

## 22T12w Prophecy

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table. I just have to say it. I don't really like eschatology or end times theology. I always figured it was going to happen so why worry about it. I would say things like, it does not help me follow Jesus, it does not help me reach others for Jesus, then why. What's the point? And this is true.

And I still kind of feel this way but over recent years, this topic keeps coming up over and over and over again. I think Jesus is trying to tell me something. So, I'm trying to be obedient and study the word of God as Jesus wants me to, not as I would like to do it.

Anyway, here we are talking eschatology and prophecies again. First do you know the difference between prophet's vision and a prophet's prophecy. Or did you know there was a difference. Well, there is a difference between a vision of something and a prophecy.

### Let us pray.

**Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Lord use me to share your message. If I say something in error, please let them remember what you wanted them to hear, not my errand words. Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on your word Lord. Guide our discussion. We pay in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.**

So, okay I bet a few of you are saying to yourself he's crazy when a prophet has a vision it's a prophecy. Well does a prophet need a vision to receive a prophecy? Well, there are many cases in the Bible when prophets got messages and prophecies without any recorded vision.

Let me give you a couple of examples from the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel 1:1 (NIV) *In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.* So this is definitely a vision which show Ezekiel something. The rest of Ezekiel 1 vision but it's not a prophecy.

Ezekiel 6:1-3 (NIV) *The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them and say: 'You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord.* This is not a vision yet Ezekiel received the message from God. The rest of Ezekiel 6 is prophecy but it's not a vision.

And there are lots of cases of this in the bible.

Here's another question. Does a prophecy have to come true exactly as it is written or told to be fulfilled? Prophecy can only be fulfilled if it comes true. The book of Jonah is all about a prophecy from God that did not come true. Jonah warned the people of Nineveh about the imminent destruction of their city because of their evil. But the people repented and cried out to God and the city was not destroyed. All of us still consider that Jonah's message was from God but the prophecy was not fulfilled.

So, I've asked three questions.

Is every vision a prophet has in the Bible a prophecy? No. Some visions are real time interactions with God and His angels, some are informational and not tied to a future time, place or event.

2<sup>nd</sup>. Is every prophecy from God delivered to a prophet in the form of a vision? Certainly not. There are countless examples of this in the Bible. Often the phrase used is something like, “the word of the Lord came to”, the prophet. Not in a vision but by some other means. God can use anything to convey His message. Even audible speech directly to the prophet from God or a messenger of God.

Last, Do all prophecies given by God and spoken by a prophet of God come true? Surprisingly No. Superficially we probably all want to say yes, but the Bible contains several accounts where God had a prophet warn or tell about an imminent event, then because of something it does not happen or is delayed from happening. The Story of Jonah, King Hezekiah, Moses on Mt. Sinai and others. Look them up. Now God has very good reasons why these did not happen the way He originally said they would. The Bible records many of these.

Are you confused yet? I sure was, so I think we need to explore a little deeper what is a prophecy. In English the word prophecy means prediction, to foretell something. Is the word prophecy used in the Bible? The NIV Bible has 44 occurrences. The KJV Bible has 21 occurrences. So, what is prophecy again and why is its use different from English Bible to English Bible. The Hebrew word for prophecy is “navi” meaning “to proclaim, mention, call, summon”. So, a prophet of God delivers a message to someone. Usually someone specific. All prophecies are messages from God to real people about real situations. Sometimes these messages are “foretelling” something that is happening or will happen, but often these messages are just messages. A message can be instructions or directives, some are informational, some are conditional, some are predictive. So, not all prophecy from the prophets of God are predictions of the future. Most are just messages, with no foretelling at all.

Many of these messages from the prophets of God in the Bible are directives or conditional promises. If you do this or that, then you will get this or that. Even many of the promises God makes to people, groups and nations in the Bible are conditional. If...then..., If...shall. Even the words of Jesus follow this pattern, If you believe, then you are saved. If you follow my commandments, then you are saved, and many others. If, then, IF, THEN.

Prophecy is simply a message. So why do we as Christians feel like it is a necessity for every vision and/or prophecy in the Bible to come true? I know you are feeling that feeling. Well God said it, so it has to be so. I agree, but I think we miss something about the “it has to be so” part. We need to go back to the basics of Bible interpretation, Bible study or even just Bible reading. KNOW YOUR CONTEXT. Reading any part of the Bible out of its context is very, very, very, very, very bad. It’s wrong to think we can understand any part of the Bible without understanding the context in which it was written. WHO. Who was it written by, Who was it written to. Who was the author’s intended audience. WHEN. When was it written, The audience, when did they live. WHY. Why was the author writing, Why does the audience need this information. WHAT & HOW. What is the message and how should the audience respond. And there are lots of other questions. Minimally, we must understand Why is this in the Bible, What was God trying to convey and who was the intended reader. News Flash. We are not the intended reader of the Bible. God has preserved His words for us, so we can know Him, learn about His character and build a relationship with Him. But the individual stories in the Bible were not originally written to us or for us. We benefit greatly from them. God uses the words and messages in the Bible to minister to us. But let me say it again, the stories in the Bible were not written by the author with us as the intended reader.

**Let us pray.**

**Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Thank you are every story, every message in the Bible. Help us understand your purpose for giving them. Help us to understand how you intend us to view them. Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on your word Lord. Help me Lord to let your word lead the way so we can see your message. Thank you, Jesus, for what you did for me or all of us. We pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.**

Was that confusing. I hope not. All prophecy in the Bible was a message from God to real people. Most of these people lived thousands of years ago. The intended audience was not us. These messages from God were written down by someone for someone or someones. Many of these messages are not intended to predict the future. Many only give a glimpse of what the future could be IF a specific group of people do what God tells them to do. But they are only IF's and that opportunity does not usually go on forever. There is always a purpose in God's message. Find the purpose and you will be able to understand if a prophecy is a directive, information or a prediction.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please click like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or mail me. I want your feedback so let me know what you think.

See you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.