



Bible Doctrines III - Survey

Prophecy

I. THE IDENTITY OF PROPHECY

A. Its Distinguishing

1. From typology
 - a. In typology, the type (shadow) looks forward to a antitype (image); whereas, in prophecy, the prophecy looks forward to its fulfillment.
 - b. Typology is based upon general similarities; whereas, prophecy is specific and complete (albeit the completion of fulfillment can be spread out over large amounts of time).
2. From promises
 - a. While it is true that the initial declaration of prophecy can be given in the form of a promise, all promises are not prophetic.
 - b. Generally speaking a promise is the giving of one's word to either do or not do something. Prophecy is more akin to the declaration of some future event transpiring along with its details of fulfillment.
 - c. Promises can be specific or general; whereas, prophecy is specific.
 - d. Promises can be fulfilled in their entirety on multiple occasions; whereas, prophecy has only one ultimate fulfillment. Again, it should be stated that prophecy can have premature partial fulfillments without denying the one final and ultimate fulfillment.
3. From prediction
 - a. Predictions are assumptions concerning the future based upon knowledge of the present; whereas, prophecy is a true declaration of the future based upon knowledge of the future.
 - b. Predictions can be, and often are, wrong; whereas, prophecy, at least that which is given by God, is never wrong.

B. Its Character

1. Prophecy is unique to the character of God.
 - a. His eternity (Psalm 90:2; Psalm 93:2; Isaiah 57:15)
 - b. His omniscience (Isaiah 46:10; Isaiah 48:5-6; Acts 15:18)
 - c. His immutability (Psalm 102:27; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8)
2. Prophecy is dependent on the revelation of God.
 - a. A product of revelation
 - b. An impossibility for man
3. Prophecy is absolutely true in its record.
4. Prophecy is understandable by means of the spirit (2 Peter 1:16-21).
 - a. Given to God's people
 - b. Given to be understood
 - c. Taught by the Spirit



II. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPHECY

A. Its Commonality

1. Prophecy makes up approximately twenty-five percent of the Bible.
2. This number is commonly arrived at in a very general sense by simply dividing out the prophetic books.
 - a. In the Old Testament
 - (1) Isaiah through Malachi (minus Lamentations) would yield 245 chapters of the 1189 in the Bible.
 - (2) This does not include passages in the other sections of the Bible that obviously contain or are entirely prophetic in nature. Certainly the Book of Psalms would increase the number above.
 - b. In the New Testament
 - (1) The book of Revelation yields at least nineteen prophetic chapters of its twenty-two chapters.
 - (2) There are certainly other chapters in the epistles to the Thessalonians and the Corinthians, in the gospels, and others.
3. Certainly it is not our assertion that every verse in the above chapters would be considered prophetic, nor that there are not chapters in other books of the Bible that should be included as prophetic material.
4. Interestingly, the first prophecy given is found in Genesis 2:17 and the last prophetic word is found in Revelation 22:20. As it pertains to the Messiah, the first prophecy is found in Genesis 3:15.

B. Its Exaltation

1. The exaltation of prophecy is twofold.
 - a. Prophecy exalts the Lord.
 - b. The Lord exalts prophecy.
2. First, prophetic declarations exalt God (Isaiah 46:9-11).
3. Secondly, God exalts the usefulness of prophecy.
 - a. We are commanded to take heed to prophecy (2 Peter 1:19).
 - b. We are blessed in the reading, hearing, and obeying of prophecy (Revelation 1:3).

C. Its Witness

1. Not only is prophecy a witness of God's greatness, but it also validates the absolute authority of scripture (2 Peter 1:16-21).
2. At times, this is accomplished in the prophecy of and fulfillment of the destructions of cities and nations (i.e., Jericho, Nineveh, etc.).
3. This is uniquely true in Israel's history (Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 15:13-16-21; Deuteronomy 17:14-15; Deuteronomy 28:63-65; Jeremiah 25:11-14).
4. This is also true in regards to prophecies of Christ. There are over 300 Old Testament references identifying over sixty details about Christ's first coming, all of which were fulfilled.



D. Its Education

1. Prophecy educates the saints regarding the ultimate meaning of history.
2. Without prophecy, history appears endless and useless; through prophecy, history becomes:
 - a. God-honoring—resulting in God’s ultimate triumph (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 19:11-21)
 - b. Dispensational—proving God’s grace (Romans 11:25-29; Galatians 3:21-26)
 - c. Providential—providing good for the saints (Romans 8:28; Titus 2:13)

E. Its Preservation; Prophecy arms the believer against cultism.

1. Those who date Christ’s coming (Matthew 24:36)
2. Those who claim to be Christ (Matthew 24:5)
3. Those who pervert future events (Revelation 7:5-8; Revelation 16:16)

F. Its Motivation; Prophecy motivates the church to evangelism.

1. The imminency of Christ’s return (Luke 21:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)
2. The urgency to reach the lost (Romans 13:11-14; 2 Corinthians 6:2)

G. Its Consecration; Prophecy challenges the believer to a holy life.

1. Watchfulness (Matthew 25:13)
2. Faithfulness (Luke 12:42-44; Philippians 2:16)
3. Comfort (John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18)
4. Confidence (Philippians 1:6)
5. Sincerity (Philippians 1:9-10)
6. Conversation (Philippians 3:20-21)
7. Moderation (Philippians 4:5)
8. Mortification (Colossians 3:3-5)
9. Love (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)
10. Sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
11. Obedience (1 Timothy 6:13-14)
12. Love of Christ’s return (2 Timothy 4:7-8)
13. Separation (Titus 2:11-13)
14. Patience (James 5:7-8)
15. Enduring trials (1 Peter 1:7)
16. Soberness (1 Peter 4:7)
17. Bearing persecution (1 Peter 4:13)
18. Godliness (2 Peter 3:11-13)
19. Abiding in Christ (1 John 2:28)
20. Purity (1 John 3:2-3)
21. Repentance (Revelation 3:3)