

#13 The Problem of Time in Prophetic Words

At the age of 15, God had placed a call on my life. He said, “I have called you to be a priest in My Church . . .” and He gave me a confirming Scripture which He said would be fulfilled in my life. When I accepted the call to leave the Episcopal Church and join the CEC, a parishioner prophesied that I needed to meditate on Peter walking on the water. I shared this word with Miranda, and she said, “If you keep your eyes on Jesus you will walk on water.” Those were the very words the Lord had said to me when He called me. Twenty-five years earlier, when I had received the call to Holy Priesthood, the Lord had said, “I have called you to be a priest in My Church, and if you will keep your eyes on Me, you will walk on water.” Then He gave me Matthew chapter 14 as the confirming Scripture. The calling I had received at the age of 15 was now being confirmed by our leap of faith in moving into the CEC.

Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born. (Gen. 21:5) He was seventy-five years old when the Lord called him to “go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation...” (Gen. 12:1-2) God did not provide Abraham with a time frame for the fulfillment of this promise. He simply said it would happen. Abraham had no son when he was first called by God, yet he believed the Lord. Little did he know that he would have to wait 25 years to receive the son of promise and to witness the fulfillment of God’s word in His life.

We need to believe the Word, and wait for it. This is a promise and exhortation in both the Old and New Testament. “For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.” (Habakkuk 2:3) And St. Paul says, “But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” (Romans 8:25) Notice that both the prophet and apostle tell us to “wait for it.”

God is not bound by time. He is outside of time. Or to say it another way, time is in Him. For the Lord “a little while” can be anything from the next moment to a thousand years from now. St. Peter tells us “that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Peter 3:8) And the Psalmist says, “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.” (Psalm 90:4) And so, prophetic words need to be understood in the context of eternity. Some words come with specific time frames -- and our Lord can be very specific in stating those times -- but more often than not, a prophetic word will be given with no specific time limit delineated. And for those words we must, as the prophet Habakkuk said, “wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.”

Let me provide one more example. This one from the school of prophets. At the school the bishop prophesied that our parish would see an influx of new, healthy parishioners. The bishop said, “The Lord told me that He is bringing petunias to you. He’s going to keep bringing petunias into your life. He’s going to keep bringing people into your life, and it’s going to be annual. You’re going to see new fresh things annually.” That is a specific time, “annually.” But there is not a clear number of these people, or the number of years over which this influx will take place. We will need to “wait for it with patience,” as Paul said, and be alert for their arrival.

Regardless of whether the Lord provides a specific time frame, or the more nebulous “in a little while,” we need to receive a word with anticipation and expectation. It is God’s word, “wait for it.”