

How to Tell Someone the Good News

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Study Four: Making the Prophecies Clear to Someone

I. BRIEF REVIEW OF OUR OBJECTIVES.

1. What life-activity will bring you the greatest joy at journey's end? Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3.
2. What did Paul regard as the greatest satisfaction of his life? Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19.
3. What encouragement does the Lord give to those of us who are timid, shy, who feel unable to communicate? Zech. 12:8; Isa. 32:4.

Note: "John says, 'I saw another angel come down from heaven having great power and the earth was lightened with his glory.' Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people shall hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue.

"God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's Word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth" (Ellen G. White, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1055.6).

4. What central truth will be communicated by these "thousands of voices"?

Note: "It is Christ in His fulness as a sin-pardoning Saviour, that the sinner must see; for the unparalleled love of Christ, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, will bring conviction and conversion to the hardened heart. ... When the earth is lightened with the glory of God, we shall see a work similar to that which was wrought when the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed the power of a risen Saviour. ... Thus, it was in the time of the early rain; but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Saviour of men will be glorified; and the earth will be lightened with the bright beams of His righteousness" (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892).

II. HOW TO PRESENT THE GREAT PROPHETIC TRUTHS.

1. Remembering that fear of being lost or hope of reward are not effective motivations to follow Christ, what truth must permeate all your prophecy presentations? Rev. 1:5; 5:6, 9; compare 7:14, 17; 11:11; 13:8; 14:4, 10; 17:14.
2. What replaces the fear or egocentric motivation when your student considers the obvious fulfillment of the prophecies? Rev. 5:12; 19:6-9, 16.

Note: All of us already have the egocentric motivation, for it is "standard equipment." If we nourish it and appeal to it, the one who hears us may simply decide which "religion" or church best satisfies that self-centered motivation. Using the aroused interest in the Bible that you have stimulated; he may then join the Pentecostals or some other church. But if you keep before him that motivation of honoring Christ in the closing scenes of the Day of Atonement, his heart will be more receptive to the testing truths that he will hear nowhere else.

3. How does Jesus introduce the study of the prophecies? John 14:16-18, 26, 27; 16:13, 14.
4. What essential truth of Bible prophecy is often denied in our usual presentations? Compare John 16:13 with Rev. 1:1, 2.

Note: A typical Adventist commentary begins, "Revelation has been considered to be the most difficult book in the entire Bible." This mind-set comports with the popular notion that God has made it "hard" to be saved and "easy" to be lost, for if He makes His "Revelation ... most difficult," He must be trying to hide it from us. Rather, He wants to "open" it up to us!

III. LETTING THE PROPHECIES SPEAK TO THE HEART.

1. What is a good way to begin the study of prophecy? Read Matt. 24:3-51.

Note: There seems no end to the important truths that can be communicated simply by reading this chapter verse by verse: (a) the reality of the second coming, (b) the end of the world, (c) the prevalence of deception, (d) how to react to rumors of wars, (e) earthly disasters, (f) reality of opposition from unbelievers, (g) the loss of agape, (h) the good news of gospel proclamation, (i) arousing an interest in Daniel, (j) perpetuity of the Sabbath.

2. Before you get into Daniel or Revelation, what are other simple prophetic studies? 1 Thess 5:1-10; 2 Thess. 2:1-12, 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3:10-13.

Note: It is not necessary at first to get involved in minute explanations of all the topics that can come up in reading these passages. But if they are studied before the student gets into the symbolic language of Daniel and Revelation, the interest will be aroused, and at the same time the heart will be prepared to receive truth.

3. What is the focal point of Bible prophecy? Rev. 19:6-9.

IV. PREPARING TO STUDY REVELATION.

1. What study provides the key for unlocking Revelation? Matt. 24:15.

Note: Daniel 2 can be said to be the simplest, the "Model T," of symbolic Bible prophecies. Daniel 7 goes into greater detail, the "Model A" of prophecy. Daniel 8 goes into still greater detail, the "V-8." But each is easy to comprehend, for the Holy Spirit is eager to teach us.

While we recommend using the Glad Tidings Bible Study Guides, we also recognize that often using the Bible alone is best. Our purpose is not to overwhelm the student with prophetic details like a medical student memorizing materia medica, but to inspire in him a love for the word of God. We cannot hope to "feed" him, but we shall be happy to arouse in him a sense of hunger. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him to fish, and he eats for a lifetime."

2. Why is it important that our student have an intelligent understanding of these prophecies?
2 Peter 1:19-21.
3. After he has gained a knowledge of Daniel's prophecies, how shall we begin the study of Revelation? Rev. 1:1-3.

Note: Make clear that the Lord wants us to understand this precious book, and that a special "blessing" is ours if we study it. As we are prayerful, let us also be careful about getting involved in testing truths before we can deal with them adequately. Avoid controversies. Feel free to say, "I don't know but I'll try to find the answer" in response to hard questions, or "we will study that more fully." Frequently we should invite decisions or responses of faith, which strengthen the student's exercise of the will or power of choice. Let your prayers be thoughtful, reverent, never flippant, or careless.

Many sincere seekers for truth who love the Lord are turned away by the cold, irreverent way we often pray: ("Let's have a little prayer," like "let's have a little salt in our soup"). Cold-heartedness in the teacher will result in cold-heartedness in the student.