

Hurst Green

22nd Jul 2018

Daniel 11:2-35

The accuracy of prophecy

So last week we looked at spiritual warfare and what it can mean and you had the main point – to believe in your training.

This is important because God is always preparing you for what he has in store for you and so when you hit a situation you have been prepared for it – God has trained you and so you are ready – believe in your training.

Now we continue in Daniel and end times prophecy and we have an easy week – or at least I have an easy week!!! Then we launch into more controversial verses which will stretch the little grey cells.

Now these verses we have read for today have already come to pass and what I want to show you today is the accuracy of prophecy.

Now of course we can all leap up and show me times when people have prophesied and it has not come to pass and you should all know the verses

Matthew 7:15-17 (ANIV)

¹⁵ “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

By their fruit you will know them and

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 (ANIV)

¹⁹ Do not put out the Spirit's fire; ²⁰ do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Test everything. Hold on to the good.

Now there are some very important principles in those verses about how we should be dealing with prophecy and so that we are clear let me draw them out for you.

Firstly do not put out the spirit's fire and this is what most of our churches are guilty of. Because of the difficulties of understanding and discerning most churches simply flatten the lot and do without the Spirit.

Never do that because in doing so you lose all the good the spirit brings to you. I have run through the fruits and the gifts of the spirit often and pointed out the benefits they bring to us.

In deed at the start of nearly every service I in the last twelve years I have encouraged you to prophecy during every service. Not much has been forth coming but I continue in hope that you will let the spirit move in your lives and you will bring that blessing to the family as we meet here.

Secondly how we treat prophecy. The verse tells us not to treat it with contempt.

Again this is what many churches are guilty of. Usually because they have seen a few false prophets and so treat all prophecy as false including that which is in scripture.

There are some that go the other way and if you say it is a prophecy they treat it as scripture.

Both camps fail at verse 23 – Test everything.

Now that is easy on short term prophecy but many prophets are only issuing long term prophecies.

For them we do not despise and reject them but we put them on the shelf and wait and see.

Watch out for these because this is where we can find teachers we like – ones that say things we like when so often prophecy is saying things we do not like!!

When we find a prophet whose prophecies have been shown to be true because they have come to pass then they are worth listening to and that is what I am going to show you today in Daniel.

But another warning – prophecy is very rarely a clear statement. Look at today's reading – I will show you it with hind sight but as a prediction it is difficult to see until it has come to pass.

For modern day prophets do not look at the man made title so many of them wear but look at the words they use. Has what they have said come to pass – if so give them credit and listen to what they say – still test it but listen.

If not then they are a false prophet and need to be ignored.

So today's reading and this is where we turn into a history lesson. How long do you want the history to be – we could be here until tea time but I think you would rather I skimmed the top and let you do the detail. You can find it in any commentary and in Peakes which I tend to use there is one page but the font size is rather small so they can fit it all in.

So here goes the high level version:

Three kings will arise and then a fourth – these are Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius and Xerxes.

Verse 3 then a mighty king will arise – this is Alexander the Great. Ruled the known world and could do what he liked – Just as is said in verse 3

Verse 4 – his kingdom will be broken up and go to the four winds – Alexander's four generals each took one section of his kingdom.

Now I could go through this naming each of the kings and I am sure you would sit there engrossed in the level of detail and accuracy of prophecy but I thought I would take a slightly different approach because this is not just a list of kings of the various kingdoms.

In this prophecy are bits that state the detail of what is going on which should encourage you in the accuracy of prophecy. Look at verse 6

Daniel 11:6 (ANIV)

⁶after some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days she will be handed over, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her.

Now I bet if you read that it would be one of those passages that you would simply gloss over on the assumption it must mean something – well it does and is significant to Israel because she gets caught between these great powers as they rage and make war.

So:

- The King of the South is Egypt – Ptolemy 1
- The King of the North is Antiochus
- The daughter of the South is Ptolemy's daughter Berenice who was given in marriage to Antiochus on the condition he divorced his first wife Laodice.
- That all happened.
- She will not retain her power. After two years Ptolemy died
- Antiochus put Berenice to one side and restored Laodice
- He and his power will not last – Laodice killed Antiochus
- Berenice fled
- She will be handed over – she was caught and put to death together with all her family and attendants

Wow!! All that in one verse

Verse 7 – her family avenge her by taking the Kingdom of the North – meaning of course that the march straight through Israel to get from Egypt to Syria

So the prophecy is accurate in the high level and the detail and we could go on through the remaining 28 verses but hopefully you have got the point and if you haven't repeating myself will not help.

But take this to show that this prophet is authentic and so as we look at the last two sections he has a track record of being right.

So you have been reminded of how to deal with prophecy together with a desire that we should see more of it in our church here since it is there to encourage and edify us.

But you have also seen how accurate Daniel is and how correct his prophecies have been and so when we look at prophecies that are more controversial you will know that Daniel is a true prophet.