



Adult Learning Opportunity

Next Steps with the Bible: Going Deeper and Growing Stronger

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Nov 20: Understanding Biblical Prophecy: Preaching and Promising

1. Review of Week 9: Wisdom Books (Job, Prov, Eccl)

- Wisdom is the skill of applying biblical knowledge and truth to life's complexities.
- Wisdom books do not share the same form or genre but the same **purpose**
 - Wisdom teaches us how to live a godly and therefore a successful life in a broken world.
- Wisdom doesn't give us simplistic rules or guarantees principles and guidelines that we apply prayerfully and skillfully.

*I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or his children begging for bread. (Ps 37:25)*

- Assignment: Wisdom and Folly in Prov 3
 - Try "flip-flopping the negative and positive commands.

2. What is biblical prophecy?

- Prophecy is not soothsaying or prognosticating
- Prophecy is not "history written beforehand."
- Prophecy is speaking in the name of the Lord as his mouthpiece about his covenant with his people (Deut 18:15-19; Acts 3:18-25).
- Prophecy is preaching (ethics).
 - Addresses current issues (orthodoxy and orthopraxy)
 - "Remember Moses? What he said!"
- Prophecy is promising (consequences).
 - Addresses the future
 - "Disobey and you will pay." (oracles of judgment)
 - "Listen and you will be blessed (oracles of salvation/blessing)
- Prophecy comes in oracles and visions (Isa 1:1; 6:1; Jer 1:4; 11:1; Ezek 1:1; 3:16; Hos 1:1).
- Prophecy is expressed poetically.

3. Where do we find prophecy in the Bible?

- Old Testament books about the *lives* of the prophets
 - 1-2 Samuel; 1-2 Kings; 1-2 Chronicles (e.g. Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Nathan)
- Old Testament books about the *messages* (oracles) of the prophets
 - Isaiah to Malachi
 - Anthologies or collections: "Jeremiah's greatest hits"
- New Testament prophecy is embedded in other books
 - Gospels: "The Olivet Discourse:" Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 24
 - Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10
 - Letters: 1 Cor 12:10, 29; 13:2, 9; 14; 1 Thes 4:15-18; 1 Tim 4:1-5; 2 Tim 3:1-9; 2 Pet 1:19-21; 3:1-13
- The Book of Revelation (The Apocalypse)

4. How do we interpret biblical prophecy?

- Historical and literary context remain important: we need to understand the **ancient situation** external to these books and the internal **flow of thought** in these books.
- Determine the limits of the oracle/vision/passage under consideration.
- Try to understand the poetic/figurative language
- If there is a promise, think about the question of near and far fulfillment.
- 1 Pet 1:10-12
- If an OT passage, determine whether the NT refers to it.
- Case study: Jesus' "Olivet Discourse" (Matt 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21)

Brief Synopsis of the Olivet Discourse			
Content	Matthew	Mark	Luke
1. Setting	24:1–3	13:1–4	21:5–7
2. Beginning of birth pains	24:4–14	13:5–13	21:8–19
3. Abomination of desolation	24:15–28	13:14–23	21:20–24
4. Coming of the Son of Man	24:29–31	13:24–27	21:25–27
5. Lesson of the fig tree	24:32–41	13:28–32	21:28–33
6. Necessity of alertness	24:42–44	13:33–37	21:34–36
7. Parable of the servant	24:45–51		
8. Parable of ten virgins	25:1–13		
9. Parable of the talents	25:14–30		
10. Judgment of the nations	25:31–46		

5. Conclusion: Why Prophecy?

- Prophecy does not merely inform; it transforms
 - Prophecy shows God's care for his people.
 - Prophecy keeps God's people faithful.
 - Prophecy gives God's people hope, and hope gives them strength.
 - *The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* (Rev 19:10).



Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)