

THE WORD OF

TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

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THE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY

In our previous segment of lessons we learned the way of salvation and how to partake of the forgiveness and transforming power of Christ.

With this lesson we begin a new segment of studies dealing with prophecy and God's warning message to a world in peril.

When a ship is sinking and there are no lifeboats, the alternative offers no encouragement. Likewise, this dying world has no escape, even among the ungodly there is a fearful expectancy for the future of this planet. Yet, there is one avenue of escape and that is through Jesus Christ, as discussed previously.

Let us now examine, over the next few lessons, how the Bible reveals the future and offers hope and deliverance to all who have sought and received the renewing power of our loving and merciful Saviour, Jesus Christ.

God does not leave His people in confusion with a blind faith, but gives clear evidence of His divine power. No one knows the future but God. Even Satan has no insight to the future. His predictions are nothing more than a calculated guess based on a knowledge of prophecy, circumstance, human nature and his engineered devices.

In the Bible, God has mapped out the whole history of this world in prophecy, leaving the unbeliever speechless and offering hope and encouragement to the true servants of God. We may know exactly where we are in the progression of world events, from the beginning of time, to the second coming of Christ.

We will first establish how God reveals His secrets. Then we shall investigate the methods Satan uses to divert the minds of men away from the impact of the sure word of prophecy (Matt.13:19), lest he should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices (2Cor.2:11). The lessons immediately following this study will discuss actual world prophecies.

1. How is the Word of God regarded by those who truly worship God and desire to know His will for them?

Psalm 119:105

Note: If this is not how the Bible appears to us, then we should pray and ask God to give us this essential blessing. Ask our dear Father-God to change the heart and give us a love of heavenly things (Col. 3:1-4; Rom.6:2) and that the Bible will lead us to righteousness and the Son of righteousness. In doing our part, diligent searching, God will do His, answer our prayer, and His Word will become to us a revelation of what we should do and we will love it (Ps.119:161-167; Eph.1:17-19). To the unconverted, it is impossible to see. To those surrendered to Christ, it is as plain as day (1Cor.2:14; 2Cor.4:3,4; Col.1:26-28.).

2. What benefit do we gain by reading the Scriptures ?

Romans 15:4 _____

3. How did the writers of the sacred Scriptures know what God wanted them to write?

2Peter 1:21 _____

4. What is another way of describing the way God communicates the Scriptures to man ?

2Timothy 3:16 _____

Note: Evidence of the Divine authorship of Scripture is seen in the accuracy of its prophecies and the power of its word, that is, the Christ behind the Bible. Those who put into practice the righteous principles of its counsel will know the mystery of the revelations of God (Colossians 1:26-28).

5. For what purpose were the Scriptures given?

2Timothy 3:17 _____

6. To whom does God reveal His secrets?

Amos 3:7 _____

2Peter 1:21 _____

7. To whom do the things revealed in these prophecies belong?

Deuteronomy 29:29 _____

8. What promise is made to those who believe God's prophets?

2Chronicles 20:20 _____

9. What agency did God use to preserve Israel and lead them safely out of Egypt?

Hosea 12:13 _____

Note: The prophet Moses, was God's instrument through whom He showed His love for Israel by bringing them through many trials to the Promised Land. When Israel followed God's instructions, as given through His prophet, Moses, they were successful, but when they did not, they met with many failures and many problems. From their experience we understand that we will be blessed and kept from eternal loss, when we follow the light given us by God through His prophets (see Q8).

10. What experience did Peter point to as proof of Jesus' Kingship?

2Peter 1:16-18 _____

Note: Peter is referring to the event given in Matthew 17:1-8.

11. As much evidence as this experience gave Peter (Q10), what did he say was even more certain evidence of the power and coming of Christ?

2Peter 1:19 _____

Note: The time has come that we cannot trust what we see with our eyes or hear with our ears. We cannot trust our senses, or what we think is right (Pro.28:26; 16:25). Our only sure guide that we may avoid destruction is the word of God, a "thus saith the Lord" (Ps. 119:114, 128-134; Jer.10:23).

12. What kind of deception does Satan engineer through his agent "That Wicked" and others.

2Thessalonians. 2:8-12 _____

13. Who fall prey to these deceptions?

2Thessalonians. 2:10-12 _____

Compare 2Corinthians. 4:3-4 _____

Note: This passage reads - "God shall send strong delusions". What God is saying in this expression is, if we take a certain course the result of that decision will surely follow (Gal.6:7,8). God is in the business of saving souls, not leading them into sin (James.1:13,14).

What God is actually saying is -- the truth I send them makes them more determined to cast it aside and embrace error (Prov.1:22-33; Isaiah 30:9-11; 2Tim.4:3,4). For example, Pharaoh's stubborn resistance to the commands of God (Ex.11:9,10).

14. Those in league with Satan, deceiving the world, take on a certain guise (appearance). What is the form of these deceitful workers?

2Corinthians 11:13-15 _____

Note: An "angel of light" is a reference to the angel that bears the truth, in particular Jesus Christ (John 8:12; 14:6). That is, Satan will even attempt to personate Jesus and His second coming, this will be the ultimate deception of Satan. Meanwhile his ministers have another work to do. Read on...

15. As an example of their efforts, describe what these deceitful workers presented to the Christians who did not pay close enough attention to the light God gave through Paul.

2Corinthians 11:3,4 _____

Matthew 24:23,24 _____

Note: As the time of the end of this world draws nearer, the devil multiplies his efforts to draw men away from God. He will use whatever means he can employ and will surely include lies, corruption of the Scriptures, flattery, force (coercion) and a display of power and miracles.

16. Describe some of these supernatural occurrences, by which men and devils will successfully deceive all but the very elect.

Revelation 13:13,14; Revelation 16:14 _____

Note: The manifestations of the devil will be powerful and convincing, but they will be false. To follow the arguments of such strong delusions will lead to perdition (destruction).

It will be at this time that God's children will be tested in respect to their faith in the written Word of God, the Bible. Will they be convinced by what their eyes and ears tell them, or will their faith and trust in the plain teachings of the Bible sustain them, when all external evidence seems to make their faith appear futile? Only those who have fortified the mind *daily* with the Word of God will be shielded from the last great deceptions.

It is because of the miracles and deceptions of Satan, that Peter warned we have no sure evidence in displays of power, but our true foundation is the more sure word of prophecy (Ps.11:1-3, see Q10,11).

17. Why did Jesus reveal the future to His disciples?

John 13:18,19; John 14:28,29 _____

Note: The purpose in giving prophecy is not only to reveal future events, but also to more firmly establish faith in prophecy's Author. As we look back at fulfilled prophecy, it inspires confidence and we can believe that what has not yet been fulfilled will surely take place, in God's good time.

18. Describe the most wonderful event, prophesied by our Saviour, that is yet to occur.

John 14:1-3 _____

Revelation. 21:1-5 _____

1Thessalonians. 4:15-17 _____

19. What awaits those who believe the Word of God and love His appearing?

2Timothy. 4:8 _____

A PRECEDENT FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

20. What question did the disciples put to Jesus as they overlooked Jerusalem from the mount of Olives?

Matthew 24:3 _____

21. In response to their question, to what prophecy did Jesus direct His disciples?

Matthew 24:15-20 _____

Note: The explanation Jesus gave had a dual application. The signs of the end that He described, combined signs for both the end of this world and the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1,2). His reference to the prophecy of Daniel 9:26,27 certainly applied to Jerusalem, while other prophecies in the book of Daniel were more specifically for the last days (Dan.2:28; 8:17). The "abomination of desolation" is a reference to the polluting practices conducted in God's church and are an abomination to Him, a defiling of His "holy place" (Daniel 11:31). The defilement may also be the entry of unsanctified heathen into the church or holy place (Eze.44:6,7), which of course results in the integration of foreign worship practices with the principles as given by God Himself and laid down in Scripture (Deut.12:29-31; Ezekiel 23:36-39; 2Kings 17:29,32,33).

At this time, Jesus told His followers that when they saw the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, they were to flee from the city without stopping for anything. He further elaborated on this sign and stated that when you see armies surrounding the city, the end is near, so flee to safety (Luke 21:20,21).

Nearly 40 years later in AD.66, the Roman general Cestius laid siege to the city and encompassed its walls. The prophetic sign was given, but how do the Christians escape? Just when it seemed that the city would fall to the Romans, for no apparent reason, the army abandoned their siege. The

people inside the city who were trying to defend it, ran out to pursue the withdrawing forces. It was during this time that the Christians affected their escape.

A few years later the Romans returned under the generalship of Titus. This time their siege was uninterrupted and they destroyed the city in AD.70. More than a million people perished in that rebellious city, yet not one Christian was lost, for all had fled at the end of the previous siege.

The destruction of Jerusalem is a microcosm of the holocaust to engulf the whole earth. Just as God gave warning to Israel, He gives warning to us in our time. *The more sure word of prophecy* is our light and our defence, the pavilion to which we may fly (Ps.27:5: Isa.26:20,21; Mic.4:1,2). Read God's Word, study it diligently and obey it, that you may have a solid rock on which to stand. We are saved as individuals, not as groups, or churches. God's Church is made up of individuals who can stand apart from men, knowing what is the truth and obeying it. This is the pavilion of God, the reliable Word in which we trust when our senses tell us to believe or trust something else.

The lessons to follow will discuss world prophecy. The accuracy of its fulfilment is a reproof to the sceptic and an encouragement to the believer. How tragic for those who refuse to believe, for the end of the sure word of prophecy is the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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