvation in you! That is Peter’s point in referencing these six servants of our salvation!

In this regard, consider how privileged you are this day! Do you understand that you are the recipient of all that the six sacrificed to give? This in part is Christ’s point to the disciples in Matthew 13.

Matthew 13:16-17, “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, that 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*.”

Yes, you may be going through difficult times on account of Christ such that you might be tempted to pity yourself, but consider: how many have suffered just like you and more BUT remained outside, on the edge... unable to participate? Yet unlike them, we have in Christ, “...tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come” (Hebrews 6:4b-5)! Do you understand how privileged we are? Thomas Schreiner put it this way:

Peter’s main point throughout is that believers in Jesus Christ are incredibly blessed to live in the time when the predictions of the prophets have come to pass... Old Testament prophets saw it from afar, and angels also marvel when gazing upon what

God has done in Christ, while the Petrine readers actually experience it. (Schreiner, 2003, p. 75)

This raises a very important, yet natural question:

- Are you enjoying this privilege?
- Do you daily delight yourself in the privileges of your salvation? So many in Christ today do not!

We've come upon a rough portion in our walks. We've sinned that horrible sin for the zillionth time. And so rather than enjoy Christ, the benefits of His Salvation, the glory of being at peace with God, we spend our time in woe and grief believing we are unworthy to lift our eyes to God!

Brothers and sisters, unless you have apostatized, receive this as a loving rebuke! So many have given so much so that you and I might enjoy the Lord. So, take your focus off yourself and place it on all that God has done and given through His servants! Accordingly, enjoy the salvation you have in Christ this day! Taste and see that the Lord is both kind and good!

References

- MacArthur, D. J. (1983). *Hebrews MacArthur New Testament Commentary (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series Book 27)*. Chicago: Moody Publishers.
- Schreiner, T. R. (2003). *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude (New American Commentary, 37)*. Nashville: Homan Reference.

End Note(s)

¹ MacArthur observed, "That Peter used the phrase Spirit of Christ within them (cf. Romans 8:9) demonstrates that the eternal Christ, inseparable from the Holy Spirit, worked from within the Old Testament writers to record God's infallible revelation." (*1 Peter*, p. 55)

² On account of this God has made His angels witnesses to what occurs in the body of Christ. As such (1) they rejoice and praise God whenever He saves a sinner, Luke 15:7, 10, (2) when Paul and the other Apostles labored for the Kingdom, the angels are said to have watched, 1 Corinthians 4:9, and (3) today they continue to "strain their neck" as they behold the glory of God's Salvation as it is worked out in and through us (Ephesians 3:10)!