

How Did The Prophets Serve Me?

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- [0 : 00] Let's share our prayer together. Heavenly Father, we humbly bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit, our teacher, and your great glory, our supreme concern.
- Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. These past three weeks, we've been reading through the same 12 verses of 1 Peter chapter 1.
- These verses which display for us or reveal for us the foundation God has laid for our lives as disciples of Jesus.
- But a foundation is good for nothing unless you build something upon it. Isn't it sad as we drive around the city? Every now and then we'll come across a plot where there's an exposed foundation which is all cracked and there's weeds growing through the middle of it.
- It's now good for nothing. At one time, it might have supported a factory or houses or a church perhaps.
- [1 : 21] But now, it's of no use at all. You're not supposed to see the foundation.
- You're supposed to see the building that goes on top of the foundation. But just for a few weeks, in just a few verses, as it were, we've been peeling back to look at the foundation.
- To see the shape of the foundation. And to learn from that what kind of building, what kind of life we are supposed to build upon this specific foundation.
- Verses 3 to 5. What God has done for us. Bringing us to new birth in Jesus Christ through the resurrection.
- The work of God for us in Jesus in our past has already been completed. It is absolutely sure and absolutely certain.
- [2 : 29] We can depend upon it. In verses 6 to 9. In our present circumstances. Which may often be trials of various different kinds.
- By the grace and goodness of God, we can know the joy of the Lord. Which is our strength. We can know the experience of being hard pressed.
- But not crushed or overcome. Our trials do not weaken or damage our foundation. Rather, they demonstrate to us the strength and trustworthiness of our foundation.
- And so today, narrowing in in verses 10 to 12. We come to the end of this great opening sentence. In this first letter of Peter. In these verses, Peter continues to outline the shape of the foundation.
- And he writes here of a biblical shaped foundation. A sure and certain word which we have from God.
- [3 : 38] The word which, as we've just sung, God has spoken. That word is to be part of our foundation. We are to have a deep confidence in God's word.
- Peter starts off by writing about prophets. So who are these prophets? Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully.

Who are these prophets? A prophet is someone who declares the word of the Lord. Who has a vision of the kingdom of God.

And speaks that vision of the kingdom into the present. What would it be like if God were king today? That's what the prophet speaks about.

In the Old Testament, we know that Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the other 12 were known as prophets. Their books, which were written down, are considered as prophetic books.

[4 : 50] However, in the Old Testament, we also read of Moses being called a prophet. Samuel does the work of a prophet. And so we learn that we cannot limit the prophets only to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and the other 12.

In some sense, all the writers of the Old Testament, whoever they were, are prophets.

This is who Peter is referring to in this verse in his letter. In general, the prophets is a phrase for the whole of the Old Testament.

Peter is writing to Christians. Almost certainly some of them were Jews. And almost certainly some of them were not Jews.

Peter is writing to display to them, and now to us, the foundation for our Christian life. And he makes reference to the Old Testament. The prophets as part of that foundation.

[6 : 01] Our foundation does not include only the Old Testament, but also the New Testament. However, our foundation is not only the New Testament.

It must include the Old Testament as well. If the Old Testament prophets, or the Old Testament as a prophetic word, forms part of our foundation, how does it do this?

How does this work? Peter writes, Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully.

Inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating, when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and subsequent glories.

This salvation at the start of the verse refers back to verses 3 to 9. All of the work of Christ and all of our present Christian lives in God's grace.

[7 : 07] The salvation that God has planned for us. The forgiveness of our sins. The life of the resurrection. Worked out in our present lives. The point Peter is making is that what has been revealed to us of our salvation in Jesus was already revealed to us through the Old Testament prophets.

What burst into flower in Jesus was in seed in the Old Testament. The grace that was yours.

Do not ever imagine that God only became gracious after Bethlehem. Or after Calvary.

God has always been gracious towards all of humanity and all of his creation. Always. Is it not by grace that God spoke creation?

By grace that God rescued his people from Egypt? By grace that God spoke the words of instruction and teaching through Moses to the people? By grace that God secured a land where his people could live?

[8 : 21] By grace that God cared for his people and provided for them over many years? God has always been a God of grace. God has always been a God of grace.

The prophets in the Old Testament time considered this salvation. Considered the grace which God had made known to them through his works for them.

But recognized this was not only for themselves. They were not grasping or selfish. Rather they knew that they would be sharing this grace with us.

Do not misunderstand me. Not one of the Old Testament prophets had ever heard of Edinburgh. Or Craig Lockhart. Hadn't imagined it. But they knew that God would have a people after them.

And we are that people. And they sought out these things to share them with us. Even though they couldn't imagine our names.

[9 : 25] Or where we would be. Or when we would be. They learned that God had a purpose to save and redeem a people as yet unborn. And that grace which they knew would be ours as well as theirs.

The revelation that God gave the Old Testament fathers began to narrow down. Towards a specific person. And a specific time.

It becomes clear. That there would not be a king. Who was different from the prophet. Who was different from the priest. Who was different from the Messiah.

But that all these characters of salvation. Revealed in the Old Testament. Were becoming one person. One Jesus.

One saviour. They did not know. That the Christ would be Jesus. But they knew he would come.

[10 : 27] They did not know when he would come. But they knew he would come. They sought out as much knowledge as was revealed to them.

About the coming of the Christ. So that they could speak that out. For our encouragement. And our blessing. They found that the spirit was showing them the sufferings.

And subsequent glories of Christ. Outside of Eden. This is the invariable pattern. Suffering first.

Then glory. Jesus descending from the heights of heaven. To the depths of the cross. Then to be raised up.

Ascending again to heaven. To the right hand of glory. The Christ when he comes. Submits to this pattern. In his life displays this pattern.

[11 : 26] Suffering first. Then glory. Coming down. Before going up. But definitely going up.

This is what the prophets came to learn. And this is what they would teach those. Including us. Who come after them. The point here is not to go seeking out one or two verses in the Old Testament.

Where we think these things are taught. But to realize that what Peter is telling us. Is that the whole of the Old Testament. Every verse. Every word.

And every page. Is focused on this. That Christ would come and suffer before glory. And we would receive grace in that.

It's a long time since I've seen one. But you remember pile drivers. These things that used to make a huge clatter of noise. In the city centre. When they were building a new tower block or something.

[12 : 31] A pile. A huge big pile. Maybe metal or concrete. Was to be driven into the ground. And so they would get a big weight. And a chain. And a big crane thing. And a winch.

And they would winch up the big weight. And let it go. And pfft. The weight. Did not drive the pile. Into the ground. The chain.

Did not drive the pile. Into the ground. The crane thing. Did not drive the pile. Into the ground. All of it together. Is needed.

To drive the pile. Into the ground. You cannot pick. One or two verses. Out of the Old Testament. And say. Look. There's Jesus there. Oh look. There's Jesus there.

The whole of the Old Testament. The whole thing. Is required. To display. The grace. That is ours. In Christ. Jesus. Our saviour. And that's what the prophets realised.

[13 : 28] That's what Peter realised. And that's why he wrote it down. For us. Not this bit here. Or that bit there. But the whole thing together. Working for us.

And our salvation. So now we come to the sharp end. Of these verses. Peter writes. Of the prophets. Serving.

Us. So how do the prophets. Serve. You and me. There are two references. To the Holy Spirit.

In these verses. They inquired. What person or time. The spirit of Christ. In them was indicating. The Holy Spirit. Was at work. In the prophets. Revealing to them. Something of Jesus. And then.

Through those. Who preach the good news. To you. By the Holy Spirit. Sent from heaven. Every single person. Who has ever spoken to you. The good news. Of Jesus Christ.

[14 : 24] Has been filled. With the Holy Spirit. At that moment. Every single person. Whoever made Jesus. Known to any of you. Is a Holy Spirit person.

There is no other way. It can be done. The spirit of Christ. And the Holy Spirit. Is the same person. In verse 12.

Peter is writing. About those. New Testament evangelists. Who preach the good news. To those who now believe. In Jesus. Today. We think of many people.

Who have spoken. The good news to us. Holy Spirit. Filled people. Who made Jesus. Known to us. The spirit.

Who inspired. This evangelistic message. This evangelistic preaching. Is the same. Spirit. Who has been at work. In the prophets. Of the Old Testament.

[15 : 20] There are not. Two. Spirits. Because there is only. One message. God loves you. And he wants to save you. In Jesus.

And the one spirit. Always speaks. The one message. The Holy Spirit. Was not invented. At Pentecost. It doesn't matter.

How much. Next Sunday. We are going to celebrate. Pentecost Day. And give thanks. For the coming. Of the Holy Spirit. But that wasn't. When the Holy Spirit. Was invented. He had not.

Been inactive. Before then. He is the author. Of the prophetic message. Just in the same way. As he is the author. Of the apostolic message.

Peter returns. To this theme. In his second letter. To Peter 1. Knowing this. First of all. That no prophecy. Of scripture. Comes from someone's. Own interpretation.

[16 : 16] Nobody makes it. Up in their head. For no prophecy. Was ever produced. By the will. Of any human. But humans. Spoke from God. As they were. Carried along.

By the Holy Spirit. That's how you know. Someone is filled. With the Holy Spirit. Are they speaking to you. About Jesus. And is what they are saying.

Filled with grace. And truth. And if it is. At that moment. They have been picked up. And are being carried along. By the Holy Spirit. We are to hold.

In our hands. The scriptures. Of the Old and New Testament. The very words. Of the living God. And we are to know.

That they are his word. The Spirit of God. Worked through human authors. Each one with their own personality. And gifts. Reflected in their writing.

[17 : 11] But he was the one. Who inspired them. He was the one. Who breathed upon them. And within them. He was the one. Who picked them up.

And carried them. As they spoke. These words of life. Which are now. The foundation. For our discipleship. If we are not confident.

In this part of the foundation. We will not build upon it. If we are not confident. In God's word. We will not trust it. The word is God's word.

The work of the Holy Spirit. In inspiring God's word. And inside us. Convicting us of God's word. Enables us to trust it.

The things that were announced. By the prophets. Are the same things. Which are announced. In the apostolic proclamation. There are two testaments.

[18 : 08] But there is no division. Between the two. The scriptures have a unity. Of authorship. The one Holy Spirit. Speaking to many human writers.

Has authored them all. The scriptures have a unity. Of theme. That in the Christ. Who would suffer. Before entering his glory. God is at work.

Renewing and restoring. All things. Including us. The diversity. We find in the scriptures. Is not a fundamental. Disunity.

Because rather. There is a great unity. In the scriptures. We cannot then. Dismiss the Old Testament. As though it were not.

For me. It isn't good enough. To say. Oh I enjoy reading. About Jesus. But all that Old Testament. Stuff. Doesn't move me at all. If you don't read.

[19 : 02] The Old Testament. You simply. Won't understand. The New Testament. With these new. Streaming services. That we get.

For our telly. Remember when tellies. Used to be tellies. You get seven. Or eight. Or nine. Episodes. In a thing. And you're supposed. To watch them all. In the one weekend.

If you join in. At the second. Last episode. You're not going to. Catch on with the story. You need to begin. At the beginning. And watch all the episodes.

How can you imagine. That you can. Start reading. At the New Testament. And understand. God's work. Which has been going on. Since the. The dawn of creation. It's not possible.

We need a whole. Scripture. To bear witness. To a whole. Salvation. In all that Peter.

[20 : 00] Has written about. Our foundation. The foundation. For our Christian life. The Lord Jesus Christ. Takes the central. Place. It really is. All about Jesus.

It's not about. The Bible. Because the Bible. Is all about Jesus. It ends up. Being all about. Jesus. All the time. In their own way.

As clearly. As God. Had revealed. To them. The Old Testament. Prophets. Give witness. To the Lord. Jesus Christ. Jesus. Was not. Plan B. There is.

No plan. B. God. Only ever. Had one. Plan. Jesus. Is not. An afterthought. Something. God. Came up. With. When his. First plan. Didn't work out.

It has always been. All about. Jesus. The more. We read. Scripture. The more. Clearly. We see.

[20 : 54] This. It's. All. About. Jesus. He. Is. The foundation. The one. On whom. We can. Build. A Christian.

Life. Which. Will. Endure. All. The trials. That come. Which. Will. Stand. Before. All. For. All. Creation. For. The glory. Of. God. Let's.

Pray. Together. Heavenly. Father. We. Give. You. Thanks. That. You. Have. Done. These. Amazing. Things. For. Us. That. You. Have. Laid. Such. A. Foundation. For. Us. And.

We. Pray. That. We. Would. Build. Upon. It. Set. A. Fire. Within. Us. That. We. Would. Stand. Here. On. This. Foundation. And. Nowhere.

Else. That. We. Would. Know. You. And. Your. Grace. For. Us. And. Bring. Glory. To. Your. Name. Amen.