

## EXAMPLE ON HOW TO INTERPRET PROPHECIES

### A. What is a prophecy? – Meaning of the word

A prophecy is defined as a future event which remains to be fulfilled. It is given by God and will be fulfilled by God in His time. Prophecies therefore will and can never fail. It will surely come to pass. The almighty power of God and His Word is

**Examples of Prophecies (fore-telling) in the OT and NT include –** Genesis 3:15 (distant future); Gen. 15:13-21 (intermediate future); Gen. 40:1-23 (immediate future); Daniel 2 and 7 (mixture of immediate, intermediate and distant future); Matthew 24: 4-13 (immediate future) Matthew 24:14-35 (distant future); Revelation (distant future); etc.

"J. Barton Payne's *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* lists 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament and 578 prophecies in the New Testament, for a total of 1,817. These encompass 8,352 verses." [<http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/318-how-many-prophecies-are-in-the-bible>]

Some statistics on the second coming of Christ from the Bible – "Of the 260 chapters in the entire New Testament, there are 318 references to the Second Coming, or one out of 30 verses. 23 of the 27 New Testament books refer to this great event. The four missing books include three which are single chapter letters written to individual persons on a particular subject, and the fourth is Galatians which does imply Christ's coming again. For every prophecy on the First Coming of Christ, there are 8 on Christ's second coming." [Paul Lee Tan's **Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations**, Dallas, Texas: Bible Communications, Inc. 1998.]

### B. Generally Two aspects to the Prophetic Ministry

#### 1. Forth-telling

Forth-telling is to preach the Word of God to rebuke sins and call a disobedient people back to God. The ministry of the priests was to teach the people the Word of God. The kings were to rule the people according to the Word of God. The prophets were sent by God to rebuke all, including the people, priests and kings, when they do not obey the Word of God. Their ministry was very specific. They were not meant to be good guys or replace the roles of the priests and the kings.

Their ministry could be summarized by this incident in the lives of young Samuel. **1 Samuel 3:18**, "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good." He is not supposed to add or subtract from what God commanded him to say. He must be very

courageous to stand before kings who were surrounded by soldiers and possessed absolute powers to kill whomever they dislike. God's prophets must not flinch from this aspect of their duties.

Preachers, church leaders, and pastors today must do likewise according to God's perfect Word. Samuel is generally known as the last Judge (from the period of Judges) and the first prophet as he will commence the ministry of the prophets. This does not in any way diminish the PROPHET mentioned in Deu. 18:18 who is none other than Jesus Christ.

There are female prophets called prophetess. Examples include Miriam in Exodus 15:20 and Deborah in Judges 4:4 and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist in Acts 21:8-9.

## 2. Foretelling

This is the aspect of prophecies that we are more familiar with. Whenever the word prophecy is used the first thought that comes to mind is future events.

God can tell the future. The reason He is able to tell the future is because He is omnipresent and omniscient (i.e. all things from the beginning to the end of time are known to God and all at the same time) and immutable (the same yesterday, today and forever). He knows all things. Because He is also omnipotent

God does not only know the future but He is in control of the future. The future is molded according to His sovereign and holy hands. He is not like a fortune teller who guesses the future and is helpless to do anything about it. He is God almighty and all that he says will surely come to pass. The problem is our faith in believing in what God says or not. If we are really Christians and believe in prophecies (fore-telling) then we must live our present life in light of what God has said He will do in the future.

Example: Joseph did after he interpreted the prophecies that God gave to Pharaoh in Genesis 41:32-36. He gave the right advice to Pharaoh on what he must do now in order to survive the terrible that will surely afflict the entire region for 7 long years. The years of famine were so severe that the 7 years of plenty would be quickly forgotten. By this very advice, the entire family of Jacob or Israel was brought to Egypt and very well received by Pharaoh. Israel was given the land of Goshen to live. This was the beginning of the exodus. For in 430 years time, Israel would mushroom from a family of 75 people to a people of 2,000,000. This was despite the infanticide practiced by Pharaoh about the time Moses was born.

God's plan cannot be delayed or thwarted by wicked men or even Satan. All that God prophesies will definitely come to pass.

Are the true prophets today who have this foretelling ministry? The answer is yes as long as the foretelling are based upon the revealed and perfect Word of God. For example when we tell someone about the second coming of Christ and the rapture which are clearly taught in Scriptures, we are foretelling. These are future events that are not fulfilled yet. In this limited and biblical sense the ministry of the prophetic foretelling ministry exists today.

### C. Determining a True or False prophet

**Deuteronomy 18:19-22**, *“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”*

The evaluation of a true or false prophet is in his forth telling and foretelling. But more so in his foretelling as forth telling are easier to determine as his messages are measured against the completed and perfect Word of God. However, in the days of the Old Testament when the Word of God was progressively revealed, both aspects of the prophetic ministries were just as difficult. When a self proclaimed prophet comes and made some future prophecies how does one evaluate what he says if true or not especially when it concerns the future. If what he prophecies do not come to pass then he is a false prophet. The reason why fore-telling is used to judge is obvious because the false prophets will use fore-telling to deceive. But when deception mounts its ugly head, it will obviously use fore-telling. It is a proclamation about the future and how will the person who lives in the present know what is in the future? Confusion will set in and deception will capture many hearts and casualties will increase.

For example -- **Jeremiah 28:1-11**, *“And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, that Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD'S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah,*

***with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.*** Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the LORD, Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD'S house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place. Nevertheless hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people; The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him. ***Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.*** And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, ***Thus saith the LORD;*** Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way." [Emphasis added]

Noticed how Hananiah (means "the LORD has favoured") also used the phrase "Thus saith the LORD". Jeremiah said 70 years and he countered by saying only 2 years in captivity and Israel will return! Hananiah even has a biblical name to complete the deception. He has his aids and the majority including the kingdom behind him whereas Jeremiah stood alone. Sure God was on His side but only Jeremiah drew comfort and courage in that truth but not the enemies and not the people who were caught in between.

Now that we have the completed and perfect Bible it is much easier for us to distinguish between a false and a true prophet. The perfect Bible is our objective and infallible and inerrant guide. This is our rule of faith to separate true from false. False prophets will abound in the last days prior to Christ's return. **Matthew 24:24** warns, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

There are no more true Prophets today after the completion of the Bible. These Bible Prophets were writers of God's Word. The moment the Book of Revelation was completed their ministry ended. **1 Corinthians 13:8-10**, "*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*" The word "perfect" here refers to the Word of God. The "part" used here is the ministry of prophecy and the knowledge of God's Word.

NOTE-The difference between prophecy and tongue speaking is that prophecy is the Word of God in the language of the people and tongue

speaking is the word of God spoken in another language. Tongue speaking is not the gibberish of the present day Charismatics.

FEBC is called a school of prophets. This particular usage of the word “prophet” emphasized the forth-telling and character of the prophets. The character of courage and integrity of the biblical prophet and their ability to call a spade a spade is the emphasis. The ministry of fore-telling is also present in that these future prophecies are all Bible based. For example when the preacher preaches from the Book of revelation and tells others about the second coming of Christ he is actually fore-telling but confined only to what the Bible has revealed. In this sense the ministry of prophet remains. It is not the capital P-Prophet where these false prophets tell the future of church members or declare that “today God gave me a word” to tell the congregation where the “word” is equivalent to the Bible! These are the false prophets of today found mainly in Charismatics churches.

**D. The Perfect Word more sure than so-called “prophecies”**

**Deuteronomy 13:1-5**, *“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.”*

This passage seems to imply that the Evil One has limited ability in the area of fore-telling. The ability of the Evil One of course cannot be compared with God’s. God’s fore-telling is genuine, holy and righteous and based upon His character. All believers who obey God’s prophecies will live a righteous and holy life whereas the “miracles” done by the Evil One will lead one away. This is the yardstick God says we must use to evaluate all prophets.

Therefore do not be impressed by the miraculous and spectaculars. Be knowledgeable in the Word of God for that is the more sure Word of life and practice that is able to help us make the right decision and not be deceived.

Do not be intimidated by claims of prophecies especially from the Charismatics or anyone else. They are the denomination that claimed to have restored the office of the prophets. They continue to claim new

prophetic revelations from God today. What they have done is to add to the Word of God and God's warning to them is in Rev 22:18-19. Even if the prophecies come to pass evaluate them i.e. the prophet himself and his teachings as a whole, against the Word of God. If it is against the Word of God he is a false prophet even when the prophecy comes to pass. He has led you astray by not following the Word of God. There were individuals who were enabled by God to prophesy but they were not even born again. Balaam in Numbers 23-24 was such a person. He was used by God to even prophesied about Christ's coming in Numbers 24:19 and yet he was an evil unbeliever.

The measure of one's salvation is the perfect Word of God. The measure of the believer's acceptable life is also the perfect Word of God. Titles and positions matters not at all! In fact the bigger the titles the greater would be the demands and expectations. **Matthew 7:21-23**, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"

#### **E. Characteristics of Prophecies**

1. There is only single fulfillment and not multiple fulfillments. For example Isaiah 7:14 is fulfilled once and once only as recoded in Matthew 1:22-23.
2. The person who receives genuine prophecies from the LORD is no reflection that he is born again i.e. a believer. For example Pharaoh received the prophecies from the LORD in Genesis 39 cannot be interpreted that this Pharaoh was a believer. This is also true of the baker and butler in Genesis 38.
3. Prophecies are often given by the LORD through dreams and visions. The main difference between dreams and visions in the Bible is that in the former the person is asleep when the LORD spoke to him whereas the later was awake.
4. The primary focus of biblical prophecies is in the event and not the time unless the prophecy itself refers to time. The timing of when the prophecy is going to be fulfilled is not the emphasis but the certainty of the fulfillment of the prophetic event is. There might be large gaps of time between certain facts of prophecies. For example Daniel 2.
5. Prophecies are basically revelations from a loving heavenly Father to His children telling them what He will do in the future. They are meant to guide their present life in light of the impending future. If

they do not change their present life then basically they do not believe in prophecies. They do not trust their heavenly Father to tell them the truth or that He is not a God who can keep His word! Verbal and mental assent are not what God wants from His children. If Joseph (Genesis 41) were like us there would be no Israel today!

6. Prophecies are given to encourage the obedient and to warn the disobedient. The former is supposed to persevere and live a holy life and never give up following the LORD. Prophecies were given to the disobedient to stop them from sinning and return to the LORD whom they say they have received as their Lord and Saviour. This means that prophecies are given not to unbelievers who already rejected the LORD but to God's children who claim to love and obey Him.

#### **F. Why did God give us prophets?**

1. Their ministry is to point us back to Christ. It is out of love and concern for His wayward children that God gave us prophets. Their duty is speak only God wants them to speak and do only what God wants them to do.
2. Their ministry also includes the future, which God will give to them, to give us hope. Revelations about the future are anchors to our soul in times of trials and adversities. The fact that there is a home in heaven awaiting all who are in Christ is most reassuring when the present life of suffering is experienced because of Christ.
3. God gave them to us as fearless men of the Word of God. They will not flinch or waver in the heat of the fiercest battle. They will be examples to the flock as seers who know the mind of God. Their ministry will put backbone into our walk with God.
4. They were given to write Scriptures. There are the preaching prophets like Elijah and Elisha and Nathan who were true prophets but did not write Scriptures. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and the Minor Prophets were both preachers and writers of Scriptures.

#### **STEPS TO CONSIDER IN INTERPRETING PROPHECIES**

1. Pray continuously for the Holy Spirit's illumination;
2. Find the context of the prophecy. Who did or said what to whom and for what purpose. The context is determined from the immediate context, sometimes before and after the said prophecy;
3. Make sure that the passage is a complete passage with a complete theme.

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4. Check from other related books of the Bible if there is a parallel text or related text that will help shed more light on the prophecy.
5. Examine and meditate from God's Word and then separate the essential salient points;
6. Understanding the culture and biblical customs in which the prophecy was given;
7. Use a Bible Atlas to help you with the geographical location in which this prophecy occurred, if any.
8. Read the prophecy many times until you have a good knowledge of the whole prophecy in your mind;
9. Do not go to the commentaries to help you yet;
10. Summarize the entire prophecy into one statement; Make it as focus as possible;
11. Restate the summarized statement into "a title" for your teaching lesson or sermon; It has to capture the attention of the hearers; Do not overstate the title such that the expectations cannot be fulfilled;
12. Find out how many MAIN points there are in the whole prophecy;
13. Find out how many sub-points there are in each of the main points;
14. Restate the main and sub-points to ensure that they are ONE with the title of the lesson or sermon. They must all be related to one another. The guide is your title of lesson or sermon.
15. The sermon or "lesson" should have -- a Title; a Proposition Statement which is your summarized statement above; Main and sub-points; Illustrations; Applications and Conclusions.
16. Check a conservative Commentary for new thoughts or lessons or points that you might have missed or not able to discover. Retain your OWN thoughts and do not change it just to fit the commentaries without a very good biblical reason.
17. Learn to be God-confident in your understanding of God's Word and never allow the commentaries to become your crutch as if without their confirmation you cannot understand God's Word.

## ILLUSTRATIONS ON HOW TO INTERPRET PROPHECIES

### Example # 1 -- Acts 2:14-21

**Acts 2:14-21** (KJV) "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: **15** For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day. **16** But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; **17** And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: **18** And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: **19** And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: **20** The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: **21** And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.."

#### 1. Context –

- a. Pentecost had just occurred and the fearful disciples experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit. They are now full of the Holy Spirit and filled with courage.
- b. Peter was the spokesman who began his preaching to the large crowd who gathered from all over the Roman Empire to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. This is the feast of thanksgiving of harvest.
- c. He began his message by correcting an error and then cited the prophet Joel as his basis to declare that what has just happened was a fulfillment of God's prophecies declared by the prophet Joel.
- d. The recipients of this message were the Jews gathered there. It was a ministry targeting the Jews only and not the Gentiles. This was in line with Joel's prophecies.
- e. Peter prophesied correctly and did not make any mistakes as some commentators surmised. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.

#### 2. Outline –

- a. Proposition/Summary statement – The beginning and the end of time has begun.
- b. Title – "Revealing the Last Days"
- c. Outline –

- I. MISUNDERSTANDING THE LAST DAYS – 2:14-15
- II. THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST DAYS – 2:16-18
- III. THE END OF THE LAST DAYS – 2:19-21 cf. Matthew 24:29-30

### Example # 2 – Matthew 24:1-31

**Matthew 24:1-31 (KJV)** "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple. **2** And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. **3** And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? **4** And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. **5** For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. **6** And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. **7** For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. **8** All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. **9** Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. **10** And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. **11** And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. **12** And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. **13** But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. **14** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. **15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) **16** Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: **17** Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: **18** Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. **19** And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! **20** But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: **21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. **22** And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. **23** Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not. **24** For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect. **25** Behold, I have told you before. **26** Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not. **27** For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. **28** For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. **29** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: **30** And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

**31** And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

OBSERVATIONS –

1. **Introduction (24:1-4)** – The incident that preceded the prophecies. The disciples were proud of the great temple that the provincial kings like Herod and his successors had paid huge amounts of money to renovate and beautify. By this time, forty six years of construction had been made to enlarge and beautify it (see John 2:20).
2. **Christ's bold declaration (24:2)** – This Temple that appears so indestructible will be completely destroyed (intermediate prophecy). In AD 70 it was thoroughly destroyed by the Romans led by General Titus.
3. **The disciples asked Christ two questions (24:3)** – The first was when will be the destruction of the Temple. The second was when will be the coming again of Christ which will signify the end of the world. This sets the division of the answer of Christ. Both these questions were answered for Christ had always answered the questions of His disciples especially when they were asked sincerely with the purpose of knowing the truth. The questions of Christ's enemies were not answered in the latter half of Christ's ministries for their attempts to entrap Him were getting very bad. Initially Christ answered their tricky questions even though they had every intention to get Him into trouble.
4. **Division of verses 5-35** – Verses 5 to 13 would be the answer to the first question concerning the destruction of the seemingly indestructible Temple. General Titus of the Roman Empire came to destroy the city of Jerusalem including the Temple. The Temple remained destroyed till today. We know that verse 13 ends the answer to the first question because of the way in which verse 13 is worded, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." These are words of warning to ensure perseverance for the believers who lived through the destruction of the Temple. Also note the similarity between this section and section verses 14-35. False Christ occurs in the time of the destruction of the Temple in verse 5 and false Christs occurs in verse 23-24 for the second coming of Christ. False prophets are mentioned in verse 11 and they are also mentioned in verse 24. If verses 5 to 35 answer only the second coming of Christ then we are saying that Christ did not answer the first question. The explanation would be difficult to say the least. Why did Christ separate the mention of false Christs and false prophets separately? Why did He not wish to prepare the hearts of the believers in light of AD 70 destruction even after they asked Him about it? The fulfillment of verses 5 to 13 in the time of AD 70 is an assurance to us that Christ will also fulfill what he has prophesied as the signs that will appear before the second coming of Christ.

Please note that there are two parts to the second coming of Christ. The first is called the second coming of Christ FOR the church where Christ will meet the believers in the air. The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive will be raptured or caught up to meet the LORD in the air with the glorified saints

(cf. 1Thessalonians 4:13-5:5). The second aspect refers to the second coming of Christ WITH the church where Christ will descend all the way onto the earth to fight against Satan and his hosts at the battle of Armageddon. Matthew 24:29-35 describes the second coming of Christ with the church.

5. **Explaining verses 14-35** – This passage contains four clear signs that will take place before the second coming of Christ with the church.
  - a. **Gospel into all the world (Verse 14)** – Has the gospel of Christ been preached into all the world for a witness unto all nation? The answer is a resounding yes. Note that the Bible did not say that the world would believe in the gospel but that the gospel is preached in all the world. With modern technology like the internet, radio and the television the gospel has been preached into all the world through these invisible airwaves. This sign is already fulfilled.
  - b. **Abomination of Desolation in Holy Place (Verses 15-20)** – In order for the abomination of desolation to be placed in the Holy Place, the temple has to be rebuilt. There is no temple in Jerusalem yet. Once the Temple is rebuilt watch out for the rising of the abomination of desolation. This is mentioned in Daniel 9:27. This sign remains to be fulfilled. From Daniel 9:27 it will be fulfilled in the middle of the seven years of Great Tribulation. This means that it will take place between the second coming of Christ for the church and the second coming of Christ with the church, if we believe that the 1st resurrection and the rapture occur before the start of the Great Tribulation. When this is fulfilled the people at that time will behave like what is described in verses 16-20.
  - c. **Great Tribulation (Verse 21-22)** – Jesus calls this the Great (mega) tribulation because this is a tribulation that the world has never seen before. The world has gone through many tribulations. Famine and droughts and world wars and tribulation that devastated millions are some examples. But none of these will even come close to what the Great Tribulation will bring. The Book of Revelation reveals the whole earth would be turned into an unlivable place. Drinking water will be turned to poison, vegetation would be burned and the oceans would be turned into blood. There will be believers on the earth at that time for they are the ones who will refuse to bow down to the Antichrist. At least 144,000 of them would be on earth during this time. The LORD says in verse 22 that for the elect's sake the days of the tribulation will be shortened. God has plans for the elect during the millennium. This prophecy is not fulfilled yet. It will also take place between the second coming of Christ for the church and the second coming of Christ with the church.
  - d. **False Christ and False Prophets (Verse 23-28)** – This sign was also common during the AD 70 period before the Temple was destroyed. Perhaps false prophets will say that Jerusalem will not be destroyed. False Christs (i.e. Messiah) would say that they are the Messiah who would

deliver them from the mighty Roman army led by General Titus! In this case the false Christs and false prophets shall arise before the second coming of Christ with the church. They have already arisen today. The Charismatic Movement is also called the "Sign and Wonders Movement." These Charismatic churches are called mega churches. The word for "great" in the phrase "great signs and wonders" in verse 24 is the word "mega." Charismatics have also restored the office of the prophets in some of their churches including the office of apostles. They prophesy today like they did in the Old and New Testaments times. This is precisely what is happening today since the Charismatic was born in 1906 in Los Angeles when a young girl by the name of Agnes Osman was said to have spoken in tongues (Mandarin language) as reported by the Charismatic historians. Since that fateful day the Charismatics have taken the world by storm and grew in leaps and bounds in a manner that outgrew all traditional churches. Their excesses have also increased manifold from merely speaking in tongues in the early days to visions, dreams, healing, holy laughter, prophecies, etc. These experiential based theologies are void on Scriptural truth but their believers are hard pressed to give them up because they have experienced them. Only by the power of God can a Charismatic surrender and confess that his experiences are not of God. From a human standpoint, to admit that his experiences are wrong and not pleasing to God, is well nigh impossible to do for it is like saying that his many years of practicing Charismatism and all his speaking in tongues and visions and dreams has been a gigantic mistake! But that is exactly what it comes down to. Charismatics have to repent of their sins for the Charismatic Movement is not of God but one of the many deceptions of Satan to unite the world into the end time one world church of the antichrist. These false Christs and false prophets will do miracles that appear so real that if it were possible (which it is not) deceive the very elect. In other words if you are a child of God open your spiritual eyes to see the errors of the Charismatic Movement and come out of it! Take their tongue speaking as a case in point. They speak gibberish and NOT a language. Thousands are being deceived. The word for tongue is used in the Bible to refer to a proper language in every instance when it is used in the figurative sense.

**Take heed of this warning from God's perfect Word in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (KJV)** "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." [Emphasis added]

If you are born again and truly know Christ as your Lord and Saviour then come out from among them and be ye saved. **2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (KJV)** "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a

Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." [emphasis added]

**CONCLUSION** – Prophecies are given by God to His children for His children are the ones who would benefit from them. Unbelievers who reject Christ first coming will not be interested in His second coming. Our heavenly Father wants us to live righteously and not be deceived by these signs of the last days. The signs mentioned in Matthew 24 concerning the second coming of Christ are not exhaustive. There are many more signs found in other passages of the Bible.

Prophetic literature is a special genre found in Holy Scriptures only. They are the acts of God Almighty for the benefits of His children so that they will live their present life in light of what Father would do. Are you born again? What do you do with the prophecies of Holy Scripture will reveal the answer to that question!