

# SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER                      ISA. 55:10                      FOR THE EATER  
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

## THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

### THE JIGSAW PUZZLE OF PROPHECY

The title for this study comes from an article that appeared in *Christianity Today* which asks the question, "Is Prophecy a Jigsaw Puzzle?" The article is a review of seven recently published books that deal with the future. The reviewer's conclusion is that prophecy is indeed a jigsaw puzzle and that we cannot put it together in a well developed eschatological scheme because some of the pieces are missing. He feels that the variations in Matthew, Mark, and Luke "warn us that none of them have it all, and that, perhaps all of them put together may have omitted extremely vital pieces of information."

I certainly agree that prophecy is a jigsaw puzzle that God expects us to put together, and I also agree that so far as men are concerned many pieces are still missing, but I believe with all my heart that these pieces are in the Word of God waiting to be brought forth. As Bishop Butler has said, "It is not at all incredible, that a book, which has been so long in possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."

Throughout my Christian experience I have believed this to be true and have given myself for more than a half century to the task of finding the missing truths that would make the prophetic puzzle fit together and that would serve as a key to prophetic interpretation. As a result of my studies I believe that I have found the missing piece that is the key that brings it all together. This is the truth that God is going to invade this earth by His Spirit and assume sovereignty over the earth and all men upon it, that Jesus Christ will govern this earth from His present place in heaven, and that all this will be before the second advent of Jesus Christ for the thousand years of His personal presence. This long period of time and all that takes place in it is the piece that is missing in all attempts to piece together the jigsaw of

prophecy. Permit me to tell a little of how I arrived at this conviction.

During the first thirty years of my Christian life I was a diligent reader, student, and teacher of the Word of God. In all this I always proceeded from the conviction that God had spoken in His Word and it was my supreme duty to know for myself what He had said. What He meant by what He said (the interpretation) would, I believed, come more easily and truly if I had a good degree of familiarity with the entire Word. At the same time I was an avid reader of the books on prophetic subjects that were produced by men who believed that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, especially men of that persuasion which can best be designated as the dispensational premillennial school of interpretation

At one time I became especially interested in the study of the seventieth week of Israel's Seventy Weeks as set forth in Daniel, chapter nine. This is that amazing period of seven years, the last half of which covers the period of the great tribulation. After much consideration I became convinced that this great drama could not be played out until the principal actor was in her proper place. This principal actor is the nation of Israel, restored to her land, with a rebuilt temple that would qualify as the temple of God, and a restored priesthood with the stamp of divine acceptance upon it. Furthermore, I became convinced that "the great tribulation" was to be a time of divine testing which would try every man that dwells upon the earth (Rev. 3:10). Then when I considered the state of men upon the earth today, their abject failure in all matters related to God, it seemed to me to be the height of folly to try that which is such an obvious failure.

Further study along these lines brought to me the conviction that there would have to be a great divine work in behalf of Israel before the great tribulation and before the second advent of Jesus Christ. If the man of sin seats himself in the temple of God (2 Thess. 2:4) and if he is destroyed by the blazing forth (*epiphaneia*) of the Lord's personal presence (*parousia*), then all this has to be true and in place before Jesus Christ returns to the earth.

At first the conviction that there would be a period of divine activity and blessing for Israel before the second advent of Jesus Christ was one that came out of necessity based upon what was required if many prophecies were ever fulfilled. I determined not to declare this conviction publicly until I could find ample Scripture for its support. Once I came upon the first

passage that declared it, fifty more were found quickly and easily.

I was at this time trying to teach the minor prophets and had come to the second chapter of Hosea. There I found all the support that one who believes the Word could ask. The pertinent passage is Hosea 2:14-23 and the reader will now need to open his own Bible to this portion. It is preceded by a divine indictment of Israel because of her sins and a threat of severe punishment. Then the Lord tells what He will do after she has been punished. The picture is one of courtship and betrothal.

Jehovah declares that He will allure Israel. By this He means that He will make Himself alluring and desirable unto her, something any wise young man should do who seeks to win the maiden he desires. He will bring her into the wilderness, that is, into the place of separation, an ideal state if a man would win the heart of the one he loves. He will speak comfortably unto her, which means He will speak to her heart words of love in great tenderness. The results of such speaking to Israel on the part of Jehovah will be miraculous to say the least. This will produce "the Israel of God," a nation born in a day.

Jehovah declares that He will give her vineyards from thence. These "vineyards" signify material blessings, and the words "from thence" speak of both time and place. As to time it will be after God has spoken to her and won her back to Himself, after she has said, "**I will go and return to my first husband; for then it was better with me than now**" (Hos. 2:7). As to place it will be while she is in the wilderness, the place of separation from the nations, and wholly dependent upon God. The spiritual blessings come first and the material blessings follow.

These words declare the future of Israel, and all this is in advance of the great tribulation as is seen in the promise that Jehovah will give her "the valley of Achor for a door of hope." The name "Achor" means trouble (Josh. 7:24-26). When Israel is in the place of blessing described in Hosea 2: 15, she will look ahead and see the greatest pressure that the nation has ever known, a time of testing that will put to the test all who dwell upon the earth. This is a valley through which she must pass as she travels upon her foreordained way from the pre-advent kingdom to the thousand years of the personal presence of Christ. However, as she looks at it through eyes enlightened by the Spirit of God, this "valley of Achor" will be to her "a door of hope", and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the

day when she came up out of the land of Egypt (Hos. 2:15). "Happy is that people whose God is Jehovah" (Psa. 144:15).

It is the policy of many interpreters to take what they want of Scriptural statements concerning the second advent of Christ while ignoring plain and direct statements that would upset their prophetic theories. They make much of the second coming of Christ in 1 Thess. 4: 16, and rightly so, but ignore altogether the plain statement made in 2 Thess. 1:7-10 that when Jesus Christ does return that He comes **"in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."** It is further declared that these **"shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."** From this it can be seen that if the Lord should return as of today, the overwhelming majority of men upon the earth would be liable to the extreme penalty described in these words, and it would make impossible the fulfillment of many prophetic passages in the Old and New Testament, especially those that concern the nations.

In Psalm 67:4 we find one of the truly great prophetic promises that God has made: **0 let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.**

Here we have the positive promise that God will govern the nations upon earth, not just Israel, but all nations. Thus the question arises and demands an answer: Does He govern these nations after He has destroyed their people or before? And there can be only one answer. There is nothing left to govern after the people have been destroyed. Passages like this indicate a time of divine government before the return of Christ, and this government will be so successful that few indeed will need to be destroyed when He comes.

Yes, prophecy is indeed a jigsaw puzzle that we are expected to put together, but we cannot put it together unless we have all the pieces. The most important piece that is missing from present pictures of the future is a definite period of divine government that embraces the whole earth, every nation, and every man upon it. This government will become a reality when God speaks the word in heaven. All He needs to do is speak and every man on earth will know that from that moment forth he is under the government of God.

There are those who will insist that divine government of the earth does not begin until Jesus Christ returns and is personally present upon it. "You

cannot have a kingdom without a king," is the oft repeated battle cry of those who hold this view.

What they are saying is that there can be no divine government over the earth as long as the Lord is in heaven. This is both false and foolish. In both the Old and New Testament God has emphatically declared that heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool (Isa. 66:1, Acts 7:49). We can rest assured that when God governs this earth it will be from His throne and not from His footstool. There is the mistaken idea that Jesus Christ returns to the earth in order to govern it. This is not true. He comes back in order to be personally present in order to make a full revelation and disclosure of God.

The present dispensation of the grace of God is not going to continue forever God will fulfill His purpose in it and bring it to an end. It will be followed by a dispensation of divine government. This is not ushered in by the second coming of Jesus Christ. It will begin when He decrees it in heaven. Psalm 46:6, Psalm 107 :42.

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