

ONLY GOD KNOWS YOUR FUTURE

The end of another year is fast approaching and people are already predicting what the new year holds for us. But a year from now most of them will have missed the target completely. The truth is, no one knows the future except God. He keeps the times and seasons under His own authority (Acts 1:7), and this includes the times and seasons concerning our personal lives. With regards the future, or things to come, God's knowledge is called "foreknowledge" (1 Peter 1:2), and the excellency of God's knowledge involves "all things knowable." Our God is infinite! He knows it all because He created it all! People are always bewildered or confused by what they don't know. James 4:14 said, ***"Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow!"*** So what should this mean to us? It should create an absolute trust in God - who does know the future and who works all things for our benefit but to His glory. The question is ... Are we able to entrust all our tomorrows to Him?

Since time began, people have tried to discern the future. Open any newspaper and you will probably find predictions for today, tomorrow and next year. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines astrology as a *"type of divination that consists in forecasting earthly and human events by means of observing and interpreting the fixed stars."* People still go to palm readers, astrologers and others who claim to foretell the future (to find out what is going to happen to them in the days ahead). Yet man cannot know the future! ***"No one knows what is coming - who can tell someone else what will happen after them?"*** ... ***"So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?"*** (Ecclesiastes 10:14; 3:22). Astrology, and all other forms of trying to peer into the future, is merely man's attempt to be his own god and have control over his own destiny. What a futile exercise!

Christians ought to stay clear of anything to do with such practices and teach others to do likewise. Our future is not in the cards, stars or tea leaves, but in Christ. We should have a confidence about the future because our future is securely in His hands. In John 14:1-2 Jesus said, ***“Trust in God; trust in Me also ...for I am going there to prepare a place for you.”*** Jesus has gone before us and He has prepared a way. Not just in heaven but here on earth also! That said, it's a question of trust!

With all that is happening in the world today, concern for the future is everywhere. There is much speculation, anxiety, and uncertainty. The world economy is constantly changing, markets are always fluctuating, and our personal lives are being affected by it all. And when events or circumstances surrounding us seem to be out of control, it is sometimes easy to question whether God's plan for our lives is really unfolding according to His design. However, from the pages of Scripture we are assured that God does know the future intimately. This truth is clearly seen in the amazing prophetic announcement of a ruler named Cyrus. In Isaiah 45, we read about a great ruler by the name of Cyrus who lived between 580 to about 530 B.C.

What is astounding is the fact that God told Isaiah all about Cyrus 176 years before Cyrus was even born. It is also amazing that Cyrus was a pagan king, and the Lord used him as His tool to bring about divine purposes. ***“This is what the Lord says to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him, that the gates will not be closed: ... I call you by your name; I name you, though you do not know me. ... Ask me of things to come ... I have stirred him up in righteousness, And I will make all his ways level; he shall rebuild my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts”*** (Isaiah 45:1-13).

For many years, theologians who did not believe in 'divine prophecy' taught that there must have been two authors of the book of Isaiah. They believed that there were two books put together under one author's name. From the ancient manuscript scrolls, they taught that there was an original author whom they called 'Deutero-Isaiah,' and then a later author simply named Isaiah. The reason for this theory was the naming of Cyrus in chapter 45. In their minds, chapter 45 had to have been an addition to the book of Isaiah because that was the only way to explain the name of Cyrus being written there. Again, for years, this was taught in seminaries around the world.

However, in 1947, a young boy was looking for lost sheep in the hills of Israel by the Dead Sea. As the boy searched, he came across some caves and wondered if a lamb might have wandered inside. He threw a rock into the cave entrance to possibly scare the lamb out of the cave, but instead he heard the sound of pots breaking. As he investigated, he found amid the freshly broken pots, very old scrolls. He took one to the city, and it was revealed to be part of a collection of ancient scrolls that included the book of Isaiah. It was a historic discovery! What made this discovery so amazing was that the age of these 'Dead Sea Scrolls' was 1000 years older than the oldest scrolls historians had to date. As the scholars examined these newly discovered scrolls, they read the book of Isaiah, and to their astonishment, found the prophecy of Cyrus. The Dead Sea Scrolls put an end to the teaching of two authors of the book of Isaiah and affirmed that, indeed, **God knows the future** and directs its path.

Therefore, be encouraged today that things are not out of control. If the Lord can call a pagan king by name 176 years before he is born and map out what he will do during his life, the Lord knows you too. He knows everything about you - past, present and future! You are His child!

Scripture tells us that God is not a respecter of persons and that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The Lord knows fully your situation, circumstances, and struggles. He is intimately acquainted with your life - moment by moment, day by day. He has a purpose and a plan for you. Jeremiah 29:11 states, ***"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for good (welfare) and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."*** That word future could be translated "an expected end" or "things hoped for." There will be an outcome, a completion, in your life. God will tie up all the loose ends. I'm sure there are things you don't understand. Things that have happened in your life that don't make sense, and no one has all the answers for you. But one day, you will stand before the One who does. Until then, you must believe that God's thoughts toward you are good; that His plans for you are good; and that He has an "expected end" in mind. He has a completion date already worked out!

Remember, whatever God's plan is, it's a lot better than anything you could plan for yourself. God has a future for you. Your ways are fully known to God and only He knows your tomorrow. Continue to trust Him and His plans will unfold at just the right time. You should have a real confidence about the future because your future is securely in His hands. Don't be afraid to commit the new year to Him. Never be afraid to entrust an unknown future to a known God. You may not know what tomorrow holds, but you do know Who holds tomorrow! It's your heavenly Father, who has a perfect plan for your life. So commit this new year to God. You will be so glad you did!

"My times are in your hands" (Psalm 31:15).