

## ***Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet: The Bible for Today***

### ***Bible Prophecy Fulfilled***

Lesson #3 for April 21, 2007

Scripture: Isaiah 41:21-24; 43:9,12; 44:8,25,26; 46:9,10; 48:3-5; 52:13-53:12; Daniel 2; Matthew 24:24; John 13:19; 14:29; 16:4.

1. Why has God given us prophecies in the Bible? Has the Devil ever tried to predict the future? What has he done to try to discredit God's ability to predict the future? When you discover a prediction of the future in scripture and then later you read about the details of how it was fulfilled, how does that affect your faith?
2. Think over the prophecies that you know from scripture. Why does God choose to reveal certain types of information and not other types? Couldn't God have revealed virtually anything he wanted to?
3. Isaiah 40-55 provides a guidebook for people interested in considering what criteria it takes to identify the true God. Isaiah states three: 1) The ability to create, 2) The ability to predict the future, and 3) The ability to perform supernatural miracles. Can you think of any other criteria that would positively identify a true God versus a false one?
4. When someone mentions "prophecy," what do you think of? What prophecies are most important to you? Why? **Read Isaiah 46:9,10. Would you agree that the ability to predict the future—particularly long in advance—is a proof of divinity?**
5. Do you believe that God has the ability to predict the future, even predict the future in detail? Why is it that God's prophecies are so general? Would they be more convincing if they were given in more detail?
6. Have you tried picking out the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament and reading the context? Read Psalms 2:7 (*GNB*).

"I will announce," says the king, "what the LORD has declared. He said to me: 'You are my son; today I have become your father....'"

This passage is quoted in Acts 13:32,33; Hebrews 1:5; and 5:5 and is identified as a clear example of a messianic prophecy. But what do we do with the immediate context of those verses, i.e., Psalms 2:4-6 and 2:9-11? Do you believe these verses are even true? How can we pick out one sentence in the middle and claim it is a messianic prophecy while we reject or set aside the remainder of the chapter?

7. Take another example, Psalm 22:1 (*GNB*). "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" These words are quoted in Matthew 27:46, in Hebrew, and in Mark 15:34, in Aramaic. Those words were uttered by Jesus as he was dying on the cross. But later in Psalm 22:6-8 (*GNB*) we read:

But I am no longer a human being; I am a worm, despised and scorned by everyone! <sup>7</sup> All who see me jeer at me; they stick out their tongues and shake their heads. <sup>8</sup> "You relied on the LORD," they say. "Why doesn't he save you? If the LORD likes you, why doesn't he help you?"

Is that a description of Jesus? Was he a worm?

8. Read Psalm 69:9,21. These words were used by Jesus or by others about Jesus. But what about Psalms 69:5? "My sins, oh God, are not hidden from you; you know how foolish I have been." And what about Psalms 69:22-25 (*GNB*)?

22 May their banquets cause their ruin; may their sacred feasts cause their downfall.  
23 Strike them with blindness! Make their backs always weak!  
24 Pour out your anger on them; let your indignation overtake them.  
25 May their camps be left deserted; may no one be left alive in their tents.

Did Jesus ever utter such words? Never!

9. Read Isaiah 7:14. What is this verse actually prophesying? Read it in several different versions. What is the relationship between Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6,7? Why do we usually not read Isaiah 7:15,16 along with verse 14? Read Isaiah 8:1-4. How do these verses relate to Isaiah 7:14-16? What is the relationship between Isaiah 7:14 with the word, "Immanuel" and Isaiah 8:8,10 with the words, "God is with us"?
10. What do you think Matthew had in mind when he quoted this verse in Matthew 1:23? **Did he think that the birth of Jesus Christ was the sole fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 or did he think it was a secondary fulfillment?**
11. We often look at the Jewish hopes of a military Messiah and wonder how they so misinterpreted the Old Testament. What kind of a Messiah are we looking forward to? Are we hoping that Jesus will come and conquer all of our enemies? Look at the following list of messianic prophecies and their "fulfillments":  
Isaiah 7:14    Matthew 1:23  
Micah 5:2     Luke 2:4-7  
Daniel 9:25    Luke 3:1-23  
Hosea 11:1    Matthew 2:14  
What can we learn about prophecy from these "clear" prophecies?
12. What do you think Jesus was referring to when talking about the Old Testament predictions of his life? Read Luke 24:26,27. Did he mention the prophecies about his birth (Isaiah 7:14), his ministry (Isaiah 9:1,2), his being rejected (Isaiah 53:3), his hands and feet being pierced (Psalms 22:16), his being mocked and insulted (Psalm 22:6-8), his crucifixion along with sinners (Isaiah 53:12), his resurrection (Psalm 16:10), or others? Do you find these prophecies in their Old Testament settings as convincing evidence of a predicted Messiah?
13. One of the most famous prophecies in the entire Old Testament is found in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Christians believe that this is a prophecy about servant leadership and specifically about the treatment that Jesus Christ would receive when he came to this earth. How do other groups interpret this passage? Jews, in general, believe this is a prophecy about the suffering of God's people (the Jews) as a nation!
14. The Jews were not looking forward to a suffering servant as their leader! They were looking for a strong and victorious military leader.
15. We have already discussed how prophecies are not always so clear in prediction as they are in hindsight. Are we being honest in our use of these verses? Some have suggested that the words of Bible prophecy are very clear and accurate and thus, are a great aid to our faith. Read Daniel 11:31-45 and see if you believe these verses are very clear?
16. If you had a true prophet and a false prophet standing in front of you, do you believe that you would be able to distinguish between them? Compare Jeremiah 28. What criteria would you use? What is a prophet? What qualifies one as a prophet? Why does God speak through prophets? Is a prophet different from a "seer"?
17. **Read Matthew 24:5,24. Why did Jesus consider it necessary to warn us about false**

**prophets? Have there been any true prophets after the days of the apostle John? If there have been no true prophets, wouldn't it have been easier for God simply to tell us to reject anyone who claims to be a prophet?**

18. If you have not been an Adventist for your entire life, were prophecies a factor in bringing you into the church? Which prophecies were most convincing? **We have already suggested that telling the truth, consistently, repeatedly, and over a long period of time, is a solid basis for being trusted. Do prophecies demonstrate that God tells the truth? Does that increase your faith?**
19. How many different types of prophecies are there? Are there specific guidelines we should follow when studying prophecy? Read Matthew 24:32,33; John 13:19; 14:29; 16:4. What do these verses teach us about how we should read and understand prophecies? **Do prophecies have their primary application before they are fulfilled or after they are fulfilled?** (See *Interpretation of Prophecy*)
20. Read 1 Peter 1:12 (GNB).

God revealed to these prophets that their work was not for their own benefit, but for yours, as they spoke about those things which you have now heard from the messengers who announced the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. These are things which even the angels would like to understand.

What is this verse trying to tell us? Don't the angels understand these things yet?

21. Look at some of the earliest prophecies in the Bible: Genesis 3:15; 6:13; 12:1-3; 15:13,14; 18:10. Almost all of those verses are predictions of events which took place in the immediate future. Is Genesis 3:15 an exception?
22. What is the real meaning of Genesis 3:15? Is this simply a prediction of the fact that most humans are afraid of snakes and most snakes are afraid of humans? Is this verse intended to be an explanation of why serpents now crawl on the ground in the dust? Isn't the head versus heel approach the natural encounter point between humans and snakes?
23. Are we justified in taking this verse to another level and suggesting that it is a prediction of enmity between the ultimate serpent, the Devil, and the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ?
24. Do you believe this text has anything at all to do with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? If so, why?
25. The prophecy of Daniel 2 is, in fact, remarkable. Why do so many modern "scholars" reject the interpretation that we give to this prophecy? Many of them do not believe that it is possible, even for God—if he exists—to predict the future! When you compare Daniel 2 with Daniel 7, 8, 9, and 10-12, do those other prophecies help you to understand Daniel 2?
26. Do the events we see taking place in Western Europe prove that the "toes" are now uniting? Has Daniel 2 been, at least partially, disproved?
27. Turn now to Christ's predictions about the final events of this earth's history. Read Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. What differences do you see in these three renditions? What specific events are being predicted?
28. Given the predictions that we have from the Old Testament about his first coming, why do you think God chose to come at the time when he did?
29. Do you have any doubts in your mind about his second coming? Are we being false prophets when we claim that Jesus is coming soon? Look at the following list of predictions

about the end of time:

1. Increase of knowledge (Daniel 12:4)
2. False Messiahs (Matthew 24:4,5)
3. Wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6,7a)
4. Famine (Matthew 24:7b)
5. Earthquakes (Matthew 24:7b)
6. Preaching of the gospel (Matthew 24:14)
7. Pestilence (Luke 21:11)
8. Signs and wonders (Luke 21:11)
9. People living in fear (Luke 21:26)
10. Social problems (2 Timothy 3:1-5)
11. Increase of skepticism (2 Peter 3:3,4)

Are there any of these predictions that were not true, at least to a certain degree, at many times down through history? Are they actually more true today than they were a hundred years ago? Do you think they will be more true a hundred years from now, if the world continues to survive, than they are today?

30. Ellen White suggested that we should not set a time for the second coming. How soon do you think Jesus could really come?

The times and seasons God has put in His own power. And why has not God given us this knowledge?—Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. **A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come.** We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has told His disciples to “watch,” but not for a definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for “of that day and hour knoweth no man.” **You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years.** . . . We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ.—*R&H*, March 22, 1892; *Ev* 221.1; *LDE* 33:1,2; *Mar* 136.1,2; *1SM* 189.2; *2SM* 113.3; *17MR* 17.2; 1888 959.3

31. When you listen to the news or watch current events on television or read the newspaper, does it convince you that the second coming of Christ is very soon? What would it take to make you actually change your lifestyle? **Are you really looking forward to the soon coming of Jesus Christ? Or would you just as soon he wait awhile?**

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