

# Duality in prophecy

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HAWKINS, Texas—A number of years ago I had become more than a little gun-shy on the subject of prophecy. I made perhaps my boldest prophetic statement back in 1966 when I proclaimed to my dad: "Dad, you mark my words. In five years, the Germans will be marching the streets of Minneapolis."

Crow doesn't have a very good flavor (and it is unclean).

Many people in the greater Church of God have been embarrassed so badly after they had gone out on a limb with their proclamations that they no longer touch prophecy with a 10-foot pole. Make that a 500-foot pole.

It is unfortunate how we overreact to our mistakes. While we do not want to make the mistakes of our presumptuous proclamations, it is important to study the prophecies of the Bible.

## **Inquiring people want to know**

God Almighty has placed in us a deep natural desire to know the future. When handled correctly and maturely, there is nothing wrong with it.

However, we see many examples of people who allow that natural desire to turn into an unhealthy lust.

People sometimes begin to consult fortune tellers, palm readers, psychics, Ouija boards and horoscopes.

The desire to know the future is responsible for millions of tabloids that entertain customers as they wait in lines at the grocery store.

In one real sense, attempting to understand prophecy is like handling radioactive isotopes. It is potentially dangerous. But it is relatively safe when we take the proper precautions.

## **Value of prophecy**

An increasing number of people in the greater Church of God at this time seek to study prophecy in a mature fashion.

One of the biggest reasons for studying prophecy is to cultivate a sense of urgency in overcoming. A healthy view of prophecy can help us to displace lethargy and complacency.

We learn valuable lessons from the story in the book of Jonah.

We see that the prophecy to Nineveh was conditional. When the people repented (Jonah 3:5-9), God showed them mercy (verse 10).

We see that studying prophecy is not about showing everybody how much we know about the future. Knowledge puffs (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Understanding prophesied events is designed to turn us toward a greater dependency upon God.

Helping other people understand prophecy can be a loving act to help them draw closer to God.

### **Valuable key**

At this time, I would like to give you one key in your study of prophecy. That information is the duality of Scripture.

Prophecy is dual. Through the entire Bible, the duality theme is emphasized over and over.

As a now-deceased friend of mine proclaimed: "The more we understand about the former types, the more we understand about the prophetic fulfillment or antitype.

A former, a preliminary or a type is followed by a climactic fulfillment. No one can hope to understand prophecy unless he has comprehended God's principle of duality.

Type and antitype fill the pages of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Here are some examples of type and antitype parallels in the Bible.

- The king of Tyre and Satan.
- Ancient physical Israel and modern spiritual Israel.
- Physical salvation and spiritual salvation.
- Escape from Egypt and escape from sin and death.
- Ancient Babylon and modern Babylon.
- The first Adam and second Adam.
- Ancient Elijah and someone coming in the spirit and power of Elijah.
- The physical temple and spiritual temple.
- Old Jerusalem and New Jerusalem.

## Value of redundancy

I had a friend back at graduate school who was a rather stuffy practicing Anglican. He was very involved in the Canterbury Club.

One time, while we were having a rather intense discussion about the Bible, he said: "I seldom trouble myself about the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. I find it to be mostly historical redundancy."

I later learned a line that I could have used in that discussion. It goes like this: "How you find it redundant if you haven't even been redundant in the first place."

Actually, the term *redundant* has been redeemed in electronics and instruction theory. It has been given another meaning: that of reinforcing an already-learned principle.

When my wife, Julie, our son Aaron and I were at the Johnson Space Center in Houston many years ago, we learned about precautionary redundant systems as safeguards to the space mission—with the goal of preventing another *Challenger* disaster.

In this context, prophecy as historical redundancy makes sense, when we consider that prophecy is history written in advance. The prophetic fulfillment is then an unfolding and replay of a historical redundancy.

## Final scripture

Before we conclude, let's look at a scripture in the book of Romans. It is the 20th verse of the first chapter.

It says: "For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made [the physical types], even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

If people don't comprehend the physical, it's unlikely they will comprehend the spiritual.

The more people understand the physical, the more they can grasp the spiritual.

God loves duality.

Considering duality can help you have a greater appreciation and understanding of prophecy in the Bible.