

Secret Things and Revealed Things



Facing the Future (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. In my introductory talk yesterday, I explained that throughout human history men have always desired to know what the future holds. Traditionally, they've sought this knowledge in ways that go beyond what man can discover merely by reason or by his senses; ways such as astrology, oracles, fortune telling, and various forms of mysticism. The record of history indicates that man's attempts to obtain knowledge of the future in these ways have proved illusive and deceptive.

In more recent times, man has also sought this kind of knowledge of the future in more sophisticated and scientific ways. Studies and surveys have been made by experts in various fields by physicists, sociologists, economists, experts in the related fields of population and food production and so on. In recent decades the help of computers has been extensively invoked.

However, there remains a third source to which we may look for insight into the future. This third source is the Bible. It is to this source that we will be looking in this series of talks on "Facing the Future."

Yesterday I shared with you three important aspects of the Bible's teaching with regard to the prediction of future events. First, the Bible definitely claims to predict the future with accuracy and authority; second, the Bible rejects the claim of occult or mystical sources to be able to do this; third, the Bible has a record of proven correctness.

To illustrate the Bible's record of proven correctness, I gave two examples. The first was the life of Jesus and, out of my book, Foundation for Faith, I read a brief passage which listed eighteen distinct events, all of which happened in the life of Jesus and all of which were a direct fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

The second example of the Bible's correctness in predicting the future that I chose was the history of Israel. I pointed out that there were 3,500 years the Bible has consistently and accurately predicted the destiny of the nation of Israel. And I gave seven specific examples of aspects of Israel's history, all

of which have been correctly predicted in the Bible.

Today, and for the rest of this week, I'll be sharing with you on a matter of primary importance in this connection. The matter that I'm going to be talking about is the kind of attitude with which we should face the future. You see, in many different circumstances, the attitude with which we approach a given situation has a lot to do with what we actually experience in the situation, and this is definitely true in connection with our attitude toward the future. It will have a lot to do with what we actually experience as the future unfolds.

There's a simple and familiar example which many of you have probably heard, the definition of the optimist and the pessimist. This is an example of the difference of attitude. Both of them walk into the same room and on the table they see a glass with a certain quantity of water in it. The optimist looks at it; He says the glass is half full. The pessimist looks at it; He says the glass is half empty. Each of them sees exactly the same thing, each makes a correct statement but they have diametrically opposite points of view. The optimist sees the glass on the way to being filled up; the pessimist sees the glass on the way to being emptied.

Now I want to say that the Bible gives us solid, objective grounds for facing the future as optimists and not as pessimists. When we look out in the light of the Bible on the human scene today, we can say, "The glass of history is half full," not "half empty." By which I mean that we can say the purposes of God, clearly predicted in the Bible, have been fulfilled up to this point. Therefore, we can be confident that the ones that are not yet fulfilled will be fulfilled. The glass is being filled up, it's not being emptied out. But many who do not have that viewpoint look out on the human situation today, they are pessimists. They say time is running out, resources are running out, the population explosion is on us, we're not going to have enough food, the atmosphere is being polluted. They've got all sorts of attitudes which really amount to saying "The glass is half empty." But, from my point of view, being a student of the Bible and believing it, when I look at the scene in the world today, I can praise the Lord and say, "The glass is half full. God's purposes have been worked out to this point and they're going to be worked out all the way."

Well, today in this connection I'm going to point out to you a very important distinction that the Bible makes between two kinds of things: secret things and things that are revealed. Let me say that again: secret things and things that are revealed. In Deuteronomy 29:29, Moses says this to the people of Israel, and this is where we see the distinction:

> "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

So there are the two kinds of things: there are things that are secret, that God doesn't permit us to know, they belong to God, they're not our business; but there are the revealed things, the things which God has chosen to reveal to us, they belong to us and we're responsible for what God has revealed to us, we're responsible to act on it, to obey it, to let it have its course in our lives in such a way that our lives follow God's plan for us.

Now, one common mistake that's made in connection with looking into the future is that we become so busy with the secret things that we fail to obey the revealed things and that's what I want to warn you against as we go on in the course of these studies. I want to give you two examples now from the predictions of the New Testament illustrating revealed things and secret things.

First of all, I want to give you an example of a revealed thing, something that's clearly revealed in the New Testament. Acts 1:11, the words spoken by the angels to the apostles as they stood on the Mount of Olives looking upward after Jesus had been taken up to heaven and they had lost sight of Him. This is what the angels said to those men standing there on the Mount of Olives:

> "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Now that's a revealed thing. That's something we all need to know. It's something that should affect our lives. There are many different ways in which that revealed thing will affect our lives. I'm going to be pointing out some of them to you later on. But just bear that in mind as an example of a revealed thing.

Now let me show you from the New Testament a secret thing, something that God has not made known and which we have no right to try to know. This is stated by Jesus Himself in Mark 13:32, which is a passage in which He has been sketching out the course that events will follow as this age draws to its close. And, having given various signs or indications of the close of the age and then having spoken of His personal return to earth, He says this in Mark 13:32:

> "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Now that's a secret thing, the precise day and hour of the return of Jesus to earth are not known to anyone in the universe but God the Father, not even Jesus the Son knows, He's awaiting the Father's signal to return. So if you ever meet anybody who claims to know the day and the hour of Jesus' return, you know that they're not in line with the Bible because that's a secret thing that we cannot know.

Having said that in Mark 13, Jesus continues with a parable which has an application for us. He says:

> "Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house in charge of his servants, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back…"

Notice Jesus has said that three times in those verses "you do not know, you cannot know."

> "…you do not know when the owner of the house will come back, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone, Watch!"

In other words, be alert, be on the watch, don't be found sleeping. Now, in that passage which is a parable, Jesus says that the landowner or the master who went away and left his servants behind him, left each with his assigned task. Each one had something specific to do during the master's absence. And the man who kept the door, his assigned task was to watch for the master's return.

Now, this is true of us as Christians. As long as we're here on earth, we each have an assigned task, something that we're responsible to do, something that we'll be answerable to God for when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. What's very, very important is that we don't neglect the revealed thing, the assigned task, and get so occupied with the secret thing, the exact day and hour of the Lord's return, that we're delinquent. That when He comes back, we've omitted to do the things He commanded us to do and we've been doing something He said we couldn't do which is find out the day or the hour of His return.

So, as we continue with this series of studies, continually bear in mind the distinction between the secret things that we cannot know, the revealed things that we can know and which we should act upon.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about an attitude of expectancy, waiting for Christ.

Radio Program

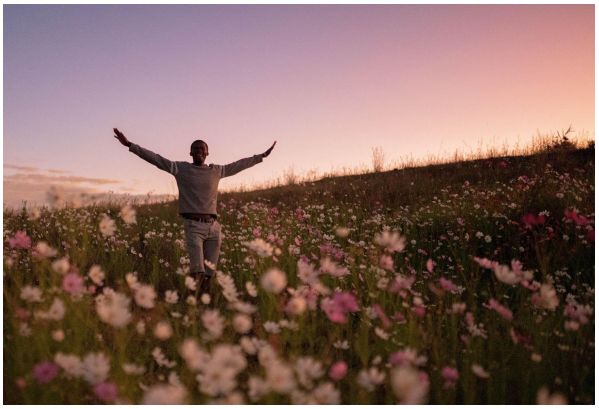
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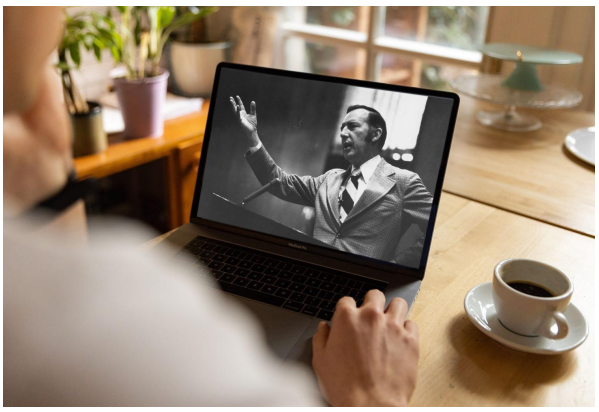
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