



### *Making Personal Application of Prophecy*

*And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"*

*Luke 18:6-9*

*Both the Greek and Hebrew words translated into English as "faith" can also be translated "faithfulness". Switching back and forth between the two every time you come across the word "faith" in Scripture helps tremendously to understand what is really being taught. The spiritual corollary to "You are what you eat" might be "Your faith is how you behave." Faith in Christ is putting His Word into practice, living a changed life here and now according to His requirements as proof that we believe all the other things promised for the future will come true. When Christ returns, will He find faithfulness? Because that's the actual proof of whether or not someone truly believes.*

There are a lot of people in God's kingdom dedicated to informing us about Christ's return. There are literally thousands upon thousands of web sites, books, articles, seminars, and speakers. I seriously praise God that He has given them the wisdom and skills to communicate to us the meaning of God's Word when it comes to the End Times.

Some of them have ministries focused on reaching the unsaved, while others are God's watchmen for what is happening in the church. This latter group is of particular interest to me as the most oft-repeated

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event mentioned throughout both Testaments when it comes to the End Times is spiritual deception and the resulting apostasy (a great, spiritual falling away). The very first words out of Christ's own mouth as He began to explain the End Times was, *"See to it that no one misleads you."* (Matthew 24:4) We have many faithful servants today who are dedicated to the mostly thankless job of identifying those who are doing their very best to mislead us.

But I have wondered why they're mostly ignored. As I pointed out in a discussion with one of these watchmen, no one seems to remove false teachers or false prophets because their teaching is biblically wrong and they've been universally identified by all the watchmen as deceivers, but only when they finally engage in personal behavior too publicly egregious to ignore.

The most recent in a very long line of examples of my frustration was the very public "fall" of Ted Haggard and his removal from ministry. He is someone about whom our watchmen have been sounding the alarm for years and years and **YEARS**, and yet more and more people flocked to him with very few turning away. Even when his personal indiscretions caused his removal, there was no moment of epiphany where the thousands following him all said, "Ah! They were right! He **IS** a false teacher. We need to repent and truly follow God's Word." Ted may be gone, but the people cling to the same false teachings he perpetuated with a different personality in the pulpit. Why aren't they listening? Why do they seem incapable of learning the right lesson from the experience?

The role of a prophet today is just like that in the Old Testament. Just taking Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel as an example – authors of three of largest books in the Bible – place all their words concerning future, prophetic events on one side of the page and on the other side place everything else of which they spoke. (Yes, it's a *very* long page.) Comparatively speaking, they prophesy very little about future events and spend much more time talking about...what, exactly?

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*Faithfulness.* Yes, living according to God's Word and ways in the here and now!

The true role of a prophet is a kind of evangelist to God's people, calling them back to sincere repentance from having strayed from His Word to live a life exclusively dedicated to His Word. Occasionally they say, "Looky here at what God is going to do in the future," but they actually spend far more time saying, "Looky here at what God is going to do if you don't start walking the walk."

You see, some of our modern-day prophets are frustrated with the response, too. I see it most often expressed in articles they publish which incorporate the phrase, "No one is listening to prophecy." They go on to explain how regardless of how often or how well they explain biblical prophecies which are being fulfilled in our day, there are large numbers within the church proper who are unresponsive and continuing to be deceived. Why won't they listen? Why can't the veil of deception be penetrated?

I would respectfully suggest that when our watchmen say such things, they're most often talking about the "small side of the page" when it comes to "prophecy", those Scriptures referring to future, End Times events. The answer to their question is really that the people who are not responding to **THAT** kind of prophecy are the ones who are ignoring the "large side of the page" – the prophetic call to be personally and daily obedient to the Word of God He's already given.

The Bible clearly teaches that people are not "trapped" into spiritual deception but *given over* to it.

*For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who **did not believe** the truth, but **took pleasure** in wickedness.*

*2 Thessalonians 2:11-12*

Their continued unfaithfulness, their unwavering commitment to pleasing themselves and refusing to put God's Word into practice in their life results in God finally giving them over to it. They were deceiving themselves that they could behave any way they wanted and, in the end, they're given over to it completely. It's not the result of being "tricked" or "duped", but the natural end of their personal choices. They "get" what they so ardently pursued.

So on the one hand I want to put my arm around our watchmen the way God did with Samuel and say, *"They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."* (1 Samuel 8:7) Or when He told Ezekiel that they *"will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me."* (Ezekiel 3:7)

But I also want to say to the rest of us that what we need is a call to repentance from personal sin with a commitment to live according to God's Word going forward. When such people finally repent of seeking to satisfy their own desire, and put the Word of God He's already given into practice so as to actually embrace God's will and ways from the heart, they will become responsive to the watchmen explaining the fulfillment of the Word of God for the things to come. Yielding to the cry of the prophet to repent and return to the cross results in their ultimately responding to the rest of the prophet's message concerning the future. Faithfulness is the only thing that can cure faithlessness.

I have strongly (and purposely) resisted to this point invoking the term "revival" because I've come to believe that it's most often used these days by people who want an experience of some kind. They want to *feel* something special or witness some kind of spiritual milestone that invokes something unique. A daily commitment to living according to God's Word is something that *may*, at times, introduce such emotional experiences, but the reality over the long haul is much different. It's the kind of thing, however, that will cause our Lord and Savior to rejoice when He returns and finds in us faithfulness, an endurance of

all things according to His Word regardless of our feelings or the circumstances.

*And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

*James 1:4*

In His Love,

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