

“PRINCIPLES OF PROPHECY”

1 Thess 5: 1-9

I challenged Pastors to preach on prophecy. A man asked how – where do we start?

I. THE NEED FOR PREACHING ON PROPHECY

A. It is important to preach on the issue of prophecy: End-times

1. It was important to Jesus: *He taught about it on numbers of occasions*
2. It was clearly a part of Paul’s ministry:
 - a. *1 Thess 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: He had told already*
3. It has historically always been a part of revival movements
 - a. When God is moving – people are focusing on end-times/prophecy: *The Jesus movement*

B. The problem is that Pastors want to preach on prophecy – don’t know where to start

1. It is an incredibly complicated subject: It is easy to get lost in details
 - a. *Vials/bowls/trumpets/stingers...*
2. Make it dizzyingly complicated or wander into false doctrine

II. FOUNDATIONS OF PREACHING ON PROPHECY *Need some basic understandings*

A. God judges sin:

1. Prophecy doesn’t make sense without this understanding
 - a. *People/cities (Sodom & Gomorrah) b. Nations (Israel) c. The whole world (Noah)*
2. End times prophecy revolves around this understanding
 - a. God’s final judgment on the earth: 7 year period of tribulation
 1. *V2 Day of the Lord... day of wrath/judgment – Jesus 2nd coming to judge – then to rule*

B. God makes a way of escape from Judgment

1. Foundational: The God who judges wants to save from judgment – and makes a way of escape
 - a. *1 Thess 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*
 1. *Noah/ark Moses/basket COI: The blood of the lamb Lot/family: Angels bring out*
2. This cures false doctrine about the Tribulation: God makes a way of escape from the coming wrath

a. 1 Thess 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1. Caught up: *Harpazo – to seize or snatch up*: Instantly removed from earth to heaven – miss judgment
- b. “Caught up” in Latin “Rapimeur” – we get our word Rapture: Instant removal and transformation

C. God moves in dispensations (time-frames)

1. God has purposes/plans: He focuses on different people at different times
 - a. Began with Jews: Then they rejected Jesus – Paul deliberately changed His focus to Gentiles
2. We are now in the time of the Gentiles: God’s focus is on the gentiles (though He hasn’t forgotten Jews)
 - a. That focus will shift off the Gentiles – and back to the Jews – to fulfill His original purpose
 1. *Romans 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*
3. This is important in interpreting prophetic scripture: Is that speaking of the Jews or the Gentiles?
 - a. After the Rapture – the focus returns to the Jews again

III. ACTING ON THE INFORMATION

A. Prophecy has some definite purposes (not just to say ‘wow’ at some bit of information)

1. **Encourage:** It demonstrates God’s control over the world
 - a. If He could predict that – and it happen; Then there are other things He knows and can do!
2. **To reveal true and false believers:** *Mat 24:40-42 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord does come.*
3. **Warn believers:** *1 Th 5:4-6 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*
4. **It is to challenge us to labor:**
 - a. *John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*