

PROPHECY PREDICTS A HOME FOR YOU

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You have been adopted into the family of God. That family is in heaven and it extends to this earth. He is leading you. He is drawing you by the cross. If you do not hinder Him, He will show you where to be nourished, where to be prepared for His soon return in the clouds of glory. He has a family for you on this earth.

Does God have a true church in the world today? Out of all the hundreds of different kinds of churches, is there one that God claims as “the woman” of Revelation 12? Bible prophecy brings into focus an end-time movement that would be the beginning of His remnant people who would see Jesus come the second time.

Before the first coming of Jesus, God sent a prophet, John the Baptist, to prepare the way of the Lord. He was the “Elijah message” for his day to call Israel back to God from its wanderings. Likewise, God has raised up a prophetic movement in these last days to proclaim the “Elijah message” in order to make way and prepare a people for the second coming of Jesus.

We have learned from King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream regarding the great statute that four successive empires would rule the world. In Daniel chapter 8 are a succession of three of these empires represented by sacrificial animals. The first is a ram. “Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great” (Daniel 8:3, 4). This is the kingdom of the Medes and Persians which dispatched the Babylonians and took over the world.

They were then struck by a male goat. “And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before

him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand” (Daniel 8:5-7). This goat was the Grecian Empire with its general, Alexander the Great.

Prophecy has a succinct way of describing the downfall of centuries-old empires. “Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven” (Daniel 8:8). When Alexander suddenly died, his four understudies carved up the Greek territory into little kingdoms for themselves.

Looming on the western horizon was the small Republic of Rome. “And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land” (Daniel 8:9). Rome soon developed its expansionist policies on the assumption that it was delivering little city-states from their oppressors and spreading its own democratic freedom. However, the Roman deliverers soon became the occupiers and over the course of centuries the Empire spread out and took in the whole then-known world, including Palestine.

These three successive pagan empires of Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, which absorbed the religions and cultures preceding it, eventually rotted from the inside out and were so weakened that it turned to the rising strength of Christianity to perpetuate itself. Christianity took up paganism within itself and Christianized it. “And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host” (Daniel 8:10, 11). Romanism challenged the God of heaven and persecuted the leaders and numbers who faithfully served God. It was Roman authority that the Jewish’ leaders appealed to in crucifying the Son of God.

“And by him the daily [sacrifice] was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down” (Daniel 8:11). Papal Rome displaced and absorbed Pagan Rome, “the daily,” by taking up so many of its practices and Christianizing them. The Pope was ceded the capital city of Rome, by the Emperor Justinian himself, who resided in Constantinople.

In Daniel’s vision he was made privy to a conversation between Gabriel and “the Wonderful Numberer.” The angel was asking a question that surely was on the mind of Daniel having seen all the

horrors of world history portrayed by the animals. “Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” (Daniel 8:13). When would God’s truth be vindicated? When would things be made right? When would evil and paganism and the God-defying, counterfeit Christianity be overturned in favor of God and His truth?

Then “the Wonderful Numberer,” Jesus, who knows the end from the beginning told Daniel: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14). Following the end of these times Jesus would proceed to restore all truth, all God’s love, and bring into at-one-ment with God all those who choose to be reconciled to Him.

And so these times of 2,300 days or prophetic years are the longest time prophecy in the Bible. They encompass a good chunk of human history from God’s perspective.

In order to explain so much time, 2,300 years, God orders Gabriel to make known to Daniel smaller chunks of time within the larger time parameters. In so doing, Gabriel helps us to understand when this 2,300 years begins and ends.

He says, “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” (Daniel 9:24). Seventy weeks of years, or 490 years, were allotted Daniel’s people, the Jews, to embrace all the wonderful things that would happen during that time and spread the good news to the world. As you see from the list it includes the forgiveness of sins, a heart-reconciliation of the nation to their Saviour, which would confirm the validity of the time prophecy.

This smaller chunk of time, 490 years, was further subdivided into three smaller time periods. “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Daniel 9:25).

In Daniel’s time the city of Jerusalem and the Temple lay in ruins as he and his fellows were in Babylonian captivity. But a time soon came with the coming in of that second world empire, the

Medes and Persians, that their king, Artaxerxes, made a decree in 457 B.C., that the Jews could return to Palestine and rebuild. So for seven weeks of years, 49 years, the construction went on. Now their missionary base was restored intact.

Now Gabriel assured Daniel of the long-looked for Messiah. “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself” (Daniel 9:26). Following another 434 years the Messiah would be killed. Prophecy always takes us to the cross.

Jesus never cherished a thought for Himself when He chose to go to the cross. He only had thoughts of love and forgiveness for sinners and His enemies when He hung upon the tree. He uttered those words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). That prayer of forgiveness was not alone for the Roman soldiers who crucified Him, but it was for all the world of sinners. It was for you.

His death was an eternal separation from His Father. He felt Himself the accursed load of sin which the law of the universe consigns to eternal annihilation. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). That “death” is not the kind of death we are familiar with. What we know as “death” at funerals is a “sleep.” Jesus has assured us that everyone that is in the graves will hear His voice, both good and bad, and will be resurrected (John 5:29). No one yet, in human history, has died the kind of death Jesus chose to die for us and our sins. Thank God He did that so we may never have to experience it!

And so prophecy pinpoints the death of Jesus in the year 31 A.D. “And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:27). In the final week of years, 7 years, of the 490 years given to the Jewish people, Jesus died. God’s everlasting covenant required the death of the righteous One for its fulfillment and confirmation.

The better promises of God’s covenant are to reconcile sinners to God, wholly and completely. This is called the atonement—to make one with God. Jesus, as our sin-bearer, bridged the impassable gulf between the world of sinners and God, by triumphing over sin which He bore in His body on the tree. He, the sinless one, actually bore our sin as an actual substitute. His was a perfect sacrifice for the atonement of sin. There is no greater love! He paid the price for our redemption—separation from His Father. That is what He uses to draw us to Himself.

But now at the end of the 2,300 years, some 1,810 years beyond the 490 years allotted the Jewish nation, Jesus sees that the time has come for the atonement to be completed in the hearts of fully mature Christians who see and appreciate His death for them on the cross. "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14). This cleansing comes time-wise commencing in 1844 A.D. This cleansing involves the atonement work not alone in His sanctuary where He ministers as High Priest, but it must first be received as His gift to our hearts to stop the pollution of sin which originates there.

This was most assuredly taught in the sandbox model of the sanctuary in the wilderness which Moses was instructed to build. "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). Here, daily, throughout the year, a morning and evening sacrifice was performed by the priests, representing the death of Jesus. By faith, genuine believers, confessed their sins to the Lord, and they looked to the blood of their Saviour represented by sacrificial animals, for cleansing.

On the occasion of certain offenses a convicted one would bring an appropriate sacrifice from his own inventory of livestock to make confession upon it, but he knew that the real sinbearer was the Promised One.

All sin was retained by the Lord's house until the close of the ritual year, when an annual audit occurred and the accounts were justified. It was known as the Day of Atonement. Earnest hearts were called upon to set aside all work and participate in the proceedings. By faith they followed their representative High Priest into the Most Holy of the tabernacle to make atonement for sin.

This atonement was on behalf of the whole church, however, each individual was called upon by the Lord to confess their sinfulness and repent. They were to acknowledge that all their righteousness was to be found in God.

This is a very helpful illustration of what Jesus is doing on behalf of all true believers today in His heavenly sanctuary. "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1, 2). His "true tabernacle" is a real place not made with human hands. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater

and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building” (Hebrews 9:11).

God is serious about taking you to Himself. He has prepared a place for you. You are adopted into His heavenly family. In order for you to feel at home there and not afraid, Jesus gives you personally, the gift of reconciling your heart to Himself. He is inviting you to open your heart, to receive the atonement. This involves Him giving you the promised Holy Spirit. “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5). This love of God is His ten commandments. This is God’s righteousness which He imparts to you. It is love to God and love to fellow man upon which all the law is founded.

Nothing less than Christian perfection of character, is contemplated by the promise of God’s everlasting covenant. “For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14).

Previous generations of Christians could never have comprehended the fullness of the gospel as to its meaning the forgiveness of sins and the giving of Christ’s righteous love to perfect our characters. The early Christian believers such as the Apostle Paul taught this gospel. But then, there came a falling away from the faith and a long journey into apostasy. This, as we have seen, was prophetically forecast. Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Wesley, Baptists and others only half-understood the meaning of the cross and the atonement. And God was merciful to them. He knew that the time was not right to reveal the fullness of light. But when in His wisdom He had given the 2300-year prophecy that in 1844 the final atonement would commence, then God set in motion certain events that would open the understanding of earnest Christians in the last days.

In the 19th century a sincere Christian by the name of William Miller, a Baptist, saw some signs in the heavens which prompted him to study his Bible sensing that the end was near. He studied Daniel’s prophecies and concluded that the “cleansing of the sanctuary” was the renovation of this old earth by fire at the second coming of Christ. And so he believed that the coming of Jesus would be soon after 1844.

This is what he proclaimed throughout the United States wherever invited. Many agreed with him and joined in a mighty movement of thousands. Publishers and pamphleteers, preachers

and lay-people alike anticipated seeing Jesus. It was one of the purest of revivals and reformations that Christianity had seen without any undue fanaticism and excitement. Their hearts were pure and they loved the thought of Jesus' coming. To them it was "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). To see Jesus coming in the clouds of glory without seeing death—that was giving Him His reward for which He died!

Of course, 1844 passed and there was a Great Disappointment. Obviously, the word of God was not in error, the problem lay in their understanding of it. So they went back to their Bibles praying for insight. They then discovered that the "cleansing of the sanctuary" involved Jesus' heavenly sanctuary. And all those on earth who followed Him in His High Priestly work into the most holy would receive greater light and truth to enable them to cooperate with their Saviour in the cleansing of their lives from sin.

These, then, became a nucleus of believers in the mid-nineteenth century, whose fondest hopes and dreams were fixed on Jesus and being ready for His coming. They desired to follow the light He gave them, however contrary to their past traditional beliefs.

They came together in some Bible conferences and studied the word of God and prayed together. Whenever they couldn't come to agreement, they asked for the Lord's help to bring them into the unity of the faith, and this He did.

God showed them the sanctuary truth. Then as they saw heaven's door opened into the most holy, light was cast upon the ark of God. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament" (Revelation 11:19). They began to realize how important God's ten commandments were as contained in that ark.

It wasn't long before one, Joseph Bates, had an encounter with a Seventh-day Baptist woman, Rachel Oakes Preston, and she brought to his attention that the seventh day was the Sabbath of the Lord as revealed in the fourth commandment. Bates was an Adventist and he shared this new-found truth to the others. Upon receiving it they dropped their Sunday worship and work on Saturday and worshiped the Lord on His day. This was part of the righteousness of Jesus.

They soon discovered the monstrous fraud of Satan's lie in the garden of Eden when he told Eve "thou shalt not surely die." Sin has subjected us to mortality. Death is not the gateway to heaven or hell.

It is entry into the grave to await the resurrection when Jesus calls forth the dead. The Adventists accepted this new light.

And, so on and on, each new truth was embraced. The 1,000 years was not the kingdom of God on this earth, during which the wicked would be given a second chance and be saved. The door of mercy closed shortly before Christ's second coming, and the millennium was to be spent in heaven with Jesus by all those who embrace the Saviour.

In addition to this, we can know the true church for you, from prophecy predicts a home for you in these last days. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). Here are its characteristics:

(1) It is a church that the devil hates. We can join most churches and the devil will not oppose us. There is no opposition from the world.

(2) It teaches the same doctrines as the woman "clothed with the sun" in verse 1. It has the same faith as the church of the apostles. The true church is one throughout history. If we see a train enter a tunnel, we will see the same train emerge at the other end of the tunnel. The church of the apostles went into the "tunnel" at the beginning of the 1,260 years of persecution, as it fled into the "wilderness." When it emerges again in full view before the world, it will be the same church in spirit and in faith as it was originally. It holds the same body of truth through the centuries.

"The remnant" means the last part of the descendants of the apostolic church—Christ's true followers in the very end of time. If we buy a piece of cloth from the beginning of a bolt, it will have a certain pattern and color. If we later should buy the "remnant" of that bolt of cloth, it will have exactly the same pattern and color as the first piece we bought. Many churches have added so many teachings borrowed from paganism and traditions of men that the apostles would never be able to recognize the "pattern" today.

(3) The true church "keep the commandments of God." James tells us that if we break one of the ten commandments, we are guilty of breaking them all (James 2:10-12). Therefore, it cannot truthfully be said that any church is keeping the commands of God if it keeps only nine of them. Almost all popular churches today continue to transgress the fourth commandment, which says: "The seventh day is

the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work” (Exodus 20:10).

All the crime, selfishness and infidelity that poison modern life are the direct result of violating the ten commandments of God. The Sabbath stands as the seal of that holy law.

If that one commandment (or any other) is violated, no true obedience of the other nine remains possible, for the motive is no longer love for God and loyalty to Him. Keeping the true Sabbath is just as important as keeping the other commandments that God wrote with His own finger. And to keep the commandments of God is to love as God loves. “Love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10). God’s true church is therefore a church which is filled with the love of Christ, supreme love for God, and Christ-like love for our neighbor.

(4) The true church has “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” John explains this for us as being “the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). “God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets” (1 Corinthians 12:28). The gift of prophecy did not die out with the apostles. Jesus gave this gift to His church when “He ascended on high” (Ephesians 4:8, 11), and the gift was to remain with the church through all time right up to the second coming of Christ, because it was given “for the equipping of the saints till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man” (Ephesians 4:12-14).

The “spirit of prophecy” does not take the place of the Bible, nor does it contradict any Bible teachings. “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (1 Corinthians 14:32).

Jesus’ book of prophecy has predicted there would be a home for you in these last days. When we go on a journey, at the end of the day, we like to know that there is a room for us. So we call ahead and make reservations. There is a sense of security in knowing you are welcome and there’s a place to rest your head at night.

Jesus wants you to know that in these troublous times He has prepared a place for you here where He can nurture you. He gives you the gift of cleansing your character from His heavenly sanctuary in order to prepare you for His second coming. He has a special place of fellowship on this earth, His body, where other fellow travelers are assembled each Sabbath day and you are supported. You can pray. There you are joined in mutual faith.

Each one who yields himself to follow Christ will be led to the true church. “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock, and one shepherd” (John 10:16).

Friday night’s topic is “The Holy Spirit and the Unpardonable Sin.”