

PROPHETIC TRUTHS FOR TODAY

Unveiling the End-Time Events

by

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CHAPTER ONE

IS THERE ANY WORD FROM THE LORD?"

(Jeremiah 37:17)

THE TEXT which I have selected from the Book of Jeremiah will serve admirably as a fitting background for the prophetic messages contained in this volume. The question raised by the king was a timely one, and the same question might well be asked by people of our own time. A national crisis faced the kingdom of Judah. The last days of that kingdom had come. The Babylonian forces had laid siege to Jerusalem and the situation was exceedingly critical. It was a situation which is analogous to our time, for we, too, are facing a mounting crisis.

The prophet Jeremiah had warned his nation that apostasy would bring on a divine retribution.

The nation's leaders did not believe it would happen, hence the old prophet who had made these gloomy predictions was shunted off to a prison; in fact, it was a dreary dungeon. He was looked upon as a man manifesting disloyalty to his country by predicting evil to come upon the people.

Even the king hoped that some-how a miraculous deliverance would come. But in that assumption he was completely wrong. The situation turned worse, for the Babylonians increased their pressure against the capital city.

In this desperate situation the king felt that, after all, it might be best to contact the old prophet and hear what he had to say. But the king didn't want to be seen in company with Jeremiah, hence a secret meeting was arranged, a kind of rendezvous unknown to all others. As the king met the prophet, almost frantically perhaps, he uttered the words, "**Is there any word from the Lord?**" The prophet responded in the affirmative, yet he had no good news so far as the future of Judah was concerned. In fact, he announced that the Babylonians would take the city and that captivity was inevitable.

Let us take these words and transfer the general thought contained in the king's question to our own time. We are facing years of terrifying uncertainty. Indeed, men today may well ask the preacher to interpret the mind of God to their generation. The question, "**Is there any word from the Lord?**" ought to be asked by people living in a befuddled and bewildered age such as our own. Fortunately, like the prophet of old, we have a specific word from God for times like these.

PROPHETS AND PREACHERS OUGHT TO KNOW GOD'S WORD

The Old Testament prophets were a dynamic group of men. They lived in days of great upheaval, such as our own. They heard the clash of despotism's battle for power and supremacy. The messages which they delivered were timely, and in the truest sense their pronouncements were timeless. It may be said about these men that they had direct communication with God, and their messages constituted a gripping word for people of their day.

Not all the prophets were *fore-tellers*; all were *forth-tellers*, however. Their key declaration was found in the statement, "**Thus saith the Lord.**" While no one today may be classified as a *fore-teller*, yet in a manner as the prophets of old, each preacher ought to be a *forth-teller*. I fully believe that the preacher of God's Word should have his hand on the pulse of the generation in which he lives. In other words, he should know the times and seasons.

Truly, the preachers of today, like the prophets of old, have a difficult task. The average audience is hard to arouse or inspire. People have heard a great deal of preaching, and they have been challenged over and over again. And like the wise man of old, they are inclined to burst out, "**There is nothing new under the sun.**" In fact, some church services often become so static, one feels like throwing a songbook at someone just to change the atmosphere and stir somebody at least.

Some of the present-day ministers resort to the method of entertaining the audiences with a popular type of message, flavored and spiced by apt illustrations and considerable humor. By adopting such a procedure these preachers hope to get across some spiritual truth to their audiences. It seems to me, however, such an innovation has very little merit.

Others become skillful in dodging; that is, they never come to grips with spiritual reality. Such are like a certain dagger-thrower of whom I once heard. He developed such a skill in throwing out these darts that a person who stood up against a wall found the dagger-thrower had made an exact profile of the person with these daggers without drawing a drop of blood. He was skillful in dodging. It is possible for a preacher to generalize to the extent that the message reaches no one in particular. Such a method used in dealing with people is totally ineffective.

Finally, there are those who insist on abusing the audience by striking at the people verbally without proper discrimination. Evidently these speakers believe a minister should be a cross between a billy goat and a mule so that he can butt at one end and kick at the other.

I heard of a certain father who was in the process of applying the lash to his half-grown boy. While the son was enduring the painful ordeal, the father kept on saying to his boy, "Son, I am doing this because I love you," and he kept right on applying the lash to his son's anatomy. This led the boy to cry out (perhaps he had a point), "Dad, I am sorry that I am not big enough to return my affection." Somehow, Jeremiah was able to give a stern message with a broken heart and a tear-stained face.

Let us, however, be slow in resorting to abusive tactics for effect, or in order to get a response from people.

What is the preacher's business? I think Elijah the prophet placed his finger on the proper point of emphasis, **"What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak."**

Indeed, the present-day preacher needs to be the mouthpiece of God. We need in this day *forth-tellers*, who know what the Book teaches, and who are not afraid to expound the truth with the fervor of the Old Testament prophets. Truly there is a word from the Lord for these days.

GOD HAS SPOKEN THROUGH HIS SON

The writer to the Hebrews puts it right on the line in these words: **"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds"** (Hebrews 1:1-2). Later in the same letter the writer adds, **"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh"** (Hebrews 12:25).

God has spoken most clearly and effectively through His Son. Through Him God has given His final truth unto men. Three times when Christ was here the distinct voice of the Father came from above, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."**

And the infinite wisdom of God was revealed at Calvary's cross. It was there God expressed the highest love ever revealed to mortal man. Through our Lord's incarnation, it was possible for God to reconcile the lost sinner with Himself. On the cross God's holy law was maintained, yet mercy was provided for the needy sinner. The cross represents the only meeting place between the sinner and God.

It might be said that on the cross the score was settled. It was determined there who will command the destiny of countless millions of human beings. Satan had gained a stranglehold upon the race, particularly at the time our Lord became incarnate. Not a prophet's voice had been heard for over 400 years. Only a handful of people were waiting for the dawn of a new day.

Judaism had entered into a pattern of inflexible forms and ceremonies. But through Christ's redemptive work, achieved on the cross, Satan's power was broken, and this truth the apostle expounds in the following meaningful words, **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it"** (Colossians 2: 15).

Calvary was the decisive battle of the universe. It became the Gettysburg for the devil, and the turning point in man's destiny. Since Calvary every sinner who wishes to be saved may find in Christ enabling grace to overcome the power of sin. Satan is a broken foe. While still powerful, he is not all-powerful. Calvary marks the turning point with reference to the defeat suffered by our adversary.

It also opened the way for his final Waterloo, and the ultimate elimination of the arch-conspirator from the whole arena. Paul writes inspiringly, “**And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet**” (Romans 16:20). The Book of Revelation depicts the final overthrow of Satan, his consignment to the bottomless pit, and his subsequent transfer to the lake of fire.

GOD’S WORD IS AN ULTIMATUM

Not only was Calvary God’s masterstroke in bringing about the triumph over the devil by the Son of God, but it actually points us to the final declaration of God in the matter of salvation. Truly, as it is written, “**Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him . . .**” (Hebrews 7:25).

Calvary is, however, His last word on that subject. It is, in other words, God’s ultimatum to a rebellious race. God has said, “**Hear ye him.**” Peter takes up the same note before the Jewish Sanhedrin in these words, “**Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved**” (Acts 4:12).

Religious piety, church membership, and the sacraments cannot save us. Only through a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ is salvation realized. Now, this is God’s final message.

In fact, the theme of the Bible is salvation; it takes precedence over all other matters.

GOD HATH SPOKEN THROUGH HIS PROPHETIC WORD

Not only has God spoken on the pertinent subject of salvation, but He also has spoken clearly pertaining to His purposes through the ages, particularly with reference to the period designated as the End-Times. Listen to Peter: “**We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts; knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost**” (II Peter 1:19-21). Nowhere is prophecy singled out for such an emphasis as it is in this passage.

Prophecy is history *pre-written*. Approximately *one-half* of the total content of the Bible is devoted to the subject of prophecy. What a tragedy to ignore or minimize that which God has seen fit to present to the extent He has in both the Old and the New Testaments. A failure to declare the prophetic truth leads to an impoverishment of the churches.

Moreover, prophecy is the silver lining in the dark clouds that envelop all of mankind during these days. A good working knowledge of the prophetic word will achieve stability to the Christians in times such as these. Through a careful study of the prophetic word, man will be able to interpret God’s purposes, and especially His plan which has bearing on the latter days. The messages in this volume come out of more than thirty years of intensive study of the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures. If you read this volume through, as I hope you will, I am sure you will agree with Peter that we have “**a more sure word of prophecy.**”

Prophecy has been even more validated in our time than during Peter's day, for we have an amazing amount of fulfilled prophecies to encourage us in this regard. No generation since the Christian era began has seen such an imposing number of signs pertaining to the latter days.

And with reference to the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God, the signs are in agreement for the first time in Church History. By that I do not mean there has ever been any contradiction, but the signs have not appeared simultaneously in all these areas before our time. Such a correlation is a prophetic phenomenon greater and more impressive than the satellites and rockets which men have been able to hurl into outer space.

The messages of this volume should bring before the readers vividly the welcome truth that God has a particular word for our time through His prophetic unveiling of the latter days. It has been our purpose to follow the proper sequence covering most of these great events as they are given us in the sphere of Bible prophecy.

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