

## Key Teachings of the Christian Faith

Vision: Strengthen our faith by examining key teachings of Christianity

### **Comfort One Another with Prophetic Hope.**

#### Goals of today's class:

1. Brief look at principles of interpretation
  - a. Plain or figurative language
  - b. Prophetic types (foreshadows)
  - c. Context
  - d. Clear before obscure
2. Find comfort in fulfilled prophecy
3. Find comfort in yet to be fulfilled prophecy

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Paul exhorts us to comfort one another with these prophetic words.

**A. The study and discussion of doctrine, including prophetic scripture, is not designed by God to create strife and disputes.**

2 Timothy 2:14-15

#### Definition – Comfort:

*verb:*

1. To soothe in time of affliction or distress.
2. To ease physically; relieve.

*noun:*

1. A condition or feeling of pleasurable ease, well-being, and contentment.
2. Solace in time of grief or fear.
3. Help; assistance

[Middle English comferten, from Old French conforter, **to strengthen**, from Late Latin *comfōrtare*: Latin *com-*, *intensive pref.*; see **com-** + Latin *fortis*, **strong**; see *bhergh-*<sup>2</sup> in Indo-European roots.]

Our goal in studying prophecy is **not to reach a feeling of pleasurable ease.**

**B. Our goal is to strengthen our faith.**

Jesus strengthened the faith of two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:25-27

And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! [26](#) "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" [27](#) Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

**God gave us prophetic teachings for a purpose.** We cannot afford to neglect such a large portion of scripture.

**God gave it to us. We should study it.** We should need no further motivation than this.

## **I. Brief look at principles of interpretation**

### **A. Plain or figurative language**

Plain language: words use their common, clear meaning

Figurative language: words create pictures, figures of speech

Metaphor: "He is a brick"

Simile: "Light as a feather"

Hyperbole: "I am starving"

Idiom: "Raining cats and dogs"

**Interpret scripture in a plain sense allowing for figures of speech.**

### **B. Prophetic types (foreshadows)**

Foreshadow: to indicate beforehand

Types of Christ: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Nation of Israel

"Safe" prophetic types are clearly identified by other scriptures.

### **C. Context**

Is the passage a historical narrative or is it poetic?

### **D. Clear before obscure**

Interpret more obscure passages or implicit meanings in light of the plain and clear, explicit teaching.

This is a very brief introduction to principles of interpretation and prophetic types. Let's apply what we've learned.

## **II. Find comfort in fulfilled prophecy**

Let's look at some of the scriptures Jesus may have explained on the road to Emmaus.

Genesis 3:15; Genesis 12:3; Deuteronomy 18:18; Psalm 22:1, 7, 8; Isaiah 53

Scriptures cited as fulfilled by apostles:

Psalm 22:18 (John 19:24); Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:22-23); Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:6)

Zechariah 9:9 (Matthew 21:15, John 15:12); Zechariah 11:12-13 (Matthew 27:9)

## **III. Find comfort in yet to be fulfilled prophecy**

Question 90 from the Westminster Larger Catechism provides a concise collection of yet to be fulfilled prophecies with scripture references.

**Q. 90. What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?**

A. At the day of judgment, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds, shall be set on his right hand, and there openly acknowledged and acquitted, shall join with him in the judging of reprobate angels and men,[\[391\]](#) and shall be received into heaven,[\[392\]](#) where they shall be fully and forever freed from all sin and misery;[\[393\]](#) filled with inconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and holy angels,[\[395\]](#) but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment.

**Selected scripture references:**

[\[391\]](#) **1 Corinthians 6:2-3.** Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

[\[392\]](#) **Matthew 25:34, 46.** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

[\[393\]](#) **Ephesians 5:27.** That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

[\[395\]](#) **Hebrews 12:22-23.** But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Most of these prophetic scriptures have a plain meaning.  
However, many prophetic scriptures are more difficult to interpret.  
Let's now apply principles of interpretation to one of these.

Micah 4:1-4 (Isaiah 2:2-4)

vs. 3 **He will judge between many peoples**

**And render decisions for mighty, distant nations.**

Is this plain or figurative language?

Is there a clear prophetic type cited?

Is this a historical narrative or poetic passage?

Should we accept the clear meaning before the obscure?

Has this already been fulfilled?

Is this being fulfilled now through the church?

Is this yet to be fulfilled through the church?

Is this yet to be fulfilled through a literal return to earth by Christ to reign?

Is this yet to be fulfilled through the coming of Christ for final judgment?

How does our interpretation affect our living for Christ now?

Does our interpretation limit our view of who He is, what He will do?

Remember, unwarranted departure from the plain meaning of scripture is dangerous.

Zechariah 14:3-6

vs. **5** You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee **just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah**. Then the LORD, my God, will come, *and* all the holy ones with Him!

vs. 5 contains a clear historical reference. Is there a reason this passage should not be interpreted with its plain meaning?

Isaiah 65:17-25

vs. 20

“No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few days*,  
Or an old man who does not live out his days;  
For the youth will die at the age of one hundred  
And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred  
Will be *thought* accursed.

Is this figurative or plain language?

If it is figurative, what is the message?

Why not accept the plain meaning if it is a clearer meaning?

Apply these same questions to verse 25:

“The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD.

Is this important? How could yet to be fulfilled prophecy affect our lives?

Imagine you were alive and living in Jerusalem around 70 A.D. and you were reading these verses from Luke.

Luke 21:20-24:

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. **21** “Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; **22** because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. **23** “Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; **24** and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

If you interpret this literally, you flee from Jerusalem and are saved from the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. But if you interpret this some other way, you miss the actual work of God in the earth and may die in the designated judgment.

Homework: Psalm 2:7-12, Isaiah 66:18-24

Psalm 2:7-12

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:  
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.

**8** 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,  
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

**9** 'You shall break them with a rod of iron,  
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

**10** Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;  
Take warning, O judges of the earth.

**11** Worship the LORD with reverence  
And rejoice with trembling.

**12** Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way,  
For His wrath may soon be kindled.  
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Isaiah 66:18-24

"For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and see My glory. **19** "I will set a sign among them and will send survivors from them to the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have neither heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations. **20** "Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. **21** "I will also take some of them for priests *and* for Levites," says the LORD.

**22** "For just as the new heavens and the new earth  
Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD,  
"So your offspring and your name will endure.

**23** "And it shall be from new moon to new moon  
And from sabbath to sabbath,  
All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.

**24** "Then they will go forth and look  
On the corpses of the men  
Who have transgressed against Me.  
For their worm will not die  
And their fire will not be quenched;  
And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

Zechariah 14:1-21

God Will Battle Jerusalem's Foes

**1** Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. **2** For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. **3** Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. **4** In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

**5** You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee **just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah**. Then the LORD, my God, will come, *and* all the holy ones with Him!

**6** In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. **7** For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

**8** And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; **it will be in summer as well as in winter**. God Will Be King over All

**9** And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one.

**10** All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. **11** People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

**12** Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. **13** It will come about in that day that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. **14** Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. **15** So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps.

**16** Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. **17** And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. **18** If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. **19** This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

**20** In that day there will *be inscribed* on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." And the cooking pots in the LORD'S house will be like the bowls before the altar.

**21** Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day.

Isaiah 65:17-25

New Heavens and a New Earth

**17** "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;  
And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

**18** "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;  
For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing  
And her people *for* gladness.

**19** "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people;  
And there will no longer be heard in her  
The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.

**20** "No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few days*,  
Or an old man who does not live out his days;  
For the youth will die at the age of one hundred  
And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred  
Will be *thought* accursed.

**21** "They will build houses and inhabit *them*;  
They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

**22** "They will not build and another inhabit,  
They will not plant and another eat;  
For as the lifetime of a tree, *so will be* the days of My people,  
And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands.

**23** "They will not labor in vain,  
Or bear *children* for calamity;  
For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD,  
And their descendants with them.

**24** "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. **25** "The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the LORD.

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