

MSB232

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Founder - David R. Hettema, Director

PROPHECY, THE TOTAL VIEW

by David R. Hettema

During the later years of the great depression in America there was a marked interest in Bible prophecy. People wanted to hear about future Biblical events. These were the years of my youth, prior to World War II. I can remember many discussions on prophecy in our home and in the homes of friends. As young people we mostly listened, but we did learn many things.

During those years there were many Bible Prophecy Conferences held throughout the nation. I remember that we as a family, when possible, would attend meetings held in the Los Angeles area. These conferences were taught by the most prominent Bible teachers in the nation at that time, men who could and would draw a large crowd because they were considered being at the cutting edge of Bible prophecy. Being youngsters, I can't say that we always gave these preachers our undivided attention, although some of them used large, elaborate colorful charts to present their teachings. But we did learn much that helped to develop a deep interest in Bible prophecy.

We knew about the so-called imminent rapture of the church, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the great tribulation, the anti-Christ, and the mark of the beast. Our young perception of a loving God was somewhat troubled though by the idea that when the imminent rapture took place there would be trains, planes and buses crashing, killing and injuring many people because the believing engineers, pilots and bus drivers had been raptured away to be with the Lord. Would God do that? That question and many others became the subjects of our bewildered conversations.

The timing or order of these coming events as they were set forth left too many questions unanswered; it was like a puzzle that didn't fit together well, something was not right with the explanations. Some pieces of the puzzle just were not there and should be found in order for everything to come together into a logical picture, the way a loving God should and would do it.

The consensus of the prophetic teachers was, and still is, that all the parts were there. Even today they continue to write and teach that the so-called secret rapture of all true believers is God's next move, immediately followed by 7 years of great tribulation when all of the remaining occupants of earth will suffer God's vengeance and many of them will be destroyed. This teaching, with some variation, is where prophetic thinking seemed to gel, or I should say was cast in cement, especially when many of these teachers authored books promoting their ideas on these prophetic events. Their teachings became irrevocable, leaving the writers without the possibility of change, lest their books should fall into disfavor and their income and status be lowered.

If this teaching is true (and I do not believe it is true as it has no scriptural basis whatsoever in God's Word), this idea that an imminent rapture is next, followed by the seven years of tribulation. It creates many problems and contradictions such as this one very disturbing event that will take place immediately after the tribulation; At the second coming of Christ, the angels that accompany the Lord would destroy the vast majority of the people of Israel, a people who for the most part do not acknowledge Jesus Christ, much less obey His gospel. . . . **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,** II Thes. 1:7-9 (NKV). How then could God flow out with His promised blessings upon a nation that He has already destroyed?

This paradox, along with many other problems created by the current teachings of popular prophetic spokesmen, has caused many dissatisfied Bible students to go back to the Book, to search and re-study the scriptures for answers to these problems. In the search for truth, all human authority should be questioned, honestly, fearlessly, and scripturally, to see if it conforms to the truth. Truth accords with the facts; God's Word is truth.

The key to unlocking the problems, the most relevant missing piece of the puzzle, was found and recovered during many years of study by the late Otis Q. Sellers, a long time Bible student and patient teacher. Mr. Sellers first began in 1946 to develop the truths of the pre-millennial kingdom of God. He came to the realization that there had to be an earlier time period of God generated enlightenment and blessing for Israel and the nations of the earth before the tribulation or the return of Christ could take place. The newly found pieces put together indicated a lengthy time of divine intervention that allowed the fulfillment of vital prophecies that up to this point had been ignored or glossed over.

For instance, the beautiful events in this prophecy of Hosea, chapter two, could never take place if it did not see its fulfillment before the great tribulation. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her. "Then I will give her her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. "And it will come about in that day," declares the LORD, "That you will call Me Ishi and will no longer call Me Baali. "For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, so that they will be mentioned by their names no more. "In that day I will also make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and will make them lie down in safety. "And I will betroth you to me forever; yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD Hosea 2:14-20 (NAS).

Another prophecy, Matthew 12: 18-21, is a description of divine intervention that can only be placed into a pre-tribulation time frame. It is the prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, without leaving His throne in heaven, taking to Himself His authority and assuming sovereignty over the earth by His Spirit. It is not a description of the second coming, for then there will be a shout. It was not fulfilled in His earthly ministry for then His voice was certainly heard in the streets, nor did the nations put their trust in Him. "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, my Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the nations. He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not

quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; And in His name nations will trust." Matt 12:18-21

That passage, first spoken by Isaiah (Isaiah 42:1-4) is the same truth set forth in 2 Timothy 4: I, I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing (epiphaneia) and (even) his kingdom. (Also see Psalms 22:27-28). The kingdom is the Lord's. Jesus Christ, ruling from His throne in the heavens, sets the order for every nation and individual upon the earth. The duration of this first period of His government evidently covers almost five hundred years, during which every believer, living and dead, will experience the benefits of Christ's salvation, everlasting (eonian) life by resurrection or by being alive when the change takes place.

Sin and iniquity will be removed. Perfect health, abundant living in an earth free of all curses will be the norm. Also as promised, Israel will be gathered to their land to enjoy Messiah's blessings in peace. Every prophecy will have its place and fulfillment. This sounds more like God, a righteous, loving God who has successfully redeemed the world and man.

This is the "good news" now available to everyone, yet it seems that there is very little interest in prophetic Bible study; prophetic Bible conferences are rare. Many of the friends we grew up with, still in their churches, are so content with the escapist secret rapture idea that no thought is given to what follows. Their understanding is that they will be with the Lord in space or heaven or wherever, but not on this earth, so why be concerned? This may sound over critical but I truly believe it is a description of what is commonly held in most churches today.

Dr. John F. Walvoord, a man I sincerely respect, but also disagree with many of his conclusions, is currently serving as the Chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary. In his book *End Times*, pages 7-8, he makes a sad but true statement concerning the present day lack of Biblical prophecy teaching. Here is what Dr. Walvoord writes: "It seems obvious that God intended to give us information about His plans for the world and for believers. In many churches today, however, little attempt is made to study and understand the prophetic Word, and most people who attend church regularly are uninformed on what the Bible teaches about the future. Part of the problem is that many church leaders feel they are not qualified to speak on the subject. Some college and seminary graduates received no instruction on prophetic subjects, and so to attempt

to preach on it would show their ignorance. Others seem afraid of preaching on prophecy because some teachers have abused the subject, attempting to be sensational and often giving incorrect explanations of the prophetic Scriptures. Others feel that prophecy, with its numerous details, is difficult to understand. Some preachers avoid prophetic sermons because they feel that doing so will label them as fundamentalists. Many pastors are struggling with contemporary problems in the church, both moral and relational, and the subject of prophecy does not seem to be an immediate area of concern. Some also view prophecy as controversial because there are so many different views, and they would rather preach or teach subjects on which there is more agreement. Whatever the reason, many churches do not feature prophecy as a major area of study and the result is that people in local churches often go without any teaching on even the basics of prophetic truth."

We are almost three generations removed from the those early days of intense interest in Bible prophecy; time changes peoples attitudes, are we coming into the time that Paul wrote about to Timothy? For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 2 Tim 4:3,4 (NIV).

To paraphrase a famous quotation, "Everyone should be interested in the future, because that is where they are going to spend the rest of their lives."

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