

The Spine



The White Horse of the Gospel (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

I want to begin with two Scriptures from the second epistle of Peter. The first is found in chapter 1, verse 19 where he says:

> "We have the prophetic word of God made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place."

I just want to point out to you that Peter tells us we need to give heed to the prophetic truths of Scripture because they are a light shining in a dark place. And we need that light. There's not one of us that does not need the light of prophetic Scripture in our lives. And if we don't give heed we're depriving ourselves of something that's of tremendous value and importance for all of us. This message that I'm bringing is designed to help you to give heed to the prophetic word.

And then in the same second epistle of Peter, chapter 3 and verse 12, Peter is warning us what our attitude should be toward the coming of the Lord and he just uses two phrases there at the beginning of verse 12:

> "Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God."

Now, the old King James Version said "hastening unto" but this version and all the modern versions say "hastening the coming of the day of God." So not really should we be expecting it but we should be hastening its coming. I believe I will show you very clearly in this message how every one of us can play a part in hastening the coming of the day of God. Not just expecting it but bringing it nearer.

Now, I'm going to turn to a passage in Matthew 24 which is, I believe, the greatest single specimen of prophetic truth in the Bible. We need to bear in mind that Jesus is a prophet. A lot of us are not used to that. We talk about Him as Shepherd, Savior and Lord, teacher and many other beautiful titles. But one of His most important titles is a prophet. The Hebrew people have given the world a wonderful list of prophets to whom we owe the revelation which has never come through any other nation or by any other means. But the greatest of all the Hebrew prophets is Jesus. And if we don't recognize

Him and respond to Him as prophet we're missing a very, very important part of what God has provided for us through Jesus.

A lot of people find prophetic truth difficult to put together. And I understand that. Let me offer you a simple picture. Now, I have to admit I'm not a doctor. I was in the British Army Medical Corps and I am a Nursing Orderly Class 2, if that means anything. But I'm certainly not a medical expert. But — suppose you're presented with an assembly of the bones of a human body and you were told to put them together in the right relationship. Where would you begin? Personally, I believe there would be only one logical place to begin and that would be with the spine. If you can find the spine and put the spine together, then it's relatively easy to fit in the main limbs—the legs, the arms, to put on the head. But if you begin with the left leg you'd probably have endless problem in fitting the other pieces in. This is a little parable.

I believe, in seeking to understand prophetic truth, we need to begin with the spine. If we can put the spine in place it will be much easier to relate the other parts of prophetic truth. As I understand it, the spine, to use this metaphor, is the discourse that Jesus gave on the Mount of Olives just a few days before His crucifixion. And this discourse is so important that it's recorded in three gospels. In Matthew chapter 24, Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21. And as I've said before, you could view this as three video cameras simultaneously viewing a preacher. Each of them records the message but each of them records it from a particular point of view. That's how it is with these.

Now we're going to look in Matthew 24. We do not have time in this session to go to the other chapters so we'll only begin to unfold the spine. Let's turn now to Matthew 24 and I'm going to work through about the first two-thirds of the chapter, God helping me. I would love to be able to go through all of it but it would take longer than is available. So we're turning to Matthew 24 and we'll read the first three verses, to begin with. Jesus and the disciples had been in the temple. And they were leaving the temple and they were going to go across the brook Kidron eastward up the Mount of Olives to one of their favorite places on top of the Mount of Olives. Now, I lived on top of the Mount of Olives about a quarter of a mile from this place for one year, in my final year in the British Army in that place. So this is particularly vivid to me. Every time I talk about it I see the whole scene in my mind's eye.

As they went out of the temple the disciples were trying to impress Jesus with the tremendous buildings of the temple. The temple that had been enlarged and beautified by Herod the great for 46 years was regarded as one of the great wonders of the ancient world. And it was the pride and joy of all religious Jews. Because it was the symbol of their national identity as God's people, the people of Jehovah. It set them apart from all other nations and it was a source of pride, I would say, to them. And they wanted to impress Jesus so this is what happened. Verses 1 and 2:

> "Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple."

Now they expected Him to express tremendous admiration but He said something totally other than what they expected.

> "Jesus said to them, 'Do you see all these things? Assuredly I say to you not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down.'"

Now if He had struck them a blow in the solar plexus it would have caused much less of a shock. The thought that this glorious temple was to be totally destroyed to the place where not one stone would be left upon another was absolutely… it threatened their whole outlook on life. They couldn't comprehend that such a thing could happen.

And then they assumed that if it were to happen it would mark the end of the age. So they waited until they got out of the temple and up the Mount of Olives and then they came to Jesus with their questions. And that's in verse 3:

> "Now, as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us when will these things be [that's the destruction of the temple] and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?'"

You see, they assumed that if the temple would be destroyed, the end of the age would come. Historically they were completely wrong. The prophecy of Jesus about the temple was exactly fulfilled in the year 70 AD, just one generation from that time. And it was as Jesus said, the Roman armies captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple; not one stone was left upon another. But the age did not end. That was in 70 AD. The age has not yet ended. So, there are two questions that the disciples didn't fully separate. One is "What will be the sign of the destruction of the temple?" the other will be "What will be the sign of Your coming back and of the end of the age?"

Now, Jesus actually in this discourse answered both questions. The answer to the question, "What will be the sign

of the impending destruction of the temple?" is given in Luke chapter 21. And Jesus says there "When you see Jerusalem surrounded with armies, then know that the destruction of it is near." Again, this was exactly fulfilled in 70 AD. It's not possible to give all the details but just let me say Jesus was a true prophet. Everything He predicted came to pass.

But the question, "What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" is most clearly answered in Matthew 24. So, we're going to concentrate on that second question and we're going to look for the answer in Matthew 24. The second question, let me repeat it, "What will be the sign of Your coming back and of the end of the age?" And I want to tell you in advance Jesus gave a clear, specific answer to that question.

Now we'll look at what He says and we're looking now in verses 4–6.

> "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Take heed that no one deceives you.'"

Almost everywhere in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, when it speaks about the return of the Lord and the end of the age, there is a warning against being deceived. It's extremely important to bear that in mind because there are going to be many, many satanic forces at work at the close of the age seeking to deceive God's people. And I'm sorry to say that in the course of my life I have seen many Christians deceived and go into error. So every one of us needs to be on our guard. Jesus said, "Take heed to yourselves that no one deceives you." And then He says:

> "For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."

Radio Program

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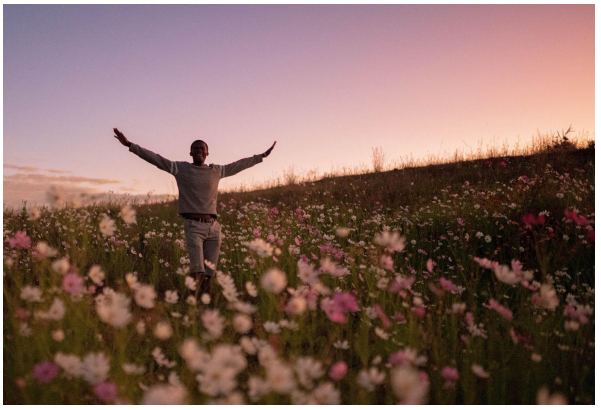
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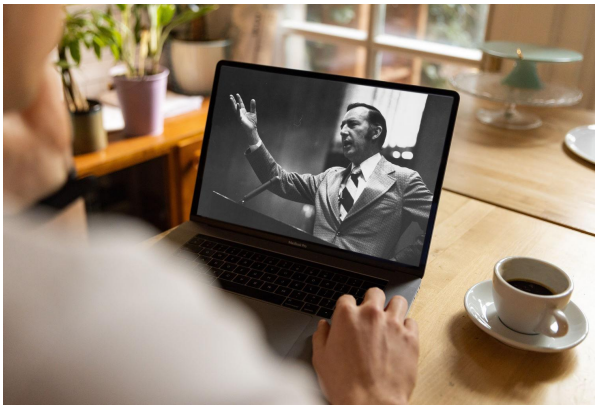
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