



October 25, 2009

## *At The Center Of It All*

Some folks in the religious world base their teachings on statements made by the prophets of the Old Testament time period. Premillennialists and others use passages from Isaiah, Daniel and other prophets to prove they are correct speaking of such things as the battle of Armageddon, the millennial reign of Christ and the eventual second coming. There are others whose concept of the scriptures is limited to the Ten Commandments, Psalms and Proverbs. The landscape of their understanding is dotted with snippets of scripture rendered on various items as inspiration and decoration. Overall the concept of where the Old Testament ends and the New begins is as cloudy for folks today as the subject of circumcision for the Gentiles was in the first century. Illustrating the transition from the Law of Moses to the Gospel, we turn to the prophecies that are recorded, showing how and when they were fulfilled. Some of this leads to other interpretations on the part of those who do not understand how the scriptures complement one another and we find ourselves mired in discussions about the interpretations that others have instead of what the scriptures teach and miss the complete picture. It is good and necessary to understand the function of prophecy in the Old Testament. The fulfillment of prophecy helps us understand the depth of God and conveys a sense of the central theme in the scriptures. The theme of the Bible, the backdrop if you will, of all the events, is the desire of God to save mankind. Christ is the focus of the plan and is embodied in various forms of prophecy. Some of the prophecies are clearly stated such as Moses statements to the children of Israel. ***“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”*** (Deut 18.18-19). At other times God used objects to represent Christ and the coming salvation. Paul draws on an event during the wilderness wandering of the children of Is-

rael in this manner. ***“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”*** (1 Cor 10.1-4). In this example the figurative representation of Christ as the rock, referred to as a type, is explained by the apostle. A reading of the account in the Old Testament (Ex 17.6, Num 20.8) will not reveal this. The New Testament is therefore the key to understanding the connection. There are other statements that are very clear about the relationship between the events recorded in the volume we know of as the Old Testament and the New. Peter states, ***“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”*** (Acts 3.24). On this occasion, Peter refers to Moses statement cited above about the coming of another prophet like him (Acts 3.22-23). On the day of Pentecost Peter told the people that the events they witnessed were the fulfillment of the statement made by the prophet Joel (Joel 2.28-30). Christ stated that he had come to fulfill the Law (Matt 5.17). Paul tells us, ***“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*** (Rom 15.4). There is one event left that will occur and the scriptures are clear about the manner in which it will take place. When Christ returns he will do so to take vengeance on those who reject and disobey him (2 Thess 1.7-10). He will come quickly (Matt 24.27). He shall remain in the air to gather those who are raised (1 Thess 4.16) and the physical universe will be destroyed by fire (2 Pet 3.10) as Christ returns like a thief in the night. At the center of everything from beginning to end is Christ. Christ is revealed in the word of God and we need to read and understand what the Lord has given us,

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