

TIMELESS TRUTHS FOR A CRUCIAL TIME

The Messages of Twelve Old Testament Prophets

Discussion Guide
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Sermon Title

Living by Revelation

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Proverbs 29:18

NAB Proverbs 29:18 Without prophecy the people become demoralized; but happy is he who keeps the law.

Introduction: “Without prophecy the people become demoralized.” In the absence of a word from God, and without understanding of where life is going, the effect is a lack of purpose, drive, and initiative. In fact, without a sense of destiny life becomes meaningless and both culture and morality decline. People without hope see no purpose in living and therefore live without purpose or restraint. As we move into a study of prophecy in the Minor Prophets, we need to have a Biblical sense of why the subject is important.

Sermon Outline

I. Why Study Prophecy? Is There a Practical Application to My Life Today?

- A. There are about 1,817 prophecies in the Bible regarding future events involving approximately 8,352/31,124 verses: about 27% of the Bible. Explaining the future to us is a priority for God! It should be for us as well.
- B. Knowing not only from whence we came, but also where we are going personally, as well as the destiny of history and the future of mankind, enables us to live in the present with a sense of purpose and with an absence of fear.
- C. John tells us that meditating upon and anticipating the return of Jesus Christ as a personal hope brings practical holiness—it directly affects the way I live my life day by day. (I John 3:1-3)
- D. Regarding the Revelation of John specifically, Jesus Himself tells us the one who cherishes and keeps the words of the prophecy of this book is blessed. (Rev. 22:7)
- E. Negatively: It is not merely an academic topic. It is not a scare tactic for evangelism. It is to be a motivation for daily, purposeful living—not an excuse to avoid responsibility.

II. The Relationship Between the Church & Israel in Prophecy

- A. There is only one “people of God” throughout all of human history;
 1. We need to avoid the error of dispensationalism in interpreting the Bible.
 2. People have always and only been saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus on the Cross, regardless of how that faith was expressed in the worship.
- B. Abraham & Moses: Faith & the Law
 1. Abraham is the father of the Jewish race
 2. Abraham is also the father of the faithful in the church
- C. Typology in Israel & Fulfillment in the Church
- D. Restoration & Convergence: The return of Christ and the millennial kingdom

III. The Future of Israel Rooted in the Covenant Character of God

- A. God owns all there is. He has made covenant promises that had no contingencies to Abraham regarding the land. Those promises include a land from the Nile to the Euphrates, a territory which Israel has never possessed in its history as a nation. (Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:13-21)
- B. God has made promises to Israel that, regardless of where she goes, or how greatly dispersed, or however much time elapses, He will always bring her back to this promised land until the day He brings her home for good and personally reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (Isaiah 11:1-16, Zechariah 8:1-13)
- C. God promised Abraham that He would make him a blessing and bless all the nations of the earth through him. It is because of this promise that Israel has a special place in the heart of God. (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-27) We need to avoid the error of replacement theology.

Genesis 12:1-3 NAB Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Genesis 13:14-17 ¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵ for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. ¹⁶ "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. ¹⁷ "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

Genesis 15:18 ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

Conclusion: The study of prophecy should be a part of our growth in the knowledge of God. It will give us great hope and draw us closer to God in holiness in anticipation of the return of Jesus Christ. It will also keep us from error as our nation and the world moves further and further toward the antichrist and the end of the age.

Discussion Questions

- 1.) Share why (or why not) the reasons that the study of prophecy is important to you.
- 2.) Given God's promises regarding the future of Israel, how should that influence our politics as voting citizens?
- 3.) Do God's promises for Israel mean that He approves of everything the present nation of Israel does? Should we unilaterally support all of her decisions? Explain.
- 4.) Does God love other nations and people groups? How do they differ from Israel in terms of His promises of care and protection?
- 5.) In what way does the hope of the return of Jesus Christ give us hope and inspire godliness and purity?
- 6.) Besides giving us understanding of the future, in what other ways is Biblical prophecy important to us?

Zechariah 8:1-13 ^{NAU} Zechariah 8:1 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, ² "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.' ³ "Thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.' ⁴ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. ⁵ 'And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.' ⁶ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?' declares the LORD of hosts. ⁷ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; ⁸ and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.' ⁹ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Let your hands be strong, you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets, those who spoke in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built. ¹⁰ 'For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for animal; and for him who went out or came in there was no peace because of his enemies, and I set all men one against another. ¹¹ 'But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' declares the LORD of hosts. ¹² 'For there will be peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce and the heavens will give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. ¹³ 'It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.'

NOTES

NAU Isaiah 11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; ⁴ But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. ⁵ Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. ⁶ And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. ⁷ Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious. ¹¹ Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. ¹² And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. ¹³ Then the jealousy of Ephraim will depart, And those who harass Judah will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, And Judah will not harass Ephraim. ¹⁴ They will swoop down on the slopes of the Philistines on the west; Together they will plunder the sons of the east; They will possess Edom and Moab, And the sons of Ammon will be subject to them. ¹⁵ And the LORD will utterly destroy The tongue of the Sea of Egypt; And He will wave His hand over the River With His scorching wind; And He will strike it into seven streams And make men walk over dry-shod. ¹⁶