

PAYING ATTENTION TO THE PROPHETIC WORD

Note to the speaker:

Focus on why we should be interested in Bible prophecy and how it can strengthen our faith. Clearly explain the selected Bible prophecies dealing with future events, and show how we can demonstrate that we are paying attention to them

THE BIBLE A BOOK OF PROPHECY (7 min.)

Most professed Christians have little interest in prophecy

Bible shows even angels interested in future (1Pe 1:12)

Bible unique among sacred writings for its prophetic elements

Contains record of fulfillment of its own prophecies

Many of its prophecies fulfilled, others awaiting fulfillment

What is prophecy? History written in advance, namely, prediction

But word "prophecy" in Bible applies also to any commands, moral teachings, messages of divine origin (De 18:18, 19; Eze 37:9, 10; Lu 7:16; Joh 4:19; Isa 1:1-23)

Bible's prophetic predictions communicated in various ways

By Jehovah's spoken word (Ge 3:15)

By guiding conscious thought and memory (Joh 14:26; 16:13; 2Pe 1:21)

By means of dreams (Ge 41:15; Da 4:5)

By means of visions (Da 8:2)

By means of angels (Lu 1:19, 30, 31)

Prophecies at times have more than one fulfillment

Malachi 4:5 fulfilled in John the Baptizer but also has modern fulfillment in view of Malachi 4:6 (Mt 11:14)

Restoration prophecies were fulfilled after 537 B.C.E., are being fulfilled in present spiritual paradise, will be fulfilled physically under Messianic Kingdom (Ps 126; 2Co 12:4; Re 21:3, 4)

WHY WE SHOULD BE KEENLY INTERESTED IN BIBLE'S PREDICTIONS (10 min.)

Prophecies help us to see where we are in God's timetable

Examples (Mt 24:1-51; 2Ti 3:1-5)

Daniel 9:24-27 helped Jews know Messiah's appearance was close

Fulfilled prophecies strengthen faith in Bible as God's inspired Word

Fulfilled prophecies testify to Jehovah's omnipotence, his omniscience; not only foresees but also has control of future (Isa 46:8-10)

Fulfilled prophecies strengthen our faith in those yet to be fulfilled

Prophecies written for our comfort, hope (Ro 15:4)

THE PROPHETIC WORD MADE MORE SURE (10 min.)

By the transfiguration scene (a vision) (Mt 17:1-9)

The witnesses were Jesus' three closest apostles (Peter, James, and John, as seen from Luke 8:51; Mark 14:33)

By this vision apostles' faith was confirmed by both visual and auditory phenomena (2Pe 1:17-19)

Verse 17: Voice was Jehovah's own voice (one of the three instances when God's voice was heard by humans: Mark 1:11; John 12:28)

Verse 18: Most likely took place on slopes of Mt. Hermon (*w*91 9/15 20)

Verse 19: What prophetic word made sure? Hebrew Scriptures filled with references to Messiah (Lu 24:44; De 18:15; Da 7:13, 14)

To pay attention means to take prophetic Word seriously, exercise faith in it, and let it influence our lives

Who is the "daystar"? Revelation 22:16 identifies it as Jesus Christ

All genuine prophecy not of "private interpretation" (2Pe 1:20)

That is, no prophecy is due to man's interpretation of events

Also, no prophecy is of human origin or release (*Ref. Bi. ftn.*)

All are part of inspired profitable things; not brought by man's will but through operation of God's spirit, even as testified by David (2Sa 23:2), Paul (2Ti 3:16)

Are part of God's utterances by which we live (Mt 4:4)

PROPHECIES YET TO BE FULFILLED, TO WHICH WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION (15 min.)

Though studying prophecies already fulfilled strengthens our faith, paying attention to those regarding future is vital to our salvation

One such prophecy is found at 1 Thessalonians 5:3 (Read) (*dg* 21 par. 12)

Men making efforts along this line (Refer to any current political efforts, meetings of leaders of major world powers)

We can also expect Revelation 17:16 to be fulfilled soon (Read and explain; see *re* 256-7)

After destroying Babylon the Great, radical political elements will then turn on God's people (Read Ezekiel 38:14-16a)

That will cause Jehovah to step in, fight for his people (Read Ezekiel 38:18-20) (*w*91 8/15 27)

This will mark fulfillment of 'crushing' referred to at Daniel 2:44, 45 (Read)

Out of mountain of Jehovah's universal sovereignty has come the Messianic Kingdom, which will soon destroy Satan's wicked visible organization

This will completely vindicate Jehovah's sovereignty and sanctify his name (Read Ezekiel 38:23)

Next, Satan and his demons will be abysed (Read Revelation 20:1-3a)

The angel doing the binding is Jesus Christ (*re* 287)

Only then can Kingdom blessings flow freely

Then Revelation 21:3, 4 will come into fulfillment (Read)

All the earth will gradually become a paradise

Mankind will be restored to perfection

Jesus' words at John 5:28, 29 will find fulfillment (Read)

The doing of good or bad refers to conduct after being resurrected; term "judgment" refers to an adverse judgment

Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 will become true (Read)

Finally, there will be testing in fulfillment of Revelation 20:7, 8 (Read)

All rebels will be destroyed; all passing the test will be given right to everlasting life

PAYING ATTENTION TO PROPHETIC WORD INCLUDES TELLING OTHERS (3 min.)

World of mankind in darkness as to God's purposes (Isa 60:2; Ac 26:18)

Fulfillment of prophecy shows Kingdom blessings are near; we have obligation to make "this good news" known (Mt 24:14)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read)