

ISAIAH, PART 2 (COMFORT FOR HIS PEOPLE)
PROGRAM 41 (#911156)
WEEK 9 (#911332) (Guest Teacher David Arthur)
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The following is an actual transcript of the PRECEPTS FOR LIFE Broadcast. For the purpose of filling transcript requests quickly, they have received only light editing. If you have questions concerning the material covered in this broadcast, Kay has published a number of books explaining the Scripture in depth. These books may be ordered by contacting the telephone number or address printed above.

SERIES: Isaiah, Part 2 (Comfort For His People)
TITLE: Program 41 – Purposeful Prophecy
(Guest Teacher David Arthur)

MONDAY

INTRO

Kay: One of my favorite names for God is Jehovah-Jireh. He is the provider. And you know what? I've had to go to Greece and teach the Word of God on our Greece Study Tour. And God, Jehovah-Jireh has provided a marvelous teacher for you today. And that's our son, David Arthur. He has his Masters of Arts in Theological Studies. But most of all he has the gift of teaching and you're going to enjoy Isaiah as a result.

OPEN

David: Let me ask you, when you read prophecy in the Scripture, do you walk away confused? Frustrated? When you look at the Bible and you realize that one third of it is prophecy, do you really understand why you're studying it? Do you really want to study it? Well today on Precepts for Life, let me show you why prophecy should be taught, why it should be studied, and how you can do it. Join us today.

PART ONE

David: I have a story from a friend named Frank. He went to the Ukraine on a missions trip. He spent his time for about a week traveling throughout the country seeing various churches and mission organizations, but the highlight of his trip was when he was taken to a village. Down a long, long road that had no electricity, no indoor plumbing, and there he walked up to this little hut of this Christian woman. She was your typical Ukrainian woman, late in her eighties. She came out and she began to talk to the translator—to my friend, Frank. Back and forth they began to talk and you could see the joy of Christ in her eyes. Frank was dying to know, “What is she talking about?” And he said, “Well she wants to know a about you. She wants to know about your children, do you have a wife, what do you do for a living? I told them you were a pastor. She was excited. But she has one question she wants to ask you herself.” And she said this in broken English: “Are you excited about the return of Jesus?” Frank said he was convicted. He was blown away. He said “I’ve gotten so caught up in all the troubles and all the worries of life. I’ve been so distracted that I forgot that Jesus Christ is coming back.” That’s what prophecy is about. Prophecy is foretelling and forth telling. Prophecy is what we are yet to see or to experience. So let me ask you, are you frustrated with it? Here’s three different ways I see prophecy portrayed to the Christian church. The first way is what I call the Puzzle Theory. The Puzzle Theory is basically like this: You hear a prophecy described and a little bit is coming from from this book of the Bible, a little bit comes from this book of the Bible, a little bit comes from this book of the Bible, and then they somehow try to connect these three. And when you hear these kind of prophecies, they never take context to play. They never ask, “What is the situation? What is the purpose of this book? What is the context of this book?” But rather what they do is they try to jam different things together and they present a jigsaw puzzle of prophecy. But what’s interesting is that when you see these they never show up the same. In fact, one man brings his puzzle and it looks completely

different from another man's puzzle. Or sometimes you seem the same person bring various puzzles together. It gets confusing. They speak so fast, they tell you so many Scriptures and they're bending and shaping, and you get this feel: Can anybody really understand what he's talking about? Or maybe there's the other one. There is the "Brokaw Bible," I call this. This is the Bible that is driven by what is going on in the news. This kind of prophecy is simply for fascinating people. It's simply for stirring them up and getting them excited. And the "Brokaw Bible," I'm using his name because he is a newscaster, but it's one who takes the news and tries to shove it into the Scripture. He tries to say, "This is a fulfillment of this." And, "This is a fulfillment of that." And you listen to these people and you, again say, "I'm confused. How can I really understand what they're saying? Or there's the third purpose—the third version of prophecy. And this is called The Catapult Theory. You remember what a catapult was? An ancient wartime device, it was this enormous contraption. It preceded the cannon, and it was this big, leveraged arm, and they would place a big boulder in it. And then they would kind of aim it at the wall of the place they're trying to attack, and they would spring it loose and schewreh—! And it would launch this big, huge boulder and come crashing down upon the wall. Now The Catapult Theory in prophecy is like this: that God said it way back here then, and so I am just simply waiting for that rock to land, and that's the fulfillment of prophecy. What they missed, though, is the purpose of prophecy. They don't ask the "why?" questions. Why is God prophesying these things? Why is He telling His people to repent or else He will bring judgment? Is He really looking for repentance if He's simply launching a catapult of prophecy? I want to show you a different way. If we'll think about the Scriptures, we must ask the Scriptures, "What do you have to say about prophecy?" And so oftentimes we think prophecy is merely predicting the future. Now let me be very clear. Prophecy does predict the future. That is part of the supernatural aspect of the Word of God, is that it tells us what will happen. But prophecy is not solely for the purpose of informing us of

the future; but it also has the purpose of forming us for the future. Not just to inform us of the future, not just the catapult thing—tell us what it’s going to be. But it is there also to shape us and to mold us and to form us for the future. Let me show you an example. In Matthew chapter 7 we hear Jesus teaching, and in verse 12, He says this—a very common phrase:

“...Therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you....”

(Matthew 7:12) You’ve heard this before. This is called the Golden Rule:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. But what does He say this comes from? Look at verse 12 of Matthew chapter 7. **“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and...,”** you got it, **“...the Prophets.”** **(Matthew 7:12)** The

prophets have something to do with obedience and righteousness and holiness. In other words, the prophets aren’t described as something just to make charts. And if we were to go and look at some of the the Puzzle Theory people, that’s their endgame in prophecy is this glorious grand chart that kind of lays out all the future where there’s no real interaction with the Creator and His people. It’s not just from making charts, but it’s for shaping hearts. Prophecy is designed to change us. Now I want to show you Jeremiah 18. Let’s go to Jeremiah 18 and we’ll see this kind of prophecy in action.

Jeremiah was told one day by God, “You’re my mouthpiece. You’re the one whom I speak to my people and direct them. I want you to go down to the potter’s house and there I will give you My message.”] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 18:2) **“...There I will announce [to you] My words...[so] I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, [he was] making something on the wheel.”** **(Jeremiah 18:2-3)** **“But the vessel...he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?’ declares the LORD. ‘Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I might speak...,’”** or prophesy, **“...concerning a nation or**

concerning a kingdom....” To do what? “...To uproot [it], to pull [it] down, or to destroy it.” (Jeremiah 18:4-7) Now look at verse 8: “If that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it.” (Jeremiah 18:8) Now here’s what He’s saying. “If I have spoken to a nation and I have prophesied judgments to them because of their sin, and I have pronounced that to them, and between My pronouncement of the judgment and the actual fulfillment of the judgment, if they somewhere in there, repent and stop their evil ways,” He says, “then I can pull it back.” In other words, if we go to the Catapult Theory, if the catapult had been launched, if the judgment stone has been launched from the catapult, and there it is going through the air and God sees His people change. God sees the people that He’s proclaimed judgment—as in the rock coming, He sees them change, He can stop it. He can reach up and grab that rock of judgment and stop it. He can relent. Now we saw this demonstrated in the book of Jonah. Jonah was told, “Go to Nineveh. Jonah, go to Nineveh and give them this message;” and it was a message of judgment. (See Jonah 1:1-2) And you remember that story of Jonah? He didn’t want to go. So he gets in a boat and he heads the opposite way to Tarshish. And there God sent a storm. (See Jonah 1:3-4) They throw him over the boat because they saw him as a curse from God. They throw him over the boat. (See Jonah 1:14-15) A whale scoops him up and takes him to the land of Nineveh and spits him out. (See Jonah 1:17; 2:1) He now goes to deliver that message. It’s a message of judgment. So he delivers this message. (See Jonah 3:4) What happens to the people of Nineveh? Well they hear the message—and they really hear it. They really get what God is saying and they believe and trust, and so what do they do with that message? They gather everybody around and they said, “Oh, we must confess and repent of our sins.” And they tore their clothes, they put on ashes, and they said, “We repent before God. We repent of our sins,” and God pulled back His judgment. (See Jonah 3:5-10) God stopped that prophecy of judgment against them. Well if we go back to Jeremiah 18, we see just the opposite is

true as well. “Those whom,” He says, “I have prophesied blessing upon, those whom I have said, ‘I will bless them’” in the form of a prophecy, in the form of a declaration to His people, “If they in the midst of that time decide to rebel against Me,” He said, “I can relent. I can change that prophecy.” (See Jeremiah 18:7-10) Do you see the difference? Do you see the difference of prophecy? That it’s not some crazy puzzle that has to have some kind of mastermind to put it together and we’re dependent upon that mastermind’s interpretation in order to understand it, which is confusion. Can you see that it’s not just cramming news articles into the Bible, trying to fascinate us with interpretation? And it’s not just some launch of a judgment, but it’s a God who interacts with His people. He sends His word through a prophet that He might change their hearts. That’s what prophecy is all about.

PART TWO

David: Welcome back. At Precept Ministries we exist for the sole purpose of teaching people how to study their Bibles. It’s what excites us around here and so today we’re talking about how and why to study prophecy. Prophecy is most of the Bible. It’s one third of the Bible. It is— 17 out of 39 of the books of the Old Testament are prophets. And it’s interesting. If you think about how many sermons you hear and you’ve laid them out on the Scriptures, you would find not many sermons come out of the book of prophets, because prophecy is difficult. It’s awkward. It’s confusing. It’s strange. It uses language we’re not really familiar with. But if you go to preceptsforlife.com you can join us in studying the Bible inductively. That means studying it for yourself. We have training and materials that will teach you how to study prophecy for yourself. Now I want to take you to 2 Peter chapter 3, and I want to show you a little bit more about why we should study prophecy. Now in 2 Peter he is writing to the church who is suffering, and he is writing this letter to all these people who are suffering because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because they have associated themselves. And he describes the suffering in chapter 3, this way; he says

verse one: **“This...now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder.” (2 Peter 3:1)** Okay, he tells us his purpose, doesn’t he? “I’m writing you,” to do what? “I want to stir up your mind. I want to do that by way of reminder.” Well now how is going to stir up the minds of his readers? How is he going to get their attention and engage them with this letter? He says in verse 2, **“That you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.” (2 Peter 3:2)** You hear what he’s just said? “I want to engage you. As followers of Jesus Christ, I want to stir up your mind. And this is the way I’m going to do it. I’m going to bring to you a reminder from the prophets.” Ah, so that tells us there’s something very important. There’s important use of the prophets for stirring up our minds—for engaging us. So here’s what he says in verse 3: **“Know this first of all, that in the last days...,”** this is prophetic language, **“...[in the last days] mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts.” (2 Peter 3:3)** What will they do? He says in verse 4, “This is their message.” **“Where is the promise of [this] coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” (2 Peter 3:4)** You hear what their message is? They’re mocking. They’re coming in and saying, “You Christians talk about a future coming, but where is it? Nothing’s changed since the beginning of time.” And so this mocking comes. He tells them this is how they’re gonna answer it. He says first, we see that they missed something. Look at verse 5. **“For when they maintain this...,”** this mocking, **“...it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water.” (2 Peter 3:5)** Okay, so what’s the first reminder that he brings to their mind? What is the first incident? Well the first thing he tells them is they have forgotten that by the word, by the Word of God— what happened? He’s describing here: creation. You remember this, right? Creation is when God, in Genesis chapter 1, God says, **“Let there be...”** And what

happened? **“Let there be light...,” (Genesis 1:3)** and there were galaxies and stars and planets. God spoke things into existence. The Psalms tell us of this, that it was by His mouth the heavens were made. (PARAPHRASE, Psalms 33:6) That He spoke into existence. So they forget that “by His word,” which they’re mocking, He created the world. Well what else did He do with His word? Look at verse 6: **“[Also] through...the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.” (2 Peter 3:6)** Not only can He create with it, but He can also destroy it. Now what He’s referring to here is the event in Genesis where God flooded the entire world. And then thirdly, He says in verse 7, **“But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” (2 Peter 3:7)** Now; so we’ve got creation and destruction and then we also have the future destruction of the world. He’s now speaking of the day of judgment which prophecy is often uh focused around. But look what he says, verse 8: **“But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.” (2 Peter 3:8)** Now if we were doing the “Brokaw Bible” or the “Puzzle Theory Bible” you might hear some crazy concoction—some mathematical equation where they try to figure out “When is this day coming?” And they try to do days and thousands of years and some kind of algebraic confusing question. But that’s not the case here. Look what he says here, verse 9: **“The Lord is not slow about His promise...,”** this promise that they’re being mocked about. **“...As some count slowness, but [rather] is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)** Now he describes the day of the Lord: **“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which...,” (2 Peter 3:10)** and here comes prophetic language that we read throughout the prophets. **“...The heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10)** So what he’s described so far is: “These people that are gonna mock you, I want to remind you, I

want to stir you up by reminding of you what the prophets have said.” It says, **“The Lord is not slow....” (2 Peter 3:9)** That phrase that we read just a minute ago that says “a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day,” that’s an indication that God’s timing is not our timing. (See 2 Peter 3:8) So here’s the question that we need to ask? How do we apply these things? Why study prophecy? It still sounds confusing, and what am I to do about it? Is there anything I have—any role I have—in applying prophecy to my life? Look at verse 11. This is fascinating. **“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be....” (2 Peter 3:11)** You hear the question? If the day of the Lord is coming and it’s not slow and it is sure and you’re stirring up my mind by way of the prophets, and engaging me, what sort of people ought I to be? Am I simply just to wait? Am I simply just to read the prophecy, make my charts and just kind of hold on and wait? No. Look what he says. What sort of people ought you to be? **“...Holy [in] conduct and godliness.” (2 Peter 3:11)** Living in the way that God calls us to live. Now what is the result of that living? I love this, verse 12, these are fascinating words. Living **“...in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God....” (2 Peter 3:11-12)** Now that little woman that met my friend in the Ukraine, a little lady in her babushka, she came out. Her question was: “Are you looking for Him? Are you excited about the coming of God?” Peter tells us here that God is not slow, but His patience is actually salvation. He is holding back His return. He is holding back the day of the Lord. And what is He looking for? He’s looking for us to live holy and godly lives that we might hasten His return, that we might hasten the coming of God. You see, My Friend, prophecy is not just for making charts. But rather it’s for shaping hearts, to make us more like our Creator and thus, not wanting any to perish and all to come to repentance, He allows us to bring and usher in the faith—our testimony—that people might come to know Him, and then His coming will come. That’s prophecy.