

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. [www.dtminc.org](http://www.dtminc.org) Today's Date: July 23, 2023

## God Consistently Talks About The Future

by Dan Trygg

“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’; <sup>11</sup> calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.” Isaiah 46:9-11

“Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.” Exodus 3:12

**We have been talking about the historical nature of biblical faith. The Bible is a record of God’s interactions with people throughout centuries of time.** The scope of its coverage, however, reaches back to the beginning of creation, and out into the end of this world and the establishment of a new creation. *The Bible records the revelation of God to humanity that precedes the biblical authors, and reaches far into the future.* We narrowed our focus, however, to the writings of biblical authors. They include the revelations that God gave to them, and the events of their own times. This is the historical backbone of the biblical record. **The historical testimony of these writers, and the process of copying and transmitting their writings, has been demonstrated to be unsurpassed** by every test that has been applied to them. **There are no other writings of ancient history that have the manuscript evidence, archaeological confirmation, and historical and scientific accuracy that our biblical scriptures have.**

Then, last week we introduced another line of evidence that confirms the unusual nature of biblical faith. Throughout the scriptures, God has spoken of things in the future, and brought them to pass. In fact, **God has said that this ability to declare the future in detail is a distinguishing mark that separates Him from other so-called gods.** There is *NONE* like Him, He says. He declares the end from the beginning, and speaks of things in the ancient past that He fulfills in the future. No one else can do this like He can. **We spoke of three major prophecies in Genesis that have played out in history over many centuries: (1.) the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent; (2.) the Abrahamic promise and blessing; and (3.) the promise to give the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham.** These are amazing! Certainly, when these words were expressed, there was no visible or tangible evidence of their fulfillment. These promises sounded incredulous! “How?” “When?” Or, even, “Why?” The “How” and “When” were up to God, and were centuries in the future. The “Why” was the mystery of God’s love and covenant commitment He was willing to make to a person who trusted in Him.

As we move on in the Pentateuch, we see that God continues to speak of future events. In fact, the essence of faith is that a person who hears of the promises of God *believes or trusts* that He *will do as He has said.*

A person of faith rests his or her hope upon God’s declared future promise, and *adjusts his or her life to the dependability of Yahweh’s follow through.* This is the foundation of faith, the characteristic of every person who chooses to trust in God.

So, we should not be surprised to see that God continues to express future promises, and calls people to trust and obey Him in order to experience things that are not present realities. God does this for individuals, and also for nations. **Sometimes these revelations are very forthright and direct communications from God,** as we saw in the call of Abram. **At other times, He gave glimpses of upcoming events through dreams or visions,** as we see in the dreams of Joseph, or even Pharaoh (Gen. 37:5-10; 41:1-31). **In each case, God demonstrated His presence and His handiwork by revealing things to come.**

Those who received these revelations were motivated to trust God.

**Joseph trusted by being faithful in circumstances that were extremely difficult and discouraging.** The revelations from God that had been so vivid “tested” or “refined” his faith in the midst of his trials (Psa. 105:17-22). He chose to trust what God had shown him, even when it seemed impossible. In the end, the “impossible dream” became a reality, when his brothers bowed down to him, ...literally fulfilling the images in the dream he had received so many years before. **In a similar way, the dreams that Pharaoh received were a test for him, as well.** Would he believe in a revelation from “God”, ...the God that this lowly slave, Joseph, seemed to know? Would he adjust his whole kingdom over a revelation about the future that came through two dreams? Yes, he did. He responded to the revelation about the future, made Joseph his highest public official, and entrusted him (and his God) to prepare for the future, which he was told was going to come. Just think of that! What kind of adjustments did *you* make, when you came to trust in God. Look at the adjustment that this Pharaoh made!

**In Exodus 3, when Yahweh appears to Moses in the burning bush, He tells him that He will deliver the nation of Israel out from their bondage to the Egyptians, and will bring them into a good land, the land of Canaan. Then He called to Moses, “Come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt” (Ex. 3:10). Moses first response was, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt.” Yahweh told him, “Certainly I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I have sent you; when you have brought them out, ...you shall worship God on this mountain.”** God was giving a revelation to Moses that he had to choose to believe or not. God’s appearance, ...God’s call, ...God’s revelation about the future was a test or challenge for Moses to embrace. Yahweh was saying, “You will know it was Me, when you are worshiping here on this same mountain, once it is all accomplished.” Yahweh went on to describe how Pharaoh would be resistant, but God would compel him to let Israel go through miracles He will do in the midst of the land.

**Throughout the narration of the ten plagues** against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, God repeatedly spoke of how Pharaoh would respond. **Yahweh knew what would happen, time after time.** When they finally leave, God tells Moses that the Egyptians would follow and try to bring them back (14:1-10). He also predicted the demise of Pharaoh’s army, because they would try to follow the Israelites through the Red Sea, and it would come back upon them (14:15-29).

**These are all minor examples, but they are sprinkled all throughout the narrative. Clearly, God wants us to recognize that He knows the things to come, and He can bring about what He desires to accomplish in the future.**

These provide a backdrop for the consistent message regarding God’s nature, power and abilities. They themselves, however, are not sufficient to establish the larger purpose of convincing the skeptic, or serving as a witness to substantiate the unique nature of the biblical documents. They are too much a part of the story, spoken here and shortly fulfilled thereafter. They have no outside corroboration in history that we can use to document their prophetic nature. For that, we need a prophetic revelation that was unmistakably given in ancient times, and that was also unquestionably fulfilled centuries later. We need something that cannot be dismissed as simply “part of the story”.

**Do we have such a prophetic declaration about the future, unquestionably given at the time of Moses, that was later fulfilled in history? The prophetic curses given by God to the Israelites in Leviticus 26, and also in Deuteronomy 27-30, provide a clear, graphic and indisputable picture of what would happen to the nation, if they should turn from following the Lord, break His commandments, and serve other gods.** There is much detail that is borne out in other biblical accounts, recorded in other later OT texts, but let’s focus on the big picture events.

**Both of these accounts, given nearly forty years apart, describe a deepening decline of the nation’s blessing, prosperity, health, peace and freedom, until the nation is defeated by their enemies and taken away from the land of promise, and scattered among the nations.** God had displaced the nations before the Israelites as a judgment for their sin. If Israel follows the same practices of those nations, it too will be defeated, displaced and driven away from the land of promise into nations far away. **Then, however, after some time in these other lands, if they remember their history, and return to Yahweh their God in repentance, and will call upon Him, He will act. He will undertake their cause, set them free from their captivity and will return them to the land of their forefathers.** They will once again live in the land of promise, rebuild houses and cities, and become a prosperous nation. **If they seek and serve Yahweh, and keep His commandments, they will abide in peace and blessing.**

**We know that these passages were written and in existence at the time of Moses.** Recently, a strip of lead was found in the base of an altar, dated as approximately 1400 BC. This ancient altar appears to be the very altar which Moses commanded Joshua to build (Deut. 27:4,5), and which Joshua reportedly constructed (Josh. 8:30-35). The lead strip was folded in half, and it has writing on it in an ancient Hebrew script from that time period. It contains some of the very curse formulas from the book of Deuteronomy recorded in our Bibles. What this means is that **(1.) The book of Deuteronomy was already in existence, and was thought to be the authoritative word of God,** enough that someone would commission a craftsman to inscribe portions of it on this lead strip. **(2.) The prophecy given by God through Moses regarding the disobedience, decline, defeat, destruction and displacement of Israel, and the promise of the nation’s later repentance and return, had been given,** understood, and widely disseminated among the people from before they even entered the land in 1400 BC. **(3.) This prophecy has been fulfilled in the history of Israel twice since that time.** They were exiled from the land by the Assyrians (721 BC) and the Babylonians (586 BC) for the very offenses God described in these passages. In their exile, they began to repent and return to seeking Yahweh, and He restored a remnant of survivors to the land (538 BC). Again in 70 AD, the Romans defeated the Jews, destroyed Jerusalem, and brought the surviving Jews into exile. This exile lasted for centuries. Through the events of the 1900’s, especially accelerated by the Holocaust, the Jews began returning to their homeland in significant numbers. In 1948, the land of Israel was reborn, and Jews are once again living in the land of their covenant promise.

We observe that **God continues to speak about the future to His covenant people.** He speaks about things to come as promises or warnings, depending upon the response of His people. **His word has proven to be true, and trustworthy, not only from the perspective of the historical past, but even in regard to the historical future!**