

DOCTRINE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPHECY

- I.** Introduction.
- A.** Prophecy is the content of that which is prophesied in the Bible.
 - B.** The Bible adamantly and clearly states that all Scripture is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2Tim.3:16
 - C.** That Biblical prophecy is Scripture, it too is deemed of importance to the CWL.
 - D.** The Holy Spirit was sent at Pentecost to lead us into all truth (Joh.16:13) and teach us all things (Joh.14:26) including things to come (prophecy). Rev.1:1,19
 - E.** Prophecy is important as:
 - 1.** Every prophetic utterance has a purpose with some both near and far.
 - a.** Ex. Gen.25:23; The prophecy of the Lord to Rebekah (and thus to Isaac) provided information necessary for them to make the proper applications with respect to their positive son Jacob (the younger) and with respect to their negative son Esau (the older). The two sons were the near fulfillment of the prophecy.
 - b.** The prophecy also contains a far fulfillment concerning peoples and nations, the descendants of Jacob and Esau. In this instance the prophecy allows positive believers of all generations to adopt the correct thinking with regard to the struggle between the Jews (descendants of Jacob/Israel) and their neighbors, many of whom are descendants of Esau.
 - c.** Ex. Mat.24:32-33; The Doctrine of the Fig tree allows Church Age believers to orient properly to their time in history with respect to the timing of the rapture, and thus to make the applications appropriate for their time.
 - 2.** Prophecy contains events, circumstances and scenarios designed to further benefit the believer as to pertinent spiritual truths applicable to one's own spiritual life, as with all of the events of the Bible.
 - 3.** Prophecy is an intricate part of the Plan of God (POG) and as such part of revealing His entire purpose that believers should desire to know. Act.20:27 cp.Heb.11:6
 - E.** Many deny that prophecy exists or occurs in the Church Age, yet examples as noted in this doctrine refute this premise:
 - F.** Christ acknowledged the importance of prophecy as applied to the Church by virtue of prophesying regarding the Church. Mat.16:18; 18:15-20; Joh.4:23
- II.** The spiritual gift of prophecy was temporarily given to the early church lasting until the completion of the canon of NT Scripture.
- A.** It was considered a greater gift. 1Cor.12:31 cp.14:31
 - B.** This was because it was a revelation of God's thinking for the instruction and edification of believers until the NT was completed. 1Cor.14:3-4 cp.13:8-10
 - 1.** Prior to the completion of the NT there was not in existence a written Bible to which one could refer.
 - 2.** The gift of prophecy functioning in the local church allowed revelation for the new dispensation (the Church Age/CA) to be communicated to positive believers.
 - 3.** With the completion of Revelation in 96 A.D., there was no further need for verbal revelation; all of the information necessary for proper function in the CA is contained in the NT canon.
 - 4.** Any attempt to add further prophetic information in this age is strictly forbidden. Rev.22:18

- C. During the time that the gift functioned, it was a sign to believers. 1Cor.14:22
 - 1. It was a sign that the canon was not complete.
 - 2. It was a sign that the end wasn't imminent.
 - D. As a spiritual gift and office it was ranked 2nd only to Apostles in importance and authority. 1Cor.12:28 cf.Eph.4:11ff
- III.** The apostle Paul taught prophecy to the model church, the Thessalonians. 1The.5:1-10; 2The.2:1-12
- A. The events of the times that characterize the day of the Lord were well known to the Thessalonians. Vss.1,2
 - B. Because Paul had taught them the necessary prophetic information, the Thessalonians were not in the dark about this time in history. Vss.3,4
 - C. The Thessalonians were further burned by a pseudo-prophetic letter that claimed to be from Paul and disoriented with respect to true eschatology. 2The.2:2
 - D. Because the false doctrine taught in the letter produced temporal disorientation, they thought that they were in the tribulation.
 - E. Paul corrected this false doctrine restating the true eschatology. 2The.2:1-5
 - F. In the last days, many false teachers and false prophets who promulgate doctrines of demons appear. 1Tim.4:1-2
 - G. The way of truth is maligned because of those that pervert the Word of God (WOG), including prophecy. 2Pet.2:1-3
 - H. There are three types of people that openly represent the WOG:
 - 1. Positive, adjusted believers with Bible doctrine that make proper applications in the Angelic Conflict based on the WOG.
 - 2. Negative believers that distort the WOG, including prophecy.
 - 3. Unbelievers that ridicule and malign category one because of category two.
- IV.** A correct understanding of prophetic events helps to protect the adjusted believer from being driven off course by winds of false doctrine; it protects positive believers from false prophets, false teachers, and scoffers. Eph.4:11-14; 2Pet.2:1-3; 3:1-7,17
- V.** The entire book of Revelation is a prophecy. Rev.1:3; 22:7,10,18,19
- A. The 7 letters written to the 7 churches of Rev.2-3 prophesy concerning the spiritual temperature of the Universal Church in 7 periods of the Church Age (CA).
 - B. The apostle John pronounced a special blessing on any P-T that exegetes Revelation and those that listen making proper application based on the prophetic truth taught in the book. Rev.1:3
 - C. Conversely, a curse is pronounced upon anyone who adds to or takes away from the prophecy. Rev.22:18,19
 - D. The importance of prophecy is adamantly stated on the same level as orientation to the testimony (witness to the truth of BD) of Christ. Rev.19:10c
- VI.** Peter says that the knowledge of prophecy will alert believers to the rapture, and that we should, therefore, pay attention to it. 2Pet.1:19-21
- A. ¹⁹*And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.*
 - B. The prophetic word made more sure looks to prophecy fulfilled through the Person of Christ. Cp.2Pet.1:16-18

- C. Prophecy is likened to a beacon in the world of darkness as it validates the POG in fulfillment.
 - D. The day dawning looks to the prophetic return of Christ, which hope is to illumine the depth of our beings in orientation to the POG. Cp.Mal.4:2
 - E. ²⁰*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation.*
 - F. Clearly, this shows that even when the gift of prophecy was in effect in the early Church, its purpose was to reveal BD.
 - G. It was not used in the frivolous, esoteric way that the modern day Charismatic's advocate i.e., it was not for the few or for insiders or concerning private matters.
 - H. ²¹*For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*
 - I. In the early Church, the spiritual gift of prophecy was for the revelation of BD prior to the completion of the NT.
 - J. This verse highlights the importance of BD as it was revealed to mankind, to include all future prophetic insight, as that spoken from God Himself.
- VII.** The rapture generation lives in an era of the CA known as the latter rains; this is revealed in a prophetic section of James concerning the last days. Jam.5:1-7
- A. That it is prophecy of the last days see vs.3.
 - B. Vs.8 then readdresses the believers of James' day.
 - C. "Latter rains" is an agricultural metaphor taken from the OT references to Israel. Deu.11:14; Jer.5:24
 - D. Further, it has prophetic connotations. Hos.6:3; Joe.2:19 cp.vs.23
 - E. There was a great outpouring of doctrine in the first century of the Church Age (the apostolic period); this is symbolically known as the early rains.
 - F. Latter rains as related to the last days of the CA means that Bible doctrine will be taught with accuracy, depth, and thoroughness unmatched since the apostolic period.
 - G. Even though the rapture generation is characterized by wholesale defections from BD (Rev.3:14-18), there will still be some local churches constituting the latter rains.
 - H. Any individual that is positive will be able to get the truth in a very concentrated and detailed form.
- VIII.** Paul prophesied that in the last days that believers would face difficult times as the STA would become more unbridled in its universal expression. 2Tim.3:1-7
- IX.** Paul prophesied the rise of monasticism and legalistic ideologies promoted through Catholicism. 1Tim.4:3-5
- X.** The sufficiency of Biblical prophecy.
- A. An understanding of prophecy is necessary for the adequacy of the believer in fulfilling the POG in their lives.
 - B. Apart from understanding prophetic events in the Bible, the believer remains incomplete in apprehending a full picture of the POG.
 - C. The principle is that God uses prophecy to inform believers of pertinent events throughout history always informing His servants, the Prophets. Amo.3:7
 - D. Orientation to or lack of regarding prophecy holds inherent consequences for the believer whether good or bad:
 - 1. He informed Adam and Eve about the coming Messiah. Gen.3:15

2. He informed Noah of the impending destruction of the world with the flood. Gen.6:13,17
 3. He informed Abraham about the pending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen.18:16-33
 4. He informed Rebekah and Isaac about the conflict that would exist between their two sons and their descendants. Gen.25:23
 5. He informed the Jews about their suffering Messiah, the One that would intercede for their sins. Isa.53:1-12
 6. He informed the Jews as to the exact time and arrival of their Messiah. Dan.9:24-27
 7. He informed the Jews as to their pending dispersion and destruction of 70AD. Mat.22:1-7; 24:37-39
 8. He informed believers as to the new dispensation of the Church. Joh.4:23
 9. He informed the Jews that their final restoration to the land would be in a state of unbelief. Eze.37:1-14
 10. He informed the Church as to its spiritual disposition throughout the CA. Rev.2-3
 11. He informed believers as to the rise of uniformitarian evolution in the last days. 2Pet.3:5
 12. He informed the Church regarding the signs of the rapture generation and coming tribulation. Mat.24:1-36
 13. He informs those after the rapture that the 2nd Advent is in 7 years via Daniel's 70th week. Dan.9:27 cf.12:11-13
 14. He informs those in the Millennium of the final Gog and Magog revolution. Rev.20:3,7-10
- E. The failure to assimilate prophetic information in the Bible produces at best a believer that will be spiritually off balance.

“..For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”
Rev.19:10