

Prophecy5

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[0 : 00] You may or may not have a copy of the bulletin, but you can get one later. And I can't say that I am interrupting this series that we are doing on prophecy and mystery because this is not an interruption, but I am taking a subject that is out of sequence in connection with the subject, and I had intended to take it later, but I want to do it now because I think if you grasp this subject, it will perhaps more than anything else reveal to you the absolute importance of these right divisions that we are talking about between prophecy and mystery.

And that which I am inserting in for just probably a few sessions is what I have come to appreciate over the 60-plus years that I have been a believer as perhaps the most perplexing, discouraging, puzzling issue of the Christian life, and that is the subject of prayer.

When the Apostle Paul stated as he did in Romans 8, for we know not how to pray or what to pray for as we ought, he was in Whistling Dixie.

That is absolutely true. Yet we find so many instances of just what I guess you would say just downright dramatic, miraculous answers to prayer in the scriptures, Old and New Testament, and there is virtually no end to the testimonies that we hear about people and the miraculous answers to prayer, every one for which we are extremely grateful.

And then, unfortunately, the issue is muddied somewhat by some of the television evangelists and preachers who really go off the deep end on the health, wealth, name and claim it thing and get people all mixed up and discouraged regarding the subject of prayer.

[2 : 18] So, as it reads in the bulletin, the question is sometimes asked about the practicality of right division. Does it actually make a difference whether we see the distinctions the Bible makes?

After all, it is all the Word of God. Why don't we just take it as a whole and forget about this thing called right division? In this fifth session today that relates to prophecy and its content, number five, we will get a glimpse of the practical importance of right division and the subject of prayer.

Do we mean even this, that is, prayer, is subject to right division? Oh, brother, is it ever?

Is it ever? Absolutely. Only by this can we understand why so many prayers are amiss and unanswered. And the follow-up to this will be covered in today's morning worship service that follows at 1015.

So, in this segment, this 9 o'clock segment, we're going to be looking at the subject of prayer as it involves the subject of prophecy or prophecy as it involves prayer, however you wish to put it, because there is a very definite difference.

[3 : 42] And my goal is for you to come to appreciate the differences and how it is that things are working. And at the outset, let me just mention this so that it will be kind of germinating in your minds.

Under the subject of prophecy, and I'm not talking about foretelling the future when I use that word prophecy. I'm talking about that segment of the Bible that is related primarily to the nation of Israel, to future things involving the Messiah directly, etc.

And the emphasis, the emphasis for this prophecy is on the physical, the material, and the earthly. It is so much about this present world.

And in keeping with that, be reminded that the Jew, in the Old Testament, under the covenant relationship that God established through Moses, often referred to as the Old Covenant or the Mosaic Covenant, the emphasis is on the physical and the material.

And there is never a place in the Old Testament under the Mosaic Commands where you read anything about believers dying and going to heaven. That is a prophecy concept that belongs under the Old Dispensation or it belongs under the Old Administration.

[5 : 07] And I'm going to try and break myself, if I'm able, against using that word dispensation so much because it has a lot of baggage. And a lot of people don't understand the term dispensationalism.

It sounds like a recently discovered disease for a lot of Christians. And you wonder, what part of the body does this affect? Well, I told you that I prefer the word administration because it communicates a lot better.

So when in the field of politics, for instance, every four years we have an election here in the state of Ohio and we elect or re-elect a governor.

And when that governor, if he was not the governor who was already in office and re-elected, if he's a new guy coming in and he is elected governor, he brings with him a whole new administration, a new cabinet.

He has a new way of doing things. He has new plans, new intentions, new ways of going about it. And there are a lot of changes that are made. And we kind of go with the flow and we call that, well, that's a new administration.

[6 : 23] And what we are saying is this is the way the Bible is laid out. It is laid out in accordance with different administrations.

Under the Old and in the Old Testament and specifically regarding Israel, the chief administrator is Moses.

He is the one whom God personally selected to reveal his word, to communicate to the people of Israel, Moses was the go-between.

Moses is the messenger. Moses was not the authority. He was just a communicator from God who was the authority. That's under prophecy.

Most people, I don't think, will give you much of an argument about that. It's pretty obvious and too hard to argue about. But where the difficulty comes in is in the suggestion that Moses and that administration served its purpose and has been set aside and is no longer in vogue.

[7 : 32] It has been taken over or replaced with a new administration. And the administrator of the new is called Paul the Apostle.

You know, almost no one gives Moses any flack. You can look at just about any segment of Christianity that you want.

And I'm talking about pre, post, all millennial, post, post-trib, bid-trib, you name it. And you don't hardly get any argument at all. Everybody goes, yeah, yeah, Moses was the guy.

Yep, yep, put it down. Moses was the guy. But when it comes to Paul, well, that's just Paul. No, it isn't just Paul.

It is just God. That's what it is. And speaking through Paul, not Moses. If we could only come to understand and appreciate the fact that God, God committed the same authority to Paul that he committed to Moses, a whole lot of problems would just go away.

[8 : 54] And how many times have you heard me say, the issue is authority. Always has been, always will be. Whatever it is that you accept as your authority will depend on the credence and the importance you give to whatever the issue is.

For Christians, the authority is the word of God. And he is the supreme authority and he has chosen, because he just deigned to do so, to use human vehicles or instruments through whom to communicate his word.

And we have this in the Bible, for instance. That's the whole book. Now, I don't know why God didn't just with a booming voice give us an ongoing revelation of whatever it is he wanted humanity to do.

Like, we could say, okay, all over the globe, everywhere, seven o'clock every Friday night, God is going to speak from heaven and everybody will hear him and there won't be any intermediary.

You'll get the word direct and if you're Chinese, you'll get it in the Chinese language and it'll all be and that's going to be the way it is and that's the way God's going to reveal himself to everybody all the time.

[10 : 12] Maybe in some ways that would solve a lot of problems. I don't know. But we've got a human instrument that God has been pleased to use and he did so in the recording of his word which gives the Bible a human flavor but it comes with divine authority and that's a marvelous thing.

And we find the same thing, the same principle repeated in the incarnation where we have a divine authority incorporated in a human being.

So Jesus is human and he is divine and God uses this instrumentality as a mediary and in a way it's just an example of his grace that God condescends to use flawed human beings to be his messengers and all human beings have flaws.

So what we've got here is a wonderful, wonderful concept and in this authority issue what God has communicated to Moses has since fulfilled his purpose and has literally passed off the scene and has been replaced by something new.

Now, one other thing, let me insert this. We tend to think that Moses and his authority as is the Old Testament concludes with the book of Malachi I've made the point that it extends into the four gospels because the four gospels more appropriately belong to the Old Testament than they do the New since that was the modus operandi under which people were functioning during the earthly ministry of Christ.

[12:01] He did not function and operate under the New Covenant but under the Old. That's why he did everything as a Jew. So we've got a problem here in that there is a transition that is taking place moving from that Old to the New and it would be very simple maybe, well, in my estimation it would be kind of simple if there were some way of saying okay, as of 12 midnight, June the 1st, whatever, there's the cutoff but we don't have anything like that.

So we have a fading out and a fading in. We have a lessening of one and an increasing of the other and in the meanwhile there is a bridge, there is a bridge between the first and the second, the first and the last that has something of both in it in that bridge.

That bridge is the book of Acts. That's the bridge. What does it have in it? The old or the new? It has both.

It has both. Therein lies the complication but once you understand that, it helps a lot. So, let me go on by saying before we look at some verses here, prophecy focuses on the physical and the material and Israel and the earth and all that involves it.

It focuses on the kingdom of heaven which is not heaven where God lives but it is heaven where God lives come to earth so heaven will be on earth but it is still here on this earth.

[13:44] That really has to be understood and that is what prophecy is all about. That's what materialism is all about.

That's what physicality is all about and prayer as it works in that segment is entirely different than the way prayer works under our administration which is referred to as the church age or the dispensation of the grace of God.

Is there anybody here who has never been terribly disappointed in prayer? Is there anybody that hasn't been terribly confused about prayer?

And when we look at some verses like Jesus said whatsoever you ask in my name I will do it. Boy, I struggled with that as a young Christian and you know what?

all I could say is why doesn't this work for me? Is there something wrong with me? Maybe I don't have enough faith.

[15:03] Maybe I've got some sin in my life that I don't know about that God isn't answering my prayers because God hasn't changed. What's wrong? What's going on?

And then you hear these startling testimonies from other people about their miraculous answers to prayer and you say wow! Boy, it never happens to me.

What am I doing wrong? What am I missing? And let me insert this. It doesn't make any difference what administration we're talking about old or new.

I want to make it very clear I am not one who and this is what sometimes what dispensationalists are accused of when to put God in a box.

I want to confine God to this little area of the church age. No, no, no. You can't put God in a box. God can do anything He wants to do any way He wants to do it any time He wants to do it.

[16:08] I'm not limiting God at all and I'm not saying well the dispensation of Israel is past and that was the age of miracles and that doesn't work that way anyone. No, no, no. All I'm saying is in the dispensation or the administration of Israel under Moses and what we call the old covenant and what we call prophecy God had a modus operandi that is the manner in which He usually operated and functioned but He can't be confined to that and the same is true under the new under this administration under the Pauline mystery administration there are certain areas certain things that God is able to do that are confined in I guess I would say confined within a standard kind of modus operandi but He isn't confined to doing certain things in certain places

He can do anything He wants to do I just throw let me just throw an example here for instance well there are so many where I'm not going to do that let's I'll get too far we've got to stay with prophecy that's the nine o'clock thing okay the prophecy can you think of any and talking about prayer and miracles because they go together in the Old Testament prophecy can you think of any miracles in the Old Testament or in the Gospels or in early Acts that were not concerned with the physical can you think of any miracles anywhere in the Bible that are not concerned with the physical the material they go together don't they physicality and the miraculous they go together all of the miracles that

Jesus performed were physical material they were those of healing or they were those where he acted upon the elements such as stilling the storm calming the sea there is always with the miraculous there is always there is always the physical that is involved when Jesus performed all of the miracles that he did they were all on the basis of seeing is believing and the physical whether it was hearing whether it was the lame body whatever it was they were all designed to do just one thing and that is to persuade people of the miraculous out of the ordinary element that had taken place that characterizes the old covenant that's primarily all about

Israel and prophecy this is why Paul says when he writes to the Corinthians the Jews require a sign and the word sign means miracle the Jews require miracles because they were accustomed to that that was God's modus operandi for Israel and if you want to look at some of the examples well we'll just rattle off a few of them let's go first of all the Old Testament to Joshua chapter 6 Joshua chapter 6 and here we have the conquest of Jericho and you can't get much more physical of that and the walls come crashing down and okay let's go to Joshua 10 Joshua chapter 10 and this is a fascinating fascinating account here and by the way what we're talking about lends itself to a great deal of confusion because we see these miraculous demonstrations in the Old

Testament and we see them in the Gospels too and we know people reason this way God hasn't changed and because God hasn't changed miracles are just as much in demand and as legitimate today as they have ever been and this by the way is the focus and the rationale for our Pentecostal brethren coming to the conclusion about tongues and healing and healing and things like that being for this dispensation and their argument is that God hasn't changed and I've already addressed that just a little bit when I said God hasn't changed but his methodology changes his modus operandi changes and humanity needs to change with it when you get into these things into these miracles the physical things whether they're Old Testament or in the New let me put this as clearly as I can and it probably won't sound right but it's going to I'm satisfied that it's accurate this is the elemental stuff you heard me the miraculous the physical all of the things that

[21 : 39] God did in the Old Testament that Jesus did in the New that are really wow factors I mean stuff like raising the dead and everything like that that is the basic that's the elemental that's the simplest that's communicating to people in ways that they not only cannot understand but they cannot deny that is as baseline as it can get but when you come into the mystery section that we'll be looking at primarily in the service that follows this the emphasis is not at all on the physical a new administration has come in and everything has changed and what is that all about it's about the spiritual now here's a big big problem what's the difference between the spiritual and the physical how much difference can there be there's that much difference it is a radical difference the physical is material the spiritual is immaterial and what I am suggesting to you is that the physical and the material which by the way is so dazzling that's what gets people's attention it's what you can see that really gets people's attention but that's the baseline stuff that's the simple stuff that's the elemental stuff that's the stuff for baby brethren humanity is to mature and grow from that into the spiritual which is life on an entirely different plane a much higher plane not that the physical doesn't matter but the physical becomes subservient to the spiritual in the old testament and under the old administration it was the spiritual that was subservient to the physical that's why people got so carried away with the miracles and they still do today probably a considerable percentage of

Christians if you were to take a poll they would prefer the elemental and the material over the spiritual any day of the week because that's where the razzmatazz is that's where you can see something that's where you've got what you call proof that's what is impressive that is the physical and that's what gets people's attention you talk about the spiritual that's where they are but let me tell you something the spiritual is where the plan and program of God is now get out of the has been program and get into the new and when you do you will come to appreciate something that you never had before and that is yes the physical is important of course you take care of it and you tend

to the body and all the rest of it but there is that higher plane that needs to be addressed and because

Christendom as a body does not address it or does not address it adequately we have a substandard presentation of Christianity to the world because we aren't separated all that much from them the world is very much in love with the physical and so are most Christians so what is happening in effect is that we are shortchanging ourselves often not even realizing it and the contrast will become more obvious in the morning service here we've got an occasion in Joshua chapter 10 I'm going to look just beginning with verse 12 Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Ammonites the Amorites before the sons of Israel and he said in the sight of Israel oh sun stand still at Gibeon and oh moon in the valley of Eglon so the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies and I don't think there was anybody there who couldn't say wow did you see that isn't that something now that'll get your attention and that's the way it is with Israel all the way through but let me ask you this did all of the miraculous manifestations that God gave to Israel over the centuries what effect did that have on their spiritual conditioning zero zero how else can you explain these people who saw God perform one miraculous demonstration after another from the manna from heaven the water out of the rock the crossing of the Red Sea all of these things one after another one major wow after another and they end up in idolatry are you kidding me what is going on here this is the kind of stuff that dazzles get your attention the major wow but it doesn't stick to your spiritual ribs and it doesn't mature you and it doesn't develop you it just entertains you and we've got Christendom today that is knee deep in entertainment and we've got Christendom that is woefully weak ineffective tolerated but for how long we don't know all of this is connected to this thing we're talking about mystery and prophecy and it is a burden that I have come to appreciate and well there's numerous other places 1st Samuel 1st Samuel chapter look at these in the Old Testament 1st Samuel chapter 9 boy how many women could identify with this especially women who are childless women who have maybe prayed for years probably probably like Elizabeth did mother of John the Baptist prayed and prayed and prayed for a baby for years and then it got to the place of where she knew she was too old to have a baby probably her monthly cycle told her that and yet there was a miracle involved there wasn't it and well that's something else we'll be looking at but here in Samuel what did I tell you Samuel what oh I'm sorry I'm sorry chapter 1 and verse 9 chapter 1 and verse 9 then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord and she greatly distressed this is a woman who is in deep anguish of soul her competitor [29 : 48] Peninnah every time every time Hannah turns around Peninnah's pregnant again and she just cranks out the babies like you can't believe and here is Hannah childless and we read that she rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh and Eli the priest was sitting in the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord she greatly distressed prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly I'd say that she's making a scene and it's kind of obvious when it says that she wept bitterly it means she was sobbing she was breaking down emotionally and carrying on and it became quite obvious to those who were around she made a vow and said oh Lord of hosts if you will indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant remember me and not forget thy maidservant but will give my maidservant a son then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life and a razor shall never come upon his head it came about that as she continued praying before the

Lord Eli was watching her mouth he's looking at this woman he's saying to himself what's wrong with this woman what's going on here what's she doing anyway she must be drunk how dare she come into a place like this intoxicated she was speaking in her heart only her lips not her Eli thought she was drunk well some thought they were drunk in Pentecost too then Eli said to her how long will you make yourself drunk put away your wine from you Hannah answered and said no my Lord I'm a woman oppressed in spirit I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink but I poured out my soul before the Lord and you know God is going to answer her and give her a son and he will become the greatest of all of the judges that Israel has ever had his name will be Samuel and this Samuel is going to be quite a guy and this is in response to prayer do you know of any women who prayed about getting pregnant and were never able to would it be a stretch for her to read this passage of scripture and say

God heard Hannah's prayer why won't he hear mine where have I failed what kind of a woman am I supposed to be God hasn't changed he was able to do that for Hannah he's able to do that for me

so why doesn't he and she thinks maybe it is because she doesn't have enough faith so she does whatever she can she reads her Bible more and prays more and she does this more and does that nothing seems to work and then she kind of gets down on herself maybe it's because God knows I wouldn't be a very good mother anyway and that's why he hasn't given me a chance and she enters into all kinds of ridiculous rationalizing like that just out of desperation and out of her humanity how many women have been agonizing over things like this how many men unable to produce a child because they're impotent after all God did it for

Zacharias he too was past the age of being able to impregnate his wife and God came through for him and why can't he come through for me and why doesn't he and so on and then they get connected with some charlatan evangelist preacher that tells them you know that they need to send in your seed money this kind of thing and this stuff goes on it's just pathetic and well there are other instances that we could look at but it will not take time because I want to have some time for Q&A; all I want to emphasize is the remarkable distinction that exists between the previous administration and the present administration and I don't know of a more practical way to address it than in this subject that is very close to the heart of all of us and we've all had our disappointments and our confusion and our anxiety and prayer and our questions and our doubts what's wrong with God well nothing's wrong with God so it must be my fault what's wrong with me and up on themselves and then they'll hear these wonderful answers to prayer for others and why doesn't it happen to me and what have I done wrong and what am I missing and it can be very depressing have you comment or question anybody talking about some sensitive areas here okay I'll just say a comment so I grew up in kind of charismatic and even the kind of word of faith type of you know name it claim it type of situation and man you can go to a lot of Bible verses to help support those types of things absolutely can and by the way just let me inject something here and that is in the situation which you found yourself and so many others do today too it has absolutely nothing to do with sincerity right or good intent because the intentions are honorable the person is sincere and but we know that is no guarantee for the position being accurate so we are talking about people he's talking about people who are functioning and operating in good faith yeah without a doubt but really

[35 : 50] I don't know because I was steeped in that and I could go toe to toe with somebody with Bible scriptures on those things but without understanding the Bible rightly divided like the things that we're talking about I don't know that there was any other way that somebody could have convinced me I guess out of that situation so so so important it is what we're talking about here I appreciate that very much and I think I can certainly understand exactly what you're saying and there are so many people dear people of God love the Lord want to do the right thing want to know the right thing and it can be terribly depressing and discouraging when things don't work out like you have been told they should and I don't know of any area in the Christian life that has been so disappointing and confusing to so many people as this subject that we're talking about right now and that's why I am injecting it in here before I plan to because I want you to pick up on how practical right division is it this is stuff that will make a difference in your life and what we are seeking to do is to grow in the grace and knowledge of

Christ and once you get plugged into what these realities are and what the distinctions and the differences are it just makes life so much more enjoyable all the way around other thoughts or comments anyone Joe hang on here comes the mic I think this is in the New Testament sure Paul's letters that God knows what we should be praying for you know what we need what's good for us the Holy Spirit is working interceding for us through God and it makes you think well then why should I pray you know why do I need to pray if he knows what I need and what I should pray for so let's use to me pray but I think God still wants us to pray he still wants us to pray because that's showing faith in him and that's showing our weakness he wants nothing more from us to show when we pray he just he just you know he just he loves it when we pray because we're showing our faith in him but he then you go to other scriptures like everything works together for good those that love him he knows probably you're going to pray the wrong things and he's going to take into consideration in his plan he knew how you that you were going to play God before knew he's going to work out even though this situation that I'm praying about for my good you got to take all these scriptures different parts into play in when you pray I appreciate that Joe that's kind of how my thinking that he's working in my life you know he is and I'll tell you one of the ways that you can determine whether you're really starting to get a handle on this is when you

are able to come to the place of where you are able to say Lord I really want to thank you for all of my prayers that you didn't answer the way I wanted but do you know what we tend to do we tend to sulk and move around and question why and what's wrong and what would

I do wrong and all the rest of it and we just can't bring ourselves to understand the possibility that what we are asking for and what we are praying about that we are convinced is so right and so honorable that God sees it differently how can that be God needs to agree with me doggone it God needs to get in line with my program and hey don't you know what's going on down here don't you see what's happening in my corner of the world and you do thus and so for those and so what why and okay that's the way you're going to be I'm just not going to your old church anymore not going to read your old Bible anymore either these are Christian temper tantrums I don't know about you but

I've had some in my lifetime and I could say God be reasonable do this my way and do you know the Lord is so loving and so patient just like with a petulant child just like a two year old that cries and wants his way and whimpers and carries on and throws a hissy fit because he can't have this or can't have that and all the while the loving mom or dad knows what the child doesn't know and is taking into consideration what is really best for the child and all the child can think is you old meanie you won't let me you know and as a teenager you don't want me to have any fun at all you won't let me and this is this is the way we relate to God many times and when we can come to the place where we are able to appreciate

[41 : 56] God has a perspective that is flawless ours is so limited and so tiny we don't not only do we not know what is going to happen tomorrow we often don't even understand what's happening today but our heavenly father does and we just need to well we'll see more about it in the lake service did another comment back in the back yeah yeah yeah Marv I guess an example of some of that anyway as you know we lost a daughter in 1985 in an automobile accident and Diane and she it wasn't we weren't we hadn't been saved for that long so we didn't have a lot of background but basically she came to Dottie and said mom

I asked Jesus to come into my life and accept him as savior and I never felt a thing and I haven't felt anything so I don't think it did any good Dottie tried to assure her that but it was only shortly after that that we lost her and I felt bad for her ever since I can certainly understand that and you know what she expressed there is not unusual and the reason it is not unusual is because when you receive Christ as your savior and he does this work of regeneration in your heart what you feel or do not feel emotionally is dependent entirely on the way you are wired and put together emotionally I remember the day I knelt and received Christ as my savior Saturday afternoon

December 8 1956 in Ellensburg Washington I got up off my knees I didn't feel anything I didn't feel any great weight lifted off me I didn't feel like shouting I didn't feel like much of anything I remember I got up and I turned to the pastor Reverend Sweetland turned and I said is that it is that it and he said did you mean what you said in your prayer and I said yes yes absolutely and I don't even remember what I prayed you know like I said the only prayer I knew was now I lay me down to sleep I didn't pray that but but I just stumble bubbled through a prayer and I know I know I told God that I knew that I needed him I knew that I was a sinner there wasn't any doubt about that and that I wanted to receive Christ as my Savior and I didn't even understand what that meant but my heart was in the right place God reads the heart and I didn't like I said I didn't feel anything didn't feel any emotion didn't feel any didn't feel any all was wonderful and I and I says is that it he said do you believe what you said did you mean what you said in your prayer and I said well yeah yeah sure he said all right then God has saved you and I said okay that's good and that was it and he says and you come back at 7 o'clock tonight and I'll marry you so okay wonderful and you know something my dear mother-in-law bless her heart when we went home and told her what had happened because she had opposed this wedding all along because I wasn't a believer and Barbara told her mother Marvin received Christ as his savior and and her mom said well that's nice and that's it I thought to myself gee that's that's all this is worth is that that's nice you know but anyway come to find out she was very suspicious and Barbara was very suspicious because it really looked suspicious it looked like I was just jumping through a hoop that this preacher said was necessary if he was going to marry us and you play the game you do what you have to do in order to get the girl and that's the way it looked that was totally out of my mind never occurred to me at all that anybody could think that but after it was explained to me that that's what people thought because that's the way it looked and I thought oh gee but my heart was in the right and listen God reads the heart God

reads the intention and he is not impressed with fancy prayers or promises or pledges or anything like that and it's a beautiful thing well we just scratched the surface a little bit but I think you will appreciate more of the counterpart to this that will come in the morning service this this is that this is a little of the meaning which has between and we're güzel this is so as well and we're though you are able to out and go to we're going toike