

What Angels Dream About

- 1 Peter 1:10-12
- I am thankful for the elders of this church, and this week especially for Scott in the way he handled the text last week and fed us so well. As I heard from another elder afterward, and I agree, Scott's sermon was anointed. We saw last week as Scott taught on verses 6-9 that suffering precedes glory. The trials you are going through, Peter writes to all we who are elect exiles, is for the very purpose that we and others may see that our faith is genuine and "result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." And he repeats that theme today when he says the Spirit told the prophets about what was to come: "the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories." Suffering precedes glory. Suffering is **not** intended to precede deconstruction of our faith! Remember when John the Baptist was in prison and he sent one of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one to come or should we look for another. This is the same John who had earlier pointed to his cousin and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" But John's suffering in prison was causing some questions in his mind. So what did John do? He sent someone to Jesus on his behalf because what John wanted to do was deconstruct his doubt, not his faith. And Jesus helped him do just that, telling John's disciple to go back and tell John what you hear and see: "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." Yes! Blessed is the one who when going through a trial turns his face toward Jesus.
- Let's look at this passage today under three main points: prophets searched, apostles preached, and angels dream.
- **Prophets searched (verses 10-12)**
- "Concerning this salvation." What salvation, Peter? The only one, the eternal one, the salvation that came from God in heaven and was made possible by God's Son on earth. The salvation that we have tasted but only in part, as the fullness awaits us and is kept for us in heaven. Peter has reminded the readers of where they are now, born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He has reminded them that they have salvation because of the sprinkling of the blood that Jesus shed for them. He has encouraged them that the trials they are going through are glorious in their purpose and in their power to reveal Christ more clearly to and through them. And now! Now Peter looks all the way back to the Old Testament to help all of us see that the plan and purpose of God for his people is from the beginning. This salvation was not kept secret until Jesus came. God sent the Spirit to prophets in the Old Testament to tell them of what was to come. They knew of the Messiah and wrote about him but they didn't understand it fully. That is why Peter says they searched and inquired carefully. They wanted to know the person and the time that the Spirit was telling them about. Adam and Eve heard it first in the garden. Remember? God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15) On the same day that Adam and Eve fell, and all mankind with them, God announced his eternal plan of salvation. And we are given further details about that plan throughout the Old Testament. The prophets of old searched and inquired to know the who and the how and the when, didn't they? Because God put it in their hearts to do so, for our sake. The prophet Micah heard from the Spirit that the ruler of Israel would come from Judah and from Bethlehem. Peter called David a prophet on the day of Pentecost and quoted one of David's Psalms: "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken." Isaiah heard from the Spirit that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. And that he would suffer and then be glorified. Jeremiah heard God say that he would make a new covenant with his people, and Jeremiah, Hosea and Zechariah all heard him say, "I will be their God and they will be my people." Ezekiel saw a vision of a valley of dry bones being regenerated, a vision almost beyond belief. Except for God. It is a promise

that looked forward to God's final renewal. That promise is fulfilled in Christ as Paul said, "All the promises of God find their Yes in him." -2 Corinthians 1:20

- What is Peter teaching these pilgrims, these elect exiles, of which we are part? **That all of Scripture can be trusted.** I was excited to hear Ray Ortlund preach last Sunday at Immanuel Church in Nashville, where our daughter Susanna goes. He told the story of his father giving him a Bible on his 16th birthday, September 7, 1966. "I was a knucklehead then," Ray said. "But the grace of God is meant for knuckleheads." Inside the front cover his father had written, "Be a student of the Bible and your life will be full of blessings." Then Ray looked at the congregation and said, "Say this to your children! 50 years from now, your voice will still be speaking. More than it is now."
- Peter is teaching the readers the importance of Scripture, which is the Word of God. He says in his second letter that "no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21) He is showing his readers then part of the understanding we all have now, that Christ is Concealed (but present!) in the Old Testament, Revealed in the Gospels, Explained in the Acts and Epistles, and Expected in Revelation. He (Christ) is hidden in plain sight in the Old Testament, and the prophets who searched and inquired carefully heard from God about the Christ! We have the full revelation of God in the Bible now, but that does not mean we are not to search out that truth that is revealed in the Word. Not just for our sake but for those who follow us, our children and grandchildren, but also for the sake of those who watch us and don't believe. That we would help them to see that our faith is real and our God is real and that he is FOR us. And he is for them!
- Peter says that the prophets of God in the Old Testament came to understand that what they were being told by the Spirit, they would never see in their lifetimes. Peter says to his readers, "Hey, they were serving you, not themselves." These prophets spent their lives listening to God and reporting what they heard to the people of God and sometimes to the enemies of God. For their thanks they were, Hebrews 11 tells us, tortured, flogged, stoned, sawn in two, killed with the sword, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy. Then he writes, "And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:39-40) That leads us to...
- **Apostles preached (verse 12)**
- The prophets heard from God and only saw him through visions. The apostles met God. They saw God the Son face to face and heard him speak and watched him heal and saw him die. And they preached Christ and him crucified. Peter said on the day of Pentecost, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." (Acts 2:33) Three thousand people heard that sermon and received the grace of the Lord Jesus and were born again that day.
- Paul spoke to a group of women by a river outside of Philippi and the Lord opened Lydia's heart to pay attention to what was said. She received the grace of the Lord Jesus that day and was baptized. Paul and Silas were beaten and bloodied and put in prison for the sake of the gospel. As they sang praises to God, an earthquake opened the prison doors and loosened their chains and the jailer saw it and pulled out his sword to kill himself, thinking all the prisoners would escape on his watch. Paul stopped him and said, we are all here! The jailer, having heard them praising God despite their suffering came and fell before them asking, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And he received the grace of the Lord Jesus that night and was baptized. And the story goes on and on and on until the day that the Lord Jesus opened your heart to pay attention to what was being preached, either on Sunday or in your own quiet reading of the Scriptures in your house or in any other place, and you received the grace of the Lord Jesus and were born again. And as Ray Ortlund said last Sunday, "When we hand ourselves over to Jesus, he brings all of his accomplishments of the past into the reality of our lives. We are not

on probation with Christ but on track for complete grace.” Yes! When you believe in Christ, he makes you to become an apostle, a sent-one, who has good news to tell to the nations. And the Lord will open the hearts of the elect exiles **you** speak to and they will receive the grace of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit will cause them to be born again, on the day and in the time of his choosing. What an indescribable gift God has given to you and me! That leads us to...

- **Angels dream (verse 12)**

- This is what angels dream about. Look at the last part of verse 12. “Things into which angels long to look.” What things? Earlier in the verse Peter writes, “the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news.” The things of salvation. **The angels of God long to look into grace!** The word Peter uses here describes the action of straining to see. It is intense desire or longing that engages the affections. We have all experienced this when we walk into a bakery or an ice cream shop. Right? We long to look into that chocolate croissant or that hot fudge sundae. We start to salivate at just the thought of “looking into it.” That’s the picture Peter is painting here, of the angels leaning over the precipice of heaven to behold the glories of grace and salvation. They cannot understand it like we can because fallen angels are lost forever and the rest of the angels have no need of grace. But the wonder of God becoming man and suffering and dying for these rebellious human creatures so that they can be born again to a living hope and receive an inheritance in heaven as co-heirs with the Son of God? Angels long to understand this. And that is part of God’s eternal purpose. Paul wrote, “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” **That’s angels!** (Eph. 3:8-10) Do you get that? Angels learn from the church because of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ on display in our lives. Saints, the very gift that angelic beings long to look into, we have been given by God. We will learn much more about that grace as we continue our study in this wonderful letter.

- Prayer
- Communion
- Greet One Another