

Studies in 1 Peter

1 Peter 1:10-12– Prophets, Angels and The Gospel

Who are the Prophets?

After directing us forward to the living hope and salvation that God has in store for the Christians, Peter now points backward to those who came before. The prophets were people who received messages directly from God (2 Peter 1:21).

There were various ways God could communicate these messages (Hebrews 1:1). Often God spoke to them and they repeated his message to the people (Exodus 19:3). At other times, God seized control of their mouths and spoke for them (1 Samuel 10:10). For others still, God communicated by dreams and visions (Daniel 7:1), or commanded his prophets to perform acts which symbolised the message (Ezekiel 37:15-17).

Most of the old testament writings were written by or contain the words of the prophets. Moses was a prophet. So too were Samuel and David. And of course, the last major section of the old testament is prophetic including the four major prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel – followed by the 12 minor prophets.

What did they Prophecy?

The prophets spoke about all sorts of things. One of the most prominent themes in the prophets is God's criticism and condemnation of the people of Israel (as well as the surrounding nations) for their disobedience and sin. But there is another theme which stands out, the theme of redemption and salvation. The prophets hardly ever condemn without also consoling. God always gave promises to follow his judgements. From the first day that mankind sinned, God made a promise of a redeemer who would come (Genesis 3:15). God gradually revealed more of this one, the Messiah, and the blessing that he would bring.

It is these prophecies that Peter draws our attention to. The prophets spoke of the sufferings of Christ and his glories. They received promises of the forgiveness of sin, the overcoming of death and sanctification through God's Spirit. But they did not understand how or when these things would come to pass. They did not grasp who this Messiah would be or how he could both suffer and reign. Some even imagined two Messiahs.

Peter tells us that the prophets knew their words were not for them, but for a future generation. Their words are for us, for our generation. In the gospel, we can see and make sense of the promises. We can see the promises take effect in Christ. We can understand why he had to suffer and we can see in his resurrection how it is possible for him to be glorified also. We can now enjoy what the prophets pondered– the grace that they spoke of us was for us. And even angels long to look into these things.

Three prophecies concerning Christ

- 1) Psalm 22 tells us how Christ would die. It contains graphic details of his crucifixion.
- 2) Isaiah 52:13–53:12 tells us why Christ would die. It describes his death as a sin offering.
- 3) Daniel 9:24-27 tells us when Christ would die. It lays out a timeline that when counted out takes us to the very year.

In all of these, we find promises of the grace and salvation that Messiah would bring. We find his sufferings. And we find the glories that would follow.

1 Peter 1:10-12

THE PROPHETS SEARCHED FOR UNDERSTANDING

the prophets

who prophesied

Searched and inquired carefully,

¹¹inquiring what 1) person
2) or time

the Spirit of Christ in them

was indicating

when he predicted

What Did They Prophecy?

¹⁰Concerning this salvation,

about the grace [for you]

1) the sufferings [for] Christ
2) and the subsequent glories.

BUT UNDERSTANDING IS GIVEN TO US

¹²It was revealed to them

that they were serving not themselves

in the things that have now been announced

through those who preached the good news

by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven,

things into which angels long to look.

For Whom Did They Prophecy?

but you,
to you
to you

Angels Looking On

The Bible tells us tantalisingly little about angels and their activities. But there are a few occasions when we see their keen interest and curiosity in heaven and on earth.

- 1) Angels watched and sang when God created the world (Job 38:4,7)
- 2) Angels watch and learn of God's purposes through the Church (Ephesians 3:10)
- 3) Angels watch and expect orderly worship when a church meets (1 Corinthians 11:10)
- 4) Angels watch and sing as Christ is exalted in heaven (Revelation 5:11)