

Glimpses of the Future - Part 1

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince discusses the importance of biblical prophecies regarding Israel and their implications for the future.

Duration: 28:22

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Topics: "Biblical Prophecy", "End Times"

Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of understanding and heeding biblical prophecy, particularly in relation to Israel and the future events predicted in the Bible. It emphasizes the need to give attention to the written prophecies of Scripture, highlighting the significance of obeying what is already revealed to receive further understanding. The speaker encourages believers to actively participate in proclaiming the gospel to all nations as a crucial aspect of fulfilling prophecy and preparing for the return of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Our proclamation this evening is taken from 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verses 23 and 24. And as I pointed out beforehand, when the Bible says you, we say we, so we make it personal. So, we're going to say it now.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify us completely and may our whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, He who calls us His faithful, who also will do it. Now I chose that Scripture because I believe it's appropriate for the theme. The title of my talk this evening, and it will be continued, God willing, tomorrow morning.

In other words, in two sessions, is Israel, Glimpses of the Future. In a previous talk I outlined a number of prophecies that had already been fulfilled in the history of Israel. I mentioned three main themes still to be fulfilled.

Now, this evening I'm stepping out boldly in faith and I'm going to present what I call, Glimpses of the Future. In other words, prophetic statements concerning Israel made in the Bible which have not yet been fulfilled. And I'm going to suggest how they could come to fulfillment.

I want to begin by pointing out that the New Testament stresses the importance of giving attention to biblical prophecy. I'm talking tonight about the written prophecies of the Bible. I also believe in the gift of

prophesying, but that's not what I'm talking about.

Human prophesying has to be judged. The Bible has already been totally purified and it is the standard by which we judge everything else. So I want to turn to a Scripture in 2 Peter 1, verse 19.

Peter's theme is the coming of the Lord Jesus in power and glory. He states in the previous verses that he and two of the other apostles were eyewitnesses on the mount of transfiguration of Jesus glorified. That is, as He will be when He comes.

But then he goes on to point out that the personal testimony of eyewitnesses, though important, is secondary in importance to the written prophecies of Scripture. And he talks about the prophetic word. That is, the written prophecies of the Bible.

And this is what he says in 2 Peter 1, verse 19. We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. So having spoken about their personal witness of Jesus glorified, Peter then says, but there is a more important and authoritative source of information which is the prophetic word.

And concerning that, Peter says to all believers in the New Testament, you do well to heed the prophetic word. You need to find out and study what the prophetic Scriptures say about the period up to and at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then Peter says, it is a light shining in a dark place.

This is very, very important because we are in a dark place. The world is getting darker. It has no real light to offer us.

But Peter says God has provided a light in the darkness. It is the prophetic Scriptures. And he says you need to give heed to it.

For me this means that if we don't heed the written prophecies of the Bible, if we don't give attention to them, we are denying ourselves the light that God has provided and we shall be in the dark. And I'm sorry to say that a very high proportion of the church is in the dark because it doesn't know and doesn't give heed to the prophetic Scriptures. But that's not necessary.

And then Peter uses a beautiful picture. He says you need to give heed until the morning star rises in your hearts. Now he's not talking about the coming of Jesus, but he's talking about something to happen inside our hearts.

And this is very vivid for me because for a year or more I was living in the deserts of Egypt and Libya. Without any real shelter, mainly sleeping on the sand. And in those circumstances we went to bed with the sun and got up with the sun, which I don't do today, I'll have to admit.

And so at certain season of the year I observed that just about the time of dawn the whole eastern horizon became luminous. And you would think, well now the sun is rising. But it wasn't the sun, it was what Peter calls the morning star.

Which in the language of astronomers is Venus in the evening and aurora in the morning. It's not a star, it's a planet. But at certain seasons of the year, just before the sun rises, the morning star comes over the horizon.

And it's so bright that for a moment or two you think it's the sun. But when the morning star rises you know one thing for sure. What's going to happen next? The sun is going to arise.

And so Peter compares the prophetic Scriptures to the effect of the morning star in our hearts. He says if you give heed to the morning star in your heart it will give you the absolute confident assurance of the coming in glory of the true Son, Jesus Christ. So that's a little testimony from the apostle Peter to the tremendous importance and I would say the urgent necessity to give heed to the prophetic Scriptures.

Now, there is a problem which basically the body of Christ is divided into two unequal sections. There's a small section of people who are fanatical about prophecy. And they're the people who tell you what's going to happen next.

And they're usually wrong and they tend to discredit prophecy and make the rest of the body of Christ reserved about prophecy. The rest of the body are those who don't know much about prophecy and whether they realize it or not, they're living in the dark when a light is available. And it affects the way we live because we have to fit in with God's program to be successful.

It affects the way we pray. Many, many times Christians are praying for things that are contrary to God's revealed plan. And you can pray as much as you like but your prayer will not be answered because God has a plan and He works according to it.

I heard about a minister who said, Well, if we all pray enough maybe Armageddon won't happen. That's just silly because the Bible says Armageddon will happen. So no amount of prayer will change that.

We need to learn to pray within the parameters of God's revealed purpose. And this is one of the main functions of prophecy. Now, there is a problem about understanding prophecy and I want to explain what I believe to be the root problem.

There's a verse in Deuteronomy 29, verse 29 in which Moses tells Israel this. That's Deuteronomy 29, 29. The secret things belong to the Lord our God but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever that we may do all the words of this Lord.

So Moses says there are two kinds of things in the Word of God. There are the secret things that are known only to God and there are the things that are revealed for our sake that we may act on them. Not just theorize about them, not just point out to people that we're rather clever because we know what's going to happen next, but fit our lives in with them.

Now I believe the main problem with interpreters of prophecy is that they're busy with the secret things and they ignore the revealed things. Like whenever I give a talk on prophecy somebody will come up to me at the end and say, Pre-, Mid-, or Post-? You know what that is, don't you? Is the rapture going to take place at the beginning of the tribulation, in the middle of the tribulation, or at the end? And I always answer, I don't know. I think that's a secret thing.

I don't believe God has fully revealed those details because He's a battle strategist and He's not going to reveal His battle strategy to His enemy. But the problem with those people is that the things that are revealed they're not doing much about. For me, one clear Scripture revealed is Matthew 24, 14.

This gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end of the age shall come. The apostles had asked Jesus, What will be the sign of your coming and of the

end of the age? Jesus gave them a number of signs, plural, and then He gave them the sign, Matthew 24, 14. This gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

This is the final decisive sign of the end of the age. But the problem is many of these people who are so occupied with prophecy are doing nothing about getting the gospel proclaimed in all the world to all nations. So, one of the conditions for receiving understanding of the Word of God is obeying what you already know.

If you obey what you know, God will give you more. But if you don't obey, He's not going to give you anything. So I believe that the key to understanding prophecy as we need to is obeying what's already revealed.

For Ruth and me, as she's already told you this evening, that means proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to all nations. And by the grace of God we are doing it to at least 120 nations. And we're doing it by various different media.

Now, I'm not saying that to boast nor am I promoting our ministry, but I want to say we are doing something. What are you doing? How much are you involved in getting the gospel to all nations? I pointed out earlier in this series, Paul says in Romans 11.25, When the full number of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel will be saved. If you want to see all Israel saved, then get busy bringing in the full number of the Gentiles.

Because all Israel will not be saved until that has happened. So what I'm saying is, the Bible makes sense to those who obey what is clearly revealed. Let's bother about the things we don't understand.

Let's not try to pry God's secrets out of Him. But let's act on what we know. And as we act, my experience is, God will give you further understanding as you need it.

But if you don't obey what you already know, don't expect God to give you further understanding. He won't do that. Now, the theme about which Peter was speaking in the verse that we read from 2 Peter, was the coming of the Lord Jesus.

And I want to make one observation about the Greek word that's used in the New Testament for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Now, I have studied Greek since I was ten years old. And I was once qualified to teach it at university level.

That doesn't mean I'm always right, but it means I'm entitled to my opinion. So, let me try to give you this simple instruction about the Greek word that is regularly translated, the coming of the Lord Jesus. The Greek word is parousia, p-a-r-o-u-s-i-a, and it is derived from a verb, paraimi, which means to be present.

So the literal meaning of that word is the presence of Jesus. But if Jesus has been away, then He can't be present until He comes back. You understand? So the use of the word present implies the return of Jesus.

But, it implies a lot more. It does not refer merely to the event of His actually coming back, but it refers to the state of affairs which will exist when He comes back. Now let me give you just a few examples.

In the New Testament it's used seventeen times of the return of Jesus Christ. But in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 17, it's used of a man named Stephanas, one of Paul's disciples, coming to where Paul was. And he

says, I'm glad for the coming of Stephanas.

But, how did he come? Or, how was his coming a reality? Because he returned to where Paul was. But, what it actually says is, I'm glad for the presence of Stephanas. In other words, it's not just the single event of Stephanas coming back, but it's that event and the ensuing consequences.

The same phrase is used in 2 Corinthians 7, verse 6, of Titus. Paul says Titus has come and he's here. The word is parousia.

In Philippians 1.26, Paul is writing to the Philippians from jail and he says, I believe that you're going to be glad for me at my coming to you. But the Greek word is, at my presence. In other words, my presence will be with you again.

Interestingly enough, in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9, it's used of the antichrist, the coming of the antichrist. Not only does Jesus have a parousia, the antichrist has a preceding parousia. But in every case, it's not just one single incident.

It's that incident and the situation that results from it. I hope I've communicated that. Let me give you another example.

The verb is used in John 11, verse 28, at the tomb of Lazarus. When Jesus had returned, Lazarus was dead in the tomb. Martha went out to meet Him.

Mary, typically enough, stayed at home. And then Martha sent a message to Mary saying, The Master has come and is calling for you. The Greek says, The Master is present and is calling for you.

I hope I've communicated that, because it enables us to view the return of Jesus and the language about it in a slightly different way. We're not talking just about one single dramatic incident, but we're talking about that incident and all the ensuing consequences which probably may go on for a considerable period of time. In other words, I believe it's logical and possible that the coming of the Lord extends over an unspecified period of time.

And I believe that's almost essential because all the things that are related to the coming of the Lord could not all happen instantly in one moment. All right? Now, I'm going to give you today and in the session tomorrow, God helping me, what I call eight glimpses of the future in connection with Israel. That is, eight different passages of Scripture that predict things that are going to happen at the close of the age in connection with Israel.

Now, I am not infallible. I'm giving you my sincere understanding after reading and meditating and praying and seeking God. And I actually believe that God has called me to this particular ministry to be an interpreter of the Scriptures in the light of the present world situation and what lies ahead.

That's my belief. But you're at liberty to disagree with me and you could even go to heaven even if you disagree with me. My aim in reading the Bible has always been for years to be objective.

I think that's part of my philosophic background because that's the approach of what a philosopher should come with. Let's find the facts and analyze them and form our conclusions. Now, it's very difficult to be objective about the Bible because most of us have inherited traditional interpretations which may not be Scriptural.

And most of us have personal prejudices and attitudes which are just part of our makeup which may stand in the way of our objectively receiving what God has said. Let me give you an example. For a year on end in World War II in Egypt I was in hospital with a skin condition which the doctors were not able to heal.

And at that time, I don't want to go into this in detail, but I experienced tremendous depression because I was already a Christian just recently saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit. I kept saying to myself, I know God would heal me if I had faith. Then the next thing I said was, but I don't have faith.

And at that point I was at the bottom of the valley of despair. But then a ray of glorious light shone into my darkness out of Romans 10, 17. So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

And so I said to myself, praise God if I don't have faith, I can get it. It comes. If I will make up my mind to listen to what God says in His word faith will come.

So I armed myself with a blue pencil and I set out to read throughout the whole Bible from beginning to end, underlining in blue everything that had to do with healing, health, physical strength and long life. And when I'd finished, you know what I had? A blue Bible. Now that objectively convinced me that the Bible's got a great deal to say about healing.

But my religious background was an Anglican. And I don't blame the Anglican church, but out of attending church every day for about ten years, and twice on Sundays, I formed the conclusion that if you were going to be a Christian you had better expect to be miserable. And I eventually decided that I could be less miserable if I wasn't a Christian.

So that was my decision. Now then the Lord gloriously met me in the middle of the night in an army barrack room, saved me, baptized me in the Holy Spirit, and I began to think differently. But I still had a considerable hangover from my previous attitudes.

So every time I read something in the Bible which said God wants you healthy and prosperous and blessed, I thought to myself, that's too good to be true. I couldn't believe that. So as I was saying that to myself one day sitting up in the hospital bed, as I said that, that's too good to be true, there must be something wrong with that.

The Lord spoke to me inaudibly and very clearly. And He said, Now tell me who is the teacher and who is the pupil? So I said, Lord, you're the teacher and I'm the pupil. And then He said, Well, would you mind letting me teach you? And I realized that I was not able to receive the Word of God objectively because of previous preconceptions which had formed in my mind.

So don't think that it's always easy to objectively receive the truth of the Word of God. It takes time, it takes prayer, and it probably takes laying down some of your pet theories and presuppositions and humbling yourself before the Word of God. Now having said that, I'm going to give you today and tomorrow, God willing, eight glimpses of the future, all of them connected with Israel.

I say glimpses of the future because I don't believe that prophecy gives us a clear, complete run-through of all future events from now till then. I believe prophecy focuses on certain scenes and situations, paints them vividly, moves on to another scene, another situation. But what lies in between very often is not revealed.

So the first scene or glimpse I have entitled, Unique Tribulation, which is something that is clearly and emphatically stated many times over in the Word of God. We'll go first of all to Jeremiah chapter 30, verses 3 through 7. This is a clear, specific prediction about how God plans to deal with Israel at the close of the age. Because at the end of the chapter the Lord says, In the latter days you will understand.

In other words, it's a prophecy that is not to be understood until the latter days. I believe we're living in the latter days and I believe understanding is now available. So this is what the message is from Jeremiah chapter 30, beginning at verse 3. For behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will bring back from captivity or from exile my people Israel and Judah, says the Lord.

And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers and they shall possess it. As I pointed out earlier, there's only one land that answers to that description, the land of Israel. God says at the close of the age He will cause the Jewish people to return to that land and they shall possess it.

No matter what Yasser Arafat may say, or the United Nations, or the American administration, the bottom line is they shall possess it. God is right and the rest are wrong if they disagree. You know, I've noticed in American culture we have an attitude the customer is always right.

That's misleading. There's only one person who's always right and that is God. And we'd better come to God with that attitude.

He's right and if we disagree, we're wrong. All right, now, having introduced the scene, the return of the Jewish people to their land after nineteen centuries of exile, God gives a warning of what's going to happen. For those of you who are considering making aliyah, that is immigration, you'd better listen to this warning.

Because it may cause you to reconsider. Not that I'm saying it should, but at least don't go into it with your eyes closed. Now these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah.

For thus says the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. In other words, the return of Israel is not going to be followed by immediate peace. Exactly the opposite.

Now Israel has been a nation for forty-how many years? Forty-four, forty-five years. They haven't known one month of peace. So you have to admit the Bible is accurate.

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