

Understanding Prophecy, Part I

Lesson Two Lecture

Building on the Foundation

Before we begin today, let's review some things that we have learned. We have learned that the Scripture, when dealing with Eternity, deals with Ages of time, rather than the idea of one long unbroken period. In what we would call "Eternity Past", there is a beginning point with respect to the earth and the heavens around the earth, and ages dealing with the earth.

That beginning point is mentioned in the very first verse of the entire Bible, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

So we see this beginning on our timeline.

Then we can know that there is at least one age or could be a number of ages between this beginning and what we would see as time (as we know it) begins — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Time would begin when the Holy Spirit hovered over the face of the deep and when God spoke, saying, "Let there be light..." And then God began counting the evenings and the mornings of those 6 days, and on the 7th day, He rested, setting aside that day as holy. And these seven days become the foundation of all of Scripture. And that is with reason from Scripture's standpoint.

Then we have also seen that there are Ages beyond Time. And that Scripture deals with this ongoing period as AGES of AGES, revealing that this is not one long unending period, but unending ages with beginnings and endings.

We have also learned that one age stands out above all the other ages—it is referred to in Scripture as the Age of the Ages. We can easily see that in Ephesians chapter three, when we read the verse in a literal translation:

Ephesians 3

21 to Him is the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.

We can see this same idea portrayed in the Book of Daniel. We will remember that the original language in the OT is Hebrew, except for a few chapters of the Bible. (A few chapters were written in the Aramaic

language which is a related language to Hebrew, using the same alphabet). Here is a portion of one of those chapters in which were written in Aramaic and translated into English:

Daniel 7

18 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.' (NASB)

...possess the kingdom unto the age, even unto the age of the ages. (YLT)

We have learned that the OT Hebrew language does not have a word which means ETERNAL. The Hebrew word is *olam*, the Aramaic word *alam* would be closely associated with *olam* and give the same meaning) which means a long period of time. Perhaps the most accurate way of understanding this verse according to the original language could be viewed is along these lines:

18 But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom during the long period of all the long periods.

...portraying the same idea as the age of the ages, which would be consistent with what Paul wrote in Ephesians.

And as we study prophecy, we will want to see this coming age in the light that God has laid it out in His word, as the age of the ages, with focus and emphasis therein!

And all of this future focus on the age of the ages would be based upon the foundation that God saw fit to give to us in the beginning of His Word. He could have given us information about many things prior to this “beginning”, but rather He omnisciently chose to give us the exact information that He has given us. He begins with one statement about the beginning of the ages:

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning, God created [bara] the heavens and the earth”

And He jumps to the time describing the earth in a formless and void state.

Genesis 1

2 And the earth was formless [tohu] and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep...

While we do not know the length of time in which the earth existed in this chaotic state, we can know that God did not create in that condition. Through the writings of the Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 45

18 ...He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create [bara] it a waste place [tohu], but formed it to be inhabited.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can see that at some point after the beginning (through the writings of Ezekiel) the originally created ruler over this earth, Lucifer, led a rebellion against God. And in this rebellion, his sanctuaries became desecrated, which brought about the need for a restoration of these same sanctuaries.

And to see that Lucifer was the original ruler over this earth, one would only have to turn to the NT to see how a particular Greek word is used to describe Satan and his angels. It is the word arche

746. arche

chief (in various applications of order, time, place, or rank):--beginning, magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule

In this next passage, this word is used with respect to Satan and his angels, and it gives a most graphic description of these beings. In the context of Paul telling the Church to stand firm against Satan, he says:

Ephesians 6

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers [arche], against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Look at the phrases used here:

Again, our warfare is ...against the rulers [arche]...

This means beginning, the first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule.

...against the powers

This word means authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength

...against the world forces ... of this darkness,

the “world forces” is made up of two Greek words and literally means means “world-ruler” and the phrase of this darkness...(the KJV has the words: against the darkness of this world) the word translated “world” here is the word aion, which literally means “age”

(Its hard to understand why the NASB translators dropped the word age, in the phrase, as it is difficult to understand why the KJV translators translated the aion word into world rather than age in this phrase. And so we should read:

against the world ruler of the darkness of this age...

Then ...against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. This is translated in a way that it is easily understood in the English —

Spiritual forces meaning not fleshly (entities that are not human beings in the context, we know to be angelic)
of wickedness self-explanatory
the heavenly places self explanatory (Angels of wickedness in the heavenlies)

Again, in the context of Paul telling the Church to stand firm against Satan, he describes Satan and his fallen angels as:

Ephesians 6

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Our struggle is against:

the original rulers

those in authority, having jurisdiction, liberty, power, the right, and strength since they are the “world-rulers” of the darkness of this age; Spiritual being rather than fleshly beings, who are wicked and reside in the heavenlies.

Whew! That is a lot to chew on, isn't it?

So why do we have to know this, in order to understand prophecy? Because the testimony of Jesus (those things written about Jesus [which is the whole of Scriptures, since He is the Word made flesh]) is the spirit of prophecy.

And because His shed blood on the cross has reconciled both the

- visible thrones dominions, powers and authorities, on the earth (due to man's fall), as well as
- the invisible thrones dominions, powers and authorities in the heavens (due to Satan's fall).

And the working out of all (accomplished in the shedding of Christ's blood on the tree of Calvary) is ultimately the fulfillment of prophecy.

And without knowing all of this, then prophecy succumbs to a list of foretold events that, at most, we could check off as things coming to pass, and think "Wow! God said that was going to happen!" And while that may excite our flesh, it falls far short of the whole scope of the wonder and amazement of the total picture of prophecy.

If we do not understand the full scope of all of this, then we are given to look forward to a coming of Jesus, who we think is only coming to usher in eternity — one long period of unending time — wherein we will supposedly "live happily ever after in heaven" doing who-knows-what... sitting around on clouds playing harps! That is NOT the picture given in Scripture.

This is why we are taking the time and energy to lay all of this out, because prophecy doesn't exist in a vacuum— There are God-given reasons and implications for God having laid out His Word in a way that we might be able to put the picture together, along with the reason for it all!

And so we can know that:

- At the point where the ages began, God brought forth a perfect creation (Gen. 1:1);
- But at some point subsequent to the beginning, the creation fell into ruin (Gen. 1:2a) at the rebellion of Lucifer. And we can see that
- God restored the ruin over a six-day period (Gen. 1:2b-31);
- then God rested from His work of restoration on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3).

And based upon this previous perfect restoration, we can know that God will again take six days to restore a subsequent ruin (i.e., ruined man,

along with the restored creation which had come under a curse through the fall of man), and He will follow this restoration with a seventh day of rest (Heb. 4:9). Only this time, as Peter so succinctly stated within a context of the “Promise of His coming” each day will be 1,000 years in length (II Peter 3).

And so these first 34 verses in Scripture are extremely instructive to us as to the **timing** of the future day of rest. As we have seen and will continue to see in further study, the Sabbath Rest, which is yet for the people of God, is a 1,000-year period, which follows a 6,000-year period.

At the very least, it would be a curious thing to see that these days in Genesis can so easily be divided in the same way that Scripture divides the history of man:

And after 6 days of work:

Genesis 2

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

And to see that the 7th day is holy and set apart beyond Gen. 2:3 is no problem. The seventh day, the Sabbath day is set apart as holy to God’s people, Israel. Look at a few of a multitude of verses that depict this:

Exodus 31

12 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 13 "But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for [this] is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. 14 Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death...

A sign is something that points to something in the future. So we have a pattern laid out in the past, which is given as a sign to point to something in the future. And it is mentioned numerous times throughout the Law and the Prophets! I wish we had the time...

At the peril of death, God's people were to keep holy, keep set apart — as a sign — the Sabbath day.

The sign of the Sabbath served as a very regular reminder of something they were to remember, which pointed to something future. A sign looked forward to that which it signaled, something that God wanted them to keep ever before them, and because just as he worked 6 days, He rested on the 7th, and set this day apart from all the other days, marking this day as HOLY, and SANCTIFIED. For a reason! Because He wants His people to know something about the 7th day, and doesn't want us to forget the FUTURE 7th day (Sabbath day of rest).

And we can see that even for us, in the NT...even for us in the Church, God has not forgotten what He intends for the Sabbath to represent, with all this information concerning the Sabbath Day of Rest...the 7th day. Concerning this day look at what the author of the Book of Hebrews says to the Church:

Hebrews 4

1 Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us,

What good news? In context the good news concerning the rest!

2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

They chose not to believe what God said about the rest! This serves as a warning to us! We must believe what God is showing us about this rest. Keep all this in the context of what Scripture depicts about all of this.

And the author of Hebrews specifically relates this back to Genesis, the 7th day in v. 4.

Do you see how the author of Hebrews is relating “the rest” that the first generation of the Children of God missed out on in the wilderness (their bodies were strewn, because God was not please with most of them (all but two) but that which the second generation went into as they received their inheritance in the land, with a level of rest from their enemies. And this rest that the second generation went into, was only to serve as a picture of that future day of rest.

As we continue reading in Hebrews chapter 4, we'll notice that the author comes to a quote from one of David's Psalms. Let's keep reading:

Hebrew 4

6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it [the rest], and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."...

Hopefully, you will remember in your homework we looked up the Psalm 95 wherein King David encourages His people

And so not only did David give this warning to God's redeemed people about 400 years after Joshua had led the 2nd generation into the promised land, but also the writer of Hebrews, under inspiration by the Holy Spirit is once again issuing the same warning as what David had issued.

Let's get back to our passage in Hebrews:

Hebrews 4

8 For if Joshua (who came BEFORE David) had given them (that second generation) rest, He [David] would not have spoken of another day after that.

And this is the verse we want to get to:

9 There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

And this "rest", this future rest is that which the Scriptures all point to. According to Scripture, it is the 7th day, the Sabbath day, in which the Scriptures are replete with verse after verse, and passage after passage wherein God is laying before His people His desired focus for them, that of the coming rest that is yet for the people of God. This is why we are to see this coming day, the Day of the Lord, this Sabbath Rest that is yet for the people of God is the Age of the Ages, for GOD DEEMED IT SO!

And to see that it will last for 1,000 years is no problem. It is not only implied throughout all of the Scriptures, it is specifically laid out 6 times in Revelation chapter 20.

Let's flip through these 6 place in Rev. 20 very quickly, only for the purpose of noting the mention of the thousand years...

Revelation 20

2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss... until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. 4 ... and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 ... but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,

There is much for that is learned from Scripture in all the books and chapters and passage previous to the Book of Revelation, but herein the specific 1,000-year period is mentioned no less than six times.

As we close, I would like to bring attention to something unique and peculiar to the Gospel of John.

John lays out a total of 8 divinely-chosen signs all of which would be given in order to get a point across. (Remember nothing is superfluous when it comes to Scripture. Each Word has been divinely chosen and has been tested in a furnace of fire!) But prior to going to these signs, let's see something interesting that John says about all of this. Let's go to the end of the Gospel:

John 20

30 Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Remember that a “sign” is something that points ahead to something else. It is a signal of something.

And these specifically chosen signs (8 chosen to be written in the Gospel of John) would be written down for specific understanding. Let's briefly see what they are and what details are given about each.

In our homework, we looked at the first sign given — the wedding feast in Cana. We saw how it could be figured as falling on the 7th day, but also seen as the 3rd day. No discrepancy here, to be sure! We saw how John begins his Gospel in the same way that Moses began Genesis.

John 1

1 In the beginning was the Word...

Which takes us all the way back to the same point where Moses began. And both inspired authors leave out much information here, both, though, mentioning DARKNESS, and the light which came into the darkness. We know what Moses wrote; let's look to see what John wrote:

John 1

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John brings us up to the same point Moses brought us up to, doesn't he? "And God said, "Let there be light..." So now we begin the calculating of TIME, as we know it...

Then we can continue to look at the first chapter of John and see these verses that carry us through four days:

John 1

29 The next day... (second day, with light having been mentioned prior to this "next day")

John 1

35 Again the next day... (third day)

John 1

43 The next day... (fourth day)

John 2

1 And on the third day... (seventh day)

And a wedding feast takes place on this third day (or seventh day, depending how you want to look at it. Both ways are correct and point to different things. And God wants us to see this.

And then note what John specifically says about this miracle that took place on this day:

John 2

11 This beginning of [His] signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

Oh! The beginning of His signs! Specific information for us to pay attention to.

Then John records seven more signs, each giving divinely-chosen information connected to each one, and/or events leading into each one. And the reason for this is so that God can continue to reveal what He wants His people to know and understand as He lays out His word precept upon precept, line upon line, a little from here, a little from there.

Then before the second sign is given in John chapter 4, we see that Jesus goes into Samaria, a Gentile City, where He spent 2 DAYS and dealt with a Samaritan woman at the well, where He offered her living water. (4:3), where he stayed for TWO DAYS (4:40).

When He returned to Galilee, He healed a royal officials son that was at the point of death, with a special note that it took place at the 7th hour of the day (in the fullness of time), on this the 3rd day, having been away for 2 days.

And a note made in v. 54 that this was the second sign that Jesus had performed.

Then the Symbolism: Israel, God's son, will be healed on the third day when Jesus comes back into Galilee, after spending two days with the Gentiles.

The third sign is found in John chapter five. A man who had been sick for 38 years, was healed on the Sabbath day.

Remember that the Sabbath was a sign given to Israel, pointing to that future day of REST. It is on this day that Israel will be healed

The fourth sign is found in John chapter six. At this sign, the Passover was at hand...And Jesus fed the 5,000 from 5 barley loaves, and 2 fishes, symbolizing that Jesus is the Bread of life whose body was broken on Passover. He is the Bread which comes down from heaven. Israel will receive the Bread of Life, the true manna of the Passover, in that coming day, when they will appropriate the blood of the Lamb that they slew 2,000 years ago.

While no reference to time given for the next sign (sign #5) given in John chapter 6, it is after the 4th sign that there were many of the 5,000 who wanted to take Him force (apart from necessary repentance) which it will not happen apart from repentance, so He withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. And while separated from His disciples, they got into a boat and started to cross the sea. It became evening time

and had become dark, which is significant in itself. And the sea began to be stirred up because of the strong wind that was blowing. They had rowed about 3 or 4 miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Without going into a lot of details, this pictures for us the time when Jesus left the earth, went back up into heaven, a high mountain. But there is coming a time in the Tribulation, the Jews will be scattered amongst the Gentile nations again, (pictured for us by the disciples being in the boat on the waters.) at a time when the winds will blow and cause a great stirring of the waters, the many nations will be in an uproar. Others Scriptures will reveal that the stirring will not be like any in history. But at that point, they will be willing to accept Him, and in receiving Him, they will find themselves back in the Land promised to their forefathers... the Promised Land.

The 6th sign is found in John chapter 9. It has to do with a man born blind from birth. His healing takes place on the Sabbath, pointing to the same healing that will take place for Israel as a nation. For the first time in the whole time of their existence, they will, as a nation, be ready to receive him, and their blindness will be lifted, and it will be on that coming Sabbath day that these things will take place for Israel.

The 7th sign is found in John chapter 11. It is the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

Look what it says in the text:

John 11

6 When therefore He heard that he was sick, He stayed then two days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

That Jesus remained in the place that he was for two days once He heard about Lazarus being sick, portrays the fact that Jesus will be away from Israel for two day, after Israel has been set aside, being describe by the Prophet Isaiah as being sick with sin from the soles of their feet to the tops of their heads. But after two days, He went to Judea in order to raise him from the dead.

Then look at what it says:

John 11:17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

What is the situation here? Two days, three days, four days? It is God's Omniscience, laying out for us exactly what He wants us to know and understand. Precept upon precept, line upon line, a little from a little from there.

There will be two days that Jesus is away from Israel; on the third day, He will raise Israel up (just like in Hosea); AND just like the man born blind from birth in the previous sign written down in this gospel, in reality, Israel has never lived as a nation, the way God has intended for them. So in that sense, they have been dead for four years, from the time of their birth. But at the end of these four days (or at the end of the two days, while Jesus is away from them), on this day God will raise Israel to live before HIM!

Hosea 6

1 "Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn [us,] but He will heal us; He has wounded [us,] but He will bandage us. 2 He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day That we may live before Him.

And all of this is given to us through the use of sign and the God-inspired details that John laid it all out.

It symbolizes for us that Israel will be raised from the dead on the third day, after He had been away two days in the place where He was when hearing about Lazarus's death.

Then the eighth and final sign given to us in the Gospel of John is the Resurrection of Jesus. He is raised on the First day of the week. Or the eighth day if you add one to seven. It is the eighth sign. Eight is the number of new beginnings.

His resurrection is the beginning of a new beginning. It is in fact the seventh day, the Sabbath day of Rest, yet, in the signs in John's Gospel we can also see it is depicted as a new beginning.

Alleluia!

Next week will look more closely at the "Salvation that is to be revealed in the last times." It is a very important lesson. Please study well.