

Mystery of The Ages

PART 11 - THE DAYS OF THE PROPHETS

INTRODUCTION: The Prophets are the Rangers, Green Berets, Sea Bees, Marines, Paratroops, SS troops, and demolition experts of the Old Testament theocracy. They stormed through shot and shell and strafed the enemy till he either had to kill them (Matt. 23:35) or ran for his life (I Kings 22:25). We must believe God's prophets to prosper (2 Chron. 20:20), and certainly we should know a prophet of God (Deut. 18:22) from a prophet of the Devil (Jer. 23:9,14,15,16,21,25,26,28).

The Majority of the prophets were contemporaries of the kings that were studied in Lesson 9. Hosea, Micah, Amos, Elijah, and Elisha prophesied to the northern tribes of Israel. Although Jonah was evidently from the north he preached to the Gentiles. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakkuk cried out the messages of God to Judah. Ezekiel and Daniel were prophets during the days of Babylonian Captivity. Haggai and Zechariah proclaimed the truth during the days of Ezra-Nehemiah when the remnant was allowed to return to Jerusalem. Malachi stands alone probably written sometime after the return.

Along with a variety of contemporary messages written to Israel and Judah, one will find by studying the prophets that:

- [1]. Isaiah points to the same personality that will suffer and die for sins and yet rule the earth.
- [2]. Jeremiah is a classic of a tribulation Saint who will suffer prior to the Second Advent.
- [3]. Ezekiel prophesies against the Gentile nations of past, present and future.
- [4]. Daniel gives a prophetic outline for the next 2500 years that has been absolutely correct without the slightest discrepancy.
- [5]. Hosea lays an emphasis on Israel's repentance and restoration at the Second Advent.
- [6]. Joel lays the emphasis on the battle of Armageddon at the Second Advent.
- [7]. Amos gives the route of the Second Advent and the nature of judgments as they fall on other cities besides Jerusalem.
- [8]. Obadiah points out that Edom will be the location for the lake of fire in the Millennium.
- [9]. Jonah stands as one of the greatest types in the Bible of a Tribulation Jew called to witness to the Gentiles (see Rev. 7).

[10]. Micah compares the first Advent with the Second Advent.

[11]. Nahum deals with Nineveh as a type of Babylon and shows the conditions that will prevail at the Second Advent.

[12]. Habakkuk lays the emphasis on the route of the Second Advent.

[13]. Zephaniah lays the emphasis on the negative nature of the Second Advent.

[14]. Haggai typifies the building of the temple that will take place in the near future.

[15]. Zechariah compares the two Advents and gives the details of events after Armageddon.

[16]. Malachi gives the final warnings that precede the advent.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPHETS

A. To Preach Repentance - It is no coincidence that we read about the majority of the prophets during a time when God's people were steeped in sin. Historically one of the first duties of God's preachers is to identify and cry out against sin.

B. To Utter Messages of Prophecy - Through such books as Daniel, nations were named, categorized, and identified years before they existed. Kings were named before they were born. However, by far the greatest prophetic thrust was aimed at the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. The Tribulation, the Second Advent and the Millennium occupy a great deal of space in the prophets.

C. To Remind of Restoration - There are over 1500 verses in the Old Testament that point to the kingdom and its restoration. The majority of these appear in the prophets.

II. THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS

The standard format for the Old Testament prophet was:

A. He never preached revolution as a means of overthrowing the "established" social order.

B. He was a strong segregationist who opposed every form of religious integration.

C. He pointed to the sinful heart of man as the source of mankind's' woes-not the economic system.

D. He was never Utopian and never wasted five minutes preaching permanent "peace on earth" apart from the Millennial Reign of a Jewish Messiah in Palestine.

E. All of his messages were based on a Biblical concept of God and God's Holiness; he knew nothing about "relative values" or "situational ethics" or "cultural exchanges".

F. He emphasized God's WRATH and God's JUDGMENT on individuals and nations who thought that God would put up with anything.

G. He was quite able to predict events accurately that would take place 2000 years after he was dead.