

Few Ears to Hear

Two major problems face the Church today. Apostasy and a militant religion bent on world conquest. If the Church would teach what we can now prove from Bible prophecy, we could stop Islam in its tracks and start a new revival.

We can now understand most of God's intent for Revelation because of two miraculous events that happened in the Holy Land during the last 60 years: In 1948, the Jews established the new nation of Israel. In 1967, Jerusalem was freed from Gentile control. Those two events are prophetically pivotal because they enable us to see Bible Prophecy in a totally new way.

But accepting doctrinal reform has never been easy for the Church. Over the years, I've visited many Christian chat-rooms, hundreds of churches and even taught in some. Many of those churches have leaders who claim to be Bible prophecy experts. It isn't so. They are actually "ism" experts: Preter-ism, Dispensational-ism, Histori-cism or some other "ism." And it's a tragedy because those "isms" have shut the door to more realistic views of Bible prophecy for over 300 years!!! With "isms" in place, the church never noticed when, after 1967, God actually opened His prophetic books.

I'm reminded of one church leader who typifies the problem. When I met this ism-ite, he was just bubbling over with the usual gossip about who the Antichrist might be, when the tribulation was going to start and whether there was going to be a pre, post or mid trib rapture. I asked if we could go to a blackboard. When there, we opened our Bibles and read . . .

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," 1Cor 15:51-52

On his blackboard I scratched in all caps, LAST TRUMPET, and asked, "You believe the Church will be taken to be with the Lord at the last trumpet, don't you?"

"Of course, that's common knowledge," he replied, smiling.

"Great, then you also believe there can't be any trumpets after the last trumpet?"

"Sure," he said a bit weakly; he probably guessed where I was headed. "Well then," I said, "If the Church is going to be on earth until the last trumpet, we're going to be here through six of the seven trumpets in Revelation."

"Oh no," he replies, "the seven trumpets of Revelation are trumpets of judgment and they come after that trumpet in Corinthians."

Then I asked, "Are you saying trumpets will be blown after the last trumpet? Isn't that contradicting a plain declaration of Scripture?"

"The last trumpet in Corinthians has nothing to do with the trumpets in Revelation," he says with

conviction.

"Well then, unless I misunderstand you, what the Bible says is the last trumpet isn't really the last trumpet." His view seemed so unlikely I just had to ask, "Is that what you really believe?"

"The last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52 refers to Levitical trumpets only," he said in his most authoritative voice, "Revelation's trumpets take place during the Seven-Year Tribulation. Everyone knows that."

"Really? Well, let me see if I've got this straight. A trumpet in the New Testament, claiming to be the last, only refers to Old Testament trumpets, even though there are seven more trumpets in the New Testament?" What he was saying was so absurdly irrational I just had to ask, "What kind of exegetical slight-of-hand brought your denomination to that conclusion?"

You see the problem don't you? Despite its irrationality, this young pastor couldn't see past his church's tradition. Now I'm not being critical of this brother and don't doubt for a moment that he was doing the best he could, but like most Church leaders, regardless of stripe, he could only see the Bible through his doctrinal filter. However, if we believe our God inspired the Bible, shouldn't we believe what it says whether it fits through our doctrinal filter or not?

In another church, I used a blackboard to graph the prophetic days. I showed this church's young pastor how Daniel predicted the coming of Islam 1200 years before Muhammad was born. I showed him how Revelation predicted the first Islamic Jihad, the Crusades, the birth of new Israel in 1948 and Jerusalem again under Jewish control in 1967. I graphed those fulfilled prophecies so clearly they were virtually impossible to dispute.

From the way he responded, you'd have thought I'd just shot his favorite bird dog. In fact, he started screaming at me, and I do mean screaming: "YOU'RE DOING AWAY WITH THE TRIBULATION !!!" If he could have gathered a fist-waving mob, shouting "Blaspemy, Blasphemy" like the Moslems do, he'd have probably done so.

Pointing to the graphs, I said, "Please calm down my friend, I'm not trying to do away with anything. I'm just showing you another way to look at those verses; a way that we can now prove both scripturally and historically."

"YOU'RE DOING AWAY WITH THE TRIBULATION;" he was shouting so loud my ears were ringing. Reasoning with him was out of the question; I'd just threatened his end-time tradition and he was beyond reason. Though this was the loudest example of the problem, unique it wasn't. Thankfully, there were a few pastors out there with open hearts or I would not have been able to go on.

Some years later, I chatted with a Christian author who had just written a major book on Bible prophecy. Thinking he might be interested, I showed him how most of the prophetic days had already been fulfilled in new Israel. It seems that prophetic days didn't fit his scheme of things and certainly not his book, so he disagreed. Even after showing solid scripture (Ezekiel 4:5-6) and many historically verifiable proofs for the prophetic days, he kept on with his, "There's no such thing as prophetic days." So how do you relate to someone who defends false doctrine when there is Scripture to the contrary? I tried a new approach: "OK, Jim, I can hear your total aversion

to the prophetic day concept, so lets call them something else. How does 'widgets' sound to you?"

I then showed him how the 1290 widgets of Daniel 12:11 predicted the coming of Islam 1200 years before Muhammad was born. I showed how the 1260 widgets of Revelation 12:6 predicted the birth of new Israel in 1948 and how the 42 months of widgets in Revelation 11:2 predicted Jerusalem again under Jewish control in 1967 . . . all three events predicted right to the year! (How those prophetic days fit world history is covered in The False Prophet) Then I said, "But you have convinced me. I won't believe in prophetic days anymore. From now on, I'll believe in 'widgets', because those 'widgets' fit scripture and recorded history right to the year."

Jim was not amused, sad to say, and no matter how simply explained, Jim still couldn't hear truths that didn't fit his end-time "ism," even when you could positively prove them to him.

The above accounts may sound humorous, but really aren't. I'm just recounting them to make a point: No blindness is as profoundly dark as the blindness you inflict upon yourself and the established churches are not immune from it. Jesus faced the same problem with the Pharisees of His day. He addressed it by saying, "By your traditions you make the word of God to no effect." The generally accepted end-time traditions of today are also making the word of God to no effect. God is truth, and how well we serve Him is not determined by how artfully we can defend our traditions, but on how willing we are to seek out and follow the truth.

It seems that most of the churches in America are far more concerned with defending their doctrinal turf than in teaching the truth. There are a few open-hearted pastors out there, but not many. Over the past 20 years, I've written five books on Bible prophecy, none of which has been scripturally refuted by anyone. Those books are either true and of the Holy Spirit or they're not. That's for you to decide. But if they are of God, they will change your life and ministry just like they changed my life and ministry and the lives of all who read them with an open heart.

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