

“That Blessed Hope”
Principles Of Prophecy
Part 1

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday:
 - We Started Looking At:
 - Some Of The “Keys” That Will:
 - Help Us “Unlock” What:
 - The Bible Tells Us:
 - About The End Times!
 - Those “Keys” Are:
 - Special Principles Of Interpretation:
 - That Are Part Of:
 - A Special Biblical Discipline:
 - Known As “Hermeneutics!”
2. Well - Last Week:
 - We Looked At Just One:
 - Of Those Principles:
 - And That Was:
 - **“The Point Of Prophecy!”**
 - If You Recall:
 - We Learned That:
 - The Primary Point Of All Biblical Prophecy:
 - Is To Call God’s People:
 - Into A Closer ***Walk*** & Relationship With Him!
 - And This Would Apply To:
 - Both Old & New Testament Prophecy!
 - To Be Sure:
 - There Are Other Points & Reasons:
 - For Prophecy As Well!
 - Like - To Inform As Well As To Warn!
 - But - It All Takes Place In The Context Of:
 - Drawing God’s People Closer To Himself!
3. To Help Us Understand:
 - This Primary Point Of Prophecy:
 - **We Looked At Three Questions:**
 - That We Should Ask Ourselves:
 - About God’s Prophets - When We Are Looking More Closely At Their Prophecies!
 - The First Question Is:
 - What Did The Prophets Do?
 - Well - We Learned That They Had A Two-Fold Ministry!
 - Most Of The Time:
 - They Were Forth-Telling God’s Words To God’s People In Terms Of God’s Covenant!
 - And Then - From Time To Time:
 - They Would Fore-Tell God’s Plan & Promises!
 - And - In Both Cases:
 - They Were Calling God’s People:
 - Back To The Lord!
 - The Second Question Is:
 - What Did The Prophets Know?
 - Well - We Learned That In May Ways:
 - Their Knowledge Was Limited!
 - Limited In Both Scope & Time!
 - And - The Third Question Is:
 - What Did The Prophets Mean?
4. Well - There Are:

- **Six Other Principles Of Prophecy:**

- That We Are Going To Look At This Morning:
 - That Will Help Us:
 - With That Third Question!
 - What Did The Prophets Mean?
- You See - Most Of The Time:
 - Prophecy Was Written:
 - In A Way That Would Both Appeal To & Apply To:
 - The People To Whom:
 - That Prophecy Was Originally Given!
- And So - The First Of These Special:
 - Six Principles Of Prophecy Is This:

1. **The Phrasing Of Prophecy:**

- Much Of What I Will Be Sharing:
 - In Today's Lesson:
 - Is Derived From:
 - A Study On "The End Times" Published By:
 - The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.
 - And - Even Though:
 - Some Of Their Conclusions About The End Times:
 - May Be Different Than Our Own:
 - It Shows Us That These Basic Principles Of Interpretation Are Used By Bible-Believers Of All Denominations!
- And So - When It Comes To:
 - The Phrasing & The Words:
 - Of Prophecy - One Of The Most Important Things To Remember Is That:
 - So Much Is Given To Us:
 - **In Symbolic Language!**
 - And - The Simple Reason For This Is:
 - Prophecy Is Different:
 - Than The Other Forms / Genres:
 - Of Biblical Literature!
 - And - One Of The Primary Tools:
 - In The Prophet's Rhetorical Toolbox:
 - Was Symbolism!
- So - When We Start Reading & Studying Prophecy:
 - "The Goal Of The Interpreter Must Be To Seek The One **Intended** Or **Literal** Sense Of The Text, And To Do So With The Recognition That God In Some Cases Has Chosen To Convey Meaning Through Symbolism And Figures Of Speech!"
 - Now - This Is An Important Principle!
 - Because - So Often - When We Say:
 - We Take The Bible "Literally" - That Should Not Mean:
 - That We Ignore The Common Ways People Communicate - Both Then & Now!
 - For Example:
 - If I Say To My Wife:
 - "I'm Going To Run To The Store!"
 - She Knows That I Am Not "Literally" Going To "Run" My Poor Legs Off To Walmart!
 - She Understand That My "Running":
 - Is Just A Figure Of Speech:
 - To Tell Her That I Am "Going" To The Store - Most Likely:
 - In Our Car!
 - So - To Take The Bible "Literally":
 - Means That We Are Trying To Understand:
 - The True Sense Of The Authors Words!
- Some Common Figures Of **Speech**:
 - That We Should Be On The Look-Out For:

- Are These:
- Metaphors - Where Two Or More Things Are Compared Using Figurative Or Descriptive Language!
 - Isaiah 64:8 - "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand!"
- Similes - Makes A Comparison Using The Words "Like" Or "As!"
 - Ezekiel 1:15-16 - "Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. / The appearance of the wheels and their work was *like unto* the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was *as it were* a wheel in the middle of a wheel!"
 - Here - Ezekiel Is Trying To Describe What He Saw In His Vision - Using The Knowledge, Experience, Vocabulary He Had!
- Metonymy - When One Word Or Phrase Is Substituted For Another With Which It Is Closely Associated!
 - Mt. Zion Can Be Considered In This Way!
 - In The Historical Books:
 - Mt. Zion Is The Physical Mountain Upon Which God's Temple Was Built!
 - But - In The Prophetical Books:
 - Mt. Zion Can Refer To Jesus Christ & Heaven Itself!
 - We See This Principle:
 - In Hebrews 12:22 - "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels!"
- There Are Other Common Figures Of Speech:
 - That We Need To Be Aware Of:
 - To Properly Understand And Interpret:
 - Biblical Prophecy!
 - But - Just Be Aware:
 - That The Prophets Were People:
 - Just Like Us - Communicating God's Truth:
 - To People Like Us - Using Common Language - To Convey Their Message In An Understandable Way!
- So - To Take The Bible & Prophecy "Literally":
 - Includes Taking Into Account:
 - Common Figures Of Speech!
 - Another Principle Of Prophecy Has To Do With:

2. **The Perspective Of Prophecy:**

- This Is Something That We Just Touched On:
 - Last Week - And That Is:
 - "Biblical Prophecy Often Does Not Picture For Us The Intervening Centuries Which Lie As Valleys Between The High Points Of Salvation History!"
- This Is What Prophetic Fore-Telling:
 - Often Looks Like:
 - **Mountain Tops & Valleys:**
 - With No Knowledge Of How Long Those Valleys Will Last!
 - One Key Example:
 - Of This Kind Of Perspective:
 - Is Found In The Old Testament Prophecy:
 - Of Joel - Who Lived & Wrote:
 - Between 835 - 796 BC!
 - He Was Commissioned By God:
 - To Warn His People:
 - Of His Impending Judgment - And:
 - To Call Them Back!
- **In Joel 1:2 - 2:27:**
 - His Focus Is On:
 - The **Immediate** Future:
 - And The Swarm Of Locusts That Will Come Upon Israel:
 - As Part Of God's Judgment!
 - And - He Calls Them:
 - To Repentance!

- 2:13 - And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil!”

- But Then - **In Joel 2:28-29:**

- He Prophecies Something That:

- Is In The ***Distant*** Future!

- “And it shall come to pass afterward, [that] I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: / And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit!”

- And The Reason We Know This Does Not Describe Something That Took Place In Joel’s Time Is Because Of How The Apostle Peter Uses These Verses - In Acts 2:16-18 - To Describe What Happened On The Day Of Pentecost:

- “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel!” (Then Quotes Joel 2:28-29)

- But Then - From **Joel 2:30 - 3:21:**

- Joel Describes Something That Is Even More:

- In The Distant Future - The ***Second*** Coming!

- 2:30-31 - “And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. / The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come!”

- So - There Are Large Gaps Of Time:

- Between These Three Major “High Points” Of Joel’s Prophecy!

- Yet - He Writes As If They Are Going To Happen:

- One Right After Another:

- In Rapid Succession!

- And - This Is Not An:

- Uncommon Situation In Prophecy:

- Both OT & NT!

- This Is Also Known As:

- Prophetic “Fore-***Shortening!***”

- So - “Events In the Near And Distant Future Are Often Telescoped Into One Picture!”

- Another Principle Of Prophecy Has To Do With:

3. **The Period Of Prophecy:**

- This Is Just A Reminder That:

- The Prophecies Were Written:

- During Definite Life-Situations:

- For Both The Prophet & The People!

- And That Is Why:

- We Need To - “Ascertain What The Text Meant In Its Historical Situation!”

- This Principle Of Hermeneutics:

- Is Known As The **“Grammatical-Historical Approach”** To Biblical Interpretation!

- All This Means Is That:

- There Were Certain Ways:

- That ***They*** Thought & Wrote:

- That Might Be Quite Different:

- Than The Way We Think & Write!

- So - The Culture & The Traditions:

- Of God’s People In The Old Testament:

- Will Have Some Bearing On:

- How The Prophets:

- Will Convey God’s Message To Them!

- This Can Also Be Described As:

- The “Historical Coloring” Of A Prophecy!

- Because - Most Of The Time - Prophets:

- “Delivered Their Oracles In Terms Which Their Original Hears Could Understand!”

- This Would Even Be True:

- About The Book Of Revelation!
 - The Title Of The Book Simply Means:
 - **“To Remove The Veil” - From:**
 - The Greek Word:
 - αποκάλυψις
 - And - As John Tells Us In:
 - Revelation 1:1 - Jesus Gave Him This “Revelation” - “To shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass!”
 - Not Just His Servants Now, But Then!
- So - An Important Question Is This:
 - How Did They Understand His Words Then?
 - Once You Uncover That:
 - You Are Well On Your Way To Understand:
 - The Proper Meaning Of Those Words Now!

Conclusion:

1. So - Hopefully - This Helps Give You:
 - A Better Idea Of How We Need To Approach:
 - The Prophecies Given To Us In The Bible:
 - Especially About The End Times!
2. Think About These This Week:
 - So That We Can Review Them Next Week:
 - And Take Any Questions You Might Have!
3. To Close:
 - **Titus 2:13** - “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!”

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