

The Tapestry of Salvation – First Peter 1:10-12

I. Introduction:

- A. I know very little about the ancient art of weaving, and I know even less about the making of tapestries.
 - 1. But I know that a tapestry is a piece of fabric with a picture, or design, woven or embroidered onto it.
 - 2. We have a couple of machine-made tapestries in the foyer by the front door of the church, and here I have a very old, small tapestry that was given to my wife.
 - 3. You'll see that, like a painting, it tells a story.
- B. This evening let's use our imaginations, taking the threads which Peter provides, making them into a tapestry depicting salvation.
 - 1. Some of these threads are to be laid horizontally while others should intersect them vertically.
 - 2. And then various others criss-cross across the warp and woof giving us the image Peter, the master craftsman, has designed for us.
 - 3. To help you make sense out of my muddling, I've given you a sheet with each of the major threads in these verses separated and ready for you to apply.

II. Notice what Peter tells us, or implies, about SALVATION throughout these verses.

- A. He has just finished saying, *"soon, you will enjoy God's ultimate blessing: the SALVATION of your souls."*
 - 1. That salvation is something which God's Old Testament prophets have foretold.
 - 2. I am planning, Lord willing, to bring a message Sunday pointing out **our** salvation in the Old Testament.
 - 3. For this evening I ask you to trust me: Several ancient prophets spoke about salvation describing many of its details.
- B. But even though **Isaiah** and the others were given information to share with us, they didn't necessarily understand what it was they were saying.
 - 1. So Peter, under the same Holy Spirit inspiration as those prophets, tells us, *"of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently... searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify..."*
 - 2. God gave to His various servants different clues about our salvation.
 - 3. For example, the Holy Spirit *"testified beforehand"* to **Isaiah** about the *"sufferings of Christ,"* and to **Daniel** He revealed something about *"what manner of time"* would be involved, but neither had the full picture.
 - 4. Some of God's prophets knew that the salvation of your soul would be purchased by Christ through His *"sufferings,"* but a lot more of them spoke about *"the glory that should follow."*
- C. And then centuries later, came the prophets of the New Testament *"preaching the gospel."*
 - 1. Just as the old prophets were inspired by the Spirit of God, so were those later preachers.
 - 2. And then there were people like us, unto whom the message of salvation was revealed and received.
 - 3. But it was not simply with our ears we received the gospel, it was through the ministry of that same Spirit who spoke to the prophets and empowered the preachers.
 - 4. *"Unto... us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven..."*
 - 5. I don't know if you can see it as I do, but there is a weaving of salvation throughout these verses and down through time.
- D. And where does that message of salvation end?
 - 1. It results in glory; the glory of the Saviour and the glory which He bestows upon us.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit, *"testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."*
- E. The foundation of this tapestry; the warp of this weaving; is salvation.

III. The next major theme; we might call it the vertical woof of this fabric, are the **PROPHETS**.

- A. *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:*
- Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*
 - Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you..."*
- B. What does Peter tell us about those Old Testament prophets?
- He says that while they spoke of the salvation of God we have received, they didn't fully understand it, and so they earnestly *"enquired"* into the details of God's grace.
 - The meaning of the word *"enquired"* is *"to pull out"* what information they could.
 - I can't imagine them speaking about such a wonderful subject without getting very interested in it.
 - And they *"searched diligently,"* looking into each of the clues the Lord had given them.
 - "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify..."*
- C. How did they search?
- We are told that **Daniel**, for example, not only studied scriptures, but he begged the Lord for more insight.
 - They had the Word of God and prayer, depending on the Holy Spirit, just as we must.
 - And like us, they were saved by grace, but even with that blessing they didn't fully understand.
 - And frankly, I don't fully understand certain parts of salvation either.
- D. With the prophets and salvation as the foundational fabric of our tapestry...

IV. Now Peter adds some of the details: like **GRACE**.

- A. *"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you..."*
- Salvation from sin is rooted in the grace of God.
 - Many of those Old Testament prophets spent most of their time condemning the sins of their hearers.
 - And yet in the midst of that condemnation they spoke of deliverance.
 - That deliverance from sin is made possible only because God is infinitely gracious.
 - As hell-deserving sinners, it is only God's unmerited favor which brings about our salvation.
- B. As I was witnessing to a lost man last Monday, he told me that he preferred the Old Testament to the New.
- With eyes as blind as the Jews, I'm sure he has no clue that the grace of God which we see in the gospel can also be seen in the more ancient prophets.
 - Not only did they **speak OF grace**, it was **BY God's grace** that they **spoke**.
 - Even if the Lord intended to save a few sinners by grace, it was gracious of Him to foretell of that salvation.
 - And it is also of grace that God raised up men like Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas to preach salvation by grace to sinners like us.
 - Even today, it is of God's grace that there are evangelists in this world. God owes us nothing.
 - "Unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven..."*

V. Interwoven into these three verses we have the **HOLY SPIRIT** of God.

- A. *"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently..."*
- Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow...*
 - Unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven..."*

- B. It was the Holy Spirit who laid the message of salvation upon the hearts of those prophets.
 1. Here He is designated as *“the Spirit of Christ.”*
 - a. It is not that the Spirit is a tool used by Christ.
 - b. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are so intertwined, they could always be referred to one another.
 2. And don't fret about the pronoun *“it” – “it testified”* – we are talking about the **Person** of the Spirit.
- C. Not only was the Holy Ghost there at the initial revelation of the truth, He is instrumental in the final reception of that truth by the sinner.
 1. The Holy Spirit **empowers** the **preaching** of the gospel, and He **empowers** the **reception** of that gospel.
 2. Because remember, the sinner has no ears for the things of God, and his heart is made of stone.
 3. It is not until he is quickened by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven that we will listen, hear, understand and receive the message of those preachers and prophets.

VI. Of course, throughout these verses we catch glimpses of CHRIST JESUS.

- A. The Holy Spirit is *“the Spirit of Christ.”*
 1. But it was not *“the Spirit of Christ”* who purchased our salvation.
 2. There would be no salvation without the suffering and physical death of the Saviour.
- B. The Spirit of Christ *“testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ.”*
 1. He provided the prophets with material to foretell.
 2. As I have already said, Sunday, the Lord willing, we will look at what **Isaiah, David** and some of the other prophets said about the **sufferings** of the **Messiah**.
 3. There could not possible be any salvation from sin without the blood and death of the Saviour.
 4. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.
 5. Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners by becoming the Lamb of God destined for the cross.
- C. So the Spirit of Christ, *“testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the GLORY that should follow.”*
 1. Christ Jesus, *“being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”*
 2. Christ has been and shall ever be glorified before His saints and eventually even before the unbeliever.
 3. *“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”*
 4. Jesus prayed, *“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”*

VII. Another thread running through this picture is flesh colored like us: the CHRISTIAN.

- A. *“Christ, whom having not see love”* and in whom *“ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto YOU... Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto US they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto YOU with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven...”*
- B. Peter refers to souls saved, the end of our faith in Christ.
 1. He speaks of us as recipients of God's grace.
 2. To us has the Lord given the ministry of the prophets, blessing us with opportunities to know and understand even beyond those great men.
 3. And then to us, came even more great men, like Paul and Barnabas, preaching the glorious gospel.
 4. And whether we see Him at the time of our evangelism, there in the background empowering that message was the Holy Spirit once again.

C. Having woven together God's prophets, salvation, grace, Christ and the Spirit...

VIII. Suspended over it all are those mysterious ANGELS of God.

A. *"Of which salvation... the angels desire to look into."*

1. Despite several books in my library, and after reading God's word for five decades, I admit to knowing very little about the angels.
2. I know they are glorious servants of Jehovah, created by Him for various purposes.
3. I also know that some fell into sin with Lucifer, so I conclude they are not perfect or omnipotent.
4. And they aren't *"know-it-alls."* They must learn things in much the same way that we do.
5. The prophesied gospel and the recently preached gospel are things *"the angels desire to look into."*
6. They are almost as confused about salvation by grace as the earlier prophets had been.

B. *"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law..."*

1. And the angels were there at Bethlehem **looking in** to it all, and trying to **take it all in**.
2. Could it be that the angels of God have been awed by grace and confused by salvation, because they have known Jehovah more intimately than we have known Him?
3. They know His perfection and glory, having spent thousands of years serving Him in the beauty of holiness
4. And at the same time, they have been watching humanity ever since the sin of Adam, witnessing every aspect of our rebellion for several millennia.
5. Putting those two things together, I can see where salvation would make no sense whatsoever.
6. Why would our infinitely holy God want to save those wretchedly sinful creatures?
7. But if you stop and think about it, don't these sinless witnesses add even more to the glory of the Lord?

IX. Conclusion

A. When tapestries are made by hand, not by computer-governed machines, I can see where each one might be different from the next.

1. Like a dozen student painters, being asked to put on canvas their rendition of the bowl of fruit in front of them; every painting is different.
2. We might make a hundred tapestries of salvation; all with information given to us by the Spirit.
3. But each of us might emphasize different colors and textures making our image of salvation slightly different from that of the next Christian.
4. And yet the salvation of God will always be absolutely perfect.

B. I read the other day that when we come to this great subject, which so confused the prophets, we only skirt the shore.

1. During our lives, we sail around and around the island of salvation taking in all its breath-taking beauty.
2. But we can't pull ashore until the Lord gives His permission, *"receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."*