

They wanted to know when, that is the “time” and “what manner”, that is what circumstances and situations would be prevailing, when Messiah would suffer and be glorified. They saw but dimly what we are privileged to see clearly. They possessed sanctified inquisitiveness which is a good quality for any student of scripture to have.

C. The Outcome Of Their Search.

“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you....”

We have the completed canon of Holy Scripture and can look backward through the lens of divine revelation and see plainly what the prophets looked forward to but saw only faintly. We are told in Hebrews 11:13 that “These all died in the faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.”

Illust. Somewhere in my travels to many Mission Fields, I heard the story of a pioneer missionary who walked into a remote village and saw all the villagers gathered in the center of the village. To his amazement, they were playing marbles with diamonds! They had discovered the glistening stones and not knowing their worth, they played with them.

That story reminds me of the Christians who carry around a leather-bound package of divine diamonds, not appreciating their true value, and only occasionally “play” at Bible study. I am glad that the prophets did not “play marbles with diamonds” but seriously searched that we might be enlightened.

II. SALVATION IS THE SUBJECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’S INSPIRATION.

1 Peter 1:11-12 - “the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

A. The Prophets Prophesied In The Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of prophecy.” (Rev.19:10)

B. The Prophets Penned The Scriptures In The Spirit.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (II Tim. 3:16)

“Inspired” in the Greek is “theopneustos” (“Theos” = “God” & “pneo” = “to breathe”); The NIV renders it: “All Scripture is God-breathed.” 2 Peter 1:21 reads: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The NIV renders the statement: “men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” They were breathed upon and borne along by the Holy Spirit. This is why we believe in the Divine Inspiration of the Bible.

Inspiration, as we have seen is “God breathing upon and moving along” the writers of Holy Scripture. There are various theories of inspiration: (1) Dictation Theory. God Dictated and the human writer simply recorded what God dictated. Objection: If God had dictated the scriptures to recorders, the style and writing would be uniform. The

writing would be the vocabulary of God. The human writer would have been only a mechanical device. Therefore, why would God use humans as mechanical devices when He could have written the books personally as He did the original ten commandments on Mt. Sinai? (2) Partial Inspiration theory. That is, only the parts of the Scriptures which deal with doctrine and prophecy – things which are unknown to humans. Objection: The product would be a mixture of the errant and the inerrant. There is no validity to this theory. (3) Degree Theory. The proponents of this view hold that all scripture is inspired, however, there are degrees of inspiration. Some scriptures are more inspired than others. Example: When God speaks or Christ speaks that is the highest degree of inspiration. Some insist on having a Bible with the words of Christ in red ink believing them to be more inspired. There is no genuine validity to this theory either. (4) The Concept Theory. This hypothesis says that God imparted ideas to human authors and left them free to express them in their own language as they saw fit. Objections: Ideas are transferred by words. If God spoke words to writers, why would the writer not use the words God used to express the original idea? Furthermore, The Bible claims to be “the Word Of God” not “the ideas of God.” Ex. 20:1 says, “and God spoke all these words, saying.....” Jesus said in John 6:63 “The words that I speak to You, they are spirit and they are life.” In Jn. 17:8 He said, I have given them the Words which you gave to me.”

I believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of scripture. By “verbal” I mean that the Holy Spirit so brooded over and guided the writers that their personalities were not obliterated, their style and vocabularies were preserved and utilized.

By “plenary” I mean that divine inspiration extends to all of the Bible resulting in an infallible product which is final and authoritative. We can say with confidence, as I often do as a preface to my public ministry:

“This is the solid rock of truth
Which all attacks defies,
O’re every stormy blast of time
It towers with majesty sublime,
It lives and never dies.”

This is the volume of the cross
It’s saving truth is sure;
It’s doctrine pure, its history true,
Its gospel old but ever new
Shall evermore endure.”

Salvation is the subject of the Prophets Investigation and The Holy Spirit’s Inspiration. There is yet another group of beings interested in this salvation, the angels.

III. SALVATION IS THE SUBJECT OF THE ANGEL’S INSPECTION.

“which things the angels desire to look into.” (v.12) The Greek word translated “to look into” is “parakupto” and means “to look into carefully; to inspect curiously.”

Illust. We have seen advertisements about some product that had a cartoon with a barrel and a figure leaning over and looking deep into the barrel. The caption was: "This is worth looking into!" That is the picture of the Greek word used here. The angels peer studiously into this subject of salvation.

Some things the angels know by observation, some by revelation by God and other things they know by means of their excellent intelligence. But there are subjects of which they are apparently relatively ignorant. Examples:

- An angel in the book of Daniel asked "How long shall the vision be?" (Dan. 8:13)
- Again, another angel inquires, "How long shall it be to the end?" (Dan. 12:6).
- In Matthew 24:36 we read, "of that day (the coming of the Lord) knows no man, no not the angels in heaven."

However, angels are associated with our salvation in many ways:

Angels Announced Birth Of Savior - Luke 2:10,11

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Angels Acknowledge When a Sinner Is Saved - Luke 15:7

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Angels Accompany The Saved - Hebrews 1:14

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

However, that is as close as they ever come to experiencing salvation. Angels have sinned, but angels cannot be saved: II Peter 2:4 reads: "God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment..."

Illust. . The old song puts it like this:

"Holy, Holy, Holy is what the angels sing,
And I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring;
But when I sing redemption's story
They will fold their wings
For angels never felt the joy that my salvation brings."

CONCLUSION

Salvation is not worked up on earth but comes down from heaven. The holy prophets, the Holy Spirit, the holy angels – all have an interest in the subject of the salvation of sinful human beings. Do we? A poem by an unknown author raises the question::

“Unsaved?”

“Still unsaved?
After all the Spirit’s pleading,
After all God’s tender leading,
After all of Calvary’s cross
To redeem your soul from loss:
While His love and grace abound
Can it be that you are found
Still Unsaved?”

Sinner, stop and look before you,
See the storm clouds gathering o’er you,
E’re they burst in judgment on you,
And in awful doom o’er whelm you,
To the cross of Jesus fly,
Lest forever you should cry:

‘Unsaved! Unsaved! I’m still unsaved!’”

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