

Notes of a Series of

SIX LECTURES

on

BIBLE PROPHECY

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DEFINITIONS AND TIME MEASUREMENTS

INTROD:

1. Perhaps you will think I am rash or presumptuous in bringing to you, in these morning sessions, a series on Bible Prophecy.
2. I do not wish to engage in controversy, yet, because feelings are so strong among believers on prophetic subjects, it is well-nigh impossible to speak on this theme without running afoul of somebody's viewpoint.
3. Some christian groups make a certain prophetic school of thought the basis of fellowship - they will not tolerate any other view.
4. Now I believe we may be dogmatic on the cardinal or fundamental doctrines of our faith:
 - (1) The literal Second Coming of Christ IS a fundamental of our christian faith.
 - (2) But there are many views about the details of that Advent that are purely speculative and not fundamental.
5. The current popular view of prophecy is the FUTURISTIC SCHOOL, but it is only about 150 years old.

None of the Reformers and no Bible teacher on record, taught the Futurist position before the year 1830 A.D.
6. I do not hold that position. You may ask, "Well, what position do you hold - to what prophetic school do you belong?"
 - (1) May I humbly say, "I don't 'belong' to any "school of thought" on this subject.
 - (2) I think I have studied most of them, if not all. I was once a Futurist, but found so many points that were at variance with the Scriptures, that I gave it up.
 - (3) I find many Scriptural truths, but also many points inconsistent with the teaching of the Word, in all the main schools of prophecy.
 - (4) I do not claim to have any superior insight into the subject, for I am still searching and have many things to learn.
 - (5) I do, however, wish to keep my mind clear and open to the Holy Spirit, and not be unduly influenced by the teachings of men.
7. Many recent books, and many popular radio and T.V. pro-

grams, present the Futurist view and it is difficult to face the wind and buck the prevailing current.

8. So this brings us to a pertinent question: "Why do you bother teaching Prophecy? Why come to us with such a series?"

I have three reasons for doing so:

- (1) Because I believe that time is running out for this world as we know it; that the Coming of the Lord is near at hand, and that God has given us the prophetic Scriptures so that we might be what the Lord says we should be in I Thess. 5:4-8.
- (2) Because Satan has made a two-pronged attack on Christ and His church with respect to these truths, that he might confuse us and render us unprepared for this most momentous event in history.
 - a. He has confused us by dazzling our eyes with a supposed future Antichrist, a supposed great tribulation and a supposed secret rapture, at the end of the age, so that we have not noticed the things he has been doing in the world, right under our very noses!
 - b. He has caused such controversy among believers, by injecting many "views" of prophecy (in many instances making us "hyper"), that the average pastor is afraid to preach on prophetic subjects and seldom attempts an exposition of the Book of Revelation.
The result is that we are being robbed of light that we need, and that God intended us to have, in this very hour of darkness.
- (3) Because I have been asked to bring a series on Bible Prophecy.

I find, in speaking to people about Prophecy, that they use terms they do not understand. Let me begin, therefore, by giving you

I. A DEFINITION OF TERMS:

What is meant by the term:

1. Premillennial?

- (1) It is not a Scriptural term. It comes from two little Latin words: mille, meaning "a thousand" and annus, meaning "a year". Hence, by adding the prefix, pre we get the term, "before the thousand years."

Speaking prophetically, we say the Second Coming

of Christ is premillennial, i.e., He is coming before the 1,000 years' reign mentioned in Revelation 20.

2. Postmillennial? Again, it is not a Scriptural term, but comes from: post, meaning "after"
mille, meaning "1,000" and
annus, meaning "a year."

This view was held by many who taught that, by the preaching of the Gospel, the world would become better and sin would disappear like the darkness of night when day dawns, and then Jesus Christ would come and set up His kingdom and reign for ever.

3. Amillennial?

- (1) It comes from the Greek prefix "a" meaning "no," so the word means, "no millennium."
- (2) Amillennialists hold several different views about the 1,000 years of Rev. 20:
 - a. That it is an indefinite period, figurative rather than literal.
 - b. Some make the millennium co-extensive with the present Gospel age. Christ's reign is spiritual, in our hearts. Christ's Kingdom is spiritual, not literal, visible or material. Satan's binding was when Christ nullified his power on the cross.
 - c. Amillennialism stands for a spiritual interpretation, rather than a literal, of the prophetic Scriptures, although they do believe in a literal (physical) return of Christ.

4. Futurist?

- (1) The futurist's view of prophecy has a lot of "holes" in it, because it holds to a theory of "gaps," viz., between the first and second verses of Genesis 1; between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel 9; between a supposed rapture and the Second Coming of Christ; between Revelation, chapters 3 and 4, making the bulk of that book apply to a short period of seven years at the end of this age.
- (2) There is much variation in this view, also, ranging from extreme literalism to more tolerable attitudes toward other views.

5. Preterist? This system teaches that the prophetic part of the book of Revelation:

- (1) Was fulfilled in the dispersion of the Jewish nation and the downfall of the pagan Roman Empire.
- (2) It is limited to the first six centuries of the Chris-

tian Era.

(3) It is held that Nero was the Antichrist.

(4) It was promulgated by a Spanish Jesuit Monk by the name of Alcazar around the close of the 16th century.

6. Historicist (or Presentist)?

(1) It holds that the Book of Revelation began to be fulfilled in John's day and covers this present dispensation of time.

(2) It sees in the Papal System the fulfilment of prophecies relating to Babylon and the Antichrist.

(3) It originated in the 11th century and was held by the Waldenses, the followers of Wycliffe and Hus, and preached by the great reformers of the 16th century.

7. The Great Tribulation?

(1) A special time of unprecedented suffering for christian believers - a time of persecution.

Some call it "The Time of Jacob's Trouble" as it relates to Israel.

(2) Views of this period vary according to one's school of prophetic interpretation:

a. Some believe this whole age is one of tribulation for the saints, e.g., John 16:33.

b. Others limit it to the last 3½ years of this age.

c. Some believe the church will be raptured before it comes, and others, that it will pass through the tribulation.

8. The Rapture?

It is the time of the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the catching up of both dead and living saints when the Lord returns, according to I Cor. 15:51-54 and I Thess. 4:13-18.

Some think it will be secret.

9. The Revelation?

(1) The time when the Lord shall be revealed from Heaven with His saints, 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

(2) Some believe that the Rapture and the Revelation are to be separated by seven years.

(3) Others believe that they take place at the same time.

SOME MISCONCEPTIONS:

A. That a Pre-millennialist and a Futurist are one and the same. This may, or may not, be true.

B. That a Futurist and an Evangelical are one and the same. A great many hold that if one does not believe

the Futuristic interpretation of prophecy, one is a Liberal or a Modernist. This, of course, is preposterous!

II. TIME MEASUREMENTS:

1. It has been suggested by some theologians that the history of the human race on this earth would cover 7,000 years or 7 millennia.
 - (1) We are nearing the end of the sixth thousandth. The next will be the seventh or the Millennium.
 - (2) I know of no Scripture to corroborate this view, but it is at least suggestive.
2. You have read in the Scriptures of certain time periods, and have possibly been baffled, not knowing what they mean:
 - (1) The 70 weeks of Daniel 9.
 - (2) Fcrtly and two months.
 - (3) Three and a half years.
 - (4) Time, times and a half-time.
 - (5) 1260 days, etc.
3. You will find a clue to the interpretation of these time measurements in the following Scriptures:
Numbers 14: 28-34
Ezekiel 4:4-6

To my knowledge there is no other system of time measurement given in the Bible. Apply it to the prophetic time periods and it is amazing how accurate it turns out to be.

CON.:

1. For the next study, please read the last two references given above.
2. Read, also, Leviticus 26 and note, particularly, the "seven times" pronounced by God upon Israel.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Daniel 2

INTROD.:

What is prophecy? It is history pre-written - by Him
Who knows the end from the beginning.

1. I take it for granted you are familiar with the contents of this chapter.
2. Daniel opens with a record of the conquest of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar, about 600 B.C.
3. Among the captives were four Jewish young men - Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (changed to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego by the Chaldeans) who became great men in the kingdom of Babylon.
4. Daniel became the ruler of Babylon (under the king) and Governor of all the wise men. He served under four successive kings - Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.

I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FORGOTTEN DREAM:

1. Dan. 2:1-3.
2. Dan. 2:4. (From here to the end of chapter 7, the book is written in Aramaic.)
3. Dan. 2:5, 6 - The king threatens.
4. Dan. 2:10, 11 - The wise men admit defeat.
5. Dan. 2:12, 13 - The execution ordered.
6. Daniel was evidently overlooked, being a slave and a foreigner. He asked for time, and it was granted, vs. 14-16.
7. Now notice what Daniel did (with his back to the wall, so to speak), vs. 17-23:
 - (1) He shared his burden, v. 17.
 - (2) Daniel and his friends prayed, v. 18.
 - (3) The unknown dream was revealed to Daniel in a vision, that same night. v. 19.
 - (4) Daniel acknowledges God's answer, and praises Him, vs. 20-23.

II. THE DREAM RECALLED:

1. v. 24. Through a godly man's intercession, he saves himself and others less deserving.

Arioch brings Daniel to the king.

2. The king's question and Daniel's testimony in reply, vs. 25-28.
 - (1) God is in Heaven and God knows the future that is hidden from all men.
 - (2) Again, Daniel denies all claim to be able to reveal or interpret the dream, vs. 29, 30.
3. The amazing dream as revealed to Daniel, vs. 31-35.

III. THE DREAM INTERPRETED:

1. Please note that this statue represents world dominion (human government) from that very point in history until the end of human government as we know it.
2. Vs. 36-38. Dominion, or the right to rule, is given to man by God alone, cf. Rom. 13:1. Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon) is the head of GOLD.
3. V. 39a. Next is a kingdom inferior to Babylon. It is represented by the chest and arms of SILVER.
Scripture does not give it's name here, but history reveals that it was the Medo-Persian Empire.
4. V. 39b. The third kingdom, exercising rule over the then-known world, was Greece represented by the belly of BRASS (bronze).
5. Vs. 40-43. The fourth dominion is represented as the IRON kingdom and has reference to the Roman Empire.
Notice, God gave to Daniel more detail about the fourth kingdom:
 - (1) It is strong and smashes everything by sheer force, v. 40.
 - (2) As time progresses it becomes weakened and divided, and its final end is in the form of 10 kingdoms, loosely adhering to one another.
6. In vs. 44, 45a, we see how the action of God brings an end to world government, especially these four kingdoms of prophecy:
 - (1) It is while the 10 kingdoms of the fourth world power are still in existence, that God Himself sets up the Kingdom that shall never be destroyed or succeeded, v. 44a.
 - (2) It will crush the four kingdoms and bring them to an end, and endure forever, v. 44b.
 - (3) This is what the "STONE" means - it operates without human hands, v. 45a.
7. This is a prophecy concerning the future which God Himself

has revealed and interpreted, v. 45b.

CON.:

In closing, notice the following deductions:

1. From Nebuchadnezzar's time until the introduction of the Kingdom of God, there were to be 4, and only 4, world empires.

(1) The present talk about a one world government is doomed to failure.

(2) We must not look for a "revival of the Roman Empire" - the ten kingdoms into which the fourth empire disintegrated at the fall of the pagan Roman Empire under Romulus Augustulus (A.D. 476) are still intact and have never varied more than one (less or more) in all this time, and these have been ruled or influenced by Papal Rome.

2. Note v. 35. When the stone smites the image on the toes, the four kingdoms fall together.

Does this mean that they will all be in existence when Christ comes? Yes, See Dan. 7:12:

Babylon is now Iraq.

Medo-Persia is now Iran.

Greece is still Greece.

Rome is now the 10 states occupying the territory: once dominated by the Roman Empire. They are

Italy

England

Austria

Holland

Switzerland

Belgium

France

Spain

Germany

Portugal

3. We are now living at the extreme end of the time covered by the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

4. Daniel 7 gives the corresponding history to chapter 2 - it was given to Daniel himself under the figure of four beasts.

5. The times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar, Luke 21:24. Never, in all this time, has Jerusalem been the capital of a free Israeli state, until 1948.

Are "the times of the Gentiles" coming to a close? We indeed believe they are.