



Things To Come: Week 3

Understanding the Prophetic Scriptures

Audio & Notes at:

<http://www.htchurch.com/things-to-come>

Video at:

<http://www.htchurch.tv>

1. What are the different types of literature in the Scriptures?

1.1 The Law: the Pentateuch or Torah

1.2 Historical Books: Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, Kings, Acts

1.3 Poetic Books: Psalms, Proverbs, etc.

1.4 Prophetic Books: Isaiah, Ezekiel

1.5 Biographical Books: the Gospels

1.6 Epistles (Letters)

1.7 Apocalyptic literature: prophetic literature with heavy use of symbols and imagery

- The writer is part of the action
- Examples: Revelation; Daniel; Zechariah
- An unveiling of mysteries by God

2. How do we read and understand the prophetic Scriptures? **(Hermeneutics)**

2.1 Read the Scriptures in their literal, normal sense:

When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise. (Dr. D. L. Cooper)

2.2 Seek to interpret Scripture with reference to the historical, grammatical, and contextual settings of the passage.

2.3 Symbols are meaningful, not meaningless.

2.4 Value symbols but avoid overly allegorical interpretations. (Not everything is symbolic!)

2.5 Let Scripture interpret Scripture: *not everything in Scripture is equally plain or equally important. We have to interpret the more difficult passages in the light of clearer ones. Scripture interprets Scripture, and we learn the whole meaning of Scripture by studying its parts and its parts by learning the whole. You need the box-top and the puzzle-pieces. (Michael Horton)*

2.6 Prophetic Scripture often has a “near and far” application. Events in the past can point to a similar event in the future which is greater and more significant.

2.7 In prophecy there can be only partial fulfillments. Jesus Himself did this in the synagogue.

2.8 Approach all prophecy with special humility and prayer!

3. Systems of Prophetic Interpretation

3.1 Idealism or Allegorism. In this system, prophecy symbolizes God's victory.

3.2 Preterism. In this system, prophecy is literal but was fulfilled in the past. Almost no prophesied events remain to come to pass.

3.3 Historicism. In this system, the prophetic scriptures give an outline of all of history. It can involve much speculation and date-setting.

3.4 Futurism. Futurism says that the events we see in the prophetic Scriptures and in the Book of Revelation concern things which for the most part have not yet come to pass. Many of them are still future, even for us who live nowadays.

Why should you read the prophetic Word according to the futurist position? Because it provides the most literal reading of the Scriptures and makes the most sense when we think about unfulfilled events prophesied by the Lord Jesus and others.

4. Basic Overview of the Second Coming

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:3b-5a)

4.1 This is a literal event not a spiritual event.

"You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven!" (Acts 1:11)

4.2 It is a visible, dramatic, and open event which people will be able to see and perceive with their senses.

Jesus said, *"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* (Matthew 24:30 KJV)

4.3 The second coming is not the end of the world.

The return of Christ is not the end of the world in the science fiction sense of the actual planet that we live on being destroyed. The return of Jesus will mark the *end of the age*.

4.4 The coming of Christ brings dramatic changes to climate and geography.

There will be dramatic changes affecting nature as God adjusts the makeup of the Earth in ways we cannot now understand.

4.5 The coming of Christ also marks a change in the relationships between the nations of the world.

4.6 Religious service will change.

Christ's return also will create new ways and modes of religious service towards God. There will be a Temple in Jerusalem and Christ will be there in person. (Zech. 14)

4.7 Government will change.

Mankind will no longer rule the Earth directly, but Christ will rule the nations with a rod of iron. There will be no war and no crime. The Church of God will rule for Him.

4.8 A change in the spiritual atmosphere.

There will be a change in the spiritual climate, as Satan is bound and unable to affect the nations while Christ reigns for 1000 years.

5. Main Purposes of the Second Coming

God has a variety of purposes which He will fulfill through the return of Christ:

5.1. To rescue His people.

When He comes, He will come to save His people from their persecutors.

5.2. To fulfill the promises made to God's ancient people, Israel.

When Christ comes, He comes not only to rescue Israel from the Antichrist and from all those who hate her, but He comes to bring them salvation. You can read Romans 9-11 and see how when Christ returns, all surviving Jews will receive Him and welcome Him.

5.3 To raise believers from death.

5.4 To give rewards to his faithful followers.

5.5. To punish all sin and rebellion against His authority.

5.6 To establish righteousness in the nations.

5.7 To bind Satan and his princes.

5.8 To lift the curses which sin had caused to be imposed upon Creation.

5.9 To get glory for himself over every other name.

5.10 To demonstrate his faithfulness to his Word in every area.

Homework: read 1 Thessalonians, chapters 4 and 5.