

# **Chapter Ten: Revealed vs. Hidden 3- Prophecy**

# Revealed vs. Hidden

## 3

### A Closer Look At The Teaching Of Prophecy

**Introduction: Finite man encounters the infinite Mind of God.**

- A. Things Hidden – Deuteronomy 29:29**
- B. Things We Can But Should Not Know – II Peter 1:6**
- C. Things Higher – Isaiah 55:8 & 9**

If two classes were offered during the Sunday School hour at church – 1.) Revelation, Prophecy and the Second Coming of Christ As Fulfilled In Our Lifetime and 2.) How To Share Christ With Others Through Scripture Memory And Evangelism In Your Own Neighborhood; which would be better attended?

Of the two areas, which one is specifically mentioned by God that we cannot fully understand?  
 To what degree do our actions affect prophecy?  
 To what degree do our actions affect evangelism?  
 To what degree are we held accountable to God for the fulfillment of prophecy?  
 To what degree are we held accountable to God for personal evangelism?

Yet, even in light of this reality, which class would be better attended, prophecy or evangelism?

Why is it that we would rather know about something that we cannot effect, we are not held accountable for the performance of and in fact are told that we cannot fully understand, than something we can effect, we are held accountable for and we can understand?

God has specifically told us that prophecies concerning the time of Christ return are hidden from us, (MAR 13:32) *"But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."* Yet, even in light of this, Christian bookstores are full of books which purport to aid the Christian in understanding the "day or hour". Why do Christian book stores carry these books? Why do Christians buy them?

Which do you think sell better...

- A. Doctrinal books on salvation?
- B. Books on how to lead others to Christ?
- C. Fictional accounts of the "day and hour" of the return of Christ?

Why do you think pretend books on a subject which God has said we cannot know sell better than books on doctrine or discipleship?

#### **I. Prophetic – is it explained or not explained**

##### **A. Prophecy**

1. We should study and pay attention to prophecy.
  - a. 2PE 1:19 *And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.*

- b. REV 1:3 *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.*
- 2. In doing so we should recognize our own limitations
  - a. 2PE 1:20 *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,*
    - 1.) Contrast with I John 2:27 where we are given the freedom to know, understand and exposit the Word of God.
    - 2.) Contrastingly, with prophecy, we are not free to exposit as we deem correct, we are not free to say what we feel, as if what we feel is what God says.
  - b. Even the prophets who spoke the Word of God did not fully understand what they were saying or writing and what the implications were.
    - 1.) 1PE 1:10 – 12 *As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.*
- 3. 2PE 1:20, 21 *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*
  - a. Prophecy is not symbol to be interpreted by man. It is not a puzzle, which, with the right perspective and the right study can be put together, unraveled or stumbled on to.
  - b. Prophecy is not code created to hide the word from governing officials. It cannot be decoded or deciphered by a correct understanding of the culture of the time, the psyche of the writer and the political or religious aims of the author.
  - c. Prophecy is God's Word, clearly and revealed from God's standpoint, but a mystery from the standpoint of man's fallen mind and intellect.
  - d. As a result, prophecy cannot be explained by our own interpretation, due to it's lofty state we must rely upon God.
- 4. Example:
  - a. Read Jeremiah 31:15
    - 1.) If you were a scribe living in the 400 years between Malachi and Matthew and this was all you had to go on
    - 2.) How would you interpret this passage?
  - b. Now read Matthew 4:12 – 16
    - 1.) What is the correct interoperation of this passage
    - 2.) Could you have ever come up with this lengthy chain of events without divine help from God?
    - 3.) What does that tell us about our teachings on prophecy?
- 5. Example
  - a. Read Revelation 12:1 – 6; Without reading any further, answer the following questions...
    - 1.) Who is the woman?
    - 2.) Who is the dragon?
    - 3.) What are the stars?

- 4.) What is the tail of the dragon?
- b. Now read Revelation 12:7 – 12
  - 1.) From this passage, again answer the above questions.
  - 2.) What is the difference in the confidence of your answers?
6. What caution should these two examples create in our teaching?

## B. In teaching Prophecy

1. Be willing to function under the divine limitations
  - a. 2PE 1:20 *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,*
  - b. MAT 24:36 *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.*
  - c. 2PE 1:6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;
2. When looking for the divine meaning of prophecy
  - a. Say what God says
    - 1.) Look for temporal immediate applications
    - 2.) Look for long term prophetic truth
    - 3.) Look for those principles which transcend fulfillment
  - b. Do not say what God does not say
    - 1.) If the temporal application is not revealed, do not create one
    - 2.) If the long term prophetic truth is not revealed, do not create one
    - 3.) Carefully differentiate between those principles which are truly and clearly revealed and any devotional thoughts which you might like to share.
3. Recognize that the benefits of the Word of God are not limited to our full understanding.
  - a. 2PE 1:6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;
    - 1.) Do not desire to know that which God has withheld
    - 2.) Recognize that if we are not satisfied with the revelation of the Holy Spirit, if we continue to seek, there are other “spirits” which will be glad to teach us.
  - b. 1TI 4:6 *In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.*
    - 1.) God’s Word is spiritual food, whether we recognize it or not.
    - 2.) Whether it be Revelation, Leviticus or the Minor Prophets, reading the Word of God has spiritual value by it’s very nature.
    - 3.) It is not our understanding that gives it worth but the fact that it is God’s holy Word.
  - c. REV 1:3 *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.*
    - 1.) Do not throw the baby out with the bath water.
    - 2.) On the one hand, do not go where you are forbidden
    - 3.) On the other do not, out of fear or vanity, fail to read and appreciate prophetic revelation.

**QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD**

*JEREMIAH 15:16*

**THEME: Revealed vs. Hidden Truth - Prophecy**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: II Peter 1:9**

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?  
Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Revelation 1:3**

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Explain why:**

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**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Matthew 24:36**

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Explain why:**

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