



1 Peter 1:10-12

What Did Jesus Come to Do?

10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

11 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.

12 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.

One of the advantages to the coming of the Christmas Season, is that I am more likely than usual to hear selections from Handel's Messiah on the radio. The music to the Messiah is glorious, but for me the most wonderful thing about the lyrics, that magnificent oratorio that Handel set to music, is that it is all scripture. It is entirely made up of Scriptures that speak of the person and work of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. But have you ever stopped to consider that the majority of those wonderful scriptures that make up the words to the Messiah are not drawn from the *New Testament*, they are drawn from the *Old Testament*. The Messiah draws from the Old Testament books of Haggai, Malachi, Zechariah, Job, the Psalms, and in particular the book that is most heavily represented is that of the Prophet Isaiah: ***“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6)***

Most people when they think of Jesus inevitably think of the Gospels, Paul's letters and the New Testament, but the reality as Peter reminds us in these verses is that the entire bible speaks of Jesus, either as the Messiah who was to come, or the Messiah who has come, and will return again. The Old Testament saints may not have known Jesus by name as you do, but they were eagerly awaiting the coming of Messiah, the Prince as He is called in Daniel 9:6, or Immanuel meaning God with us from Isaiah 7:14, or My Redeemer as Job called him in Job 19:25.

This is of course because God had promised them again and again, that when the time was right, He would send the Messiah, who would Himself be God incarnate. The men and women of faith in the Old Testament heard those promises and they believed them, that is why Job was able to testify even in the midst of terrible suffering, hundreds of years before the coming of Jesus: ***“For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God.”***

All of those Old Testament saints were eager to see their redeemer, and they were given many details about the Redeemer, for instance, they knew things like the fact that he would be a blessing not just to Israel but as God told Abraham "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" – they even knew where the Messiah would be born, that is why it was possible for Herod, when he was greatly

disturbed by the visit of three wise men from the east seeking *He who has been born King of the Jews?* to gather all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, and ask them where the Christ was to be born, and we read:

So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'

Those chief priest and scribes knew, because that detail had been revealed through Micah. You see as Peter puts it in verse 11, the Spirit of Christ, by which he means the Holy Spirit who was in them, revealed it to them, and under His inspiration they recorded it for the benefit of the generations to come. It's worth noting incidentally, that Peter's use of the *term* Spirit of Christ for *Holy Spirit*, teaches us what the main ministry of the Holy Spirit is, and that is not to provide miracles for the signs and wonders movement, but to exalt Jesus Christ and to point men to Him.

But even these inspired prophets, as anxious as they were, did not know all the details of the coming Messiah, though as Peter put it they inquired and searched carefully. Details they dearly wanted to know like the great question "***When will the Messiah come***" where kept concealed from them. As Warfield puts it so well, the Old Testament is like a room richly furnished but dimly lit. All of the beautiful furniture is there, but is only visible in dim outlines. It would take the greater revelation of the NT to turn the light on, and reveal what had been there all the time.

But while they did not have all the details, things like the exact whats and whens, they knew what the Messiah was coming to do. Sometimes, I think they knew better than most people do today what it was that Jesus was coming into the world to do. He wasn't coming into the world merely to be placed into a manger, or receive gifts from wise men, or even to provide us with an excuse to create a holiday and go shopping and give gifts. No, Jesus came into the World to Suffer. That was something the bible tells us all the way back in Gen 3:15 – when immediately after the fall God told the Devil, "***And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.***"

What was God saying there? He was saying that Jesus, the seed of the woman, would crush the head of the serpent, that he would crush the power of the deceiver, but that in the process he would be afflicted and suffer himself. And why did he have to do that, because it was the only way we might be redeem mankind from the curse of the Law. That is why, as Paul tells us in Gal. 4:4: "***But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.***"

What does the Bible tell us but that Jesus had to suffer that you and I, might be redeemed, because you and I, friends, in our fallen state are powerless to save ourselves. How could we atone for our sins, even if we had wanted to, only God Himself could do it by bearing the punishment for them and becoming what the prophet Jeremiah called *The Lord our Righteousness*.

Perhaps no chapter in the entire bible sums up what Jesus came into the world to do and why better than Isaiah 53. ***Isaiah 53:4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.***

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

6 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 came into this world, for suffering, but that suffering was to him the pathway to glory. For in that ignominious death, dying the death of the sin bearer on the cross, soaking up the punishment we deserved, he won the final victory over sin, he opened the way to heaven for all past, present, and future who believed in Him, and that includes all those saints who like Abraham rejoiced to see His day coming and as Heb. 11:13 ***“died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them”***

Now we can understand why the prophets wanted to so badly to look into these things, to know everything they could about the Messiah, they lived their entire lives hoping to have the experience that old Simeon was blessed to enjoy, who holding the Christ child in the temple glorified God saying: ***“29 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”***

But why did the angels desire to look into these things as well? They weren't depending for their salvation on the coming of the Messiah, after all. Christ didn't die for the angels, the angels that didn't fall have no need of redemption, and those that fell with Satan are irretrievably damned. No, they desire to look into these things because they are so amazing to them. These are the messengers of God who dwell in his presence. They know him as the one who is so holy, that they have to cover their faces with their wings. They have seen the invincible love between father son and holy spirit first hand in the heavenlies. And so they are amazed, that this Holy God, who loves His Son more than we could understand would send Him to be an atonement for Sinners and Rebels like us who deserved only damnation. ***If only you and I knew God they way they know God the Gospel would knock off our feet!*** What must amaze them more is the way we can hear the tidings they proclaimed and barely stifle our yawns, surely it can only make them wonder ***YOU DIED FOR THEM?***

Now let me give you two brief applications of these verses:

- 1) Peter wrote to a church that was about to suffer, he wanted to them to be assured that their suffering was actually a sign of their fellowship with the Lord, and that it indicated that they too were walking in the way that leads to glory. Brothers and Sisters, as Peter Davids said “Neither Christ nor his people receive the crown of glory without the crown of thorns.” I know that those of you who love the Lord suffer, sometimes terribly, but do not think for a moment that this is a sign that the Lord has left you or that He doesn't love you, far from it. I know it is hard, but when you suffer, remember what Peter said in ***1 Peter 2:21 “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:”***
- 2) Friends, Jesus came once to redeem, this is the message of the bible, the Gospel of God's amazing Grace, a Grace so amazing, so undeserved that it astounds even Angels. This grace is so amazing that it astounds even creatures like the Angels. That is the Gospel, the Good News that has been preached to you today.

But what is even more astounding is that I know there are people in this room who are saying, that's nice, I like Baby Jesus stories, but as for all this believing and being saved stuff. I'm ok. I'm not a bad person. I know that I'll be ok in the end.”

Now I could stand up here and prove to you that you have broken all 10 of God's commandments again and again and again throughout your life, I can prove to you that Jesus said if you look upon a woman to lust after her you have committed adultery, and that if you have hated your brother in your heart you have committed murder. I could prove to you that those violations of God's law are sins and that the bible says that the wages of sin is *what kids? What is the wages of sin?*

I might be able to get you to do some elementary calculations on just how many times you probably break the commandments in a week, and the astronomical number of violations that you would have after a lifetime. I could even possibly show you that what God demands of us, his standard is perfect obedience.

I might even be able to prove to you that there is a day of judgment coming on which you will stand before that Holy and all knowing God, in whose presence the angels veil their faces, and yet I know that some of you even now are thinking that on that day you can advance arguments that wouldn't fly in a court of law here on earth. Let's just take one, I hear it all the time. ***“Look, I've tried to live a good life and keep the commandments, its not like I'm a mass murderer or Genocidal maniac.”*** Alright, imagine that I after a life time of speeding, I am finally hauled before a traffic judge, for hours my rap sheet of 2,643,000 speeding offenses is read out in court. Now after that, I say to the judge, ***“Look judge, I tried to keep the speed limit, I mean come on it's not like I'm a genocidal murderer.”*** At the end of such a brilliant answer, do you really think that a good judge would say ***“OH, of course! Case dismissed!”*** No given the evidence, he'd probably laugh at my first comment, that I'd tried to keep the speed limit, and then quite rightly pronounce me guilty.

Friend, do you think that the Holy God who knows everything you've done, is less righteous in his judgment than an earthly traffic court judge?

Some will say *well, but there has to be another way*. Friends if there was another way that you might be saved other than Jesus coming into the world and dying for your sins, don't you think that a loving God would have chosen it?! <GETHSEMANE> There is no other way, the only way you can meet God's standard of perfection is if Christ has paid the penalty for your sins, and given you his perfect righteousness. And the only way you can have that gospel salvation is if you give up depending on yourself and depend wholly on Christ and His grace.

What did Jesus come into the world to do? Let's ask Paul shall we? *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”*

Last question, if Paul knew himself to be a sinner, what are you?