

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Beginning to Appreciate the Scope and Language of Biblical Prophecy

by Dan Trygg

“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

Daniel 2:44-45

“While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts. ⁹ I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him. The court sat, and the books were opened. ¹¹ Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. ¹³ I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming. And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and people of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

Daniel 7:8-14

I have been thinking about that quote from J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Prophecy*, (Baker Publishing, 1980), page 675, that said that 27% of the Bible is predictive prophecy, ...over 1800 prophecies, ...and that over half of them have been fulfilled. As I reflected on this concept, my mind began to go through the Biblical stories, ...and, **wow, prophecy is all over the place!** I had not really considered this before, but it is *very* evident.

Beginning in Genesis 3:15, we have God declaring that “the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent, ...but that the serpent would *strike* Him on His heel.” This is the first hint at the gospel plan of God for the redemption of humankind. It involved the unusual notion of “the seed of the woman”. Normally, children were thought of in terms of the “seed” of men. Looking back, this seems to be a thinly-veiled reference to the virgin birth of Jesus. It *does* plainly teach that a man will fatally crush the serpent, ...but also that the serpent will inflict that person, as well. If the serpent was thought to be poisonous, the outcome would be that they would both die. Pretty amazing insights into future events!

As we continue on in Genesis, however, we begin to see how much of the action was inspired by prophetic words. **Noah was instructed by God to build an ark**, to preserve his family and animals with which to repopulate the earth. This had to take place some years before the flood, since the construction of the ark was a mammoth task. **Without a prophetic word to set Noah into motion the ark would not have been built. Faith was an obedient response.**

Abram would not have left Ur of the Chaldees, except that God had spoken to him a word of future promise. Again, faith was a response of obedience to a declaration about the future. In Genesis 15:1-6, it was Abram’s trust in Yahweh’s prophetic promise that was counted as righteousness in God’s eyes. Right after that, God also declared that his seed would be strangers in a land not theirs. They would be enslaved and oppressed. But Yahweh promised to bring them out of that land with great possessions. **Yahweh made an unconditional covenant to give the land of Canaan to Abram’s seed. Abram trusted in this prophetic promise, ...and they are there today**, having been absented from the land on *three occasions* in history. No other nation in history can claim such a background.

God also predicted the growth and prosperity of the Ishmaelites, and described their future location as being “to the east” of their brothers. The Arab tribes trace their ancestry to Ishmael.

In Genesis 17, Yahweh appeared to Abram and promised that he would have a son through Sarai. He changed their names to Abraham and Sarah, and promised that Sarah would have a son, Isaac, “at this time next year”. In chapter 18, Yahweh and two angels came to Abraham, and he repeated to him the promise. Sarah overheard Him speaking and laughed, as Abram had when God had informed him. Yahweh called her out, however, and assured them both that they would have a son “at this time next year”. Even though they were so old, **God’s prophetic word came to pass, just as He had spoken.**

In chapter 22, when Abraham showed that he was willing to put Yahweh first before all else, God told him that through his “seed” all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The apostle Paul pointed to this as a prophecy about Christ (Gal. 3:16). The very location where this faith test occurred was the land of Moriah, a mountain just outside of Jerusalem. God tested Abraham about being willing to offer up his son, ...but God provided a substitute

lamb. This occurred in the very place Yahweh would sacrifice His own Son as the Lamb substituted for our sin. **Abraham prophetically called that place, “Yahweh will provide.”** The temple was later built on that mount, but more importantly, **Calvary was also located on that same hill. “In the mount of Yahweh it will be provided” was a saying.**

In Genesis 25, when Isaac’s wife, Rebekah, was experiencing an unusual movement within her womb, **the Lord revealed that there were two nations within her womb, ...and the elder would serve the younger.** Later, **Yahweh extended the covenant promise to Jacob**, when he was fleeing from Esau’s anger. God prophetically declared that He would keep him safe, and bring him back to this land of promise (28:13-15). Twenty years later, Yahweh appeared to him again, after he had safely returned. **God promised that a nation, ...a company of nations, ...even kings would come from him** (35:11). Yahweh again promised to give him the land of Canaan, as He had promised before.

The story of Joseph (37-50) is set within the context of some prophetic dreams that God had given to him. Again, not only did God know the future, and revealed it to people, ...He also ordered the events to fulfill all that He said. **Joseph came to recognize that, in spite of his brothers’ selfish intent, Yahweh had sent him to Egypt to preserve life, ...not only the lives of the Egyptians, but also to provide for his father’s household in a time of great famine.**

The book of Genesis is literally chock full of prophetic declarations and promises. It seems to be almost the norm for many of the Biblical stories. A faith-hero often begins their adventure in response to a prophetic promise.

As we look ahead to the end of the age, **we need to begin to understand and appreciate the language and the methodology of prophetic revelations.** Some are very plain and straightforward, ...while others are filled with strange images and symbolism. As we saw in Genesis, **prophecy can also be progressive and cumulative in the information God provides. In the NT, often prophetic information is based upon or built upon previous revelations given in the OT.**

In Daniel 2, God revealed future events using a large statue, made of different materials, ...a gold head, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and finally feet made out of a mixture of iron and clay pottery. Then a stone was cut without hands, and it struck the statue, shattering it and turning it to dust, which the wind blew away. Daniel interpreted this as referring to succeeding kingdoms. These would be Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. The point of the revelation was: **“In the days of that kingdom (Rome), the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed. It will crush and put an end to these other kingdoms, and it will endure forever”** (vs. 44). This was a prophetic word about the future. It refers to the initiation of a kingdom of God on earth, which He Himself will raise up, and cause to prevail and endure long past the downfall of those other kingdoms.

In Daniel 7, Daniel had a vision. This one, too, was very symbolic. Four winds of heaven were stirring up the sea, and **four beasts** emerged from the sea. (The sea may be a reference to humanity, or the nations. Rev. 17:5 likens “the waters” to “peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.” This *may be* helpful here.) **The first beast was a lion with wings of an eagle.** Its wings were plucked, and it was made to stand on its feet like a man, and a human mind was given to it. This seems to be a reference to Babylon, especially to the events in chapter 4. **The second was like a lop-sided bear.** This could refer to the coalition of Medes and Persians who joined forces to defeat the Babylonians. The Persians were the greater of the two. The ribs may refer to three kingdoms they quickly conquered: Babylonia, Lydia and Egypt. The kingdom expanded under the Medes and Persians was much greater than any other to that point. **The third beast was like a leopard with four wings and four heads.** Not much is said about it, except that dominion was given to it. The four wings speak of speed. This would seem, historically, to refer to Alexander the Great, and his four generals. He quickly conquered the Medio-Persian empire, from Egypt to India, but he died in Babylon. His kingdom was divided among his generals. **Then a fourth beast, ...dreadful, terrifying, and extremely powerful..., arose.** It had large iron teeth, and devoured, crushed, and trampled down all these other kingdoms. **It was different than the other kingdoms. It will devour the entire earth** and tread it down and crush it. **It had ten horns** (a “horn” represents power, authority, and possibly leadership). These are ten kings. **A “little horn” came up among these ten, displacing three of them.** It had human eyes and a boasting mouth. Eventually, it became larger than the other horns, and **it was waging war against the saints** and overpowering them. **It will speak out against the Most High**, and will intend to make changes in “times” and in “law”. Somehow, this person will want to reorganize things that have been established one way in the past into a new way that suits him. He will be able to overpower the saints for three and a half “times”. But then, **God will intervene, and he will be destroyed. One like a Son of Man will come on the clouds of heaven, and the Most High will give Him dominion, glory and a kingdom. All the remaining nations will serve Him.** His kingdom will never be destroyed or pass away. **The saints will also possess this kingdom forever, ...for all ages to come.**

Note that in my historical interpretations, I used terms like “seems to be” or “may”. We are not specifically told who these beasts refer to. We can surmise, based upon events and images of that time, but we have to admit that we don’t know. God has not specifically made these things known. Other people have different interpretations. **For our purpose, it is important to become familiar with the images, the characters, the general sequence of events, and the main ideas.** God will use these images again in future biblical prophecies.