

## *Fulfilling Prophecy*

*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away  
Matthew 24:35*

Decades ago as a hungry spiritual babe, I soaked up more than a few theological discourses on prophecy. I'd drive north, south, east and west throughout the Southland to reach the galaxy of stalwarts hosted by various local churches. Whether it was Charles Ryrie, John Wolwood, Renald Showers or Dwight Pentecost, the messages were riveting, and well worth the time and effort.

In spite of the points of view espoused, all agreed that the stage was set to launch the end times, including the Rapture, Great Tribulation and millennial Kingdom. On a personal note, I wondered if I'd meet the Lord in the air with His church during my lifetime. But fast-forwarding 25 years, it's clear that events unfold according to God's timetable not mine. Even so, the words of one speaker, Dr. Earl Rachmacher, still echo in my mind today. As a middle-aged man, he had claimed that he himself was, "fulfilling prophecy."

At the time I was much younger and didn't quite get what he meant. After all, doesn't prophecy mean future events? How can we be fulfilling prophecy now? However lately, I think I better grasp his meaning, because I'm now at the stage where he was then. Currently I awaken to see in the mirror a changing form with less taught muscle tone and stubborn extra poundage. Of course these changes didn't happen overnight, but they happened nonetheless. Gone is my naive youthful perspective that old age was distant and unthreatening. Little did I know how close it hovers over the fleeting vapor of our lives (James 4:14).

But we must pass through youth to reach maturity. And time for the young moves slowly, for at that stage 365 days comprise a relatively bigger piece of our lifetime's pie. One year may be over one 10<sup>th</sup> of a child's lifetime, but decades later it represents a smaller and smaller proportion of the whole, thus speeding by ever faster. All of our thoughts, words and deeds transpire in the passing years that are joined like steps taken along a path leading to a final destination. As the accrued mileage becomes greater, the pace faster and the goal closer, the calendar changes from a series of evenly spaced snapshots to a fluid, dynamic continuum rushing towards a final conclusion.

Still, our subjective human viewpoint can misunderstand the dynamics of motion when it's imperceptible by our senses. Hence the saying, a watched pot of water never boils. On a larger scale, the earth travels over 1.6 million miles daily orbiting around the sun while spinning on its axis as much as 1000 mph. But does anyone fly out of bed because of it? No, so we probably assume we're immobile without any perceived movement.

Yet the earth is continually moving, and Scripture tells us that it's passing away (1 John 2:17). Though it may not happen today or even in this century, no one can deny the evidence showing that nothing in this world lasts forever. Everything physical decays, whether it's a fading flower, a rusting metal, or a heart's final beat. History continues as long as the calendar flips forward, but even history itself will someday cease.

However, in the moment-by-moment continuum the Lord works, though outwardly it appears as if nothing is happening. And this perceived inertia has always been misunderstood; scoffers today, as in ancient times, inquire scornfully, "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation (2 Peter 3:4)."

This spiritual myopia sees dimly the events of creation but doesn't comprehend. Only with eyes enlightened by divine revelation do we understand invisible Truth because we walk by faith rather than sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Hence seeing isn't believing; rather believing is seeing. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1), so we trust in unseen God and manifest the glory of Christ into whose image we are being transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18) moment-by-moment. We know the certainty of passing time, but even more sure is His Word, affirming that each day gone by brings our salvation is nearer than when we first believed (Romans 13:11).

So indeed we are fulfilling prophecy now, as those outwardly perishing but inwardly being renewed (2 Corinthians 4:16). For what is prophecy, but the divine foretelling of what will happen? On a macro scale in our current timeframe it includes historical events to come, and its perfect accuracy reflects the inerrant character of God. But prophecy affects us on a very personal level too, for its focal point is always Jesus Christ. His saving work reaches us this very moment. "It is finished" lies behind us, so our forgiveness is complete and our redemption sealed. Yet His Kingdom still lies before us. Until then we have His Word, the Mind of Christ, to guide us. It is guaranteed by God who cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18) and it foretells future events, but not without admonitions, exhortations and many, many promises. It's alive and powerful now to edify and form the solid foundation upon which we walk during our brief stay on this world.

Interestingly, my latest reminder of life's inevitability has been farsightedness. As my eyes see up close less and less, a spiritual reality becomes more and more clear, the need to focus upon what's ageless. Not the up close here and now that fails, but unfailing God. Invisible by sight, the Ancient of Days is seen through the eyes of faith, proclaimed by the prophets and worshipped in heart, word and song by those brought near:

O God our help in ages past  
Our hope for years to come  
Be Thou our guard while life shall last  
And our eternal home