

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Many of you reading these words can recognize that they aren't mine originally. But the other day I tried to borrow them, or lend them, I should say. The context was my dysfunctional refrigerator/freezer. Without warning it had stopped freezing and cooling. As I saw my wife browsing through the selection of new appliances on her laptop I got a little nervous. So I began to assess the situation. Was it really broken? Out of refrigerant? Was the compressor functioning? No amount of standing in front of it with the door open during my evaluation seemed to help in any significant and measurable way. These were the questions I was asking out loud...and then I asked the question that seemed too simple to consider. Why don't we unplug it? You know, kind of like rebooting a computer! My wife said, *Are you serious? It can't be that obvious can it? Surely it's more complicated than that.* I guess she was saying some things are beyond my limited knowledge. It was then that I closed the door and decided to call the repairman.

So when the highly anticipated day for the repairman's visit arrived, I expected a time consuming battery of diagnostic tests to successfully trace the source of the malady. But guess what the man said? *Unplug it, let the doors stand open, and plug it back in tomorrow...* I couldn't believe it! He had just told me to reboot the system. *Did you hear that?* I asked my wife. *Now, do you perceive that I am a prophet?* We had a good laugh about that...well, one of us laughed. She was shaking her head as she walked away. Haven't you heard that *A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown... and in his own household?*

All of this helps me transition into what I find to be an interesting subject of study lately. Prophecy. While some think it is being fulfilled before our very eyes, others are having a good laugh about it. We are living in the midst of a time when mockers are mocking just like one Biblical prophecy declares. *Where is the promise of His coming?* The key to understanding the nature and purpose of prophecy is the truth that prophecy reveals a promise given...a purpose declared. The Lord has seen fit in His word to let His people know there is hope for humanity's restoration. It is amazing to seriously study the prophecies given to us in the Word of God about the Word of God. The woman in John 4 was onto something big...she had perceived Jesus to be a prophet. Some of us may not know that already. But when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us it was a personal revelation of what we need to know about the restoration of the creatures created in the image and likeness of God. Humanity was created to be like God...not be God.

On Wednesday evenings we have begun to explore how the stage is being set for the Lord's return. The nations are being gathered and the armies arrayed like so many players in some grand contest. There are those around us obsessed with the daily developments of events beyond their control. This contributes in no small way to increased anxiety and the dread of impending doom. Trying to tell a fearful folk about the good news of God's grace often falls on deaf ears. Fear seems to seep into even the faithful among us...we don't want to be reminded of a world falling apart. But as one prophecy oriented ministry says it...the world is not falling apart...it's falling in place. That is the proper perspective of prophecy. God tells His people what is coming. He always has. He always will. He does not judge until He warns. He promises to fulfill His plan for our good. That is prophecy in its purest form. As we learn more about prophecy, we learn more about the plans of God, the purpose of God, and the promises we are given. We also learn more about how to pray for our neighbor across the street or the nations around the globe. We all need Jesus.

Come and let us journey together as we try to learn the relevance of the Lord's revealing in these days. More than just trying to nail down which nation is gathered against another, or developing a dogmatic timeline of the time of Jacob's trouble, we are seeking to hear the Lord's word to us about how we should live in these days. I am excited to see converging world events speeding up and intensifying in frequency and magnitude...kind of like the birth pangs of a woman in labor that One Great Prophet talked a lot about...

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. (Matthew 24:7-8)

King Jesus is coming...it's just that simple...a total reboot is on the way. Unplug from the world's systems of power. Plug into the power, promise, and purpose of God's word as He works His plan of redemption.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam