

The Prophetic Gift Lesson 8 1Q 2009

The Authority of the Prophets

Memory Text – read – thoughts?

What does this mean? Are we to accept what a prophet says because a prophet says it or are we to test what the prophet says?

We have talked about testing a prophet by comparing scripture with scripture to be sure a prophet is not contradicting inspired revelation. But is there an even more basic test we must put the prophet, preacher, teacher to?

Is what they say true? Does it get borne out in reality?

For instance, throughout my lifetime there have been periodic dates set by some for the return of Christ or the collapse of the economy or the invasion of Israel etc. When such prophecies come how do we test them? By watching and waiting and see what happens.

Here is one written in 1897:

Intemperance in study is a species of intoxication, and those who indulge in it, like the drunkard, wander from safe paths, and stumble and fall in the darkness. The Lord would have every student bear in mind that the eye must be kept single to the glory of God. They are not to exhaust and waste their physical and mental powers in seeking to acquire all possible knowledge of the sciences; but every individual is to preserve the freshness and vigor of all his powers to engage in the work which the Lord has appointed him in helping souls to find the path of righteousness. Fundamentals of Christian Education 340.

Thoughts?

Am J Epidemiol. Published online before print January 6, 2009.

Middle-aged workers who consistently work overtime appear to be at risk for mild cognitive impairment (MCI), researchers report.

In a prospective study of middle-aged British civil servants, those who typically worked more than 55 hours a week scored worse on a vocabulary test and showed a greater decline in reasoning ability than their colleagues who worked 35 to 40 hours a week.

Since MCI predicts dementia and mortality, identifying risk factors for the condition in middle age is important, the researchers, led by Marianna Virtanen, PhD, from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, in Helsinki, write.

Working more than 55 hours per week was associated with worse baseline and follow-up performances on vocabulary testing, with a decline in performance on the reasoning test over the 5-year period.

Thoughts?

I received this last night from one of our online listeners:

Our message is not that our prophet is better than yours, our message should be that our God loves you just like you are. If we continue on this detour of naming the true prophet we would soon be stuck in an eddy with no way out. Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith, the Fullers, Amenhotep, Ellen White, David Koresh, Jim Jones and Moses should all be judged by the same standard, "Do they point you to the Savior or themselves?" Does one, after being exposed to them, know God better? That is the only valid test. If we would spend more time reading Ellen White than trying to defend her, our church would be a less caustic environment for tender growing Christians.

But we shouldn't read just Ellen White, she herself was well read. For our own growth we need to see God from a multitude

of perspectives. Why? To discern truth for ourselves. I am not suggesting that truth and falsehood are not important, they certainly are. But it is the work of the Spirit in your heart, it is the work of the Eternal for eternity. Our work is to make choices that make our hearts a place where the Spirit likes to hang out. If God is actually in your heart don't you think when you read or hear something that its correctness will be decided together? God and I deciding its value makes so much more sense.

Thoughts?

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Have you ever been called to speak for God? Are parents called to speak for God to their children? What message about God did you get from your parents?

Are children to test the message they get from their parents? Have you tested the message about God your parents gave you? What conclusions have you drawn?

Would the church be a better place if all children tested the message about God they get from their parents?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What do you think about the idea of Moses becoming God to Aaron?

God used the children of Israel as an acting troupe to put on an elaborate play with a very intricate script. God was the director and everyone had their part.

Moses got to play what part? And Aaron? Remember in Hebrews where it says only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy place of the sanctuary and then only once a year. But Moses used to go in and talk with God face to face all the time, after Aaron was the High Priest – why?

Moses represented Christ before His incarnation, the Lamb represented Christ during His incarnation and Aaron represented Christ after His ascension. Christ before His incarnation was in constant communion with His Father as they coordinated their efforts and plans for the salvation of the race. Thus we see Moses going in and talking with God. Aaron's ministry represented Christ's work after His ascension applying the remedy He achieved during His time on earth.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

MONDAY

Read top Bible verse, Matthew 28:18 – thoughts? What power was given to Jesus? What did Jesus do with the power? What importance is it to us to recognize Jesus had all power? How is this truth important in the conflict with Satan? How do these texts fit in?

‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty. Zech 4:6

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Romans 1:16

With what power does God win the war with Satan? Is it by physical might? Why not? What is the battle over? Our hearts and minds, can love be won by force? How does the Spirit work? By love and truth – the truth destroys lies wins us to trust and then love is written in freeing us from fear and selfishness.

While it is true Christ never used His own divine power while on earth, but rather relied on His Father's power accessed through faith (like any other human prophet performed miracles), why is it important not to conclude, as some have done, that Christ didn't have access to His divine power?

If Christ didn't have access to His divine power then what do we learn about how God uses power in trying circumstance? If Christ was just as helpless as the two thieves on the cross do we learn anything about how God wields power?

Read bottom two paragraphs – thoughts?

- When you think of the judgment what comes to mind? What is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone is accused of murder what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone is accused of embezzlement what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone is accused of child abuse what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone with AIDS is accused of not taking their antiviral meds what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone with cancer is accused of refusing the chemotherapy what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone jumps out of an airplane and is accused of not having a parachute what is the purpose of judgment?
- Is there a need for judgment in the first three scenarios? Is there a need for judgment in the last?
- Do we see God's law as imposed or natural? Do natural laws require imposed penalties or judgments?
- How about if you didn't know anything about cancer and you saw two people with cancer and one the doctor saved and the other died because they refused the treatment – might there be a need for a judgment? Why? Who would be judged?

Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. ²⁴ "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over

from death to life. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. John 5:22-27

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. John 8:15,16

“As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. John 12:47, 48

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37

Does God have to hold a court scene in order for Him to know who is guilty or who is innocent? Does God have to hold a court scene in order for the rest of the universe to determine innocence and guilt? Yes, the question is who are the intelligences of heaving judging? Who is the one the court scene is designed to judge?

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy

sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.
Romans 3:4 KJV

Who is the one on trial? Who was accused of being untrustworthy? Who is the one being judged? God

¹⁹ “Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. ²⁰ I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:19-22 NIV

Thoughts?

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; ²²until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:21,22 ASV

Thoughts? Who is being judged? God.

Why does God not have to hold a court scene for the intelligences of heaven to figure out in the end who should be brought to heaven and who should not be brought to heaven?

Why did Jesus not come to earth 2000 ago in His full heavenly glory?

2 THES 2:8 – the wicked are destroyed by the brightness of His coming – what would have happened if Christ would have come in brightness two thousand years ago?

Moses came down off the mountain – what was his face doing? What did the children of Israel do? Why?

In the end when Christ appears what do the wicked do? Why?

When Christ shall come in His glory, the wicked cannot endure to behold Him. **The light of His presence, which is life to those who love Him, is death to the ungodly.** The expectation of His coming is to them a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Hebrews 10:27. When He shall appear, they will pray to be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.
{Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings 26}

If this is the condition of things when Christ returns will there be a need for an external judgment imposed by God or will each person's condition be demonstrated for what it is when God reveals Himself?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph –thoughts? How is God's word mistreated today? Only in the ways described in the paragraph or in other ways? What about those who would apply it rigidly without thinking?

In Christ's day did the religious leaders ridicule, ignore, denounce as out of date the Scripture? Did they claim to be people of Scripture? But Jesus said:

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Matthew 23:15

Thoughts? How could people be converted to God's chosen people and made twice the son of hell? What were they teaching their converts that did this? Lies about God!

Could we do this today? Could we convert someone to the truth about the Sabbath, the state of the dead, the sanctuary message, the sacredness of scripture, the importance of healthful living, tithing etc. and still make them twice the son of hell as they were before? How?

Read second paragraph "Yet, no one.." – why? Why will we sooner or later suffer if we ignore the scripture? Is it because God will finally get us or is it because the consequences will finally come to bear?

Read fourth paragraph – "all through..." thoughts? What is the message we should hear in this statement? What errors might occur from this thought alone?

What about Galileo – Should the Bible be tested by science or not? The church at the time said that the Bible taught the earth as the center and the sun revolved around the earth, should science be brought to bear? When we read about the angels standing at the four corners of the earth should we test what that means by science or should we conclude the earth is flat?

Here is another statement from EGW:

Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature.
{Ed 130.3}

Does this give further clarity to what she was saying before? Do you agree? Are there any areas where you have struggled to find harmony between science and scripture?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What is the sword of God? The Word of Truth – then how do you understand this passage?

Isaiah 26:21,22 See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer. In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword, his fierce, great and powerful sword.

Consider the following verse:

Revelation 19:19-21 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

Notice the sword is coming out of the rider's mouth – the Rider is Christ, what does the sword represent? Truth!

The wicked are destroyed “because they did love the truth and thus be saved.” 2 Thes 2:10. In other words the wicked have hardened their minds in lies, solidified their characters in falsehood, warped their selves in deception and the sword of God is the truth that cuts through their lies right to their inner self.

When people sin they are convicted with guilt, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. No one likes guilt and we all want it to go away. There are only two ways to resolve appropriate guilt, God's way – repentance and restoration and reconciliation. And Satan's way, lies, denial, distortion, externalization. Adam said after his sin, "It wasn't me. It was that woman you gave me. If she had not brought me the fruit I would have never ate it. Don't blame me, blame her."

This is the hardened condition of all those who have not opened their hearts and minds to the Spirit of Truth here. What will it be like for those who have lived in the darkness of lies to come face to face with infinite truth, truth which can not be denied, truth that cannot be avoided, truth which sears through to their souls? Their minds cannot take it and they die. Do we have an example of this demonstrated in Scripture where someone was living in lies and was confronted by truth and were slain by the sword of truth?

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Acts 5:1-5.

THURSDAY

How did we get the books that make up scripture? It was a slow process of several hundred years culminating in 327 A.D. when only the books that all the churches agreed were inspired were included. So the selection was one of experience and consensus.

Long Working Hours in Middle Age May Impair Cognition

Marlene Busko

January 19, 2009 — Middle-aged workers who consistently work overtime appear to be at risk for mild cognitive impairment (MCI), researchers report.

In a prospective study of middle-aged British civil servants, those who typically worked more than 55 hours a week scored worse on a vocabulary test and showed a greater decline in reasoning ability than their colleagues who worked 35 to 40 hours a week.

Since MCI predicts dementia and mortality, identifying risk factors for the condition in middle age is important, the researchers, led by Marianna Virtanen, PhD, from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, in Helsinki, write.

"This study suggests that in addition to traditional risk factors for cognitive decline, such as biological age and disease, work-related factors, such as overtime, might contribute to cognitive decline," Dr. Virtanen told *Medscape Psychiatry*.

The study is the first to show this association in a large sample of diverse middle-aged employees who were followed for several years, she added.

"I would recommend that people keep their working hours reasonable," she said.

The study was published online January 6 in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Working Longer Not Necessarily Smarter

Working overtime is common, the researchers note. For example, in Europe in 2001, an estimated 12% to 17% of employees worked overtime. However, long work hours have been linked to adverse health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, fatigue, and depression.

Working long shifts is known to impair cognition, but little is known about how overtime, as opposed to shift work, affects cognition.

To examine the association between long working hours and cognitive function in middle age, investigators analyzed 1997–1999 baseline data and 2002–2004 follow-up data from 2214 British civil servants who participated in the Whitehall II study.

The participants, 1694 men and 520 women, had a mean age of 52.1 years at baseline.

At baseline and at 5-year follow-up, participants were tested on 5 aspects of cognitive function:

- Short-term verbal memory.
- Verbal and mathematical reasoning.
- Vocabulary.
- Phonemic fluency.
- Semantic fluency.

Participants were divided into 3 groups on the basis of self-reports on the length of their typical workweek, including work they brought home:

- 35 to 40 hours: 39% of participants.
- 41 to 55 hours: 53% of participants.
- More than 55 hours: 8% of participants.

Compared with employees who worked a standard 35 to 40 hours per week, those who accumulated 15 to 20 or more overtime hours every week were more likely to be married men with a higher education level, a higher job level, and a

higher income. They also slept fewer hours and had greater psychological distress and alcohol consumption, but they did have greater social support.

Working more than 55 hours per week was associated with worse baseline and follow-up performances on vocabulary testing, with a decline in performance on the reasoning test over the 5-year period.

The researchers found a dose-response pattern between the 3 ranges of working hours and the vocabulary and reasoning measures.

The associations were robust after adjustment for 20 potential confounding factors, including age, sex, marital status, education, occupation, income, physical disease, psychosocial factors, sleep disturbance, and health-risk behaviors.

Working longer hours was linked to worse vocabulary scores in men but not in women. However, larger sample sizes are needed to confirm this sex difference, say investigators.

The effect of long working hours on cognitive function had an effect size equivalent to smoking. Further research is needed to identify potential factors behind these associations and to examine the generalizability of the study findings, the authors write.

The Whitehall II study has been supported by grants from the British Medical Research Council; the British Heart Foundation; the British Health and Safety Executive; the British Department of Health; the US National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; the US National Institute on Aging; the US Agency for Health Care Policy and Research; and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Networks on Successful Midlife Development and Socioeconomic Status and Health. Dr. Virtanen has disclosed no relevant financial relationships. The financial disclosures of the other authors are listed in the article.

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