

## *Christ in Prophecy*

### **Sermon 19: Prophetic Word Made More Sure**

© 2023 Lamb & Lion Ministries. All Rights Reserved.

For a video of this show, please visit <https://christinprophecy.org>.

**Tim Moore:** If stones could talk have you ever wondered what they'd say? According to Scripture, stones do bear testimony to the prophetic Word of God.

You know, there's another example in Scripture of stones that actually speak, or at least will bear testimony according to the words of Jesus Christ. Turn with me, if you will, to Matthew chapter 24, and let's read about an experience His disciples had in Jerusalem. Verse one says, "Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him." Now, let's understand the context of this passage. You see, Jesus and his apostles have come from Galilee down to Jerusalem. And the Apostles, the disciples being from the northern part of the country, what we would call the sticks, were awestruck by all the magnificent buildings which they witnessed. I'm speaking, of course, not just of the Temple, but the other buildings and all the magnificence of Jerusalem, as had been built by Herod the Great. We know Herod as a great builder, and to this day you can see evidence of the structures that he built. You can see evidence of some of the cities like Caesarea Maritime, or like the fortress at Masada, and you can even see the retaining wall which he used to build up the Temple Mount platform. As a matter of fact, the Western Wall that we visit to this day, where Jews still pray and treat as an outdoor synagogue is just that a retaining wall built by Herod to enlarge the temple platform so that he could beautify and expand the Temple and create all sorts of other buildings. Why did he do that because he was actually worshiping the true and living God? No, not really. Herod was trying to make a name for himself and ingratiate himself with his Jewish subjects. And obviously he was also trying to ensure that they spent lots of money in Jerusalem, and even as they exchanged their money at the Temple, that he and the priests would reap the benefits.

So the apostles have come to this place and are awestruck, as I said, by the magnificence of all these many buildings that took many years to construct. And it's in that context that we go on to read verse two, "He said to them, 'Do you not see all these things, all these wonderful buildings? Truly, I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.'" Now, this was puzzling to the disciples, it had taken years to construct the Temple and all the other buildings, and it's all going to be torn down? Obviously, later Jesus would make the same claim to the Pharisees when He said, "In three days I will rebuild this temple." And they couldn't imagine what He was meaning because it had taken so long to build the Temple. They couldn't imagine it falling down. And how could you possibly rebuild it in three days? They didn't understand He was referring, of course, to His own body.

But puzzled as they were the disciples went about their way until later that evening. And it says in verse three, "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately saying, 'Tell us, when will these things happen and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?'" Now, I like to point out, Jesus' response to his disciples at this moment was not, oh, fellows, you got it all wrong. I'm not going away. What are you talking about

coming back? And end of the age what are you talking about? No, Jesus did not dismiss their three part question. As a matter of fact, He affirmed it in His response recorded in verse four. Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you, for many will come in my name saying I am the Christ and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains."

Now we've taught many times on Christ in Prophecy the importance of that phrase birth pangs. Because we recognize that all the signs of the times, the signs of nature of society, spiritual sign, signs of world politics, technology and yes, even Israel will be like these birth pangs. And every mother knows birth pangs start infrequently and relatively mild, and they increase in frequency and in intensity until a baby actually arrives. So all these signs will do the same thing. But the disciples, even at this point of Jesus' ministry, understood some aspects of what lay ahead. They knew, as He had just testified, that there would be destruction in Jerusalem. They understood that somehow He would go away and come back. They didn't fully understand because we know later Peter said, "No, Lord, you won't die." And Jesus said, "You do not understand the purpose and plan of God." They would only understand in hindsight. And finally, they clearly realized that there would come an end of the age.

Do you understand that there are signs manifest all around us that fulfill what Jesus went on to describe through the rest of Chapter 24 and into Chapter 25 of Matthew alone? The signs of the times bear testimony just as stones do to this day that God's prophetic Word is true. It is, yes and amen. And the stones themselves do testify. When we take pilgrims to Israel, we witness the destruction of the temple and all the other buildings, because, first of all, they're no longer there. And second of all, there are stones thrown down from that Temple Mount, crushing the pavement where Jesus and the disciples would have walked, and they're still there to this day. Including the cornerstone that has etched on it from this place the priest would blow a shofar to proclaim the beginning of a feast. So stones do testify to the fulfillment of God's prophetic Word.

But with that in mind, I want you to consider for just a minute this question: What is the most amazing event you have ever experienced? Would it be your wedding? Perhaps the birth of a child or grandchild? Maybe it's your own conversion experience or your baptism, even at the hands of a dear loved one. Maybe some of you would think it's the most recent victory of your favorite sports team. But whatever it is, how would the Apostle Peter answer that question? The most amazing event that he personally had witnessed.

Well, we know that Peter had seen a great catch of fish twice. This fisherman watched as miraculously and supernaturally a great throng of fish filled his net. Peter was there to walk on water not once, but twice; once by faith and once by grace. He personally witnessed the healing of lame people blind, mute, deaf. He saw demon possessed people cleansed. He saw lepers, healed. And he even witnessed as Jesus raised from the dead, a little girl and a man named Lazarus. Obviously, Peter was there in the upper room with the other disciples when tongues of fire descended upon their heads as the Holy Spirit filled the room and they began to speak in other languages. And Peter himself went out and spoke to the crowds gathered at

Pentecost in languages each one of them could understand, and he witnessed as 3,000 gave themselves to the Lord that day.

Peter later was sent down to Joppa and stayed at the house of Simon the tanner, and as he took a nap in the afternoon on the roof of the building three times, he saw the vision of a sheep descending from heaven filled with unclean animals, and the Lord saying, "Take and eat." And Peter refused, "No, Lord, I can't eat those are unclean animals." But God said, "No, Peter, I'm declaring them clean." Demonstrating to him that he would be called just a few hours later to go to the home of Cornelius, a Gentile, to share the Gospel. And all of us who are Gentile followers of Christ today can be thankful that Peter was obedient, and indeed, Cornelius and all of his household were saved.

So with all these eyewitness events and personal experiences, how would Peter answer the question of what is most important in his own personal testimony? Well, we know because he wrote in 2 Peter 1, beginning in verse 16 these words "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His Majesty." Again, what did Peter eyewitness? All of these miraculous events. Oh, I wish I had been there, maybe my faith would be even greater than it is. But that's not what Peter says. He goes on to say, "For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance of this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased' --and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the Holy Mountain. So we have the prophetic word made more sure." Do you understand what he's saying there in verse 19? All these incredible experiences, all these eyewitness accounts he could give, even of hearing the Father testify regarding the Son, Peter says the prophetic word which we collectively have, is made more sure even than his eyewitness testimony. What is he talking about? He's talking about the promises of God that are being fulfilled before our very eyes.

You know speaking of the promises of God and the expectation of their fulfillment, I'm always reminded of an exemplar from the Old Testament who believed God and His promises. I'm speaking, of course, of Abram. You remember Abram, who lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, who was from a family of idol worshipers, and yet the Lord God called him out and said, "Go to a place I will show you, and I will give it unto as a possession for you and your children." So Abram packed up his wife, and his servants, and his flocks and herds, and he went around the Fertile Crescent to the land of Canaan. And when he arrived, the Lord told him to look in every direction, He said, "This is the land which will belong to you and to your descendants." Genesis captures Abram's response to the Lord in 15:6 which simply says, "Then he, Abram, believed in the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness."

Paul puts it this way, he says in Romans 4:3 "Abraham believed God." I think it's an important distinction because it's one thing to believe in God, even Satan does that, he knows God personally and experientially. But to believe in Him, to put our trust in Him, and to obey Him in believing faith. That's exactly what Abraham did. And when he got to this land of promise, that was promised to be his and his descendants, we know that he never actually possessed it. As a matter of fact, he wandered almost as a migrant in the land, living in a tent, not in a city. The writer of Hebrews records in chapter 11, verse ten "throughout his sojourn in Canaan, he was looking for the city, which has foundations whose architect and builder is God." That's exactly

right, Abraham never lived in a city. Occasionally, he sought refuge in a city ruled by a pagan king, but in the land that was declared to be his, he lived as a sojourner in a tent. He was looking forward to a city built by God, just like you and I are anticipating a great city, the new heavens to be placed here on the New Earth. The New Jerusalem, because this is the place Jesus has said He goes to prepare for us who put our faith in Him.

And yet there's another promise that Abraham was waiting for his entire life, almost. And that was the promise to be the father of a multitude. As a matter of fact, God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, which means father of a multitude or exalted father. You have to wonder, when Abraham met someone and they said, Your name is Abraham, and it means father of a multitude. Where are they? Well, they're not here yet, but God has promised. Oh, okay, sure. And indeed, even as Abraham waited for God to fulfill that promise, one night, the Lord told him to go out and look up into the heavens. And as he did and gazed upon the stars, the Lord said, "So shall your descendants be. If you could count the stars of the heavens, even greater will be the number of your offspring.

It's estimated that with a naked eye on a very dark night, you can see thousands of stars. Abraham would have been in awe of what was in store for him. But he also realized that it was not yet coming to pass. And yet again, as Genesis 15:6 says, "He, Abraham, believed in the Lord and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." Do you understand what this is telling us? Even later, how many children did Abraham have? He had one son of promise. No great nation of offspring within his lifetime.

Well, as Abraham and his aging wife were awaiting fulfillment of that promise, the Lord came to visit them under the oaks of Mamre, He appeared in preincarnate form and promised that by the next year they would indeed have a son. Sarai laughed, the Lord called her out and even changed her name to Sarah, which means laughter. But he said this "Is anything too difficult for God? At the appointed time I will return to you." And I believe that passage is absolutely prophetic, because even now, as we await the return of the Lord, we trust that He will come at the appointed time. Nothing is too difficult to God, and He will fulfill every promise.

So in that context, we turn back to what Peter recorded when he said, "So we have the prophetic Word made more sure." More sure even than the eyewitness testimony he could bear. And he says, "to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but by men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

Well, this begs the question, what is prophecy? We know from Revelation 19:10 that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. So all God's prophetic Word points to and is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. But other than that, we recognize that prophecy deals with things which are foretold, events that will take place in the future relative to an individual or to a nation. We've taught many times here on Christ in Prophecy that in the Old Testament alone, there are over 300 prophecies regarding the First Coming of Jesus Christ. And in that same Old Testament, there are 500 prophecies dealing with the Lord's Second Coming. Those are all foretold promises that we can absolutely trust in.

But there are other types of prophecy, and what I'm referring to is forthtelling of God's Word. Let me give you a dramatic example. When the prophet Nathan went to King David to call him out on an instance of grave sin. Nathan told about a rich man who had many flocks and herds, but he looked down upon his very impoverished neighbor who had one little lamb and he coveted the lamb, and he arranged to rob the poor man of his lamb and take it for himself. King David, upon hearing that offense, was greatly indignant, "that man should die." And the prophet Nathan pointed his finger at the king and said, "You are the man." In other words, Nathan was forthtelling revealed truth that he received from God Almighty to King David.

Oftentimes God's prophetic Word is just that, it is forthtelling, which is why over 1,900 times in Scripture, the prophets would say before making their utterance, thus sayeth the Lord. The authority for what they were prophesying came from God. The assurance of the truth and the trustworthiness of their prophecies was based on the character of God.

Well, if that is true, then all of the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation, from beginning to end, is the revealed truth of God. It is the forthtold revelation of God, and therefore all of it is prophetic in nature. And we can trust that indeed it will come to pass, whether in our lifetimes or beyond.

So this begs a question, what are you looking forward to? You know, while the Lord tarries I have learned, over time, to be content as Isaiah 40:31 says, to wait upon the Lord. Now I get impatient at times. But I've also learned, as the writer of Hebrews says in 11:1, that we should be confident that our faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And I dare say it is the conviction of things not yet seen, because if it is a promise of God, it will come to pass and it will eventually be seen, even if it is not yet.

Having said that, we know that just in the past 2,000 years, many prophecies have come to pass. We can be assured of all the truth of God's revelation because of fulfilled prophecy. In 1 Peter 1:3 Peter basically bears testimony to this fact. He said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." What does this living hope bear testimony of? Well, he explains in 4:7 "That the end of all things is near." The same disciple who on the Mount of Olives heard Jesus say that these things, the stones falling down would take place. We know that did in A.D. 70, and that He would come again, and that there would be an end of the age, tells us that the culmination of that prophetic Word is near.

We also know why Peter was even inspired to write the letter I just referenced from Second Peter. In chapter three, beginning in verse one, he makes this testimony, "This is now beloved the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles." In other words, Peter wants us to understand the prophetic Word. He wants us to see the signs manifest all around us, whether they're stones or even the very heavens.

You know, David, speaking of King David wrote in Psalm 19 "That the heavens are telling of the glory of God; their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge." Well, I dare say they pour forth speech and reveal

knowledge to those who have eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart of discernment. To those who are in darkness, then even the glory of God manifest in the heavens that we can see with greater clarity than ever before through modern technology, leads them to darkened minds that concoct fanciful tales of the universe spinning itself into existence. No, it takes the Holy Spirit of God to reveal to our hearts even the truths that have been spoken to us.

And among those truths is the great promise that Jesus is coming again to receive us to Himself, to Rapture His Church out of this world. And that's exactly what Peter addresses going forward in chapter three of Second Peter. He even says, "Know this first of all," this is verse three. "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.'" And the sad reality is this is not the world that is mocking. They could care less about the Lord's coming. They don't even know to anticipate it. This is people within the church who say, I knew folks in previous generations that were looking forward to His coming. He didn't come. So why should I get all excited?

Well, first of all, Jesus again promised that He was going to prepare a place for us, and that He would come again to receive us to Himself. He said write, speaking to John the Apostle, "Write, blessed are those who are invited to the wedding Feast of the Lamb." So although I may be impatient, and indeed brother and sister sometimes I say I can't wait till I learn to have patience. And even though I realize the prophets themselves, often time were impatient, Habakkuk crying out, "How long O Lord, until you exert justice in the world." Isaiah saying, "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down," not yet, knowing that Jesus Christ would indeed rend the heavens and come down, and that soon He will rend them again.

Know we can anticipate the coming of the Lord. Paul tells us that the whole creation groans, awaiting the arrival of our Lord and the revealing of the sons of God. Are you groaning? Are you looking forward to Him? Right now you may be caught up in thinking, the world such a horrible place, I have so many troubles. But Paul also said in First Corinthians "things which eye has not seen, and ears not heard, which have not entered the heart of man all that God has prepared for those who love Him." But to us God revealed them. Those things through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. Which is why Paul could write to the church in Ephesus and say "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may He give you the spirit of wisdom, and of revelation, and the full knowledge of Him. So that you, the eyes of your heart, having been enlightened will know what is the hope of your calling," His calling, "that are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward those of us who believe, according to the working of His might and His strength."

Know, Paul tells us that we are not destined for wrath if we put our faith in Jesus Christ, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore we can and must encourage one another. Why is God waiting right now? Well, Peter went on to explain in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." Have you ever thought when the Lord would come if it was up to you? I can tell you if it was up to me, He would have already come. I was ready for Him to come in the early 1990s and I said, surely He'll be here by the

year 2000. As Y2K came and went, I said, surely He won't wait another 20 years. And yet He tarries. And oh, am I glad He did because if He had not tarried some of you watching this program might not yet have put your faith in Jesus Christ. Some of my loved ones would not yet have put their trust in Christ. Know, the Lord is tarrying because it is not yet the appointed time as determined by the Father.

Paul tells us that for all of us who are looking forward to, who are loving His appearing there is stored up for us a crown of righteousness. I'm reminded what Queen Victoria said. She said, "I hope He comes in my lifetime. Oh, how I'd love to lay my crown at His feet."

You know, on that note, brothers and sisters, Abraham gives us another demonstration of how to wait upon the Lord, because even as he waited for God to fulfill His promises then, he realized that they would be slow motion promises. He realized he would not have all the descendants promised of God, but he ensured that those promises would pass to another generation, and yet another generation.

As the Lord tarries are you working to ensure that your expectation of His promises, even if they're not fulfilled in your lifetime, resonate in the hearts of those who come after you? As a Lord said to the Pharisees in Luke, 19, "if those who follow him become silent, the very stones will cry out."

So returning to our passage in 2 Peter 1 the Apostle says, "So we have the prophetic Word made more sure." We have 2,000 years of hindsight and we're seeing prophecies coming to pass before our very eyes that even the prophets could only dream of, former generations of Christians hoped and longed to see. And we can see them with our own eyes. So Peter says, "You do well to pay attention, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

I pray today that the Lord Jesus Christ has already arisen in your heart, and that you're already looking for Him with eager anticipation. I hope you raise up every morning crying "Maranatha! Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!" And while He tarries I hope you're sharing that Glorious Hope with others. Godspeed.