

Understanding Biblical Prophecy In Terms of God's Revelatory Purposes

by
Jim Sayles

Many Christians think that biblical prophecy is complicated and complex, requiring advanced seminary training in order to understand. Thus ordinary believers must rely on the “experts” and “authorities” of the faith to explain it.

But keep this in mind. The intellectual giants of Israel, the Pharisees and scribes, failed to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the long awaited Messiah in spite of the fact that He fulfilled all of the prophecies related to His birth, life, death, and resurrection in their very midst.

Thus it was the general population who ultimately received the truth while the religious authorities, filled with spiritual pride and intellectual arrogance, from whom the truth remained hidden.

At that time Jesus began to say, I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth [and I acknowledge openly and joyfully to Your honor], that You have hidden these things from the wise and clever and learned, and revealed them to babies [to the childish, untaught, and unskilled]. Matthew 11:25 Amplified (emphasis is the author's)

The failure of the “wise and clever and learned” of Israel to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah was no accident. They were hidden by God (i.e. not revealed) to the “wise and clever and learned” of Israel, because of the intellectual arrogance of the spiritual leaders of Israel.

In fact, their minds were grown hard and calloused [they had become dull and had lost the power of understanding]; for until this present day, when the Old Testament (the old covenant) is being read, that same veil ... (of spiritual blindness)... still lies [on their hearts], not being lifted [to reveal] that in Christ it... (the old covenant)... is made void and done away. 2 Corinthians 2:14 Amplified (insert and emphasis is the author's)

Satan was thus as active in his dialectical deceptions among the covenant people of God in that day as he is with the covenant people of God in this day, the “spiritual Jews” who comprise the “Israel of God” in Christ.

The Pharisees failed to recognize Jesus as Messiah, because their intellectual traditions had become the doctrines of men (and of demons) over time, masking

the revelatory truth of God that was revealed to a few at that time, like Zachariah (Luke 1:67-78), who prophesied over both his son, John the Baptist, and Jesus.

In Zacharias's case it should be noted that Zacharias was filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit. It is unlikely that Zacharias held any opinion about the fulfillment of prophetic scriptures concerning the Messiah apart from those common among the Pharisee authorities at that time, but in that moment he recognized and prophesied the revelatory truth consistent with scripture but hidden from eyes guided only by intellectual presumption.

In this I am not saying that it is wrong to seek an intellectual understanding of prophetic scripture any more than it is wrong to seek an intellectual understanding of the vast amounts of metaphorical, allegorical, and parabolic passages in scripture, but it is important to recognize that the Spirit of truth plays a vital part in supernaturally "guiding" us into the truth.

But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the truth-giving Spirit) comes. He will guide you into all the truth – the whole, full truth. John 16:13 Amplified

Those who claim to have discovered intellectual keys and intellectual methodologies and formulas for interpreting scripture in general, and prophetic scripture specifically, are misguided. The worst among these are the "date-setters," like those who were guilty of setting specific dates for the pre-tribulation "rapture," an invented doctrine with no genuine scriptural basis. And, yet, most of these still have major ministries and still interpret prophecy without revelatory guidance.

A simple, concise understanding of what the Lord is telling us in John 16:13 is that we will NOT arrive at the fullness of revelatory truth, especially prophetic truth, without the guidance of the Spirit of truth.

The problem arises when men develop theories and interpretations of scripture without the guidance and confirmation of the Spirit of truth, or even with incomplete guidance, and then elevate those theories and interpretations into authoritative (as though stamped by the seal of God) doctrines that we dare not question.

The Roman Catholic Catechism is an example of this. The Catechism is an interpretive book of doctrine produced by the papal authorities, and Roman Catholic believers are much more familiar with that book than they are with the God-breathed scriptures of the Bible. Thus their ability to receive revelatory truth from scripture is greatly hindered.

In some cases our ability to recognize and receive revelatory truth from scripture is even hindered by doctrines of demons introduced into the church

through men who have been deceived by another spirit, Satan, masquerading as an angel of light.

This is specifically evident as it relates to Christian cults, or even the Roman Catholic church, but it is also present in the church at large today as evidenced by our division into numerous denominations with widely varying doctrines and practices, including widely varying theories of prophetic interpretation .
(Ephesians 4:14)

Presumption is an incorrect conclusion based on an inaccurate or incomplete examination of the facts. Assumption is receiving and believing the conclusions and “proofs” of some chosen authority such as the papacy, our denomination, or our favorite ministry leader. Presumption and assumption, regardless of the source, lead to the development of spiritual “cataracts” that hinder our ability to “see” revelatory truth, whether of prophecy or doctrine and practice.

In the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) the Lord refers to this spiritual “blindness” effecting the entire church, having lost the active, vigilant faith of the original apostles, as “falling asleep,” and the awakening process, which has already begun, but will not begin on a large scale until we “hear” the announcement of His imminent return, is to trim the wicks of our lamps (our souls) by repenting of false (non-inspired) doctrine and false (non-inspired) practices (i.e. removing the cataracts) so that the light of the Spirit of truth can shine brightly in and through all that we think, say, and do, which, of course, includes our revelatory understanding of scripture.

All those I know who are currently receiving revelatory truth concerning doctrine, practice, and the interpretation of prophetic scripture have been, and are still going through, this continual repentance process.

There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who have believed and even taught erroneous doctrines and interpretations of scripture in the past, IF they are diligently seeking the truth of God and willing to repent when the Spirit of truth reveals error.

In terms of the parable of the ten virgins this process is identified as the trimming of our wicks so that the oil of the Holy Spirit is allowed to produce light in our souls and manifest outwardly in all that we think, say, and do.

But the greatest hindrance to this awakening is the intellectual and spiritual arrogance of ministry leaders and teachers upon whom we depend for “truth,” but who are heavily “invested” in false doctrines and false interpretations of biblical prophecy and are, therefore, strongly defensive and unwilling to change or even to genuinely and prayerfully seek the absolute, immutable truth of God.

The intellectual giants of Israel, like many of the intellectual giants of the church, worshipped their own opinions more than they worshipped the truth of God. Thus the Talmud, the written opinions of the rabbis, ultimately became a divisive and authoritative corruption of the truth of God just as the Catechism and a multitude of Christian books, writings, denominations and seminaries, have become a divisive and authoritative corruption of the truth of God in the church at large.

It was never God's intention for us to receive His truth, promises, and commands apart from revelation by the Spirit of truth. Revelation is the language of God, and we cannot "hear" or "see" correctly without it. But those who hear and see by the light of the Spirit of truth will hear and see and understand the same as all others who have heard and seen and understood the same truth, promise, or command by the Spirit.

Therefore, intellectualism without input from the Spirit of truth divides and corrupts, while intellectual understanding guided by the Spirit of truth unites and builds up.

Where biblical prophecy is concerned we recognize the fact that some biblical prophecies were not revealed to the body of national, ethnic Israel at the time that they still held title-deed to the promises of God and some have not, yet, been unsealed and revealed to the body of Christ as the current heirs to the promises of God.

The attempt by the rabbis and learned men of Israel, both now and in the past, failed to uncover the truth of God in those prophecies, and the learned men of God in the "Israel of God," the church, have also failed to uncover the truth of God in numerous prophecies as yet unfulfilled.

In some, but not all, cases this is deliberate, according to the purposes of God.

[Things are hidden temporarily only as a means to revelation.] For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor is anything [temporarily] kept secret except in order that it may be made known... (at the appropriate time)... Mark 4:22 Amplified (insert and emphasis is the author's)

Thus the prevailing opinion of the Pharisees, priests, and religious Jews of Israel at the time of the Lord's earthly ministry, concerning who they thought the Messiah would be and do, prevented them from "hearing" and "seeing" the truth as it played out in their presence.

The prevailing opinion concerning end time biblical prophecy that shapes the non-revelatory beliefs of a majority of Christian believers in America and the western world today is Dispensationalism, which teaches that God has dispensed

salvation differently through the ages through various covenants.

This doctrine denies the very clear scriptural truth that it was God's intent from before the foundations of the world to include an elect remnant of mankind, both Jew and Gentile, in a single redemptive covenant in Christ and that no other covenant between God and man was redemptive in itself. (See "[The Blood Covenant](#)")

The dispensational opinion of dual or multiple covenant salvation did not surface in the church until 1832 when one of the founding fathers of the elitist Plymouth Brethren movement, John Nelson Darby introduced it at the Powerscourt prophecy conference in 1832. Cyrus Scofield, also a Plymouth Brethren and a contemporary of Darby's, then published his "Scofield Reference Bible," which promoted the dispensational view and has shaped the assumptive intellectual opinions of millions of Christians over the years, including the leadership of Dallas Theological Seminary, which is one of the seedbeds of this presumptive, non-revelatory doctrine.

The third member of this triad of Plymouth Brethren was Sir Robert Anderson, a contemporary of Darby's, whose book, "The Coming Prince," provided an interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 that presumably confirmed the popular theory of a secret pre-tribulation resurrection-"rapture" of Church only saints prior to a seven year tribulation during which the Antichrist would sign a treaty with Israel and many nations. (See "[Daniel's 70 Weeks, The Unsealed Version](#)")

The purpose of this final seven years, according to this popularly held dispensational doctrine, is to bring national, ethnic Israel to repentance and then, through national, ethnic Israel, bring in the final harvest.

Christian Zionists and other dual covenant theologies share this interpretation or something like it, but this interpretation contradicts the singular view of all the founding fathers of Christianity from John's disciples forward to the mid-nineteenth century. (See, "[Warning From Voices of the Past](#)")

Yet, Sir Robert Anderson, whose intellectual brilliance did reveal that a scriptural prophetic year is 360 days, came to his presumptive conclusions without revelatory input from the Spirit of truth, because, at the time Sir Robert Anderson wrote, "The Coming Prince," the revelatory truth was still sealed.

But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the Book until the time of the end. [Then] many shall run to and fro and search anxiously [through the Book], and knowledge [of God's purposes as revealed by His prophets] shall be increased and become great. Daniel 12:4 Amplified (emphasis is the author's)

It is only now, at the time of the end, that the Spirit of truth is unsealing biblical prophecy concerning the end times to the generation of believers who will, and are, experiencing it. But the majority of Christian believers are still held captive by the assumed, non-revelatory doctrines and intellectual interpretations of prophecy that were introduced and promoted by the intellect of man and the subtleties of Satan, prior to the unsealing of those prophecies, effectively preventing us from appropriately receiving and responding to the biblical prophecies that were given to warn us and prepare us for things to come in our own lifetimes.

This unsealing of prophecy is also progressive, meaning that the Spirit is unsealing end time prophecy in stages, in accordance with the purposes of God.

I was recently given a dream in which I found a rare Clovis point, an ancient, pre-historic Indian artifact. In my dream this represented finding a “treasure” of unsealed prophetic truth concerning the end times. But the tip of the point was unfinished, which represented that part of the prophecy that was not, yet, unsealed for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

Yet, because the unsealing of end time prophecy has now begun, I believe that the “sharp point” of this particular prophecy will be unsealed in its appropriate, God-chosen time.

We also need to recognize that one important reason some end time prophecies are not unsealed until it is time to warn and prepare those who will experience the prophesied events themselves is to keep Satan himself in the dark.

Be aware, then, of how you have come to believe what you believe about biblical doctrine and the interpretation of biblical prophecy, and remember that God wants to reveal truth directly to you through your examination of scripture as you seek the guidance of the Spirit of truth.

He commands it, and your personal future depends on it.

But you are not to be called rabbi (teacher), for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.

And do not call anyone [in the church] on earth father, for you have one Father who is in heaven.

And you must not be called masters (leaders) for you have one Master (Leader), the Christ. Matthew 23:6-10 Amplified

This is not a denial of the Lord’s gift of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to the church, but we must remember that they are not, in

themselves “authorities.” And we are not to receive the truth, promises, and commands of the Lord on the basis of intellectual understanding alone, but through the prayerful, meditative examination of scripture as we allow the Spirit of truth to confirm what He has spoken to us through the gifts of the Spirit as they are manifested through others.

For the substance (essence) of the truth revealed by Jesus is the spirit of all prophecy [the vital breath, the inspiration of all inspired preaching and interpretation of the divine will and purpose, including both mine and yours]. Revelation 19:20 Amplified

Additional Scripture Passages for Consideration:

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things which are **revealed** belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all of the words of this law. Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret [of the sweet, satisfying companionship] of the Lord have they who fear (revere and worship) Him, and He will show them His covenant and **reveal** to them its [deep, inner] meaning. Psalms 25:14 Amplified

But as for me, this secret is not **revealed** to me for any wisdom that I have more than anyone else living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king. Daniel 2:30

(Concerning the Spirit of truth): **He will honor and glorify Me, because He will take of (receive, draw upon) what is Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.** John 16:14 Amplified

But it is from Him that you have your life in Christ Jesus, Whom God made our Wisdom from God, [**revealed** to us a knowledge of the divine plan of salvation previously hidden, manifesting itself as] our Righteousness [thus making us upright and putting us in right standing with God], and our Consecration [making us pure and holy], and our Redemption [providing our ransom from eternal penalty for sin]. 1 Corinthians 1:30 Amplified

In fact, their minds were grown hard and calloused [they had become dull and had lost the power of understanding]; for until this present day, when the Old Testament (the old covenant) is being read, that same veil still lies [on their hearts], not being lifted [to **reveal**] that in Christ it is made void and done away. 2 Corinthians 3:14 Amplified

Now before the faith came, we were perpetually guarded under the Law, kept in custody in preparation for the faith that was destined to be **revealed** (unveiled, disclosed), so that the Law served [to us Jews] as our trainer [our guardian, our guide to Christ, to lead us] until Christ [came], that we might be justified (declared righteous, put in right standing with God) by and through faith.
Galatians 3:22-24 Amplified