

## The Gift of Grace

### 1 Peter 1:10-13

Online Sermon: [http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page_id=3567)

I remember when I was a small boy how much I looked forward to Christmas morning! I shared a room with one of my brothers and either myself or both of us would plan on visiting the tree while everyone else was sleeping. While thinking about the visit to the tree I would mentally go through a checklist: do I have a flashlight that worked but not too bright, what time should I venture out of my bedroom, what route should I take to the tree and how am I going to



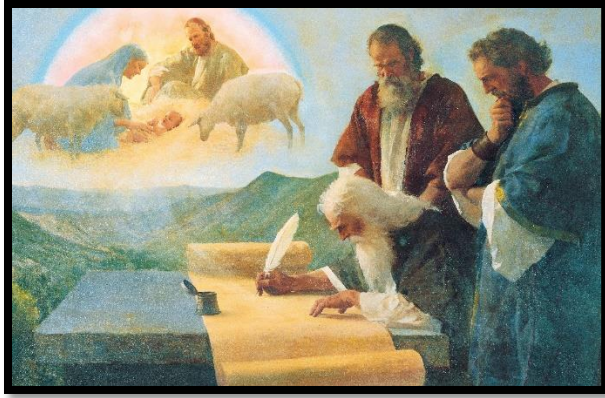
examine my presents and not leave evidence that I ever there! I would wait for what seemed like an eternity for my parents to finish wrapping and placing gifts under the tree and then the toughest decision of the night had to be made: how long will it take them to fall asleep and when would I dare go on this amazing venture? At two or three in the morning I would get out of bed and tippy toe out to my prized destination in the dark, lest my parents might be awake and see my flashlight! Once at the tree the goal was to carefully examine the gifts. When I found a gift with my name on it, I would have to hold back my glee and as I felt the package I would dream of its contents. I imagined the gifts that were light and soft were likely clothes, thin and hard likely books; but when I found a large gift that was heavy ... my heart would race with great joy and anticipation! At this point I would often feel so guilty for

merely touching my “special gift” and would become so consumed with the fear of being caught that I would quickly, but quietly, tippy toe back into my room. As I lay on my bed, I dreamed for the remainder of the night of all the unending possibilities of what might be contained within that beautiful box: maybe a remote-control car, the roller skates I asked for, the computer I saw in the store and figuratively drooled on, or maybe even a trainset like the one I saw on TV! As I dreamed of opening the gift my mind would race, anticipation would build and yet while I painfully knew I would be exceptionally tired on Christmas day, I felt powerless to do anything but to keep on dreaming!

### “The Gift Foretold”

While the gifts I waited for on Christmas morning were spectacular they were nothing in comparison to hearing about the gift of the Messiah as given by the Old Testament prophets! From Judah and specifically the Davidic line would come a ruler of which all the nations would “bend the knee” (Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-13). Born in Bethlehem He would exist from

the ancient times and would be born of a virgin (Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14). His name would be called “Emmanuel” which means “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14). Even though there will be a “voice calling in the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for God” (Isaiah 40:3) most will respond by “being ever hearing, but never



understanding, seeing but not perceiving for their hearts will be too calloused to respond and be healed (Isaiah 6:9-10). This Great Light will be a stumbling block to those living in the darkness and (Isaiah 9:1-2) and to His own people (Isaiah 8:14). Even though the Spirit of the Lord will be on Him to proclaim the Good News, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release them from darkness (Isaiah 61:1), He will be despised, rejected, and held in low esteem by humanity (Isaiah

53:3). Even though His dominion is everlasting and one day all nations will worship Him (Daniel 7:13-14), He would be forsaken and betrayed for a mere 30 pieces of silver (Psalms 22:1; Zechariah 11:12-13), mocked and abused, and put to death (Isaiah 50:3-6, 53:12) but ironically in doing so will make a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31) by being pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities so that by taking on the punishment meant for us by His wounds we might be healed (Isaiah 53:5)! Upon completing His mission, He will be declared the “Son of God” and ascend to heaven and take His rightful place at the right hand of God (Psalms 2:7, 68:18, 110:1)!

### “Searching Intently”

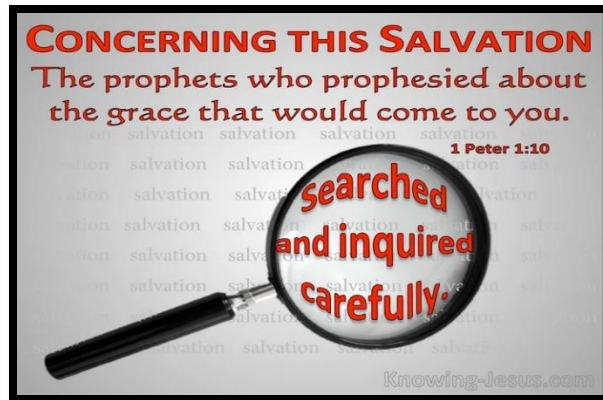
In today’s passage Apostle Peter states these prophets were not mere stenographers, devoid of interest in their written words but instead were so taken by the Gift they described that they “searched intently and with the greatest of care, trying to find the circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing and predicting, the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow” (1 Peter 1:10-12). Even though the prophets wrote and “spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21), this did not mean they were omniscient<sup>1</sup> for there was much of their utterances they did not understand (Daniel 8:27, 12:8).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [“The Letters and Revelation,”](#) in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 2240.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin A. Blum, [“1 Peter,”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 222.

While they certainly would have asked God to reveal the significance of their prophesy,<sup>3</sup> Peter states in looking upon “God’s fullest and final revelation of Himself”<sup>4</sup> and the salvation He was



about to offer humanity, like me at two am Christmas morning they too were left with many unanswered but incredibly intriguing questions! For instance, how could this be the long waited for Day of the Lord<sup>5</sup> if the predicted Messiah would suffer greatly, be abandoned by the world, and put to death? And what was meant by phrase He would be born of a virgin, was He not to be God Himself? With but a mere “vision of the details and timing of the Messiah”<sup>6</sup> the prophets continued to search intently into

Scripture hoping that they might come to understand the significance of the suffering, death, and future glory of the Messiah even partially!<sup>7</sup>

### “Their Prophecy Served Us”

Though the Spirit of God would reveal to them the prophetic words concerning the coming of the Messiah, Peter stated the Prophets were told their eyes would not see the coming of the Messiah for their prophecy would only be fulfilled in a future generation,<sup>8</sup> or as the prophet Joel stated, “in those days and at that time” (3:1)!<sup>9</sup> Imagine Christmas morning sitting around the tree and looking at an incredible gift with your name on it but told that you can only merely examine but will never get to open

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<sup>3</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:10–12.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [“The Letters and Revelation,”](#) in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 2239.

<sup>5</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, [The Epistles of Peter and of Jude](#), Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1969), 59.

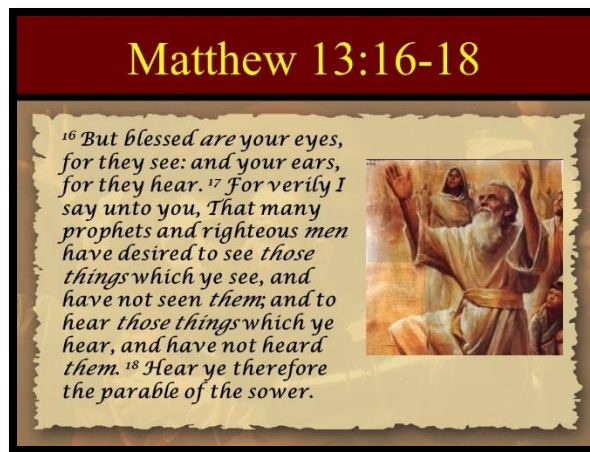
<sup>6</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, [The Epistles of Peter and of Jude](#), Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1969), 60.

<sup>7</sup> Edwin A. Blum, [“1 Peter,”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 222.

<sup>8</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:10–12.

<sup>9</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:10–12.

the gift! We are to see the Old Testament not just as “a time-bound book”<sup>10</sup> intended for past generations but a compass always pointing to the New Covenant! It is precisely through the prediction and subsequent fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah that the glorious truth, that God



miraculously intervened in human history to reveal grace and salvation, is confirmed! Peter told the persecuted Christians living in the five regions of Asia Minor that while living for the Lord often involves great suffering, persecution, injustice and pain they were privileged because the gift the prophets searched intently into, the Messiah and grace, they got to experience firsthand!<sup>11</sup> In the words of our Lord, “Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to

hear what you hear but did not hear it” (Matt 13:16–17).<sup>12</sup> So when the prophets wrote the inspired words of the Holy Spirit they did so partially to get a “peak” into the gift of grace but mostly so that we today might have proof and an explanation<sup>13</sup> of the reasons why we have hope in our Lord, Savior and King (1 Peter 3:15)!

### “The Gift of Grace”

So that we fully understand what Peter was saying to the Christians in Asia Minor lets take a moment and examine the gift of grace and salvation that the prophets never got to see opened! “Having made promises to His people in Old Testament times, God now acts in accordance with them to show His love and compassion”<sup>14</sup> by sending the ultimate revelation of Himself, His very own Son! Christ chose to make Himself nothing in the eyes of the world (Philippians 2:7) by taking on the nature of a suffering servant and offered His own life as a

<sup>10</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:10–12.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [“The Letters and Revelation,”](#) in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 2240.

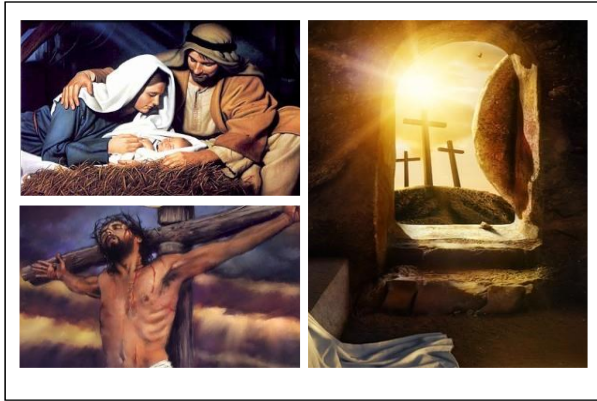
<sup>12</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 75.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, [A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1980), 30.

<sup>14</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:3–5.



sacrifice for many (Mark 10:45). It is by grace and through faith in His atoning sacrifice (Ephesians 2:8) that believers are freed from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:18), are born again (John 3:5-8) and eternally adopted into God's family (John 1:12-13). "Believers have a living



hope. To be born is to enter into existence in a new world. Physical birth brings us into a world that will eventually perish. Spiritual birth is into a world where there is hope for the future."<sup>15</sup> Because we were "not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold but the precious blood of Christ, the lamb without spot or blemish,"<sup>16</sup> we are to look forward to when we will receive our new bodies and the promised inheritance that is imperishable, pure and unfading.<sup>17</sup> While those who are perishing

in their sin cannot discern the things of the Spirit and therefore cannot see this gift wrongly declare it to be mere foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:11-16), for those who are born again and have obtained the mind of Christ they did what the prophets longed to do, not just peer into the gift but to obtain the "living hope"<sup>18</sup> that comes from becoming a redeemed masterpiece of God's eternal grace!

### **"The Angels Looking Into these Things"**

This gift of grace and salvation was so utterly amazing that Peter states "even the angels looked into these things" (verse 12b)! As "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14) angels have always taken an intense interest in what interests God,<sup>19</sup> i.e., redemption of those created in His image!<sup>20</sup> The angels were present at the Garden of Eden with a flaming sword keeping humanity

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<sup>15</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:3-5.

<sup>16</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[Angelic Interest in the Gospel](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 493.

<sup>17</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:3-5.

<sup>18</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:3-5.

<sup>19</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[Angelic Interest in the Gospel](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 495.

<sup>20</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[Angelic Interest in the Gospel](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 497.

from the tree of life,<sup>21</sup> thousands of angels were present at Mount Sinai when the Law was proclaimed (Psalms 68:17),<sup>22</sup> angels carried Lazarus to Abrahams bosom when he died (Luke 16:22),<sup>23</sup> Michael the archangel guarded Moses body (Jude 9),<sup>24</sup> and angels not only announced



the birth of Christ (Luke 2:8-14),<sup>25</sup> but they also told Mary to fear not for she was about give birth to Emmanuel (Luke 1:3-32), ministered to Christ after His temptation in the desert (Matthew 4:11),<sup>26</sup> strengthened Him in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), and two of them comforted Mary who was about to meet the risen Lord (John 20:11-18)! The angels have always had an intense interest in our salvation for does not Scripture clearly state they “rejoice at the conversion of a sinner

(Luke 15:10)” and “they will rejoice in songs of praise at the completion of redemption” (Revelation 5:11–14)?<sup>27</sup> And yet though they have a great interest in our gift of grace and salvation Peter states they were not able to attain firsthand knowledge of this precious gift.<sup>28</sup> The angels that are fallen cannot receive the grace of salvation for their destination is hell<sup>29</sup> and the

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<sup>21</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 496.

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<sup>23</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 497.

<sup>24</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 497.

<sup>25</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 496.

<sup>26</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 496.

<sup>27</sup> Edwin A. Blum, [“1 Peter,”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 222.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 75–76.

<sup>29</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 494.

angels who did not fall cannot fully understand “salvation, pardon, justification, and cleansing”<sup>30</sup> because they have not sinned and as such do not need nor can they experience such grace! The angels being denied an understanding of grace makes the climax of the cross and resurrection even<sup>31</sup> more profound and should incite the recipients of Peter’s letter, i.e., us, to rejoice more fervently that they not only know but are experiencing the precious gift of salvation through grace and faith!

### “Set our Hope Fully on Grace”

Peter finishes this passage by telling the Christians in Asia Minor that those who have received the gift of grace and salvation are expected to live holy lives in the present by setting their hope on the return of the Lord! It is through trusting in God’s promises that one can not only survive but thrive amidst the sufferings of this present age.<sup>32</sup> To “live by hope”<sup>33</sup> though does not become a reality “without disciplined thinking ... it requires effort, concentration, and intentionality!”<sup>34</sup> As pilgrims on a journey to our destination, heaven, we honor God by asking Him to give us the strength, faith, and grace to become living sacrifices so that we might not only please Him but also mirror holiness<sup>35</sup> to a world that is dying in their sin! To keep our thoughts and actions from going in every direction<sup>36</sup> of a worldly Christmas focused on commercialism and Santa, we simply must obtain and maintain a “single-minded commitment”<sup>37</sup> and a “Christ-

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<sup>30</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 494.

<sup>31</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, [The Epistles of Peter and of Jude](#), Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1969), 63.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 76.

<sup>33</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [1 Peter](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 1:13.

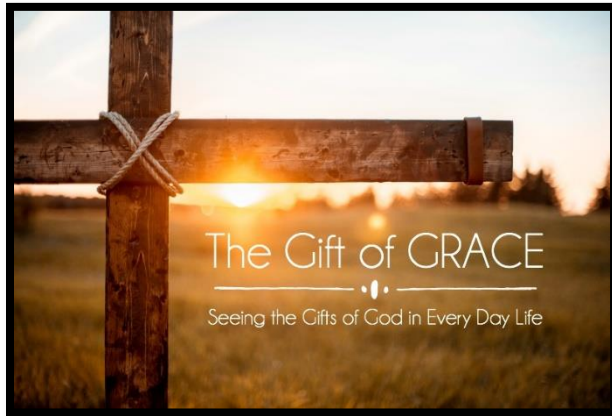
<sup>34</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 78–79.

<sup>35</sup> David A. deSilva, [“1 Peter,”](#) in *John’s Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition., The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary (Colorado Springs, CO; Paris, ON; Eastbourne: David C Cook, 2005), 297.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, [A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1980), 34.

<sup>37</sup> Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 44.

centered attitude of mind that shapes and directs our focus<sup>38</sup> on the precious gift of grace and salvation we have already received and the future blessings coming when the Lord returns! So, this Christmas let us sit under the tree of the cross and spend time in intense meditation and



reflection on all that we have and will receive by grace through faith in Jesus! Since we “cannot keep a fire burning without fuel”<sup>39</sup> let us join the prophets and angels and search intently into God’s word not with the intent to amass information but to be conquered by it, fall in love with it,<sup>40</sup> and forever accept the invitation through divine grace to be forever molded and shaped by its wonderful precepts! May His world inspire us to love one another deeply and may we rid ourselves of any attitude or behavior that

destroys the bonds of church community<sup>41</sup> or convinces us to write off the supposed unworthy, enemies of the cross in which the Son of God died to redeem (Romans 5:10-11)! And when suffering, trials and tribulations, and persecutions inevitable come let us show this fallen world the true value of the gift of grace and salvation we have received by looking up towards heaven to the Lamb that was slain as our perfect, holy, and forever secured portion in His kingdom as one of His very own children!

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<sup>38</sup> Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 44.

<sup>39</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Angelic Interest in the Gospel,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 504.

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<sup>41</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [“The Letters and Revelation,”](#) in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 2240.