

Some Basic Keys to Understand the Prophecies in Scripture
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1. The prophecies are not mainly about any human system, no matter how bad it may be. They are given to reveal Christ. If the main result of hearing them is not a better picture of Christ, if He is not made preeminent and exalted, we have missed the central point. John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Luke 24: 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Col. 1: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell

2. The prophecies are not given to pit one group against another, but to reveal the true spirit of Christ (humility, self-sacrificing love) in a historical (and often national) setting, in contrast to the contrary spirit (pride, self-exaltation). Every person and group struggles with this "anti-christ" spirit. The Seventh-day Adventists are no exception. We need to confess this and repent of our us-versus-them attitude.

3. The prophecies in revealing Jesus highlight true teachings about Him in contrast to false teachings. These must be understood to enable us to worship the true Christ. The world is being called like Elijah called Israel of old,
1Kings 18: 21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Many are in the condition of the woman to whom Christ spoke:

John 4: 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

God gave the written word and the Living Word to the Jewish people, to share it with the entire world. Because of the Jew's rejecting both, the responsibility to take the gospel of salvation to the world was given to the Christian church (see Matt. 21:43; 1Pet 2:9). So the first angel in Revelation 14 is shown calling to true worship:

Rev. 14: 6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the

fountains of waters.

And the third angel, using the symbols of prophecy, warns of false worship:

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

This is summarized by Paul in describing those who turn from the revelation of the true Christ:

Rom. 1: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

This is the setting for the Sabbath.

When Seventh-day Adventists learn how to exalt Christ in all their teaching and in all their attitudes, then we will fulfill our mission. It is in light of this need that the following was written to Seventh-day Adventists in 1896:

There is need of a much closer study of the word of God; especially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never before in the history of our work. We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy, but we should call attention to what the prophets and apostles have written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit has so shaped matters, both in the giving of the prophecy, and in the events portrayed, as to teach that the human agent is to be kept out of sight, hid in Christ, and the Lord God of heaven and His law are to be exalted.--Letter 57, 1896. {CW 65.1}

God bless you all as you study the prophecies about Christ!