

## Excerpts from Life-study of 1 Peter, Message 8

### THE FULL SALVATION OF THE TRIUNE GOD AND ITS ISSUES (4 & 5)

#### Bible Verses:

1 Pet. 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation the prophets, who prophesied concerning the grace that was to come unto you, sought and searched diligently, searching into what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them was making clear, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these. To them it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they ministered these things, which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, which things angels long to look into.

First Peter 1:3-25 is concerned with the full salvation of the Triune God and its issues. Verses 3 through 9 cover the Father's regeneration unto a living hope; verses 10 through 12, the Spirit's

application; and verses 13 through 25, Christ's redemption. In this message we shall consider the Spirit's application through the prophets' prophesying and the apostles' preaching.

According to Peter's word in 1:10-12, the first means of the Spirit's application was the prophesying of the Old Testament prophets, and the second means was the preaching of the New Testament apostles. By this we see that two groups of persons were used by the applying Spirit to apply God's full salvation to His chosen people.

First Peter 1:10 says, "Concerning which salvation the prophets, who prophesied concerning the grace unto you, sought out and searched out." Here Peter uses the Old Testament prophets to confirm his teaching concerning the New Testament salvation. The Lord Jesus did the same thing (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46).

In 1:11 Peter goes on to say, referring to the prophets, "Searching into what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them made clear, witnessing beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these." The searching of the prophets was the Spirit's preapplication of God's

salvation in the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophets were searching into what time and what manner of time the Spirit in them made clear concerning Christ's marvelous accomplishment through His sufferings and glories. Eventually it was revealed that those marvelous things were ministered not to them, but to the New Testament believers (v. 12).

In verse 11 Peter says that the prophets searched not only into what time but also into what manner of time. Although it is easy to understand the meaning of "what time," it is difficult to know what Peter means by "what manner of time." This is an unusual expression. Does time have a manner? We may be bothered by this expression and wonder what Peter means by "what manner of time."

Regarding the coming of Christ and His sufferings, the prophets not only searched into what time this would be, but also searched into what manner of time, what kind of time, it would be. A number of verses in the prophecy of the Old Testament indicate that the anointed One of God, the Messiah, Christ, would suffer for the salvation of God's people and the fulfillment of God's purpose.

According to these prophecies, it was necessary for God's anointed One, the One appointed to fulfill God's commission, to suffer. The ancient prophets knew this, and they spent considerable time to find out when the Messiah would suffer. This means that they were seeking to know what time He would suffer. Furthermore, they were also searching into what manner of time this would be. Would it be in a time comparable to the winter season or one comparable to the summer? For this reason, in 1:11 Peter speaks concerning what manner of time.

Peter treasured the Old Testament, and we in the Lord's recovery today certainly treasure the Bible. One striking characteristic of the Lord's recovery is that we treasure the Word of God and spend a great deal of time reading it and studying it. Many of us have been dealing with the Bible diligently and seriously for years, especially during the years we have been in the recovery. Therefore, let me address a question especially to those who have been serious in their reading of the Bible: What verse in the Old Testament tells us the manner of time of Christ's suffering and of His glorification? It is easy to find a verse that speaks of what time. For instance, Daniel

9:26 says, “After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off.” The words “cut off” point to Christ’s crucifixion. Daniel 9:25 mentions “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.” Here we have a total of sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred eighty-three years. According to these verses, four hundred eighty-three years after the command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, the Messiah, Christ, would be cut off, crucified. By this we can know what time Christ would suffer. The time was at the expiration of the sixty-ninth week.

Isaiah 53 speaks of what manner of time Christ suffered. If you research Isaiah 53 , you will see that this chapter reveals the manner of time of Christ’s crucifixion. This chapter speaks clearly about Christ’s death in plain words, just as the New Testament does. But probably none of us has searched this chapter to find out the manner of time in which Christ died.

The first verse of Isaiah 53 says, “Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” This verse indicates that Christ came to suffer at a time that was full of unbelief, at a time when God’s people were not believing in Him. The prophet asked the question: “Who hath believed our

report?” The prophet reported, preached, made an announcement, but no one listened to him. This means that when Christ came, the people of God were full of unbelief. That was the manner of time. Christ did not come at a time when the people of God were filled with faith and everyone had a strong belief in God. No, He came at a time when God’s people did not have belief in Him. The prophets knew this. They knew what manner of time Christ would come.

In verse 12 Peter goes on to say, “To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, but to you they ministered these things, which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; which things angels long to look into.” “These things” refer to the sufferings of Christ and His glories. The Old Testament prophets ministered the sufferings and glories of Christ to the New Testament believers.

These things have been announced to us through those who preached the gospel. The ones who preached the gospel were the apostles of the New Testament. The prophets searched and prophesied; the apostles preached. The preaching of the apostles

is the Spirit's practical application of God's salvation in the New Testament. Both the prophesying of the prophets and the preaching of the apostles were the application of the Spirit. This means that the Spirit applies God's full salvation by two instrumentalities, the prophesying of the prophets and the preaching of the apostles.

In my ministry I am preaching. I believe that through this preaching the Spirit is applying God's full salvation to you. It is not my goal actually to train anyone. Instead, I simply preach Christ, the death of Christ, and the different glories of Christ. Each preaching is an application of the Spirit. Those who attend the meetings of the ministry are under the application of the Spirit of Christ. My greatest joy is to see the saints receive Christ through the application of the Spirit. I am especially happy to see the second generation growing up in the church life. My heart leaps when I see that they are receiving the application of God's salvation through this ministry and by the Spirit.

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Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

**[Commentary]:**

**Introduction**

[CW]: Even though Peter's entire contribution to the New Testament only comprises eight chapters, the scope of his writings was extremely broad. In his first epistle, he incorporates both the prophecies of the ancient Old Testament prophets and the preaching and teaching of the New Testament apostles, and links both of these in the Holy Spirit's application of God's full salvation upon His chosen people. Bill Lawson has joined us today as we begin the second week of our Life-study of 1 Peter. Bill, we have three verses particularly today before us, and like the preceding nine verses in this book of 1 Peter, they are loaded, aren't they, with content?

[BL]: They really are, Chris. When you consider Peter's background as one who was very unlearned, just a fisherman that grew up around the Sea of Galilee, you could not imagine that Peter could write epistles like this that are so deep and so profound. It is really a marvelous thing that the Lord could transform Peter into such a writer.

[CW]: We've seen, particularly in the first few programs, Bill, in this book, Peter was very much focused on the matter of God's full salvation, not just the initial salvation, not the common thought concerning salvation, but the full salvation with the three main stages that really apply all aspects of what God accomplished in Christ and all aspects of what He's carrying out in the Spirit upon us and in us today, and I think that's really the main focus of where we want to go with this program, isn't it?

[BL]: Right. When Peter talks about salvation, his epistles, he's not talking about a shallow kind of salvation that most believers are familiar with, salvation from hell, the forgiveness of sins, but that's just the initial part of salvation. Peter's was a full salvation, not only the saving of our spirit, but also the saving of our soul, and eventually the full salvation of our body to bring us into a full salvation where the Triune God is fully saturated, the tripartite man.

[CW]: Bill, the three verses we want to look at today are 10, 11, and 12 in chapter one. I'm going to read those again. We have to kind of go slow and chew on these to really get it, but we'll hit a few of the main points, but this matter of God's full salvation and the application aspect, the Holy Spirit's working upon us to bring us into the full salvation is the main thrust of the program, even though we're going to touch some other aspects, but they all relate, don't they?

[BL]: They do. Peter is structuring his writing here with the Triune God, the Father's regenerating, the Son's redemption, and now we'll be touching the Spirit's application.

[CW]: Okay, let's take a look at these three verses. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied concerning the grace that was to come unto you sought and searched diligently, searching into what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them was making clear, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these. To them it was revealed that not to themselves, but to you they ministered

these things, which have now been announced to you through those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, which things angels long to look into. Tremendous. I mean, we are spanning the whole breadth of nearly of time here, aren't we?

[BL]: Right, with both the Old Testament age and also the New Testament time when Peter was there.

[CW]: All right, let's join Witness Lee with the first portion. We'll talk about this looking into the time and the manner of time.

### **Part 1**

[CW]: Bill, the application of God's full salvation by the Spirit we just saw involves the utilization both of these Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament teaching and preaching of the apostles. But let's focus on these Old Testament prophecies for a minute, particularly, obviously, in the process of God's salvation or in the stages of God's salvation. The suffering of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ, the crucifixion of the Messiah is an indispensable, maybe is the key foundational item. And the Old Testament prophets spent much time, didn't they, researching this and actually knew a great deal concerning it specifically, didn't they?

[BL]: They really did, Chris. If they would just even have looked into the Pentateuch, the first book, Genesis, in, of course, we know as today as 3:15, they would realize that the seed of the woman would have his heel bruised. So that's one reference right there. Then if they would, of course, by studying the prophet Daniel in the Old Testament, in especially chapter 9, they would realize through the prophecies of Daniel that the coming Christ would be crucified according to chapter 9. So, we know they should have known through studying even Genesis and Daniel that the exact time of the Messiah's being crucified and cut off would be made known to them. So this is a very, very interesting point. They searched and they sought out the time, first of all, of when the Christ would suffer and enter into His glory. And that is unveiled there in Daniel 9 when Cyrus, the king of Persia, he made a declaration for the Jews to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. So from all the way from that time to the time that the Messiah would be cut off counts to be 483 years. So, if they would have studied that, they would realize that from the time that Cyrus, the Persian king, made a proclamation for some of the Jews to come back and rebuild the city of Jerusalem until the time the Messiah would be cut off, that would be exactly 483 years.

[CW]: So, they could tell even with that degree of specificity that the actual date, the actual year, at least a close proximity to the very time that Christ was going to be or the Messiah was going to be crucified. Yet as we'll see in this portion just ahead, as you said, the verse makes reference that I read both to the time, which we've now just discussed, and the prophecies show us the time, but also the manner of time. This is a little bit more elusive as we'll hear. And it's searching into the manner of time, not so easy, but still the Old Testament offered many windows into this aspect as well. So let's talk about that in the coming portion. Let me pick up that verse again, searching into what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them was making clear, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ. And one of the great books in the Bible, surely the Old Testament, focusing much on the sufferings of Christ, Isaiah, the prophet, and Isaiah said, "Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Here's Witness Lee once more.

### **Part 2**

[CW]: This is really striking, Bill. The way he succinctly kind of connected that, the manner of time, isn't talking about the specific times. It's talking about the characteristic of the age, the characteristic of the climate. And surely Peter could have easily related to Isaiah 53, who has believed our report. I mean, here he and the other apostles are speaking the truth, giving the report of the crucifixion of the Messiah. And it perfectly matched the

time element as it was unveiled in the Old Testament prophecies. And yet, just a handful of the Jews believed. So the characteristic of that time was really a condition of unbelief, wasn't it?

[BL]: The prophets there were really quite diligent. They were searching, they were seeking, not just the time. That's one thing, to know the time and figure out from Daniel and Genesis and so on, put together the time when Messiah would be cut off. But another thing is to know, like you say, the generation. What is the environment? What will be the situation of the nation of Israel at that time? And Isaiah, especially in chapter 53, Isaiah was prophesying concerning the coming of Christ, and that Christ would come to turn the situation of the nation of Israel fully around. And yet, almost whatever he spoke, they didn't believe him. They either persecuted him or condemned him, like all the prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah. So eventually Isaiah said, who has believed the report? Isaiah and these prophets spoke about Christ, he spoke about the coming Christ to rescue the nation of Israel and the Jews. No one believed him. So by that one verse in Isaiah, we know the environment at that time of Christ's crucifixion would be a time of almost complete unbelief on the part of the Jewish people. Then if they would study Daniel 9 again, it talks about a time of rebuilding and restoring of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. So that implies a time of degradation, a time of desolation, a time of captivity. So they also realized that the time of Messiah's being cut off would be not only a time of unbelief, it would also be a time of captivity. So they got into these things. It was amazing. They really got into them. And the Lord unveiled to them that it would be an age of unbelief and an age of captivity.

[CW]: Bill, he made the comment here at the end that even today, many believe that the time of the Lord's next unveiling, second appearing, will be characterized by large-scale revival and maybe a whole generational turn back to God. But we really don't see justification for that in Scripture, do we? There's a lot of parallel between the manner of time that we're living in and the manner at the time that Christ came the first time, isn't there?

[BL]: Right. In the 20th century, if we look at the history of Christianity, you see a period of a 100 or 200-year period of great revivals, the Lord moving all over the earth. And you see gospel campaigns even in our generation. You see large gospel campaigns and efforts. But really, if we look here in 1 Peter, it will really be when the time of Christ unveiling again, it will really be a time of unbelief, where the majority of the people will be unbelievers. And we should also not expect that millions of people will believe, because these prophets in the Old Testament were speaking and ministering to an unbelieving generation. And it's the same thing today, that we in the New Testament, we also need to speak, but we will also be facing an unbelieving generation.

[CW]: Bill, I think I'll just pick up what you spoke here, use it as a transition or a springboard into the final section, because it matches very well where we want to go. Verse 12 has this portion. These things which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, which things angels long to look into. You said we need to be those who are speaking. We need to be those who are preaching. Some preached to us. And even though the general climate remains one largely of unbelief, that doesn't alleviate us, does it, from the need to speak, which we're going to see very clearly in this final segment.

### **Part 3**

[CW]: It's clear, Bill, from this, that the kind of speaking, the kind of preaching, not only that we are under, but that we participate in, is critically important, because the Spirit is even using this preaching, this apostolic teaching and preaching, to apply God's full salvation to us.

[BL]: Right. The work, of course, of God the Father is to purpose, to plan, to regenerate. And then the Son comes in, we know, to accomplish redemption for us, to take care of the negative things, but without the Spirit's application, nothing that the Father has planned and purposed, nothing that the Son has redeemed can be

applied to human beings. In other words, we wouldn't even be saved unless the Spirit applied these things to us. But I think, Chris, the main point here is that the Lord needs those, Peter mentioned, to preach, to minister today, to bring people this salvation. So He used the prophets in the Old Testament to bring the salvation to them. Then He uses the apostles and teachers in the New Testament to do the same thing, to bring the full salvation of the Triune God to man. Without the Spirit doing this, without our preaching, the Spirit cannot apply anything of the rich salvation of the Triune God to us. So it's very important that all of us minister and teach and preach this wonderful, all-inclusive Christ to people so that God could have a people today, just like He had in the Old Testament.

[CW]: Yeah, the point he makes here is a good one. In the first portion today, when we first touch this verse, verse 12, he pointed out really primarily the preaching of the apostles in the New Testament period and the prophesying of the Old Testament prophets. These are the unique tools, so to speak, that the Spirit uses to apply the salvation, the full salvation to God's chosen. But Peter inserts this word. I was appreciative, again, so often in this ministry. Witness Lee will pick up what we might consider a throwaway word, "those" here. And the "those" has a broader implication, doesn't it, than just the New Testament apostles, those 12 apostles. And we don't even have to get into the big question of whether the line of apostles continues after the first century. But the those there, that means all of us who preach according to the Holy Spirit, doesn't it?

[BL]: Right. A big point here, too, is that despite a generation, Chris, of unbelief, we still have to preach and minister this wonderful Christ to people. Despite an environment of captivity like the Jews were in, Christ came in that generation of captivity. He also was crucified in that generation of unbelief. So today, despite this background, we still need to minister Christ, announce Christ, preach Christ. So the application of the Spirit can be made.

[CW]: Of course, the Apostle Paul picks up a very similar language when he says, preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, right? This should be not just something we reserve for the special class of serving or gifted ones, but really the call is today for all of God's people to rise up and in the same principle, realizing we might have some difference in measure of gift, but still in principle, we all need to be engaged in this, don't we?

[BL]: Right. If Peter didn't mention the word those there, we would think, oh, I'm not a New Testament apostle, I'm not one in the category of Paul or Peter or John, what can I do? But no, by the fact that Peter mentions those here, that means he wants all of God's children, no matter what, like you say, their measure of Christ is, to minister Christ to one another, to talk to their friends, relatives, colleagues, and so on, so that this wonderful Christ and His full salvation can be applied to all kinds of people today.

[CW]: Wow. Well, we covered a lot of territory, Bill, from the Old Testament, ancient prophecies concerning the time of Christ coming, the manner of the time, this age of unbelief that existed both then as well as now, but really the main focus is we all need desperately, day by day, moment by moment, the Spirit's application of God's full salvation, don't we?

[BL]: That's right.

[CW]: Good to have you. As always, I hope we have a number of opportunities before we're through with these life-studies of 1 and 2 Peter to come together again.

[BL]: It's a real pleasure to be here, Chris.

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