

1 Peter 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Analysis

Peter reveals the prophets' unique position in redemptive history. "Unto whom it was revealed" (hois apekalypthē, οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη) indicates divine disclosure—God revealed to prophets crucial information about their prophecies' fulfillment. The content: "that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister" (hoti ouch heautois hymin de diēkonoun auta, ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτά). Prophets understood their Spirit-inspired messages primarily benefited future generations, not themselves. They "ministered" (diēkonoun, διηκόνουν, were serving) believers who would witness Messiah's coming. This demonstrates prophets' faith and selflessness—proclaiming truths they wouldn't personally experience, serving people centuries unborn. Peter identifies these prophetic "things" as "now reported unto you" (nyn anēgelthē hymin, νῦν ἀνηγγέλθη ὑμῖν)—the gospel proclaimed by New Testament evangelists. The means: "by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (dia tōn euangelisamenōn hymas pneumatī hagiō apostalenti ap ouranou, διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ). Apostolic gospel preaching occurred "in/by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven"—referencing Pentecost (Acts 2) when promised Spirit empowered gospel witness. The astounding conclusion: "which things the angels desire to look into" (eis ha epithymousin angeloι parakys ai, εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι). Angels,

who attend God's throne, "desire" (epithymousin, long earnestly) to "look into" (parakysai, bend over to examine closely, peek into)—like someone stooping to peer into a deep well—the mysteries of redemption. Angels witness salvation but don't experience it, observing with wonder God's grace to undeserving humans.

Historical Context

This verse establishes salvation history's progressive revelation: prophets received and proclaimed truths they didn't fully understand or experience; New Testament believers receive Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation fulfilling ancient prophecies; angels observe it all with wonder, excluded from redemptive experience. Peter's argument counters Christian readers' potential discouragement—far from being latecomers or second-class believers, they occupy history's most privileged position: personally experiencing what prophets longed to see and angels desire to understand. The phrase "Holy Spirit sent down from heaven" references Pentecost (Acts 2), marking the new covenant era's inauguration. First-century believers heard apostolic gospel preaching "in the Holy Spirit"—same Spirit who inspired prophets now empowering evangelists and indwelling believers. The angelic interest motif appears elsewhere in Scripture (Luke 15:10, 1 Timothy 3:16, Ephesians 3:10)—angels learn about God's wisdom through observing church. Early church fathers marveled that humans, lower than angels in natural order, receive grace unavailable to angels, demonstrating divine mercy's astonishing nature.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does knowing that angels "long to look into" the salvation you possess increase your appreciation for the gospel?

2. What does it mean practically that you experience truths Old Testament prophets served without personally enjoying?

Interlinear Text

ᾧ	ἀπεκαλύφθη	ὅτι	οὐχ	ἐαυτοῖς	ἡμῖν	δὲ
Unto whom	it was revealed	that	not	unto themselves	unto us	but
G3739	G601	G3754	G3756	G1438	G2254	G1161
διηκόνουν	αὐτά	ᾧ	νῦν	ἀνηγγέλη	ὑμῖν	διὰ
they did minister	the things	Unto whom	now	are	unto you	by
G1247	G846	G3739	G3568	G312	G5213	G1223
τῶν	εὐαγγελισαμένων	ὑμᾶς	ἐν	πνεύματι	ἁγίῳ	
G3588	them that have preached the gospel	unto you	with	Ghost	the Holy	
	G2097	G5209	G1722	G4151	G40	
ἀποσταλέντι	ἀπ'	οὐρανοῦ	εἰς	ᾧ	ἐπιθυμοῦσιν	
sent down	from	heaven	into	Unto whom	desire	
G649	G575	G3772	G1519	G3739	G1937	
ἄγγελοι	παρακύψαι					
the angels	to look					
G32	G3879					

Additional Cross-References

John 15:26 (Spirit): But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Ephesians 3:10 (Parallel theme): To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

1 Corinthians 2:10 (Spirit): But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Mark 16:15 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Hebrews 4:2 (Parallel theme): For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Revelation 5:11 (Parallel theme): And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

Romans 15:19 (Spirit): Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:22 (Spirit): Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 6:6 (Holy): By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

1 Peter 1:25 (Parallel theme): But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.