

Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, November 23, 2014

Volume 19, Number 47

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path... Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart” (Psalm 27:11-14)

PROPHECY DECLARES ...

by Bob Pulliam

“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;”
(Isaiah 46:9f)

I’M AFRAID PEOPLE HAVE a tendency to miss this point. Especially atheists and agnostics bent on a denial of the Bible as God’s word. It isn’t simply that a Bible character said something (or claimed that God said something) and it came to pass. Nostradamus made a lot of vague statements in the form of quatrains, and something eventually was bound to *look like* a fulfillment. The Civil War was a predictable event. That Joseph Smith predicted it does not validate Mormonism. Nor did the political guesswork of Jean Dixon

concerning the 1960 presidential elections. That Joseph Smith and Jean Dixon also got details wrong invalidates them as having any supernatural power.

Last week, we saw that Scripture makes a declaration by its content. Now we need to follow up on that by taking a brief look at Bible prophecy. And the first thing I must point out is that not a single word of the Lord fell to the ground unfulfilled. This is far more significant than you may think at first glance. Of the hundreds of prophecies in Scripture, each provides a possibility for

proving the Bible to be a fraud. It is one thing to claim that you are a prophet and never say anything; and quite another to make prophecies that aren’t fulfilled. God Himself gave this test to Israel concerning anyone who would claim the office of prophet (Dt 18:21f). One case of unfulfilled prophecy will prove the prophet a phony.

When we turn to the Bible, we find the prospect of failure on page after page. Hundreds of prophecies present a liability for some point in the future. If the prophecy is not fulfilled, the source of the prophecy is proven a fraud. By extension, the Bible would become a fraud. As I said above, it would be far better for a **false prophet** to make the claim and keep his mouth shut (*i.e.* not prophesy). The more he “prophecies”, the more failure there will be to invalidate him. But if he makes hundreds of prophecies, and they **all** come to pass, he deserves your attention! Therefore

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the Bible deserves your attention, because it has done that very thing.

Just a Few Prophecies...

I don't have space to do this subject justice. So keep in mind that these are just the "tip of the iceberg". A whole array of prophecies could be cited on just the coming of Jesus. But the following will establish my point.

When it came time for the Messiah to be born, God had already set significant prophecies in place. Just the time and place present a very real possibility for prophetic failure. Why did Micah prophesy the exact place of the Messiah's birth (Micah 5:2). The people of Jesus' day knew this (Jn

7:42). If Jesus had not been born in Bethlehem, there would have been a prophetic catastrophe. That the Messiah would have to be born in the fourth kingdom from the Babylonian kingdom is huge (Dan 2:36-45). If the Roman empire had passed without the coming of a Messiah, all Old Testament prophecy would have flown out the window (because the coming Messiah is the main point of the Old Testament).

Before Jesus came, there was John. Just as prophesied (Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1; 4:6). That Jesus would be a worker of signs put a lot of pressure on anyone coming (Isa 35:5). But Jesus opened the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf (Lk 7:22). If He hadn't, appealing to the prophecy to identify Himself would have been futile.

That Jesus went to the Gentiles would not have been a highly anticipated aspect of a Messiah figure for Israel. And yet, prophets for a nation who came to despise the Gentiles (*cf.* Jonah) had the coming Messiah going to the region of the Gentiles (Isa 9:1*f*), and the Gentiles called by God's name (Amos 9:12).

Of greatest significance to me is the abundance of prophecy surrounding the death of the Messiah. Just the idea that a "deliverer" was coming, and would do so by **dying** was incredible. Who wants the anticipated deliverer of His people to be put to death? But more than that! For He would not die on a battlefield with honor. The coming Servant would be crucified with thieves (Isa 53:12). The people would wag their heads in disbelief (Ps 22:7), and He would be ridiculed (Ps 22:7*f*; Mt 27:39-43). The people would not

believe on Him (Isa 53:1 & 3). He would be betrayed and sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12 - the price of a slave), which would then be cast to the potter in the House of the Lord (which made no sense until fulfillment shed light on how that would take place). His disciples would be scattered (Zech 13:7). And He would be cut off by oppression and judgment (Isa 53:8). All of which leaves Israel in a very bad prophetic light. Human nature forces us to embellish the virtues of oneself and one's own people. But Messianic prophecy does the opposite!

Consider the prophesied form of death, which did not involve the breaking of bones (Ps 34:20 - which would be expected in a nation with stoning as it's primary form of capital punishment); but instead his hands and feet would be pierced (Ps 22:16). His side was also pierced (Zech 12:10). As mentioned above, He was put to death with thieves, but ended up in a rich man's tomb (Isa 53:9). He who would arrive triumphantly in Zion (Isa 62:11; Zech 9:9), would be wounded and bruised (Isa 53:5). What a turn of events. But what a turn of events to prophesy it long before fulfillment!

For a nation that was so proud of the exclusive nature of their covenant with God (entered into by physical birth), it was monumental for Jeremiah to speak of a different covenant entered by a different means (Jer 31:31*ff*). And rather than a national salvation, the Messiah would be a stone rejected by the builders (Ps 118:22), and a stone of stumbling (Isa 28:16).

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THIS WEEK'S DAILY BIBLE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT READING

I THESSALONIANS 1 - 5;
HEBREWS 1 - 4

November 23 - 25

OLD TESTAMENT READING

II SAMUEL 19 - 21;
PSALMS 35 - 41

November 26 - 29

I TIMOTHY 4:13

FAMILY NEWS & NOTES

News and Notes of Interest
to Fry Road Members

Because of the large number of visitors to our services, we would ask those wishing to identify with the congregation to do so by expressing this interest directly to the elders.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

Gospel Meeting (Dee Bowman)
January 11 - 14, 2015

V.B.S.
June 21 - 25, 2015

Gospel Meeting (Jim Deason)
September 13 - 16, 2015

Gospel Meeting (Carl McMurray)
April 12 - 15, 2015

Annual Singing
September 12, 2015

Sick and Shut-Ins

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

Sermons:

Next Sunday:

The Final Word on Love

Tonight:

A Worthless Fellow

"...I was sick, and you visited me..."
Matthew 25:36

(Declare, continued from pg 2...)

Conclusion...

Countless other passages could be brought to bear on this subject. But how many do you need? Just the first prophecy regarding Jesus' birthplace should make you sit up and think twice. And as the list expands and broadens, you should become increasingly convinced that the Bible is worth your diligent study. For, if the Bible is what it claims to be (II Tim 3:16f), your eternal destiny hangs in the balances. And the Bible is the only book that can tell you how to tip that scale in your favor!

PP

A Sunday Afternoon Assignment

Tonight's lesson is entitled "A Worthless Fellow". The text for it will be II Samuel 20:1-2. Before that lesson, you might do the following "homework":

- 1) Who was worthless, and why did he do what he did (look at the context of the previous chapter)?
- 2) Why did he have followers in his worthlessness?
- 3) What comparison did David make between him and Absalom?
- 4) List ways in which he did harm in his worthlessness...
- 5) What happened to this worthless man?
- 6) Can you think of other passages that would warn of the same end?

FOR THE RECORD

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

IN KEEPING WITH OUR LONG STANDING AGREEMENT, THOSE SERVING PUBLICLY ARE REMINDED TO PLEASE DRESS IN A MANNER RESPECTFUL OF THE GOD WHOM WE SERVE.

ELDERS:

Ruben Amador
Matthew Heaton
Donnie Mangrum
Steven Martin
Steve Voss



DEACONS:

John Coleman	Ken Dunsmore
David Ellison	Ray Farrell
Aubrey Garner	Steve Geraci
Steve LaGrasta	John Light
Mike McMurray	Jason Mock
David Stevenson	Glenn Tomblin

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Assembly	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Assembly	6:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:30 PM

EVANGELIST & EDITOR:

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