

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Seventh Sunday After Trinity, July 18, 2021**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 59, 283, 56, 510, 98:4-5.

Lessons: Deuteronomy 18:15-22, Acts 2:14-24, Matthew 4:12-17.

Sermon Text: 1 Peter 1:10-12.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Although the Word of God is filled with comfort and encouragement, it seems that Peter's first letter is especially loaded with those ideas. As believers we rejoice in the new birth and the inheritance we have received through faith in Jesus Christ. Peter admitted in the first verses that *"for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen [Jesus] you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."* 1 Peter 1:6-9 (NIV)

Here, today, you are receiving part of the goal of your faith right now, as if on a silver platter. And what you are receiving,

**THE PROPHETS WANTED TO SEE**

1. **They wanted to know when their Savior was coming, but didn't know the details.**
2. **They were serving you, giving you signposts, billboards and puzzle pieces pointing to Jesus.**

Peter goes on talking about the eternal salvation that has been completely revealed for us living in 2021. It was all revealed in the Bible.

He mentioned *"the prophets"*. Who are they? Literally, they are those who announced the coming of the Savior. They inquired and searched intently, diligently, for more details about the coming of the Savior. They said and wrote what God told them to say and write. They didn't just write whatever came to their minds. In fact, Peter writes in his second letter that *"prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* 2 Peter 1:21 (NIV)

They were men who spoke and wrote prophecy, proclaiming the Word of God, and especially the words that proclaimed the coming Savior. And what was their message? Peter tells us it was *"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully."* 1 Peter 1:10 (ESV) Peter is here emphasizing what the Old Testament prophets had to say about the coming Savior, Jesus Christ. They are those who spoke and wrote about God's grace that was to come to you, too.

Remember, Peter is writing to us as well as to all Christians who lived since this letter was written. The prophets, and we will continue in this sermon to speak of the "Old Testament prophets", were told that a Savior would come. Sometimes they were told very directly, sometimes in pictures that seemed rather vague to them.

Remember, it was only after pieces of the puzzles of prophecy were put together at the time of Jesus and the Apostles – when Jesus came to earth, lived, died, rose again and ascended into heaven that the complete picture and history of the salvation God sent for mankind was known.

Imagine putting a puzzle together – maybe a puzzle of 1000 pieces and you are given 2 or 5 or maybe even 10 pieces at a time. You have a general idea of what the final puzzle picture will look like, but you can

only see part of it. And if you have ever tried to put a big puzzle together without a detailed picture, it is pretty difficult if not impossible to put all the pieces together to see the complete picture. I kind of think that's what each of the Old Testament prophets was doing. They all had the right pieces but they couldn't always see how it all fit together. But we have the whole picture, "the rest of the story".

They were trying to find out the details of it all and when it would all happen. They were searching intently to figure out when the Savior Jesus Christ would come. It didn't happen at the times when believers in God wanted it again and again. But God in his wisdom sent the Savior at the right time. Scripture says ***"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."*** Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV)

We may be assured that the Old Testament is filled with prophecies about Jesus Christ. There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament which unmistakably point forward to the coming of the Savior. The first prophecy recorded is in the Garden of Eden, when God told Satan so that Adam and Eve could hear: ***"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*** Genesis 3:15 (NIV) There are hundreds of passages which plainly point to Jesus, and the more you read in the Old Testament, the more you can see about the coming of the Savior.

If we were to pick out just a few, we might think of some of the words of Isaiah who wrote about the terrible, innocent sufferings of the great Servant of God. We might think of searching for the answers to 'when the virgin would give birth to a son.' We might think of the words of Zechariah when he wrote ***"Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."*** Zechariah 13:7 (NIV) We might think of Micah who told us exactly where the Savior would be born. We might think of the words of the Psalms, which spoke in great detail about the sufferings of the Savior for the sins of all mankind.

All these prophets ***"who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, [and were] trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."***

Let's use another picture of a sort of prophecy, an example that tells us what is coming. Maybe some of you remember the many signs, even here in Minnesota that told you what you would find at Wall Drug in Wall, South Dakota, hundreds of miles away. You know, things like 5 cent coffee, souvenirs, clothing, and all sorts of things. And if you go to Wall Drug now, after seeing maybe hundreds of signs, there's a whole lot more to be seen there than you expected from the signs telling you it was coming.

The Old Testament prophets wanted to know the details and were ***"trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."***

Instead of telling them "when" all this was going to happen, they learned that they were serving you, and all of us today. ***"It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven."***

But kind of like Abraham, who was told by God of the great Promised Land and of the Savior who would be born of his descendant, they didn't all know all the details of when exactly how it would all be fulfilled in God's right time. They spoke and wrote and walked forward in faith, trusting God.

And that is why Scripture, in the book of Hebrews, speaks of how "by faith" the Old Testament believers did what they did in following God.

The prophets weren't doing it for themselves, but for you (point to someone in the congregation) and for you (point) and for you (point) – for all of us and really for all mankind!

They were painting word-pictures for all the believers who would follow them. ***"They were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven."***

And how were they serving us today? Today, you've got the whole picture in the Bible. All the puzzle pieces of your salvation have been put together for you – especially in the gospels. But not every sermon can review for you all the details of God's plan which were revealed for you. That's why each sermon offered here

Sunday after Sunday doesn't say exactly the same things as the previous sermon. One is built on the previous one. So how do you get the whole picture?

That's why we also offer Bible Classes – which are not just 'discussion forums so people can share opinions' – but opportunities to hear, study, and learn more of what God tells us in the scriptures.

That's why articles and pamphlets and things like devotional books have been written and made available to you, things that teach and explain the pure truth of God's Word for you.

But remember what we are really talking about. We're not just talking about a beautiful scenic puzzle or a huge shopping center in Wall, South Dakota.

We're talking about the gospel, the good news of what Jesus Christ has done for you.

And what has he done for you? Sure, you know John 3:16 and Mark 16:16. Even your children can recite those passages. There's more in Scripture to hear and learn! The message is all about how Jesus Christ paid the punishment you deserved for all your sins!

He did all this so that you might live. He suffered so that you might have a sure hope and would not have to suffer all the torments of hell. He did that in your place, paying the price for all your sins.

He came back to life so that you might have life "abundantly"

And just so you don't think lightly on this message today, Peter tells us that "***Even angels long to look into these things.***" Even angels, the spiritual invisible beings created by God to serve him and to serve you have wanted to know the things you know and can learn from the Bible. Even these beings created by God for specific purposes such as watching over us, as we read in the Psalm: "***For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.***" Psalm 91:11 (NIV) They want to know what you have been privileged to hear, to learn, to know, to memorize, to remember!

May the importance of this message touch your hearts. May the significance and consequences of this message inspire you to invite others to come and hear the full truth of God's Word! Amen.