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**Prophecy
and their many
Different Styles**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Prophecy and their Many Different Styles.

Principles that apply to Old and New Testament Prophecies, and help to understand the many different styles.

Topics.

Partial and local fulfilment, and interpreting time periods.

Four keys to prophecy, and prophecy and repentance.

Future prophecy spoken in the present tense.

Not knowing the voice of the prophets.

Prophecy transcends time and history, and repeated prophecy.

Prophecy and predictions are not by the wisdom of man.

Prophecy, is not limited to future prophetic messages.

Do not despise prophecies, and a more sure word of prophecy.

Men spoke from god by the holy spirit.

Prophecy and chapters of the book of revelation.

PARTIAL AND LOCAL FULFILMENT

Often in Bible prophecy the names of places, town's countries and people are left out of a prophecy allowing the message to transcend the era of the prophet to a future age or a future person. Many prophecies have a partial local fulfilment, but because of the lack of detail in the language of the prophecy or the detail of the vision, the prophecy often allows a partial and local fulfilment to settle upon events that are very similar for a limited period, and then takes up wings and soars through history to its ultimate, perfect, and complete fulfilment.

INTERPRETING TIME PERIODS

Years, months, weeks, and days, when spoken of in prophecy are sometimes based on an ideal year of 360 days (i.e., twelve months each of 30 days). For example, divide 1260 days by 30 days and you get 42 months, which means the 1260 days of (Rev. 12:6) is the same as the 42 months of (Rev. 13:5). The calendar of exactly 360 days, (twelve exact 30-day months to a year), is very suitable to use for interpreting prophetic prophecies. However, such a calendar would not work in practice, unless a gap of some extra days were allowed between each year to keep the calendar synchronised with the seasons, because there are not exactly 52 weeks in a year so calendar weeks do not fit exactly into months and years. Even the symbolic calendar mentioned above does not fit an exact number of weeks because 360 does not divide evenly by seven so years and weeks never exactly fit mathematically to actual times.

This is why attempts to use the symbolic periods as a code for some real number of years, months, weeks, and days, often leads to confusion, when they are turned into numbers of real historic years or to actual dates. Due to this dilemma, it should be recognised, symbolic times do not signify the exact date or exact duration of actual times, but rather that the period is within the knowledge and authority of God whenever it may be. It is possible in certain cases, prophetic days, weeks, months, and years are not to be used as a code from which scholars and theologians are to calculate real time periods, but rather a symbol to stand in place of real time periods, which are not for us to know in advance.

Following is an example: a symbolic period such as the 1335 days (Dan. 12:12) indicates that this is a time or season 'which the Father has fixed by his own authority' and it is not for us to know the exact time.

Jesus said:

- **Acts 1:7:** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

FOUR KEYS TO PROPHECY

Following are four keys that help understand Bible prophecy.

1. The first key, is to know that the verses are not always written in chronological order. It is almost as though the prophet is so inspired that he immediately speaks the words as they come to him. They are then recorded in the order that the prophet spoke them, but that does not always mean they are in the actual chronological order that they will unfold throughout history. Sometimes the latter verses of a chapter may be the first events to take place in God's foreordained plan of events. In the book of Revelation this principle applies not only to the individual verses of the chapters but also too many of the chapters themselves.
2. The second key, is to know that a prophecy is often spoken in the present tense as though the event has already happened when in actual reality the fulfilment of it may still be many years away. This is because the prophet is seeing the vision in the present moment and speaks it as he sees it in present time. The people the prophet is speaking to know when the prophecy is a future event, but sometimes it can be difficult for those reading it thousands of years later to realise, because of the tense it is written in.
3. The third key, is to understand when a prophet speaks, he is often speaking as the voice of God therefore the words he speaks are guaranteed to come to pass. This, is why the prophet sometimes will speak future predictions in the present moment because they are certain to happen at the right time in the future.
4. The fourth key, is to understand the prophet himself may not always be aware of the echoes contained in his prophecy or that the words he is speaking have contained within them the ability to transcend time and travel thousands of years through history to a future age or a future person, this is because many future prophecies are spoken in the present tense, because the prophet is speaking the words of God or the vision as they come to him in his time.

Often the prophet, by the inspiration of God, see in their mind in vision form future events yet to come, and proclaim to the people what they see, so that when the events they proclaim come to pass, the people will look back to the prophecy, and see that what the prophet proclaimed was the word of God. One of the reasons for this, was so that when they saw what the prophet had spoken came to pass, they would realise, the prophet, they rejected, was sent by the LORD, and speaking the word of the LORD, and recognising this, be convicted of their sin and repent of their wickedness and forsake their idols and return to the LORD their God, which is exactly what they did, especially, at the end of their seventy years in captivity.

FUTURE PROPHECY SPOKEN IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Prophets often have visions of events that have not yet come to pass, but are certain to do so at the appointed time in the future. Sometimes these prophecies are spoken in the present tense, as though the event has already happened, when in actual reality the fulfilment of it may still be many years away. This is because the prophet is seeing the vision in the present moment, and speaks it as he sees it in present time. The people the prophet is speaking to know the prophecy is a future event, but sometimes it can be difficult for those reading it thousands of years later to realise, because of the tense it is spoken and written in. When a prophet speaks, he is often speaking as the voice of God, therefore the words he speaks are guaranteed to come to pass. This is another reason the prophet can speak the words of God in the present moment, because they are certain to happen at the right time in the future. Another reason many future prophecies are spoken in the present tense, is because the prophet is speaking the words of God, or the vision as they come to him in his time. The prophet himself may not always be aware of the echoes contained in his prophecy or that the words he is speaking, have contained within them the ability to transcend time and travel thousands of years through history to a future age or a future person. The following verses are a good example of this principle:

- For a nation (Babylon) has come up against my land (Judah), powerful and beyond number; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness. ⁷It has laid waste my vine and splintered my fig tree; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches are made white. (Joel 1:6-7).

This event has not taken place, yet Joel speaks it in the past tense as though it has already happened. This is because Joel is speaking what he is seeing happening in his vision. God is giving Joel a complete picture in his mind of what is about to take place. Joel in a sense is watching a movie being played out in his mind and is simply speaking it out as the events take place, which is the reason Joel speaks in the past tense, in his mind the events have already taken place, but in real life they are still to be played out in the future

NOT KNOWING THE VOICE OF THE PROPHETS

Many that read the words of the prophets do not know the voice of the prophets, nor do they understand the meaning of the Scriptures that they read. They have the sound of the Gospel in their ears, but not the Spirit of it in their mind, or the Saviour of it in their hearts. Added to this spiritual blindness it is possible that people may be fulfilling Scripture prophecies even when they are breaking God's laws, and Scriptural precepts, as in the case of Judas and the crucifixion of Christ.

PROPHECY TRANSCENDS TIME AND HISTORY

A partial application and future fulfilment: the wonder, beauty and splendour of Bible prophecy is that it often has a partial local fulfilment for the people of the era it is being spoken to, and a more perfect and wider fulfilment that soars through time and history until it arrives at its predetermined destination and achieves the final purpose it has been set out to accomplish. When the whole scope of these types of prophetic messages is taken, into account it can be clearly seen that intertwined within the language two events, the first being an historic fulfilment, and the second being a much wider and far more perfect fulfilment yet to happen at some future time. It is as though the prophecy rest for a time upon its first application and then takes up wings and soars through time and history until it fulfils its greater and more perfect fulfilment.

REPEATED DREAMS, VISIONS, AND PROPHECY

Repeated dreams, repeated visions, and repeated prophecies are repeated to magnify their importance and to:

- Confirm they are of God.
- Confirm there is a sense of urgency concerning it coming to pass.
- Confirm that it is certain to come to pass and cannot be stopped in anyway.

This principal of repeating words or a message applies to dreams, visions, and prophecies throughout Scripture.

4

PROPHECY AND PREDICTIONS ARE NOT BY THE WISDOM OF MAN

All things that the LORD had previously foretold and promised have come to pass in their proper seasons exactly as it was said they would, not one of them failed, as was noted by Joshua.

- **Joshua 23:14:** Now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed. (Joshua 23:14).

The promises made to Abraham concerning the settling of Israel in the land of Canaan and to Moses concerning Israel's deliverance out of Egypt and the predictions spoken by Isaiah and the many other prophets all came to pass. Now because of these great promises being fulfilled Israel has every reason to believe the new and excellent things pertaining to future events that are yet still to come to pass, specifically their restoration by Cyrus and more fully the to the universal Gospel message going out to all nations and the coming of the Messiah to rule the world will also come to pass. The prophet Isaiah wrote:

- **Isaiah 42:9:** "Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Here is a beautiful image that is taken from plants and flowers sending out shoots, buds, and flowers. It literally means, "before they begin to germinate," meaning before there are any outward indications of life in the seed its growth has begun.

The idea is that God predicts future events before there was anything by which it might be supposed that such events would take place. These predictions did not arise up from human knowledge and wisdom as human men may sometimes predict future events with great probability by observing certain political indications and current world events. God gave these predictions when there were no such signs and when such predictions could only be done by the inspiration of God. It is in this respect that the predictions of God's prophets differ from mankind's wisdom and knowledge, understanding and intelligence, speculations, and assumptions.

While the seeds of future events were as it were under ground and unseen God inspired His prophets to predict them when there was no visible appearance of such events. Before there is the slightest observable indication to enable a wise, intelligent, and knowledgeable observer to predict a future event God foretells it through His prophets and often hundreds of years before the event. Jesus when talking to his disciples about who would betray him said:

- I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. (John 13:19).

Prior to Jesus being crucified he told his disciples:

- **Mark 8:31:** The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.
- **Mark 9:31:** The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.
- **Mark 10:34:** They will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.

These verses shine a brilliant light upon a truth that is often overlooked; that truth is this: during Jesus three years ministry on earth serving, healing and ministering God's love and grace to others, he was fully aware of the brutal cruel and suffering death he was to suffer on the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

PROPHECY, IS NOT LIMITED TO FUTURE PROPHETIC MESSAGES

- **1 Corinthians 14:3-4**³ On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their *upbuilding and encouragement and consolation*.⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but *the one who prophesies builds up the church*.
- **1 Corinthians 14:24-25**²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all,²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Prophecy is not limited to future predictions, but also embraces speaking Scripture that:

- Teach the Bible, and upbuild and encourage believers and the body of Christ.
- Reveal inward and outward sin, convict the conscience, and lead to repentance before God.
- Lead to Christ, salvation, the Kingdom of God, and eternal life.

The Bible is the word of God, that proclaims the path to God and to life after death, which is why those who are teaching the word of God can correctly say they are speaking words of prophecy.

DO NOT DESPISE PROPHECIES

- **1 Thessalonians 5:20-21:** Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good.

During the era of the apostles this applied to the words of Scripture men of God spoke by the inspiration of God's Spirit, but today we do not need prophets since everything we need to know has been written and recorded for us in the Canon of the Bible. There is no new revelation today, certainly men who have studied the Bible may be able to clearly explain prophecy to those who do not have the time to study, but it is not new revelation since everything God considers that we need to know today regarding the future and Christ's return can be found in the Bible.

Test everything: I not only personally think this is the best advice, but also believe that every Bible teacher should encourage (as Paul does) those who follow them to test everything they have been taught, firstly, by looking up the verses and reading them in the entire context of what the writer is saying and secondly by comparing what they have been taught against the lives of Jesus and the apostles, (i.e., if a teacher is proclaiming that God's children should prosper, be successful and wealthy because they belong to the King, look at the lives of Jesus and the apostles and test their teaching against how they lived.

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY

- **2 Peter 1:16-19:** We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Here Peter is saying that his faith, and the faith of James, and John did not solely rely upon the testimony of others or upon the glorious fact that while on the Mount of Transfiguration they heard God Himself say, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," (Matt. 17:5), but was founded upon something even more certain than these. This is a stunning statement, what could be more-sure than the testimony of the faithful and the LORD'S voice? The answer is, "the fulfilled prophetic words of God."

These are more certain than the testimony of others and the voice of God, because people can exaggerate their testimonies, and the mind can be deceived by visions and trances, and only the person themselves have experienced them. In contrast to this everyone can check out the prophetic prophecies against history since they are all recorded in Scripture, and there is no clairvoyant, god, or man who can predict the future. Clairvoyants may at times make a prediction that may come to pass and men who have a certain amount of wisdom and insight may at times predict future events by observing past history and current events happening on earth at the time, but no clairvoyant, man or god can predict the future in such exact detail as God does, and sometime hundreds of

years before they come to pass. Added to this they are all written down so that anyone can check the detail of them against history for themselves. The Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled when Jesus came into the world prove that Jesus is Israel's Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world. This is why the chief priests, Pharisees, and scribes, the keepers of God's word should have recognised Jesus when he came to them and why they are without excuse. Today, many believe there is no evidence to prove the truth, the Bible is the inspired word of God. The reality is that even though there is much outward evidence to prove the Bible (i.e., archeology, history, evidences of sin in the world etc.), it does not need any of them to prove it is God's word, since it proves itself by the many perfectly fulfilled prophecies.

Peter is saying that as fantastic as it was for him, James, and John to be on God's Holy Mountain and see the Majestic Glory as they did, should anyone be in doubt regarding their testimony, the prophecies concerning Jesus will furnish an even stronger proof of Christ glory and majesty than the testimony of the apostles. This is because they were written over hundreds of years by different prophets from different periods of history and different countries and all this long before Christ appeared which means there could be no collusion between the different prophets and writers, yet there one beautiful theme that flows from Genesis through to the book of Revelation, and many have come to pass in stunning detail and many are still to come to pass in glorious wonder and breath-taking awe. Fulfilled prophecy is not only proof that the Christian faith is not built on cleverly devised myths, but is also proof of inspiration because throughout the Old Testament there are Scripture predictions of future events that were uttered long before the events transpired that no mere human wisdom, intelligence, or foresight could have anticipated especially in such minute and specific detail as the prophets proclaimed and psalmist sang.

No mortal man no matter how brilliant or clairvoyant could without the inspiration of God possibility predict, guess, or anticipate the hundreds of predictions concerning Israel, the land of Canaan, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and numerous other prophecies that have been fulfilled throughout history, especially those prophecies which were fulfilled by men who struggled with frantic desperation to avoid their fulfilment and by others who utterly disbelieved in God. The many Old Testament prophecies that have been fulfilled throughout history could not have been written by anyone with the limitations of a mortal mind, without being inspired by and influenced by the Spirit of the Alpha and Omega who planed and purposed the course of the world according to His eternal foreknowledge before time began and therefore knows all things from beginning to end before they come to pass.

A lamp shining in a dark place: (v19) the words, "Pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place," means that the prophecies resemble a lamp shining in a dark room, the lamp make the objects in the room distinct which were before unseen and things which would be otherwise invisible, but there is still much that is only dimly revealed and much in the room we are not able to see. The idea here is that as majestic and awe-inspiring as prophecies are they do not give a perfect light or remove all obscurity, but that they shed some light on objects which would otherwise be entirely dark, and that the light which they do give is so valuable that we should make every effort to seek out for ourselves the priceless riches and treasures the light the prophecies do shine upon.

Until the Day Dawns: (v19) the reference in the words, "Until the day dawns," refers to the morning light as compared to the lamp, clearly the morning sun brings far more-light than a single lamp. The idea is that we

should attend to the light given to us by the prophecies until the obscurity of prophecy is revealed in much clearer and far more distinct light by the clearness of events when they occur and dispel those things that remain shadowed and obscured by the dimness of light. The difference between the light of the lamp, and the light of the sun is the difference between seeing an event by faith and prophecy and between seeing the actual reality of it shining all around us.

Peter in these verses is directing the mind of all believers to that glorious length of time when all prophecy will shine in absolute clearness when our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ returns to receive his brothers and sisters to himself and to everlasting glory where all will be pure light.

John in the book of Revelation wrote:

- The holy city, New Jerusalem has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there (Revelation 21:23-25).
- Night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:5).

Is there any other religion on planet earth that has such awe-inspiring majestic and glorious prophecies, visions and promises for its followers (this author has not found one). While we patiently wait for this glorious and eternal world to come, Peter is encouraging us to walk in the light that we have and diligently study the prophecies of the Old Testament (especially those still unfulfilled) and of those in the New Testament which direct our mind onward to brighter and more glorious scenes than this world has yet witnessed. Bible prophecies are a cheering lamp to guide our feet through the darkness until that illustrious and glorious day shall dawn.

The morning star rises in your hearts: the words, “The morning star rises in your hearts” (v19), literally refers to the bright star that at certain periods of the year begins the day in the most magnificent brilliance. Figuratively the star is Christ and the reference is to that glorious day when Christ returns in the full revelation of his glory and the splendour of his Kingdom, and his light shines its beams deep into our hearts and that hidden but glorious light and love that dwell within the heart of every brother and sister in Christ rises in breath-taking and uncontrollable excitement and joy at the sight of seeing their risen Saviour. Then all will be clear, clearer, and brighter than any other time that has yet occurred on our world. Bible prophecies are as the morning star that shines brighter than the dawning sun as it heralds in the new day

MEN SPOKE FROM GOD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **2 Peter 1:20-21:** knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter is saying not one of God's prophets spoke from their own mind, no Bible messages or prophecy is birthed from human thinking or human imagination. The Holy Spirit influenced and inspired the prophets of the Old and New Testaments to speak the messages of God, and it is these messages that are now written down and recorded in the canon of the Bible the Holy Spirit enabled the prophets to speak of:

- Christ's birth, suffering, ministry, and his death and resurrection.
- Christ's spiritual Kingdom, his literal Kingdom, and his eternal Kingdom.

NOTE: God is the source of the Holy Spirit, and spoke his messages by the inspiration and influence of the Holy Spirit through men He chose. When the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ through the prophets it is spoken of as Christ (or the Spirit of Christ) being in the prophets. This is because they are by the Holy Spirit speaking of Christ, and the things concerning him.

PROPHECY AND CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

When reading the prophetic book of Revelation, it should always be kept in mind that absolute and perfect understanding of prophecy is limited by the following four things:

1. By our imperfect mind and partial understanding of biblical knowledge.
2. By the difficulty of obscure verses, and its symbolic language.
3. By a lack of historical, cultural, and geographical knowledge.
4. By the strength of certain preconceived ideas already established in the mind, and the influence of popular thought or theory, and our own individual perspective of God.

Because of these four facts, no interpretation of the book should be so dogmatic, that minor details that have no effect on a believer's salvation should be so dogmatic, that it causes divisions amongst the faithful in Christ, especially since world events are constantly changing and our knowledge and understanding of prophetic Scripture is always increasing and will become much clearer as we move closer to the end of the age as we know it, and get closer to the glorious return of Christ.

SNAPSHOT: it should always be kept in mind that Jesus said, "I know my sheep," no faithful brother or sister in Christ needs to understand the full detail of how Christ will return, they just need to know that he will return, and that all his sheep will be resurrected to eternal glory when he does.

SUMMARY

Prophecy properly means to predict future events, but it also means to declare the divine will of God; to interpret the purposes of God; or to make known in any way the truth of God, which is designed to influence people. Though its first meaning is to predict or foretell future events the word prophecy is not limited to this meaning since those who did prophecy were messengers of God, and as they commonly proclaimed predictions, instructions, and exhortations in, regard to the sins, dangers, and duties of people the word prophecy came to denote any who warned, threatened, or in any way communicated the will of God. Today the word prophecy refers to proclaiming the messages of the Bible, since what we have in written form today is the prophetic word of God. During the generations of Paul, the Scriptures were not neatly put together as we have them in the Canon of the Bible today, added to this their message was totally new so the people had to rely on others receiving visions and prophecies,

but today we have all those spoken prophecies recorded in the pages of the Bible, therefore when a person is proclaiming God's word and the words of the Lord and the apostles, they are proclaiming the prophetic word of God. This, is why we do not need any more knowledge beyond what is recorded in the Bible since it has recorded within its pages God's plans, purposes, will and eternal outcome for all mankind. Today whoever proclaims the word of God is proclaiming prophecy. All that has been stated in this document evidences, that no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but by men who spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21).

For those who understand the wonder, beauty, and glory of Bible prophecy there is no-doubt that Scripture is the Revelation of the mind and will of God.

For further information see the title:

- Prophecies that Prove the Reality of the Bible.

In Random Snippets (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace