

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG76 – You Live In Prophetic Days

There is a terminology that we hear used quite a bit, and it is the term "the last days," or "the end of time," when people are referring to things of the Scriptures or prophetic issues of this time that we live in. I think that there is something about that terminology that doesn't really quite give us the sense that we need of what is taking place around us right now. I think that we would be better to use terminology like the fact that we live in prophetic days. We really do live in prophetic days. One of the best ways to identify that is to look around you at what is happening in Israel. We see tremendous, and very evident and obvious, prophetic fulfillments that are taking place.

One of the things that we recognize is the fact that the State of Israel now exists; and another would be the return of the Jews out of the Diaspora into the land of Israel. These are things which are really quite visible to us and that we should be able to recognize quite readily. And what I don't like about this idea of just saying "it's the last days" is that to me, your mind just jumped to say, "It's all over with," "everything is all done," or "everything is going to be just completed in a moment." We miss the actual progression of prophetic fulfillment that is really transpiring all around us. I think it behooves us as believers to be part of and to be aware of prophetic fulfillment; because if we are not aware of it and we don't have this mindset, we lose the sense of our participation in it.

This is the day in which we live, and God has chosen to put us in the earth at this time. I am quite thankful for it, really, when you think about it, because I believe that there have been times in history where there are not a lot of prophetic events coming to fulfillment or fruition. One example I always think of is being in the land of Egypt for four hundred years as slaves. Year after year, decade after decade, century after century, people lived through that time, and you didn't really see a lot of unfolding, prophetic fulfillment. Maybe the one thing was that Israel was growing to become like the sands of the seashore. But other than that, you know, what was really going on that seems to be very significant? And it makes you and your life not seem very significant to the will of God in the earth or the Kingdom of God in the earth. But that is not true of us today. We live in a time of tremendous fulfillment around us. We live in a very significant, prophetic timeframe to see the Kingdom of God come forth on the earth, to see the fulfillment of what the Word of God says is to happen. And I believe that needs to be our focus.

So I want to talk a little bit about that in this podcast, and I am going to start at Matthew, the twenty-fourth chapter, at verses 31-35. "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near." Christ is talking to those sitting around Him. He is looking over Jerusalem, and they had asked Him, you know, when would the end be? and what would be the sign of His coming? And He begins to explain to them some of what will transpire. Now, one of the signs that He gives – and there are many before this verse, but I want to emphasize the one here in verse 31, because I have already mentioned it, that He is going to "send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." We are actually

visibly watching that take place every time a plane lands in Israel, filled with Jews coming in from the Diaspora. This is happening in tremendous numbers, in significant numbers. So here is a prophecy that Christ Himself refers to that we with our eyes can behold in the day in which we live. There are many such prophecies for the days in which we live. Christ goes on to say, "Learn the parable of the fig tree." What was it? "When the branch is already tender and it is putting forth its leaves, you know summer is near." It is one thing to say, "Oh, it's the time of the end"; but it is another thing to begin to recognize these signs. And this is what He emphasizes to those who are hearing Him. He is not emphasizing, "Oh, it's the last days, everything is going to be over with." He is emphasizing what will transpire during the days of prophetic fulfillment on the earth. Those are days that we live in, day upon day upon day. And that is what should be our focus. Otherwise, we are just sitting here waiting for the end, and I do not believe that is the will of the Lord for us.

He goes on to say, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." So He is talking about from the time that these signs become evident and you know the summer is near, that the generation will not pass away until all of these things take place. Again, what is His emphasis to them? Watch for these things. Watch for what I have told you will transpire as prophetic fulfillments. These things will all take place, and the generation won't disappear or won't come to an end until all of these things have transpired. In verse 35 He says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

Now there are very much similar verses in Mark the thirteenth chapter, starting at verses 27-31. He says, "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven. Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." Every prophecy will be fulfilled; all of these things will take place; Heaven and Earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away; saying that it is impossible for the Word of God not to have its fulfillment. So He says in verse 29, "Even so, you too, when you see these things" – and we have to recognize, we are now seeing these things which were prophecies in other generations beginning to happen before our eyes – "when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door," and that all of the things that He has prophesied in His Word will then take place before the generation is done with. This to me tells us that we are right in the midst, we are seeing these things, and we are in the midst of their fulfillment and their completion. Therefore, we should watch and pray. We should be very much on our toes spiritually to continue to be watchmen on the wall and recognize what is happening, and be the voice to this age to say, "It is the time," and to open their eyes to recognize what is going on around them.

I want to give another illustration of this using Mary, and I will start out of Isaiah the seventh chapter, verse 14, the prophecy that we have about Christ coming forth. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel." So here we have a tremendous prophecy that came back during the days of Isaiah. And when we jump forward to Luke, the first chapter, beginning at verses 34-35, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" He had just announced to her that she was going to be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and that she would bring forth the Christ. And she says, "'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."

Mary goes on to say, you know, "Behold Thy bond servant. Be it done unto me according to Thy Word." And it is these words of Mary that are so significant to me, because, really, what are we talking about? We are talking about the fact that she, as a very young girl, finds herself in a time of prophetic fulfillment. She lived in a time of prophetic fulfillment. The angel comes and says, "Hey, this is happening." Her response is, "Okay, I may not understand it completely, of how this is possible, but be it done to me according to Thy Word." Now, think of the significance of that, because Mary places herself as an agent of the fulfillment of the Word of God in and by her response. I think that we need to take up the example of Mary, and we need, living as we are in a time of prophetic fulfillment, in times of prophetic fulfillment, we need for our words and our faith to place us personally in the midst of this fulfillment. We need to position ourselves as part of and players in the fulfillment of the Word of God that is coming forth in this generation.

God did not bring us, I don't believe, into the earth at this time that we sit on the sidelines and watch and wonder what is transpiring. We certainly should not observe in fear and say, "Oh my gosh, how do I handle this?" And Mary is such a tremendous example, and was throughout the Scriptures. I think a lot of times in the Protestant faith, the church tries to separate itself from Mary because of the Catholic view of Mary, and the way they relate to Mary. But I think that the Catholic connection or revelation of Mary is far more correct than the Protestant is, because, again, it tries to isolate her and what she really did. And I don't know, maybe it is because the church was so based in male leadership and all of that; but the truth is, Mary not only in this moment, when the angel appears to her, places herself and positions herself to be part of the fulfillment of God's Word, of these great prophecies that had come back at the time of Isaiah; she is saying, "Let this happen through me." And I don't know, is that our cry in this time as Christian believers? Are we saying, like Mary, "Let Your Word be fulfilled through me, Lord"? I recognize, I see the parable of the fig tree coming to pass. I see the leaves appearing, the branches getting soft. This is the time, and we are watching it. But are we positioning ourselves by our word, by our faith, by our proclamation, by our prayer and intercession, to be those that God can use to actually fulfill His prophecy through?

I think prophecy is fulfilled on a natural level, and it does need those who become the people it is done through. Israel was that through the Scriptures. It is one thing for God to say, "I have a promised land." It is another thing for a people to become those who go in and possess it. If Israel never possessed the land, then there would be no fulfillment of the prophetic proclamation of the Scriptures that God's chosen people would in fact possess His land. We need to recognize that when prophecy begins to have fulfillment on a natural level, and it begins to manifest – which is what Christ was saying would happen, that prophecy would; "All of these things will take place before this generation passes away." So for things to take place, for prophecy to have fulfillment in the earth, it must then have that fulfillment through physical individuals and places and things.

What we see here with Mary is she steps into the prophecy. The prophecy was a Word coming, the angel was proclaiming it about her, but it was a prophecy back from the days of Isaiah. Isaiah didn't identify Mary, but Mary steps into this by the way she reacts and responds: "Let it be done unto me according to Thy Word." And that is exactly what happened. And Mary paid a price. Again, I think we don't, because we don't really study the dynamics of Mary and what she did, we lose some of the significance of who she was and what she did as an example for us today, as those who will walk in days when prophecy is being fulfilled and unfolding all around us. Mary put her life in danger when she said these words. For her to be found pregnant when she was in fact engaged and promised to Joseph, she could have been stoned to death. Joseph himself had the choice of allowing that to happen, or

protecting her from that. So once again, Joseph chooses to step in to be a fulfillment of the prophetic Word that was spoken back through Isaiah that this virgin would bring forth this child. If she was stoned to death in her pregnancy, she never would have fulfilled the prophecy. And it took Joseph to be part of that fulfillment. He stepped into prophecy.

When you watch the life of Mary, she is amazing. She is there at every event that happens. The disciples left during the moments of the cross, but Mary was there. Mary was there among the one hundred and twenty at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Mary was there, I believe, helping and guiding the apostles after the Ascension of Christ. One of the last directives that Christ gave was about Mary, to her and to John of what she was to do at that moment, seeing He was no longer going to be there for her as a covering. Mary was one of the few people you find that from before the birth of Messiah through to His Ascension, and the creation of the Church by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was involved in every part of it. So when she says here, "Let it be done unto thy servant according to Thy Word," she never stopped saying that. She says that all through her life. All through the life of Christ she was with Him, and next to Him, through the difficulties. Her life was in danger because of her stance and how she placed herself through her prayer, through her prophecy. That is a prophecy, "Be it done unto me according to Thy Word." She places herself to be one through whom the Word of God would be fulfilled.

We live in the days of the fulfillment of prophecy, but we can't continue to isolate ourselves from that fulfillment. We must through our prayer, through our watching, through our prophecy, through our faith, put ourselves into the day we live in to be the part of, and the instruments through whom these prophecies can be fulfilled.

Christ went to the Garden of Gethsemane, and I want to read some of these Scriptures, because we see both Christ and the disciples experiencing this same type of dynamic where the fulfillment of prophecy is concerned. Obviously, the cross of Christ is one of the greatest events in the fulfillment of prophecy that there is, because the Word says that God would bring forth salvation. And He brought it forth, not by Himself; He brought it forth through Christ. So we see in Matthew 26 that Christ is in the Garden of Gethsemane. In verses 40-41, "He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'" See, this Garden experience, this was a challenge for both Christ and the disciples. It wasn't just what Christ was going through of the intercession, but what Christ was doing – and we will read about it in these next verses – Christ, like Mary, was placing Himself into the fulfillment of the prophecy. The disciples, on the other hand, were asleep, and they missed the prophetic moment. Because of that, we know what happened with them; and especially Peter, whom He addresses here, who denied Him during the time of this great challenge.

In Matthew 26, going on with verse 42, "He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.'" So He is interceding that He Himself might be the instrument through whom the prophecy of salvation is fulfilled. And He is, as we know, sweating tears of blood down His eyes, as well as His forehead. It was a painful intercession that goes beyond anything we have known, that He is contending with God to be able to stand in the place, because these moments are going to take place. The question is, where is Christ going to be? And what is His response going to be? And what will His reactions be? Will He go to the cross? Will He be taunted to come down off of that cross? These were not easy times. It is not easy to be the fulfillment of God's Word and the prophecies. But it is something we must recognize is transpiring around us, and once the

prophecy begins to unfold, it will unfold. It will happen. There is no stopping it. It is like a runaway train: it is going to take place. The only question is, where will we position ourselves in those moments?

So in verses 43-44, "Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And He left them again" – He doesn't even bother them – "He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more." So here we see this picture of Christ contending and interceding with God, as Mary did, "Let it be done unto Me according to Thy Word, Lord." This is not going to be easy, it is not going to be fun. Just like Mary, putting her life on the line to be the one through whom the great prophecy is fulfilled. Christ likewise is positioning Himself through His intercession, saying, "Father, if this can pass from Me, that would be My preference. But not My will, Your will be done in Me. Be it done unto Me." He was saying the same thing Mary said, "Be it done unto Me, and through Me, according to Thy Word, Lord."

But the disciples missed the moment. And He comes to them as they are sleeping, again, in verses 45-46, and He said, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand." You have got to get the urgency of this, because, see, again, the moment – the prophecy is unfolding, unfolding, unfolding; it is fulfilling itself right before their eyes. They can't now go, "Okay, well wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! I want to go back! We didn't, you know, I know we fell asleep. Give us another chance. We want to pray now." No. It's done. That moment is gone. Christ didn't get another moment to pray in the Garden. He couldn't have interceded more. He was being betrayed at that moment. And so you have to be ready. When prophecy begins to unfold, there is a time element involved; and you must move and act while you can. We must not delay. We can't sit around and wonder, "Gee, what do I do now?" No, they had to act. That had to be a scary moment when Christ walked up to them and said, "Okay, come on, get up guys. Here we go. The betrayal is happening." They were so sleepy, they probably didn't even recognize what was going on. But we know they did fall into temptation, and they were all scattered. None of them made it through this testing. Why? Because they weren't prepared. They did not step into the prophetic moment in a preparation of putting themselves at a place where they could be there, like Mary, at the foot of the cross, being a strength to Him when He was crying out to the Father, feeling abandoned. Because not only did He feel abandoned by the Father when He cries out to Him, you know, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He is looking at the foot of the cross, wondering where His disciples are. He was forsaken, and they were scattered, because they were not prepared to stand. The last moment – they had walked with Him all these years, and at the last moment, they were not able to step into the prophetic moment as it was unfolding and be there for Him as a strength. We don't know what strength it would have provided for Him to look down and have the disciples surrounding Him, looking up at Him, blessing Him, saying, "We are with You in this moment. We are standing with You." But they couldn't, because they were not ready.

I don't want us to enter into these days of prophetic fulfillment and not be ready. I want us to be as Mary was. And remember, it was not just this one minute with Mary. It was her whole life that she was putting herself in that place that God could move through her. Christ was the same way. He was always doing. He could do nothing of Himself. He only did those things which He heard the Father say, He said those things; and He did the things that He saw the Father doing. He put Himself in that place constantly as being the instrument through whom the prophecies could be fulfilled. The Word will be fulfilled. The question is, where will we be as they are unfolding?

I want to read one more set of verses out of Luke, the twenty-third chapter, starting at verse 39. This is about the criminals. Again, we are at the cross of Christ. We are at this moment when the most important prophecies of the ages are unfolding. In verse 39, it says, "One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuses at Him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!' But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Yeshua said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'"

I mean, I think about this. Again, we see this vision of prophecy unfolding rapidly in front of our eyes. It is just happening. And it will happen. It happens because the Word creates its fulfillment. Things will unfold because the Word said they would unfold, and they will happen, just as Christ said in the verses we read at the beginning of this podcast. All these things will take place. They will happen. And you will be somewhere while they are happening. And you will have to position yourself in the events in the day in which you live. Jesus is surrounded by these two criminals. One of them is mocking Him. The other is seeing that Jesus is innocent, and he beseeches that he might be remembered in the Kingdom. Yeshua says, "Not in the Kingdom, but this day you will be with Me in Paradise." Two individuals living in a moment of prophetic fulfillment and unfolding. They had a moment in which to solidify their, not destiny, their eternity; and they chose. What an example that we are given in these verses.

As we come to the conclusion of this podcast, I just want to emphasize a few points. These are not just the last days – that is too general and broad, and it makes us tend to sit and wait for it all to be over. No, these are not just the last days. These are the days of prophetic unfolding and fulfillment.

Number two, when prophetic events unfold around you, there will be a time limitation as they progress. You do not have all the time in the world; they are moving forward, and they are generally marching quite quickly at a time of prophetic unfolding. I would also say the issue is, what role will you play as these prophetic events that Christ taught us unfold?

Lastly, I would say, I hope that our prayer, the prayer of all of us, is, "Not my will, but Thy will be done." And, "Lord, let it be done unto me according to Thy Word." By faith, step in to these days of prophetic fulfillment and prophecy. Amen.