

***“That Blessed Hope”***  
***Principles Of Prophecy***

**Introduction:**

1. As We Continue Our Series On Biblical Eschatology:
  - What We Have Been Doing:
    - Before Looking At The:
      - “Details” Of What The Bible Says:
        - About The End Times:
    - Is - Laying The Groundwork & Foundation Necessary:
      - To - Hopefully - Help Us Understand Those Details:
        - In A Better Way & In The Right Way!
  - **IE:** Think Of These Introductory Lessons As Foundation Stones!
2. The First Level Of Stones:
  - Has To Do With The Different Approaches:
    - To Learning Biblical Doctrine!
      - So - For The Last Two Weeks:
        - We Have Looked At:
          - **Two Different Approaches!**
  - Both Approaches:
    - Are Biblical Approaches!
      - But - They Look At Biblical Truth:
        - In Different Ways!
  - The ***Systematic*** Theological Approach:
    - Seeks To Synthesize & Summarize:
      - What The Bible Says:
        - About A Particular Question Or Topic!
  - The ***Biblical*** Theological Approach:
    - Looks At The Historical Development:
      - Of That Same Question & Topic!
3. Both Approaches Have Their Place!
  - But - The Best Way:
    - To Do ***Systematic*** Theology:
      - Is To Start With:
        - ***Biblical*** Theology!
  - So - After Introducing:
    - Some Of The Different Models:
      - Of Eschatology - That Systematic Theologians Have Come Up With:
        - We Will Use Biblical Theology As The Primary Method:
          - To See What God Tells Us About The End Times!
4. Well - Another Important Level Of Stones:
  - In Our Foundation Of This Series:
    - Has To Do With:
      - How We Can Interpret & Understand:
        - Biblical Prophecy!
    - This Is A Whole Different Discipline:
      - **Called “Biblical *Hermeneutics!*”**
        - “Hermeneutics” Is Just A Big-Fancy Word:
          - That Means Interpretation Or Explanation!
  - So - When We Come To:
    - Passages In The Bible - Both In The OT & The NT:
      - That Deal With Prophecy About Future Events:
        - How Do We Interpret:
          - What We Read?
5. This Is An Important Question:
  - Because Of How God Chose To Give Us The Bible!
    - He Chose Different Authors - About 40 Of Them:
      - That Wrote In Different Times Throughout History:

- Over 1,400 Years - Even Living:
    - In Different Cultural Settings:
      - Even Though They Were All Jews!
  - And - Those Authors:
    - Each Had Different Personalities:
      - Different Abilities - And Even Used:
        - Different Vocabularies!
  - Yet - Each Was Inspired By God:
    - To Write Down His Words:
      - In Their Language!
  - Inspiration:
    - Is Truly A Miraculous & A Magnificent:
      - Doctrine!
  - But - With Such A Wide Variety:
    - Of Writers - You Would Also Expect:
      - A Wide Variety:
        - In Their Writings!
          - And That Certainly *Is* The Case:
            - With Our Bibles!
6. There Are A Number Of Different:
- **Genres** – Types / Classes – Of Literature:
    - That We Find In The Bible!
  - Some Of Them:
    - Are Similar To Genres:
      - That We Find In Secular Literature!
        - Like - The Books Of History & Wisdom & Poetry! (Genesis / Exodus / Acts / Proverbs / Psalms / Job)
  - Other Genres That We Find In The Bible:
    - Are Unique To The Bible Itself:
      - Including - The Books Of The Law & The Gospels!
        - As Well As The Books Of:
          - Doctrine (Epistles) & ***Prophecy!***
            - (Paul’s Books / Major & Minor Prophets / Revelation)
  - So - Because Of The Differences:
    - Between These Kinds Of Writing:
      - There Are Different Principles & “Keys”:
      - That Will Help Us:
        - Open Up What God Is Telling Us In Those Texts!
7. **So - Since Biblical Eschatology:**
- Is Primarily Related To:
    - The Genre Of Prophecy In The Bible:
      - There Are Certain “Keys” And:
        - “Principles Of Prophecy” That We Need To Consider:
          - In Order To Interpret What We Read In The Right Way!
  - So - The First Key & Principle:
    - To Interpreting Biblical Prophecy:
      - Is To Understand:
1. **The Point Of Prophecy!**
- The Primary Point Of Prophecy!
    - Now - There Will Be Some More:
      - “Principles” That We Will Look At Next Week:
        - But For This Morning - We Will Just Be Looking At:
          - This One!
    - Because - All Too Often - When We Think About Prophecy:
      - We Think In Terms Of:
        - What The Bible Tells Us:
          - About The Future!
      - But - In Fact - Most Of The Prophecy:

- In The Bible Tells Us:
    - About The Past!
  - Because - When God Gave:
    - Prophecy - He Used His Servants:
      - Called "Prophets!"
        - Which Simply Meant That They Were God's "Spokesmen!"
        - They Were To Speak For God To His People!
  - So - To Understand The Writings Of The Prophets:
    - We Need To Know Some Things:
      - About The Prophets Themselves!
        - So - 3 Questions - To Help Us Understand The Primary Point Of Prophecy!
  - **First Question - What Did Prophets Do?**
    - In Speaking For God:
      - Their Ministry Was Two-Fold!
        - First & Primarily - They Were:
          - Forth-Tellers!
            - They Simply Related God's Word:
              - To God's People!
                - Though, Sometimes, Their Ministry Extended To Other Nations & Other People!
            - The First Man Called A Prophet In The Bible Is Abraham (Genesis 20:7)
              - But - Then - When We Come To:
                - The People & The Nation Of Israel:
                  - We Find Prophets All Over The Place!
            - But - The Words They Spoke And/Or Wrote:
              - Were Not Communicated:
                - In A Vacuum!
            - **As Forth-Tellers:**
              - They Were Always Speaking In Terms:
                - Of God's Covenant With Them!
              - The Covenant That God Made:
                - With The Children Of Israel:
                  - At Mt. Sinai!
- Exodus 19:4-6a, 8a - God To Moses To The People - "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. / Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: / And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation!" These [are] the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. / 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do!"
  - So - The Covenant Was Made By God:
    - And Willingly Ratified By The People!
  - But - How Often:
    - Did The Children Of Israel:
      - Break God's Covenant & Commandments?
        - Too Often To Count!
      - But - God Remained Faithful & Merciful!
  - So - It Was The Primary Job Of The Prophets:
    - To Call God's People:
      - Back To God's Covenant:
        - And Back To God Himself!
      - Dr. Walt Russell - Described Them As:
        - "Covenant Enforcement Mediators!"
  - So - Most Of The Time:
    - The Ministry Of The Prophet:
      - Looked Back:
        - To God's Covenant & Purposes & Promises:
          - To Persuade The People To Return!
  - But Then - Another Aspect Of Their Ministry:
    - Even - The Smaller Part - Was To Be:

- **Fore-Tellers!**

- At Times:
  - The Ministry Of The Prophet:
    - Looked **Forward:**
      - To The Future!
  - But - Even Then - It Was Usually:
    - In Relation To God's **Covenant:**
      - And His Promises!
- When You Look At The Writings Of The Prophets:
  - In The Old Testament - Only About 5%:
    - Deals With The Future:
      - New Covenant!
  - Only About 2%:
    - Deals With The Future:
      - About The Messiah! And
  - Only About **1%**:
    - Deals With The Future:
      - Of The End Times!
- And - Most Futuristic Prophecy:
  - Is About The Immediate Or Near Future:
    - In Order To Inform:
      - The People - Or:
    - In Order To Validate:
      - The **Prophet!**
- So - When It Comes To Our Study Of The End Times:
  - We Need To Remember That:
    - The Majority Of The Time - Prophecy:
      - Is Meant To Call God's People To Greater Faithfulness:
        - To God & His Covenant!
  - Not Primarily For Speculation:
    - But For **Sanctification!**
      - Like We Saw In 1 John 3:2-3 - "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. / And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure!"
- But - Whether A Prophet:
  - Was Forth-Telling Or Fore-Telling:
    - The Words Of God:
      - It Was All-In-All A Rather **Thankless & Risky** Task!
  - Remember Jesus' Parable Of The Householder?
    - In It - He Describes The Treatment:
      - Of God's Servants - The Prophets!
  - Matthew 21:35-39 - "And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. / Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. / But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. / But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. / And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him!"
    - Who Would Want To Be A Prophet:
      - With That Kind Of Career Path?
        - But - That Was What They Were Often Called To Do! But Then:

- **Second Question - What Did Prophets Know?**

- This Is Another Important Question:
  - In Interpreting The Writings Of The Prophets:
    - Especially Their "Fore-Telling" Of:
      - Future & Even End-Times Events!
        - What Did They Know?
  - For The Most Part:
    - Their Knowledge:

- Was **Limited!**

- The Apostle Peter:

- Describes This Limitation For Us:

- In 1 Peter 1:10-12 - "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace [that should come] unto you: / Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. / Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into!"

- We See From This That The Knowledge Of The Prophets Was Frequently:

- **Limited In Scope!**

- God Only Let Them See:

- What He Wanted Them To See!

- They Could Only Communicate "According To The Measure Of Light And Knowledge Communicated To Them!" (Gill)

- And - Much Of What They Knew:

- They Too Had To Learn The Old-Fashioned Way!

- Reading & Study & Prayer!

- Most Of The Time, They Had To "Search Diligently" Themselves!

- "In The Use Of Means; By Prayer And Supplication; By Reading The Prophecies That Went Before; By Observing The Types, Shadows, And Sacrifices Of The Law; And By Waiting Upon The Lord For The Inspiration Of His Spirit!" (Gill)

- An Example Of This Is One Of The Great Prophets:

- That We Think Of - When It Comes To:

- Eschatology - Is Daniel!

- But - Remember When God:

- Revealed To Him Much Of His Prophecy - From Chapters 9-12?

- Daniel 9:2-3 - "In the first year of his reign – Darius The Son Of Ahasuerus – I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. / And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes!"

- This Is How It All Started!

- Daniel Studied God's Word & Spent Time Praying & Confessing To The Lord!

- And Then:

- Daniel 9:22-24 - The Angel Gabriel Came - "And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. / At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. / Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy!"

- Now - There's A Lot That God Chose To Reveal To Daniel Through Gabriel There!

- But Even This Shows A Limitation To His Knowledge! It Was:

- **Limited In Time!**

- Gabriel Tells Daniel Events:

- That Appear To Take Place:

- In Rapid Succession:

- After - *Not* Just The 70 Years Of Captivity, *But* 70 Weeks Of Years!

- To Daniel - It Might Seem:

- As If It Will All Take Place At Once!

- But - As History Has Borne Out:

- There Are Often "**Gaps**" In The Timing Of Prophetic Events:

- That God Chose Not To Reveal To His Prophets!

- **Third Question - What Did The Prophets Mean?**

- This Is Another Important Question:

- When Considering The “Point Of Prophecy!”
  - Not Only Did They:
    - Forth-Tell Or Fore-Tell:
      - In Terms Of God’s Covenant!
- They Also Would Use:
  - Words & Phrases & Figures Of Speech:
    - And Illustrations - Even Of Future Things:
      - That Their Audience Would **Understand!**
- We Must Be **Careful:**
  - Not To Read Prophecy:
    - In An “Anachronistic” Way!
      - That Is - Reading Our Time:
        - Back Into Their Time!
      - Or Even - Reading Their Time:
        - Into Our Time!
  - So - Even Though:
    - Biblical Prophecy:
      - Is Relevant:
        - For All Ages!
    - Yet - The Reason For That Prophecy:
      - Specifically Applies:
        - For That Age!
  - And - That Should Be:
    - Where We Begin:
      - With Any Text About The Future:
        - Or The End Times!
    - What Was The Meaning:
      - Of It - For The Prophet:
        - And The Original Audience?
          - And Then - See How It Applies To Us!

**Conclusion:**

1. So - To Help Us Understand More:
  - About This Question:
    - “What Did The Prophets Mean?”
      - We Will Look At - Next Week:
        - Six Special Principles:
          - For The Proper Interpretation:
            - Of Prophecy!
2. But - For Now:
  - Remember That:
    - **The Primary Point Of All Prophecy:**
      - Was & Is:
        - To Call God’s People:
          - Into A Closer **Walk** & Relationship With Him!
    - The Primary Point:
      - Of Learning About Prophecy & Eschatology:
        - Is Not The What:
          - Or Even The Why:
            - But The Who!

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