

September 16, 2007 by Steve Brandon



As to this Salvation

1 Peter 1:10-12

- 1. The prophets wrote of grace (verse 10).**
- 2. The prophets studied hard (verse 11).**
- 3. The prophets served us (verse 12a).**
- 4. The angels long to look (verse 12b).**

Before we get into our text this morning, it would be good to first review Peter's argument up until this point. After a brief introduction in the first two verses Peter continues on (in verses 3-5) with a description of the wonderful salvation that awaits us in heaven.

We who believe in Christ have a perfect inheritance awaiting us in heaven. It is imperishable. Nothing will break in heaven. It is undefiled. Nothing unclean will be in heaven. It is unfading. Nothing in heaven will lose its brilliance. Our inheritance is on reservation. Our inheritance is guaranteed. God Himself is protecting us until that final day when we will experience the glories of heaven. This is the hope that we have! In addition it is all a gift of His great mercy as He has caused us to be born again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 3).

As Peter progresses in His flow of thought He shows (in verses 6 and 7) how this ultimate salvation is a sufficient reason for us to keep our eyes off of the troubles that encounter us in the here and now and place them upon the hope that we have awaiting us in heaven. Verse 6 states, "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials." The salvation that God will ultimately give us is so glorious that we are rejoicing even though we are dealing with various trials in our life right now. In demonstrating that our salvation is the object of our affections God will also be glorified on that final day. Verse 7 indicates that when our faith is found to be true it will result in "praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

In verses 8-9, we see how our unseen hope is worthy of our affection and love. Though we have never seen Jesus, we love Him. Though we don't see Jesus now, we believe in Him. These things give us reason to "greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (verse 8). The reason why we can hope like this is because of the belief that we have in our coming salvation. Indeed, Peter affirms what will be the outcome of our faith in verse 9. "Obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

Now as we come to verse 10 the main point of these verses is introduced with the first words of verse 10, "As to this salvation." This is the title of my message. This is also Peter's point. In the next three verses Peter will demonstrate how marvelous is the salvation that God has provided for all of us who have believed in Christ.

It is interesting to see how Peter actually describes our salvation. He doesn't describe our salvation like he did in verses 3-5, where he described the marvelous treasures that await us. Rather, Peter shows how much others have longed to see this salvation. As others have longed to experience this salvation we ought to treasure it in our hearts. Overall, Peter's argument to this section goes like this: If the prophets longed to see the salvation that you have experienced, you should treasure it greatly. If the angels are stooping to look into your salvation, you should realize what a great treasure you have. And as you realize the greatness of your salvation, it will help you in the day of your trial.

Peter's argument is a bit like the reasoning that a parent will give a child who is refusing to finish the food on his plate. Mom says to Jimmy, "Jimmy, there are starving children in Africa who would love to eat what you are eating on your plate. So please eat your food." Rather than using starving children he spoke about longing prophets and inquisitive angels. Rather than talking about food Peter spoke about the salvation that is set before us. If the prophets and angels longed for it, we ought to cherish it as well. As you consider the following verses, see if you can discern Peter's argument.

1 Peter 1:10-12

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

Let's consider our salvation from the vantage point of the prophets and the angels. First the prophets.

1. The prophets wrote of grace (verse 10).

We see here in verse 10, "the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you."

Verses 10-12 talk about the experience of the prophets as they anticipated the coming of Christ. Being moved by the Holy Spirit these prophets spoke from God (2 Peter. 1:21). When they spoke from God, they wrote of "the grace that would come." This is how Peter summarizes the message of the prophets: They preached a coming grace.

When you think about the message of the prophets, is this the thought that usually comes to mind? Do you think of them as writing about a coming grace? If you are anything like me you usually think of the prophets preaching the coming judgment. Much of the ink the prophets spilled as they wrote the Old Testament was focused upon the coming judgment upon those nations who rebelled against the LORD.

As our family has been reading through the Bible this year we have spent much time in the major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel simply because those books are so massive in length. This past week I talked with my older two children about these verses. I said, "Guys, this past year we have spent much time reading the prophets, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. If you would try to summarize these books of the Bible how would you do it? What's the main message about each of these books." Almost without hesitation both Carissa and SR said, "Judgment." They are both correct.

Throughout our reading of the prophets we have heard them bring a message of condemnation again and again and again. For instance, Isaiah has several chapters condemning Babylon (chs. 13-14). Isaiah spends several chapters condemning Moab (chs. 15-16). In Isaiah 17 Isaiah pronounced judgment upon Damascus. In Isaiah 18 Isaiah pronounces judgment upon Ethiopia. In Isaiah 19-20 Isaiah pronounces judgment upon Egypt. Such condemnations go on and on (Edom and Arabia and Tyre). Jeremiah's message is very similar. Toward the end of Jeremiah judgments are pronounced against Egypt (ch. 46), Philistia (ch. 47), Moab (ch. 48), Ammon (ch. 49), and Babylon (ch. 50). Yet as much as these prophets focused on the coming judgment against the nations there was also a great focus upon the judgment coming against Israel and Judah as well.

Isaiah's message was constant: "You have been unfaithful to the Lord. Judgment is coming! Repent! Repent and find forgiveness or be judged for your rebellion."

Jeremiah's condemnation of Judah came so hard that he was imprisoned for preaching his message. They accused him of discouraging those who were attempting to fight against Babylon as he constantly preached of how Nebuchadnezzar was going to come upon Judah and carry them away as captives. In fact so often was his message of the coming destruction by Babylon that he was accused of being a traitor, "You are going over to the Chaldeans!" (Jer. 37:13).

Yet as hard as the message of judgment came there was also a message of hope. It was the message of the Messiah. There would be one who would "spring from the stem of Jesse" (Is. 11:1). The Spirit of the LORD would rest upon this individual (Is. 11:2). He would come and bring comfort to Israel (Is. 40:1). Like a shepherd He would tend His flock caring gently for those who need care (Is. 40:11). Yet this Messiah would also wage war, coming with might, with His arm ruling for Him (Is. 40:10).

So great was this hope that when Peter thought of the message of the prophets he thought of their message as a "coming grace." I believe that this was a pattern in Peter's thinking. When he originally brought the gospel to the Gentiles he preached to Cornelius and his friends and relatives of how "all the prophets bear witness that through [the name of Jesus] everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43). This is grace from the prophets!

Though the prophets preached a message of the coming judgment they also preached a message of hope and restoration! When you realize how wicked Israel was, this coming hope is amazing. Listen to Isaiah's message received from the Lord against Israel, "Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me. An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand" (Is. 1:2-3). Though God cared for Israel. Though God nurtured Israel. Though God provided for Israel. Israel didn't even realize that it was the LORD who did all these things! Israel didn't deserve a Messiah in any way. In fact, God considered their wickedness to be so bad that He likened them to Sodom and Gomorrah (Is. 1:9).

To these people, Isaiah said a few verses later, "Come now and let us reason together [says the LORD]. Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow, Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."

So the message of a coming Messiah was a message of sheer grace, unmerited favor to those who had rebelled against the LORD. This is what Peter has described in the opening five verses of this letter. Peter describes God's grace upon our lives. God initiates the work in choosing us for salvation (verse 1). It's the work of the Spirit that sanctifies us (verse 2). God effects the work by causing us to be born again (verse 3). God accomplishes our salvation through the resurrection of Christ (verse 4). God promises us an amazing inheritance (verse 4). God assures that we will arrive safely to inherit all of these blessings (verse 5).

This is the coming grace! Rightly has Peter identified the core of the prophets' message: grace. However the prophets did more than writing of grace. In addition, ...

2. The prophets studied hard (verse 11).

Look again in verse 10, "the prophets ... made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."

In recent days, we have received a new pet into our home, a praying mantis. We received from some friends, who had initially named the insect, "Rocky." However, in discovering that Rocky is a girl, we have renamed her, "Roxie." Roxie's diet consists of crickets. As we have found these critters around our garage, we have captured them and fed them to Roxie. Usually, the entire family has been around the cage, watching her catch and eat her dinner.

As my office is through the garage, I have happened upon some chirping crickets these past few weeks. There have been times that I have

sought to follow the sound of these crickets to capture dinner for our beloved pet. If you have ever tried to track down the source of a chirping cricket, you know how it can be a bit deceptive (which has made for a few interesting hunts). On several occasions, I have been down on my hands and knees, "searching and inquiring" for these crickets, eagerly listening to see if I can discover their hiding place. While looking, I have sometimes taken a short stick and poked and prodded back into corners to see if a cricket was back there.

In the same way, the prophets "made careful searches and inquiries" as to the coming of the Messiah. The Greek words used here are very emphatic and describe an all-out search, pictured well by a grown gentleman on his hands and knees.

Now, in their study, these prophets didn't study a text book written by another person. They studied their own writings because they didn't fully understand the unfolding plan of the redemption of God of which they had written.

At this point you need to realize that these prophets weren't writing on their own power and under their own authority. Rather it was the "Spirit of Christ within them" that was inspiring them to write as they did. The "Spirit of Christ" is probably a reference to the Holy Spirit who was intensely involved in the writing of Scripture. In Peter's second epistle he wrote of how "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21).

As these prophets wrote their revelation they were being moved along by the Spirit of Christ. In the process there were some things that they didn't fully understand. These prophets were never quite fully understood when the Messiah would come. Nor did they fully understand how it was that the Messiah would carry out His plan of salvation. In a very real sense the full reality of who and how the Messiah would come was "veiled" to them. It wasn't revealed to them to fully comprehend what would take place in the future.

Now, it wasn't difficult at all for them to study hard. They were easily motivated to search to diligently because it was the hope they were after. They knew that a blessing was available to them on the back end. It's a bit like my searches and inquiries in recent days for crickets. On several occasions after finding a cricket, I have entered into the home triumphantly shouting, "I found dinner!" The kids all know what that means and will come running to see, as they are all desirous to watch dinner take place.

These prophets were motivated to study a bit like a child studies her Christmas present under the tree. I remember as a child carefully observing the presents under the tree. I knew full well which presents were mine. I made careful searches and inquiries into my presents seeking to know what sort of present I was to receive on Christmas day. These prophets gladly spent hours and hours seeking to know what "person or time" the Messiah would come.

Please keep in mind that it's not like these prophets were ignorant. These prophets understood quite a bit. From our text today, we can discern five things that they knew.

1. They understood that the grace of God was coming (verse 10).
2. They understood that the Christ was coming as well (verse 11).
3. They understood that the Christ would come and suffer (verse 11).
4. They understood that the Christ would receive glories (verse 11).
5. They also understood that they were servants in these matters (verse 12).

However what they didn't quite understand was the "person or time" that the Messiah would come. They didn't exactly know who the Messiah would be, nor did they know exactly when the Messiah would come.

Now, these prophets knew many things about the Messiah. They knew that He would be a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15). They knew that He would be a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4). They knew that He would be of the kingly line of David (2 Sam. 7; Matt. 22:42). They knew that He would be the true shepherd of Israel (Ezekiel 34:11-16). They knew that He would come from humble beginnings, being born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:5; Micah 5:2). They knew that the Spirit of the Lord would come greatly upon him (Is. 61:1). They knew that he would come with a message of "good news" to the afflicted ... and liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners" (Is. 61:1). They knew that he would come with signs and wonders. "the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ... The lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy" (Is. 35:6; Matt. 11:4-5). T

These prophets also knew that He would "break [the nations] with a rod of iron and shatter them like earthenware" (Ps. 2:9). They knew that He would be installed as King upon Zion (Ps. 2:7). They knew that the Messiah would be exalted to the right hand of God (Ps. 110: 1). They knew that the Messiah would come and crush Satan under his feet (Gen. 3:15).

The prophets knew that He would be the suffering servant as Isaiah 53 predicted, being oppressed and afflicted, being taken away in judgment, being like a lamb that is led to slaughter, ultimately being cut off out of the land of the living. They knew that He would face being abandoned by God (Ps. 22:1). They knew that He would be ridiculed by men (Ps. 22:8). They also knew that the Messiah would be bruised on the heel by Satan (Gen. 3:15).

So it's not like these prophets had no clue about what they had written. They understood much about what was written. But, what they didn't know was the exact person that the Messiah would be. Neither did they know exactly when the Messiah would come on the scene.

Would the truth be known they also were probably a bit confused as to how the sufferings of Christ related to His glory. When you read through the gospel accounts you get the strong sense that the disciples of Jesus didn't understand how the sufferings of Christ related to His glory. Instead, they are constantly setting their sights on the coming kingdom. They were anticipating that Jesus was going to conquer the Romans and establish His messianic rule (Luke 24:21). James and John requested prime seats in the kingdom (Mark 10:32-45).

In the same way, when John the Baptist didn't see the kingdom coming in all its glory he sent a delegation to Jesus asking, "Are You the

Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" (Matt. 11:3).

The disciples were continually confused as to His coming suffering. When Jesus first revealed to the disciples that He must suffer and be killed Peter rebuked Jesus saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You" (Matt. 16:22). When Jesus stalked further to them about His upcoming death, the disciples "didn't understand [what He said], and they were afraid to ask Him" (Mark 10:32).

In fact, it seems as if the disciples had no understanding of how He was going to suffer. When He was killed in Jerusalem, His disciples were confused and afraid. Perhaps the conversation that the two on the road to Emmaus had with Jesus (who wasn't recognized by them) sums up their confusion. When Jesus asked them about the things that had just taken place in Jerusalem that had seemingly caused them to be so down they told Jesus about ...

Luke 24:19-24

The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.

As Jesus patiently listened to them surely His heart sunk. They had failed to believe what He had said. On several occasions Jesus had made it perfectly clear to them that He "[would] be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they [would] condemn Him to death, and [would] hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up" (Matt. 20:18-19). Yet at this moment of time when the two on the road to Emmaus were confronted, Jesus didn't focus upon His own words, which they failed to believe. Rather Jesus turned his attention to the Scriptures. In particular, Jesus turned to the prophets.

Luke 24:25-27

He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Jesus said that the scriptures clearly proclaimed His sufferings and then His glory. Surely it was His sufferings first! Then came His glory. The parallel here in 1 Peter is almost exact. These disciples had failed to understand the "sufferings of Christ and the glories follow." These prophets were studying hard to try to figure out who and when these things would be.

I'm sure that they were also straining to understand the relationship between the sufferings of Christ and His glories to follow. They were making "careful searches and inquiries" into these things. They were studying hard to comprehend them and what did they receive as a result? Only the reality that they would never be privileged to see and understand the person or time of the redemption. This is the message of verse 12, "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you."

3. The prophets served us (verse 12a).

Oh, how privileged we are! The prophets of the Old Testament are our servants! They have become our servants.

It is like going into a restaurant and a waiter approaches your table and says, "Hi, my name's Ted. I'll be taking care of you tonight." He takes your order. He brings you your drinks. He brings you your food. If you need ketchup he'll bring you your ketchup. If you need a refill on your drinks he'll refill your drink. Periodically he'll check in with you to see how you are doing. If you something else comes up you simply locate Ted somewhere in the restaurant and wave your hand at him to get his attention. Promptly he walks over to your table and says, "How may I help you." This is what the prophets have done for us!

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zechariah. They have served us. And they have served us well. They have told us of the coming of the Messiah. What they never understood we now understand. We know the "person" and "time" of the coming of the Messiah. We know that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. We know that Jesus of Nazareth came about 2,000 years ago. In looking back we can understand how Daniels prophecy anticipated this perfectly. We also know of the sufferings of Christ as it relates to His glory. Verse 11 tells us about "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."

As we have seen in these series of expositions, I have identified the theme of 1 Peter as, "Suffer now, glory later" That's the same story of the life of our Messiah. He suffered while upon the earth. However through His death, burial, and resurrection He is now in glory seated at the right hand of God. We are simply called to the same path.

Look over to the end of chapter 3, verse 22. There we see that Jesus "is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him." Right now Jesus is at the right hand of God in glory! This didn't simply "happen." It was "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." We see this in chapter 4, verse 1. "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose." In other words, "follow the path of your Savior."

Isn't it a comfort to know that God doesn't merely look down from his cosmic comfort chair and exhort us to endure our sufferings knowing nothing of it Himself? On the contrary Jesus says, "Follow Me." In saying so, Jesus might easily be saying, "Follow Me in my sufferings. Follow Me in my glory."

Jesus Himself has experienced the **sufferings** of life. He was one who was tempted in great ways, and yet He didn't sin. When sinless, Jesus suffered unjustly at the hands of cruel men. It can well be argued that the sufferings of Jesus was far more than any of the sufferings that you or I face today. We all know of the cruel death that he faced upon the cross. Yet He also endured the wrath of God that was due for the sin of everyone who would believe in Him. This suffering was far greater than any suffering that we have ever known. Jesus has also experienced the **glory** of living a victorious life. Jesus "is at the right hand of God" (1 Peter 3:22). Jesus deserves all "glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (4:11).

We have the opportunity to join Jesus in both of these things. "To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation" (1 Peter 4:13). We have been called "to His eternal glory in Christ" (1 Peter 5:10). Jesus doesn't merely tell us how to act. Rather Jesus shows us how to act and calls us to join in His example, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). The example of Jesus is our model for how we are to live: "Suffer Now, glory later."

Coming back to verse 12 we see that these prophets knew that they were serving us in these things. This comes in verse 12, "it was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you," They knew that these things about the coming of the Messiah that would always remain a mystery to them. Yet another generation would come who would have the opportunity to fully know them. As it turned out, it was the generation of Peter's day. but, equally, it includes the generation of our day.

Do you realize the value of what you possess today? These prophets longed to see the coming of the Messiah. At one point in His ministry Jesus told His disciples how blessed they were to be able to experience the dawning of the Messianic age. He told them, ... "Blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (Matt. 13:16-17).

I believe that the blessing extends in even a greater way to us than to the disciples. Yes, these disciples had the opportunity to witness the pinnacle of history come to pass. Yes, they were with the Messiah. Yes, they heard His message. However to these disciples these things were a bit of a blur to them. Yes, they say but they didn't fully comprehend until after Jesus left them. It was then that their eyes were opened to fully understand how it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and then enter into His glory. We are privileged to hear their testimony and believe it!

Near the end of verse 12, Peter mentions how this message of the Messiah has been "announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." We have been served well by the prophets. All that the prophets longed for they have given to us. They have communicated of the coming Messiah. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit the message of the gospel has come to us. Many of us have received the message of Christ. We have received the blessings.

What a wonderful thing it is to reflect back upon our lives and realize that the Holy Spirit has brought the gospel to each one of us through the means of those who have been faithful to share it. When you heard the gospel for the very first time God was very active in you hearing it. It would be good even now to think upon those who shared the gospel with you. Perhaps it was your mother. Maybe it was your uncle. Maybe it was your friend. Perhaps it was a Sunday School teacher. Perhaps it was a preacher. Perhaps you read a Christian book that taught you of the way of truth. Perhaps you heard it on the radio. Maybe your experience is that your hearing of the gospel has come through many of these means.

For those of us who have believed in the gospel we ought to continue to marvel at God's great grace to us. What an amazing thing it is that God Himself would enter into humanity, and that He would live a perfect, sinless life (1 Peter 2:22 says), and that He would die upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin, and then that He would raise from the dead as a proof to us that He conquered death, so that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved from their sin!

The forgiveness of sins is the greatest of blessings that you could ever receive. You may think that your greatest blessing is in the new car that you are about to purchase. I have news for you. Cars wreck. You may think that your greatest blessing is in the new home that you buy. Again, I have news for you. Homes flood with water. No other material blessing will come close to giving you the joy and happiness that the forgiveness of sins will be. David wrote, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!" (Ps. 32:1).

So great are these blessings that the angels delight to see us enjoy our salvation, which is my forth point.

4. The angels long to look (verse 12b).

This comes at the very end of verse 12, "things into which the angels long to look." The angels from heaven long to look into our great salvation.

A few months ago I preached a message from Hebrews 2:16, entitled "Not Our Ways: Helping People, not Angels." [\[1\]](#) In that message I sought to show you how God's Ways are not our ways regarding His offer of salvation. His grace is only extended to people. God has not extended His grace to angels who have sinned.

The angelic realm is divided into two categories. There are the angels who have sinned. There are the angels who haven't sinned. Those angels who have sinned have no opportunity for salvation. They are merely waiting until the day of judgment when they will receive their final condemnation. Those angels who have not sinned, are currently busy serving the Lord. Since they have never sinned they know nothing of what it is to experience grace. The angels long to know what it is to experience grace.

The angels know much about salvation. They were present to announce the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:10-11). They ministered to Jesus after His temptation (Matt. 4:11). They knew about his resurrection and were present at the tomb to tell His disciples that He had risen (Matt. 28:2). Some angels were present at the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:10). Even now the angels are sent out by God "to render service for the sake of

those who will inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14). The angels know the joy of salvation (Luke 15:10). They know about the wisdom of God as it is displayed in the church (Eph. 3:10). In eternity to come many angels will join the praise of the "worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (Rev. 5:12).

The angels know much about salvation, probably even more than we know. But, the angels don't know what it means to experience grace. That's what they are longing to see and know. We have a similar fascination. We long to know what it's like to experience something great. After athletic games, there are often broadcasters who will take to the field and find the head coach or some star player and interview them. Almost always, the questions seek to get at the experience of those who played or coached. "What were you thinking when you scored the winning touchdown?" "Why did you decide to go for it on fourth down?" Sports fans long to know what it is like to experience what the athletes experienced.

Likewise, angels are fascinated by the grace of God extended to save sinners like you and me. They have a passionate desire to know about these things. They "long to look" into our salvation.

The Proverbs speak of some wonderful things that we humans marvel at.

Proverbs 30:18-19

There are three things which are too wonderful for me, four which I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the middle of the sea, and the way of a man with a maid.

We marvel at the eagle stretches out her long wings to float effortlessly through the air catching thermals. We marvel at the way in which a serpent can move and slither about, even though it doesn't have any legs. We marvel at the way in which a great ship can float in the sea. In fact, on vacation this summer, we took a trip to San Francisco. At one point we saw an absolutely gigantic ship. I took several pictures to try to remember forever how large it was. We marvel at the love demonstrated between newlyweds. They seemingly can't seem to get enough of each other. They want to serve each other and make each other happy.

I could add to these a bunch more. We marvel at the sunset the sun going down and the pretty colors. This past Friday night my wife and I were out and she said, "Steve, look at the sunset."

We marvel at the animal kingdom. When we feed our praying mantis, you will find us gathered around the bug box longing to understand the way of a praying mantis with a cricket.

We marvel at the colors of the leaves of the trees. In a few weeks many of us will take a drive in our car someplace and visit a park someplace merely to take a walk and gaze at all of the beautiful colors on the trees.

We marvel at nicely furnished homes. On Friday evening my wife and I visited a few homes on the "Parade of homes" through Rockford. These homes were selling for half a million dollars (or more). We marvel at the woodwork, the gigantic bathrooms, high ceilings, the huge windows, the tall entryway, and the big garages.

I could go on and on and on of the things that we marvel at. So likewise do the angels marvel at our salvation. They marvel at our experience of God's grace.

Sadly, there's something about us that turns the spectacular into the ordinary. Just think about your living conditions. You all live in nice homes or apartments. When it's dark you flip a switch on your wall and you have light. When it's cold outside you turn your thermostat up and your gas furnace heats the house. When it's too warm outside you turn your thermostat down, and your air conditioner cools your house. To clean your house you pull out your vacuum cleaner and run it across your floor. You have indoor plumbing: hot water on demand. No need to go outside to use the facilities. When your food is cold and you want to eat it you put it into the microwave and it's piping hot after two minutes. You have a car that allows you to travel hundreds of miles in a single day in a climate-controlled environment. You have a telephone without wires that can be used to communicate with others all the way around the world!

Have you ever thought about how wonderful these modern conveniences are? Or, have you turned the spectacular into the ordinary.

How would people two hundred years ago respond to our modern conveniences? They would be blown away. No need to light a kerosene lamp when it's dark? No need to chop down trees to provide firewood and heat? No need to heat your bathing water on the stove? No need to hitch the horses for your trip? If we could only transport them from two hundred years ago to today they would be amazed at the ease of life. Yet what do we do? We get a bit upset when our child spills Kool-Aid on the carpet. We turn the spectacular into the ordinary.

When tourists come to the Grand Canyon they are fired up and ready with their cameras trying to catch the grandeur of the canyon. Yet I'm sure that for many who live (or work) near the Grand Canyon, they don't carry cameras around. It's not quite so amazing to them.

Regarding your salvation it's a bit like the Grand Canyon. We are the Grand Canyon! The angels are the tourists. We experience it first-hand. To us it may not seem to be breathtaking all the time. However to the angels who haven't experienced grace in their souls it's amazing. They want to witness it first hand. They want to hear more and more about it.

Do you realize the treasure that you have in your salvation?

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 16, 2007 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] You can read it here: http://www.rvbc.cc/Sermons/2007/2007-06-24 - Heb 02_16.htm.