



November 24, 2023

Prophecies - God Can Always Be Relied Upon

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here in Aransas Pass, Texas. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

My wife and I are here in southeast Texas taking a few days off to spend time with her parents and to visit with brethren in the area.

I remember being asked "Can the great God we serve be relied upon to fulfill the prophetic statements He has made?" Again, a fair question to be considered by us all.

God says, "*Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure'*" (Isaiah 46:10)

So, what exactly did the apostle Paul mean when he said, "*whether there are prophecies, they will fail?*"

Let's take a few moments to look at that statement. "*Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.*" (1 Corinthians 13:8 NKJV)

Notice another translation. "*Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.*" (1 Corinthians 13:8 RSV) The Revised Standard Version translation recognizes that the same Greek word is used for "will fail" and for "*vanish away*" in the New King James Version translation. The Greek word *katargeo* has a range of meanings or renderings. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon comments on *katargeo*: "1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative 2) to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish."

The apostle Paul is contrasting the quality and trait of love with other expressions of the working of the Holy Spirit. We've been talking over the last few weeks about the Holy Spirit, and this fits in well with our focus.

Here's the point. The need and importance of love will never diminish or fade away! Many prophecies, even though inspired by God's Spirit working through the prophets, will be fulfilled and then be rendered inactive.

In addition, God maintains the prerogative to negate or suspend certain prophetic predictions when circumstances change. One example of this: "*if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.*" (Jeremiah 18:8) The book of Jonah is another example of the Lord rendering a prophecy inactive and reversing His initial pronouncement.

The gift of speaking in tongues by inspiration of the Holy Spirit was present in the early church, but seems to have no longer been active later in the first century church. If everyone is speaking the same language, the need of the gift of speaking in another language is no longer necessary. Notice this prediction: "*For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they all may call on the name of the Lord. . .*" (Zephaniah 3:9)

This seems to be a millennial condition where God will work out having everyone on earth speaking the same purified language of His choosing.

The knowledge that will pass away or will be unemployed will include the knowledge of how to do evil, how to devise and implement weapons designed to kill and injure others, the knowledge of the ungodly philosophies of this world, secular humanism, evolution, etc.

But, the knowledge of how to practice righteousness and properly worship God will not cease. The condition of right knowledge to be present in the Kingdom of God age is described. "*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.*" (Isaiah 11:9)

One component of love is connected and associated with the knowledge and application of living by God's laws and commandments. "*Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.*" (Deuteronomy 11:1) "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. . ." (1 John 5:3) "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" (John 14:15) Not a popular concept to many these days.

The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary has an interesting observation: "A primary fulfilment of Paul's statement took place when the Church attained its maturity; then "tongues" entirely "ceased," and "prophesyings" and "knowledge," so far as they were supernatural gifts of the Spirit, were superseded as no longer required when the ordinary preaching of the word, and the Scriptures of the New Testament collected together, had become established institutions."

The apostle Paul looks forward to the circumstances of the Kingdom of God as compared to this physical, limited existence and knowledge. "*But when the perfect thing comes, then that which is in part will be caused to cease.*" (1 Corinthians 13:10)

We can trust our great God to use His Holy Spirit to work through human beings in the way that is best within the circumstances and times in which we live.

Peter referred to events of his day when God poured out His Holy Spirit, but he quoted from a passage that looks ahead to the last days. "*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.*" (Acts 2:17-18)

For sure these days ahead will be both interesting and exciting! And, there are still many important prophecies to yet be fulfilled...

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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