

## THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY - 1

### INTRODUCTION:

1. To understand the meaning of "prophecy."
  - A. A prophet was a man who explained the message he received from God - he taught the people.
  - B. To foretell future events, to be guided by the power of the Holy Spirit to prophesy of the future.
  - C. This was true when the prophets told about the coming of the church, or the kingdom.

### BODY:

1. 2 Peter 1:16-21
  - A. Peter writes that they were "eyewitness of his majesty" - he speaks of the transfiguration - Mt. 17:1-5.
    1. This concerns the church also.
    2. Peter was an eyewitness of the beginning of the church - Acts 2.
    3. On this day of Pentecost Peter, with the other apostles, preached Jesus Christ as the Messiah - Acts 2:22.
    4. For the first time the saved were added to the Lord's church - Acts 2:47.
  - B. "So we have the prophetic word made more sure" - ( or, we are even more confident of the message proclaimed by the prophets) 2 Pet. 1:19.
    1. 1 Pet. 1:10-12
      - A. 'These prophets made careful search and investigation...'
      - B. 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 from Heaven.
    2. This 'good news from heaven' was about the coming of the church and salvation in this body.
  - C. "To which you will do well to pay attention to it." - 2 Pet. 1:19 - because this message from the prophets is certain.
  - D. The prophecy explained:
    1. 'Because it is like a lamp shining in a dark place.' - 2 Pet. 1:19.
      - A. Psa. 119:105
      - B. When the prophets first spoke of God's eternal kingdom to come, it was but a small light shining in a dark world of unknown future.
    2. "Until the day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in your hearts."
      - A. When the apostle John came to the close of the prophecy revealed to him, he was told: "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to announce these things to you in the churches. I am descended from the family of David; I am the bright and morning star." - Rev. 22:16.
      - B. This is Jesus, the son of God, who is the bright and morning star from prophecy.
    3. When the prophet Balaam was told by Balak, King of the Moabites, to bring a curse on Israel, Balaam told him, "The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." - Num. 22:38.

- A. Thus, a faithful prophet of God spoke, 'By the word that God put in him.'
  - B. Balaam told Balak, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star of David shall come out of Jacob; a scepter shall rise out of Israel." - Num. 24:17.
- 2. Isaiah 60:1-3
  - A. Isaiah prophesied: "Darkness now covers the earth and the people are in darkness."
    - 1. "But the Lord will shine on you, and his glory will appear on you."
    - 2. "The nations (or Gentiles) will come to your light."
      - A. We have seen the fulfillment of this prophecy in the church.
      - B. Both Jew and Gentile have come to the light of Jesus Christ, as God's people - Acts 2, 10; Rom. 9:24-26,30.
- 3. The prophet Malachi prophesied that "the sun of righteousness" will come "with healing in his wings." - Mal. 4:2.
  - A. God's Son has come to heal lives that have been broken because of sin - Mt. 11:28-30.
  - B. This healing is for all those who come to him and receive forgiveness of sins, and be added to His church.
- 4. Luke 1:67-79 - The prophecy of Zacharias, father of John.
  - A. Zacharias said, "Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come to the help of his people and has set them free." - v. 68.
  - B. Verses 78,79
    - 1. The "dawn of salvation" is the coming of the Messiah.
    - 2. Recall 2 Pet. 1:19.
  - C. This salvation "in the light" comes from Jesus Christ in his church.
- 5. Ephesians 5:8-14
  - A. Paul quotes from Isa. 26:19.
  - B. Jesus shines on those who obey him and come from the world of darkness into the light of his kingdom, the church.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. 2 Pet. 1:20
  - A. The prophets who spoke of the coming light, the Messiah, and the church were not expressing their personal thoughts.
    - 1. They were under the control of the Holy Spirit.
    - 2. They spoke the message that came from God.
- 2. The church, the kingdom of God, came by the will of God, not from any man.

## THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY - 2

### INTRODUCTION:

1. We have seen from the prophets, Isaiah and Malachi, that the light would come to shine upon those who sat in darkness.
  - A. This light, the new dawn, is the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
    1. This light that would shine on those who sat in the darkness of sin would be for the Jews and Gentiles.
    2. We have this promised salvation from God in Jesus Christ and his body, the church.
  - B. The prophecy of Zecharias of the coming sun of righteousness and fulfillment of this prophecy.
2. These prophetic words did not come by the will of man, but they spoke by the control of the Holy Spirit.

### BODY:

1. Ephesians 1:3-12 - "GOD CHOSE US"
  - A. Paul declares that "God chose us in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world."
    1. God calls us from the world into his church, the body of Christ.
    2. We are "called" or "chosen" when we obey God's commands to be forgiven of our sins.
  - B. "He predestinated us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself."
    1. "Predestined" is to 'pre-determine,' 'arrange before or 'to decide.'
    2. God had already decided, before the beginning of the age, concerning those who would be His children.
  - C. Verse 9 tells us that God did what He had purposed and made known to us the mystery of His will.
    1. This plan was completed when God brought all creation together (that is both Jew and Gentile) with Christ as the head.
    2. All things were done according to God's plan and decision.
    3. God chose us to be his own people based upon what He had decided from the beginning.
2. Romans 8:28-30
  - A. God causes all things to work together for good (or, in all things God works for good).
  - B. To those who are called according to His purpose.
    1. God's purpose was in His kingdom.
    2. Those who are called compose the church, the church as the ECCLESIA are those who are called out of the world of spiritual darkness into His light.
3. The question is asked: "What has all this to do with the church?"
  - A. It is in the church that God has brought all creation, both Jew and Gentile, together.
  - B. It is the church that Jesus is the head - Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18.
  - C. Therefore, it is in the church, as the body of Christ, where there is salvation according to the plan of God.
    1. The coming of the church was the fulfillment of specific prophecy from the prophets of old.

2. The church was not an emergency plan of God to take the place of something else.
- D. To understand this truth from the Bible, we must know that the church and the kingdom are the same body.
  1. Mt. 16:18 - Jesus said he would build his church.
  2. Mt. 16:19 - Jesus spoke of giving the keys of the kingdom.
  3. Therefore, Jesus used the words "church" and "kingdom" to refer to the same body.
- E. Mark 9:1
  1. If the kingdom has not yet come then some people living today are over 2,000 years old.
  2. On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, the kingdom of God did come with power.
  3. According to the Scriptures, from this time the kingdom has been in existence.
  4. Col. 1:13
  5. Rev. 1:6,9
- F. Since the Bible is true, we know from these truths revealed by the Holy Spirit, that the kingdom of God has existed since the day of Pentecost.

CONCLUSION:

1. Paul wrote by inspiration that "God chose us in Jesus Christ."
2. The Scriptures reveal to us that the church and the kingdom are the same.
  - A. Therefore, both of them exist at this present time as one body.

## THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY - 3

### INTRODUCTION:

1. The prophets told of the coming light, the new dawn, who is the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
  - A. In him, or in his body, the church, is the promised salvation from God.
  - B. These prophecies did not come by the will of the prophets, but by the control of the Holy Spirit.
2. God chose us in Christ before the beginning of the age - Eph. 1:4.
  - A. All those who obey God's will are in the church, or his kingdom.
    1. The church is the ECCLESIA, the called out body.
    2. The kingdom is to recognize that Jesus Christ is now reigning as King.

### BODY:

1. A brief examination of the doctrine called Premillennialism.
  - A. This doctrine teaches that the kingdom of God has not yet been established.
    1. They teach that the kingdom will come when Christ returns to earth.
    2. They believe that Jesus will reign on a literal throne in the city of Jerusalem for 1,000 years.
  - B. They believe that the church and the kingdom are different bodies, existing at separate times.
    1. They teach that God added the church to His plan because the kingdom was rejected, ore refused by the Jews.
    2. They regard the church as an "accident", and that it was not previously planned.
  - C. The Scriptures prove that this is a false doctrine.
2. We have examined the Scriptures that teach us very clearly that the kingdom has been established since Pentecost.
  - A. Mt. 16:18,19; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:6,9
  - B. Paul wrote that when Christ returns he will deliver the kingdom back to God - 1 Cor. 15:24.
    1. The kingdom could not be given back to God if it does not exist.
    2. There is no Scripture that teaches that Jesus will return to this earth, or reign in Jerusalem.
    3. In Eph. 2 Paul explains how the Jews and Gentiles became one people in the Lord.
  - C. The prophecy from Isaiah was fulfilled when the events of Acts 2 took place from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.
  - D. "The word of the Lord" was proclaimed from the city of Jerusalem on this day of Pentecost.
    1. After his resurrection, Jesus told his apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit - Acts 1:4,5.
    2. Jesus told them that they would be his witnesses - Acts 1:8.
      - A. The first sermon that preached Jesus as the promised Messiah was in Jerusalem.
      - B. Therefore, "the word of the Lord" first went out from Jerusalem.
  - E. Thus, from Acts 2, we see the fulfillment of all truths in Isaiah's prophecy.
3. The church in prophecy was declared by the prophets of God to be the coming kingdom.

4. The importance of the name of the church, or kingdom.
  - A. God has always given an importance to names.
    1. Gen. 17:5 - God changed the name of Abram - 'exalted father'- to Abraham - 'father of a multitude.'
    2. He changed the name of Jacob to Israel because this name was important to God.
  - B. We see from the Scriptures that the name of the church is important to God.
    1. The term "church" is found 110 times in the N.T.
      - A. 92 times it refers to a local congregation.
      - B. 18 times it refers to the whole body, or in an universal sense.
  - C. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." - Mt. 16:18.
    1. Since Jesus built the church it belongs to him.
    2. It is correct to speak of the "church of Christ" - Rom. 16:16.
  - D. Quite often the N.T. speaks of the "church of God." - 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Tim. 3:5;
    1. Other names are given - Heb. 12:23; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18.
  - F. All names speak of the church's relationship to its head.
5. God describes the church in the N.T. in many different ways.
  - A. As a "family" - Eph. 3:14,15; 2 Cor. 6:18.
  - B. A comparison between the physical and the spiritual body - 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22,23; 4:12.
  - C. As a "bride" - 2 Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7:4.
    1. In a spiritual sense, the church is "married" to the Lord.
  - D. As a "flock" - 1 Pet. 5:2; 2:25.
  - E. As a "house" - 1 Pet. 2:5.
  - F. As a "vineyard" - Mt. 20:1-16.
  - G. As a "pearl of great price" - Mt. 13:45,46.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. In the prophecy of Isa. 2 we have seen four very exact predictions when the kingdom would come.
  - A. In Acts 2 we see the fulfillment of these prophecies.
    1. Peter declared this to be "in the last days."
    2. "All nations" or "all people" will come to the kingdom.

## THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY - 4

### INTRODUCTION:

1. The prophets of God spoke under the control of the Holy Spirit to tell of the future events in God's plan.
2. God chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world" - in the body of Christ, which is the church.
3. The premillennial teaching is a false doctrine.
4. The prophesy of Daniel 2:36-45 indicated that the kingdom of God would be established in "the days of these kings."
  - A. Evidence from the Bible and history shows this to be the time of the Roman Empire.
  - B. This kingdom of God shall stand forever, and destroy all other kingdoms.

### BODY:

1. Isaiah 2:2,3 - this prophecy is also in Micah 4:1,2.
  - A. According to this prophecy there are four exact truths that must be fulfilled.
    1. This will be in the "last days."
    2. "All nations" will go to the house of the Lord.
    3. "The law of the Lord" will go out from Mt. Zion.
    4. "The word of the Lord" will go from Jerusalem.
2. Acts 2 gives the fulfillment of all of these prophecies.
  - A. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" - Acts 2:16.
    1. It is certain that the prophecy of Joel and the prophecy of Isaiah refer to the same time.
    2. After the death of Jesus the term "last days" means this "last age" in which we are living.
  - B. Acts 2:5
    1. These were from some 15 different countries.
    2. Acts 2:39 - speaks of the Jews and Gentiles.
  - C. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
3. Daniel 2:36-45
  - A. In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a large statue or image.
    1. This image had a head of gold, arms and chest of silver.
    2. Its stomach and thighs were of brass, and its feet and toes were of iron, mixed with clay.
  - B. The world kingdoms that fulfilled this prophecy.
    1. This image represented four world dominions or kingdoms.
      - A. The Babylonian kingdom was represented by the head of gold.
      - B. The Persian kingdom was represented by the arms and chest of silver.
      - C. The Grecian Empire of Alexander the Great was the third kingdom.
      - D. The Roman Empire was represented as being "strong like iron."
        1. This Empire was established by Caesar Augustus in the year 31 B.C.
        2. It lasted until the 476 A.D.
  - C. Daniel 2:44
    1. It was during the time of the Roman Empire that the kingdom that would never be destroyed would be established.

2. V. 45

D. Daniel 2:35 - the whole earth was to be affected.

4. This eternal kingdom of God, that began small, is in all the nations of the earth.

A. Isaiah 9:7

B. Matthew 13:31,32

CONCLUSION:

1. We have seen the church in prophecy.

A. We have seen these prophecies fulfilled in the N.T.

2. We have also seen that the name of the church is important to God.

A. This is true due to the fact that each name is a descriptive phrase showing relationship to Christ.

1. Names which do not show such are foreign to the Scriptures.