

The Purpose of Prophecy About the Future

Matthew 24:1-14

Introduction:

- Biblical prophecy is defined in 2 Peter 1:20,21 – as a direct r_____ from God communicated through a person by the Holy Spirit. So it does not necessarily have to do with the future.
- Three kinds of prophetic fulfillment
 1. Prophecy about the f_____ - where the original intent was to reveal something yet future (e.g. Gen 15:13).
 2. Prophecy of types or p_____ - where the original intent was to prepare people for a better future (e.g. Jn 19:36 – Jesus fulfilled the pattern of the Passover lamb in Ex 12:46; see also Heb 10:1).
 3. Prophecy of i_____ - where a scripture passage serves to illustrate a later event (e.g. Matt 2:18 quotes Jer 31:15).
- Today's lesson deals with the purpose of prophecy about the future which will enable us to live more effectively each day.

So that we learn God's p_____ (2, 21, 22)

- Jesus revealed the future destruction of God's house, the temple.
 1. The disciples point out to Jesus the magnificence of the temple b_____
 2. Jesus prophesied that not one s_____ would be left on top of another (v. 2) and that this tribulation would be unlike any other (vv. 21, 22)
 - a. This complete destruction of the temple occurred August 10, 70 A.D. when the R_____ army toppled and burned all the temple buildings (Josephus – *Wars Book V – VII*).
 - b. 1,100,000 Jews were k_____; 97,000 were captured; 11,000 starved in the preceding siege thus wiping out ¼ of the entire Jewish population (Josephus – *Wars Book VI, Chapter IX:3*)
- Why did God want His own temple destroyed? – Dan 9:27
 1. *He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week*
 - a. *He* refers to the M_____, the subject of the previous verse.
 - b. The *firm covenant* refers to the N_____ Covenant which Jesus put into effect by His death (Lk 22:20)

- c. *The many* refers to the Hebrew people who come to f_____ (Is 53:11; Dan 11:33)
 - d. *One week* is literally *one seven* units of time. The unit of time is years because of the context (Dan 9:2) – the gospel of the New Covenant was made for ____ years with the Jewish people 26 – 33 A.D.
2. *In the middle of the week, He* (the Messiah) *will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.*
- a. Jesus's death stopped all sacrifices when the v_____ was ripped (Matt 27:51) and ended the need for sacrifices since He became the sacrifice (Dan 9:24; Heb 8:13).
 - b. However, once the veil was repaired, the temple system continued. So, God decreed its complete destruction (the rest of Dan 9:27).

So that we trust God's p_____ (4-8, 11)

- Is 46:9-11 – God will bring about the future He d_____
 - 1. The fulfillment of prophecy is not a demonstration of God's knowledge but His p_____.
 - 2. God will bring about the future that He declares in spite of man's c_____.
- The apostles could have perceived many things as thwarting God's plans.
 - 1. The apostles would be persecuted and k_____ (v. 9).
 - 2. F_____ prophets and false Christs polluting the Christian faith (vv. 5,11).
 - 3. W_____ and rumors of wars (vv. 6,7).
 - 4. The above things m_____ take place and are not the end but the b_____ of God moving His plans along (vv. 6,8).
 - 5. The apostles had to t_____ that God is always in control even if it did not look like He was.
- Americans put too much weight on g_____ as the solution to a better life.
 - 1. Do all you can – cast your vote and be God's v_____
 - 2. T_____ that God is moving His plans along in spite of the problems in government.
 - 3. One day the U.S.A. will f_____ (Rev 13) because it is necessary to God accomplishing His ultimate purpose.

So that we adjust to God's p _____ (9-20)

- Before the end comes, the gospel must f _____ be preached to all the nations [ethnos] (v. 14; see also Rev 5:9,10)
 1. The apostles had to adjust their lives to God's purpose of spreading the gospel in the face of p _____ (v. 9)
 2. The apostles were to leave Jerusalem before its destruction as soon as they saw *the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place* (v. 15)
 - a. *The abomination* – something _____
 - b. *Of desolation* – something _____
 - c. *The holy place* – the area immediately outside the Holy of Holies which was the innermost part of the temple.
 3. The abomination occurred when the Jewish Zealots made this area a base of operation, cooperated with the Idumeans, and slaughtered 8500 people within the temple and city (Josephus – *Wars Book IV: Chapter V:2*).
 - a. The apostles no doubt passed this warning on to all believers.
 - b. The apostles and Jewish believers no doubt heeded the warning.
- The preaching of the gospel to the world was not just the apostles' responsibility but every b _____ 's (Matt 28:19,20).
 1. Testify of Christ in your daily l _____ (Matt 5:17)
 2. Testify of Christ through the c _____ (Eph 3:21)
 - a. By actively l _____ one another (Jn 13:35)
 - b. By actively s _____ mission activity through prayer, by giving, and when possible by going to the lost.

Conclusion:

- The future that God reveals, is for us to learn and know so that we
 - (1) t _____ in God's power to bring about that future, and
 - (2) a _____ our lives to His purpose.
- This way we can be used by God in a powerful way to move His plan along.

God is so powerful, He can accomplish great things through you!