

Articles and Sermons :: Curiosity to understand Prophecy

Curiosity to understand Prophecy - posted by Sree (), on: 2019/4/5 17:59

Whenever we study prophecy that is as yet unfulfilled, we must bear 1 Corinthians 13:12 in mind: "Now we see in a mirror dimly - but then face to face. Now I know in part but then I shall know fully". God in His great wisdom, has allowed a lot of prophecy concerning the future to be seen by us only dimly as in a mirror. We must never forget that.

There is a great curiosity in our flesh to know everything about the future exactly. But the word of God has not been given to satisfy our curiosity. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God but the things which are revealed to us and to our children". So there are things that are clearly revealed and things that are hidden.

Here are some things that have been clearly revealed: 2 Peter 1:4 states that "all things pertaining to life and godliness have been given to us". Everything relating to partaking of the Divine nature has been revealed clearly. That is neither dim nor unclear. Romans 6:14 also is crystal clear when it says that "sin cannot rule over you when you are under grace".

But the amazing thing is that most believers don't look at such truths that are taught clearly. Instead they argue over the details of prophecy, that are often unclear. This is a dangerous attitude. We must have our priorities right. The greatest thing is not prophecy but love. We are never told to pursue after a clear understanding of prophecy. But we are told to pursue after love - the Divine nature (1 Corinthians 13:8, 9, 13; 14:1).

There are many parts of Biblical prophecy that we will know clearly only when they actually happen, and yet other things that we will know only when the Lord comes. But since the Lord has given us the book of Revelation, He must be expecting us to understand something, albeit dimly, about the future.

In chapter 6 we have a bird's eye view of the future, upto the very end. Then from chapter 7 onwards, the Spirit comes back and fills up certain details in the remaining chapters. Praise God that this book has been written like that - so that it doesn't satisfy our curiosity. In all of us, there is a great lust to study prophetic charts that claim to explain the sequence of events at the end time. But God does not satisfy our curiosity. The word of God, including the book of Revelation, was not given primarily for that.

Consider what Jesus told His apostles just before He went up to heaven. The apostles had asked Him, "Lord is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" They had thought that since Jesus was risen, He was now going to drive out the Romans and establish His millennial reign. Jesus did not say that such questions were unimportant. No. Instead, He said, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority" (Acts 1:6, 7). He told them that there was something else that they needed to know right then, and many other things that they did not need to know. And then He told them of the absolute necessity of receiving spiritual power. Not knowledge - but power! (Acts 1:8) - power to be His witnesses to the end of time. And remember that those were His last words on earth. This fact is important for us to bear in mind as we approach the book of Revelation.

- An extract from Final Triumph by Zac Poonen

Re: Curiosity to understand Prophecy - posted by Sree (), on: 2019/4/5 18:10

I find this above extract very true with respect to many serious believers I have met. It is true even in Sermon Index. If you see in general highly followed posts are related to some kind prophecy like Pre or post-Trib etc. But the posts on clearly visible things like overcoming life goes unnoticed!

I was once part of a Bible study group which was mostly attended by elderly people. It was odd for a guy in early 30s to be part of such a group. But whenever I got my turn to share on a scripture in discussion, I always brought practical aspect of the scripture instead of boring theory that they discuss mostly. Soon the people there found that my perspective of the Bible was very unique and found high interest in listening to me. But soon also people there started questioning me on my stand on various prophecies on the end times. When I stated my stand (just for the sake of giving an answer), they started questioning me on how I came to that conclusion etc. I frankly have no interest in such discussion, so it clearly disappointed me that after hearing me they are only interested in knowing my stand on these Prophecies, instead of asking me how I get such unique practical perspective of the Bible etc.

I believe this is great deception among believers to show such curiosity on prophecies that are not clearly visible, there by taking their attention from things that are clearly visible and promised to us.

I do not believe there is any reward in heaven for correctly predicting the hidden prophecies! But living out the clearly visible things surely has credits. May the Lord open our eyes to the deception before us.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/4/6 8:00

Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed and sealed up till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. (Dan 12:9)

But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the Book until the time of the end. many shall run to and fro and search anxiously, and knowledge shall be increased and become great. (Dan 12:4 - AMP)

A sign of the end will be an increased interest in the prophets and what they prophesied concerning the time of the end. If the wicked will not understand how is it that the wise shall understand except through a increased knowledge of the prophets? Many Christians acknowledge that Christ came and fulfilled prophecy yet many are illiterate to a large degree of the events and prophecies regarding His second advent. It is one of the greatest deficits in the contemporary church in which many have given up on becoming prophetically wise. Daniel himself wrote that knowledge of the prophets would increase and become great at the time of the end.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2019/4/6 11:06

The new covenant prophecy is different from that of Old Covenant. One has to understand that to understand how the knowledge of prophecy will be in end times which is New Covenant times.

It is absolutely worthless if a Church has bunch of people sitting with Charts on end time prophecies! What is the use of such a knowledge? The prophecy that Paul wanted everyone in the Church to do is not predicting of end time but to have a Prophetic word that will warn the Church against the schemes of the Devil.

The Spirit of Prophecy - Zac Poonen

When God is present in our midst, we will hear Him speaking to us powerfully in the meetings. That is the meaning of prophecy. In old covenant times, prophecy was meant for foretelling the future and for guiding people as to what they should do. But now, in the new covenant, prophecy is for exhortation(challenging, rebuking and correcting people), consolation (comforting and encouraging people) and edification (building up the church) (1 Cor.14:3). Prophecy is the main gift of the Spirit by which the church is built. The prophetic word is "a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Pet.1:19). Without this light constantly burning in the church, it will be impossible to escape the wiles of the prince of darkness. The church itself will sink into darkness. The main reason why many Christian groups that started out well degenerated over a period of time was because the gift of prophecy gradually disappeared. Whenever God's presence departed from Israel in Old Testament times, one mark of His forsaking them was that "there was no longer any prophet" among them (Psa.74:1,9). Israel always degenerated whenever they did not have a prophet, as in the days of Eli (See 1 Sam.3:1). But Israel rose into a place of eminence when they had a prophet, as in the days of Samuel (1 Sam.3:20). It was through Samuel that David was anointed as the king of Israel. And that began a glorious new era in Israel's history. When Samuel prophesied, "the Lord did not allow any of his words to fall to the ground" (1 Sam.3:19 - KJV). We too must pray earnestly for such a powerful ministry of prophecy in the church that every word we speak goes straight home to people's hearts like an arrow to its mark. Through the gift of prophecy, "the secrets of people's hearts are disclosed" (1 Cor.14:25). Thus everyone in the church will get light on the deceitfulness of sin.

We are commanded to "exhort one another daily (in the church), lest we be hardened through the DECEITFULNESS of sin" (Heb.3:13). There are sins that are obvious and there are sins that are subtle and hidden. But the spirit of prophecy will expose both the deceitfulness of sin as well as the schemes of Satan, so that we are protected. We see an illustration of this in the Old Testament. When the king of Aram was warring against Israel, every time he and his generals planned in secret to attack Israel at a certain point, his plans were revealed to the king of Israel by Elisha, through prophecy (2 Kings 6:8-12). Thus the king of Israel knew exactly where to place his army to defend the country, and saved his nation again and again. That is how the Lord, through prophecy in the church-meetings, warns us in advance of the areas where

e Satan is going to attack us in the coming days. So we can be on our guard in those areas.

Paul exhorted Timothy to fight the good fight (against Satan) by paying attention to the prophecies made concerning him (1 Tim.1:18). Proverbs 24:3,4 says, "By WISDOM a house is built, and by KNOWLEDGE the rooms are filled with pleasant and precious riches". There is a place for knowledge in the church - God's Word taught by anointed teachers. But knowledge is like the furniture, with which a house is furnished after it has been built by WISDOM. So if we only have Bible-knowledge in our churches, we will be like a family living on an empty plot of ground with a lot of expensive furniture around us, but with no house - no walls, no roof and not even a floor!! That's why we are exhorted in the New Testament to pursue after WISDOM first of all. "If anyone lacks wisdom let him ask God who gives liberally to all" (Jas.1:4). It is through wisdom that the church is built. And God's wisdom comes to the church through the gift of prophecy. That is why we must "earnestly seek to prophecy" (1 Cor.14:1,5), in every meeting of the church. Meetings for Bible-study and evangelism are good. But if we are to build the church as a pure testimony for Christ, then the gift of prophecy must be given the FIRST place.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/4/6 11:29

I wouldn't think though that the new covenant nullifies or changes anything prophesied beforehand. Christ and Paul and John spoke of a certain order of events leading to the day of His appearing. New Testament prophecy does not change that. What was spoken in the old formed the eschatological backdrop of what was proclaimed in the new testament.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2019/4/6 11:43

Nothing is nullified, the purpose of the Prophecy has changed in New covenant. In Old Covenant the blessings were Physical hence it was important for Physical prophecy to warn Israel of the physical attack of its enemies in the future. In New Covenant, our blessings are spiritual, hence our warnings are not warning of future physical dangers but spiritual dangers faced by Church. There will be an increase of such prophecy in true churches which work as a local body of Christ.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/4/6 12:41

Yet almost to a man the prophets warned of a final days physical assault against the physical nation of Israel. From my experience I see hardly a peep of this coming from modern prophets and prophecy in the church. During which time the physical life of the church will likely be under great duress also.

Re: Physical vs Spiritual - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2019/4/8 4:59

Sree, I think you are missing the forest for the trees. The cause of the physical judgements against Israel were because of spiritual problems. If you can not see the spiritual dangers being addressed in Old Testament prophecies, then your spiritual vision is veiled in that area. The oft quoted passage from 2 Timothy 3 applies to prophecy as well.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

A sober minded saint will see God's judgements on Israel and the nations and apply the same plumbline to their own age because neither God nor man have changed. Brother Zac has some great teachings on being an overcomer from the first chapters of Revelation.

The physical is temporal while the spiritual is eternal but the physical will be exchanged for new bodies when Christ returns. We are instructed to wait and watch for That Day. How can one watch for something we know little or nothing about?

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2019/4/8 9:43

Quote:

How can one watch for something we know little or nothing about?

We should not jump to other extremes. This has always been the problem with believers, they always cling to extremes instead of finding the balance. The warning here is about being taken over by prophecies. Even in the incidence that I stated in the thread, I have mentioned that I have answers and opinion on end times. I am myself not naive on this subject. But I am not someone who waste my time discussing it. I do not even ask others their view on end times etc. In our church we give lot of importance to fellowship of believers. We spend more time in fellowship rather than service. We do not waste our time on end time prophecies. Instead we encourage one another on matters that are clearly written in the Bible like overcoming sins in our life etc.

Also Jesus himself said in Luke 12 - Then you will be like servants waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once. 37Blessed are those servants whom the master finds on watch when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve and will have them recline at the table, and he himself will come and wait on them. 38Even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night and finds them alert, those servants will be blessed!

Jesus wants us to wait for him without knowing what time he will come. There is no holiness in being ready knowing when he will come. But the blessed servant will be ready at all the hours, expecting the master.

There is a reason God has NOT made these things very clear. We should not waste our time trying to decipher those hidden things, instead focus on things that are clearly revealed.

Yes we should see the times and understand the end is near. Even the Apostles thought that they were in 11th hour, 2000 years before. Not that they got it wrong, they lived exactly like how Jesus wanted them to live instead of trying to decipher hidden prophecies.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2019/4/8 13:57

Sree: Ive experienced similar over the years. Went to a new study, the folks really liked what I was saying and enjoyed my teaching...but the unwritten rule: 1. You cannot like someone who is not just like you.

So because I had 'other views' differing my favor dissipated quickly.

Rule: 2. Doctrinal similarity is to be preferred over character and godliness. To my shock I realized all-is-forgiven as long as I towed-the-line. and it's anti-thesis all-is-unacceptable when you don't.

I find it strange to think I know when the 'angels trumpet will blow' to gather the elect, yet I have no idea when I will attempt to share my faith to a stranger.