

The Truthfulness of Prophecy

Revelation 22:6-7

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about Benjamin Franklin's homemade Bible, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #746.
- B. Franklin could not have gotten away with such a stunt unless the Bible were held to be trustworthy a true.
 - 1. In this passage, John tells us about the truthfulness of biblical prophecy.
 - 2. Let's think about what he says.

THE PROPHECY'S TRUTHFULNESS, v. 6

- A. And he said to John, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."
- B. Just who is it that spoke to John in this verse?
 - 1. Many of us might want to reply rapidly that it's Jesus.
 - a. This speaker does say in v. 7 — "And behold, I am coming soon."
 - b. However, in v. 8, John fell at his feet, and he told John, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren the prophets."
 - c. I'm inclined to think that possibly this isn't Jesus speaking here.
 - 2. Is the speaker the angel who had just shown John the New Jerusalem?
 - a. That doesn't seem very likely, either.
 - b. This verse corresponds quite well to 1:1 which reads: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place, and he made it know by sending his angel to his servant John."
 - 3. If the speaker is merely an angel, it seems far more likely that he would be the angel referenced in 1:1.
 - a. That doesn't really seem likely, either.
 - b. Notice what he says in vv. 12 and 13: "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega."
 - 4. Just exactly who is speaking here?
 - a. The simplest answer I can give is to simply say: "I don't know."
 - b. It seems possible that John keeps switching speakers, and so different speakers get blurred as you keep reading.
- C. John was told, "These words are trustworthy and true."
 - 1. We should not at all be surprised that these words are trustworthy and true, for God is trustworthy and true.
 - a. "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).
 - b. "By two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18).
 - 2. The words spoken by God or a divine representative are, therefore, trustworthy and true.
 - a. "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses" (1 Ki. 8:56).
 - b. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Is. 40:8).

3. This is where we can place our confidence.
 - a. Every word God has spoken is true, and every promise he has made will come to pass.
 - b. What a blessing it is to serve a faithful God and a God whose word is true and faithful!
- D. "The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."
 1. God is the God of the spirits of the prophets.
 - a. "Spirits" is in the plural; therefore, this cannot be the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The spirit of the prophet is the faculty he or she has that God overtakes to make sure that his Word is accurately revealed.
 - 1) In rebuking the Corinthians for speaking out of order, Paul says, "The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets" (1 Cor. 14:32).
 - 2) God is over the faculties of the prophets that reveal his Word.
 2. God sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.
 - a. The term "sent" means to send as an official authoritative representative.
 - 1) Thus, this angel, the one who revealed this book to John, served as a divine representative.
 - 2) When an ambassador from our nation goes to another nation to do diplomacy, it might as well be the President of the United States standing there. It's the same thing here: this angel's being sent by God means that he is sewing as a divine representative, it's as if God were speaking through him.
 - b. This angel showed God's servants what must soon take place. This demonstrates that much of what this book has described had to have relevance in the first century, otherwise, these things could not have "soon" taken place. Most all of this book is, from our standpoint, history.

THE PROPHECY'S BLESSINGS, v. 7

- A. He told John, "Behold, I am coming soon."
 1. This verse causes a small problem, this was spoken nearly two millennia ago, and the Lord has not yet returned.
 - a. Perhaps, the Lord was mistaken — he thought he was going to come soon, but the Father had different plans. That, as you know, makes no sense whatsoever.
 - b. Perhaps, "soon" is a relative term.
 - 1) Maybe we're not to see the "soon" here as meaning "soon" in time.
 - 2) That has a problem, too. For, the Greek term for "soon" means "soon in time" as we think of the term.
 2. I don't think that Jesus was speaking of his Second Coming.
 - a. I don't personally believe this verse has anything to do with the Second Coming.
 - b. I think Jesus is speaking of his coming against the Roman Empire in judgment. Jesus was going to come against the Roman authority and execute his vengeance as this book well prophesies.
- B. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.
 1. The Christian who kept the words of the prophecy of this book would receive numerous blessings
 - a. They would not give up their faith in Christ, they would not bow down to the emperor and honor him, even if it cost them their lives.
 - b. Jesus outlines the blessings for those who overcame in chapters 2-3.
 2. We are blessed when we keep the words of Scripture.
 - a. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Lk. 11:28).
 - b. "He who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (Js. 1:25).
 - c. Are you following the teachings of Jesus?