

Chapter 13

Cognitive Prophetic Cooperation

Preparation Theology, or the concept of preparing the way for the King by completing our job, is difficult for some to grasp. Some view our feeble human efforts as insignificant, irrelevant or even as human pride that is a hindrance to the workings of God. There are surely cases where that is true, but such a view can also breed a form of fatalism that completely neutralizes us. If fate has already mapped out every detail of our lives, then what is the use of trying to be a positive influence in this world? With this mentality, many tend to take more of a spectator's role, expecting things will just happen as they are supposed to, giving far too little attention to how we should cooperate with and even influence the future. [1] It is a "Que Sera Sera" (whatever will be will be) attitude. Such an extreme idea of fate can become a restrictive box, a box we need to escape from.

The Almighty has chosen to work through us, giving us a significant part to play in God's plan to fulfill His prophetic declarations. As seen in Paul's charge to Timothy, the prophetic word is how we fight the good fight. Therefore we should use prophetic promises to activate, direct, inspire and motivate us in our work. [2]

1 Timothy 1:18 (NKJV)

18 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare

This chapter will deal with the restrictive box of fatalism, but instead of simply talking about how bad fatalism can be, let's establish a positive concept and call it Cognitive Prophetic Cooperation (CPC). Yes, I made the terminology up and it sounds like some sort of psychobabble. If you are laughing, that makes two of us! But all joking aside, the label "Cognitive Prophetic Cooperation" really does describe a concept that is very important to embrace if we are to develop a kingdom paradigm. It simply means that when God makes a prophetic promise to us, He usually expects our conscious cooperation in bringing it to pass. [3] It is important that we establish this if we are to put the Kingdom paradigm into action.

Jesus Christ Came Through CPC

There are many examples of CPC in the Bible, even Jesus came to earth through Mary's willful cooperation with the prophetic proclamation. As a young virgin, she mentally and verbally cooperated with the planned birth of the Savior. When the angel told Mary that the power of the Highest would overshadow her and that she would give birth to the Son of God, Mary replied: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38). [4]

Abraham and Isaac, an Example of CPC

In Genesis it is recorded that the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a dream telling him, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen 15:1). Abram's reply was a question regarding the nature of that reward, in which included a complaint about being childless.

Genesis 15:2-6, 18 (KJV)

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

18 In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

Here we have a prophetic declaration from God that Abraham would have descendants from his own body that would be as difficult to count as the stars and these descendants would inherit the land from the Nile to the Euphrates.

The story of Ishmael's birth, which took place about 13 years before the birth of Isaac, is perhaps the strongest indicator showing that Abram and Sarai were engaged in a very cognitive way to see the prophetic promise fulfilled. When time passed and they remained childless, the cogs in Sarai's mind started turning. She came up with a plan to have child through a surrogate. She decided to offer her handmaid, Hagar, to her husband, that she might bear him a child. Since her womb remained barren, and she was past the age of child bearing, she reasoned that this must be the way that God was going to fulfill the promise.

As we know, Ishmael was not God's plan despite Sarah's brilliant strategy. What we have here is not a case of Cognitive Prophetic Cooperation (CPC) but rather Cognitive Prophetic Fabrication (CPF)! [5] The "F" also stand for "Failure." CPF can cause a lot of heart ache. This is where we need discernment. But failure to grasp the proper way to cooperate with the prophetic is not an excuse to disengage. Thankfully, Sarah's misguided failing attempts to serve God's purposes did not nullify His promise, nor does it nullify ours.

Now we jump forward, possibly as much as 24 years from the original promise. God again comes to Abram, who is now 99 years of age, to encourage him regarding the prophetic declaration made concerning his seed. In this encounter, God gives Abram a name change and declares that Abraham is the father of many nations. He also reveals to Abraham that it is through his wife Sarai who is 89 years of age, not Hagar, that this promise will be fulfilled, her name shall be Sarah and she shall be the mother of many nations (Genesis 17:15-16). Then God makes it very clear that the child through which this will be accomplished is to be called Isaac and he will be born about this time next year:

Genesis 17:21 (KJV)

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

Yes, God was the one who made the birth of Isaac possible. But now we see that he had given Abraham a very narrow time frame in which Isaac had to be conceived. God actually pressed the point very strongly with Abraham. However, Abraham had to cooperate with the

prophetic promise. He had to have relations with Sarah, otherwise there would have been no Isaac “at the set time in the next year.” With Abraham being almost 100 years of age and Sarah being nearly 90, one has to wonder if the act was more deliberative than impulsive. Though the act may have been motivated in part by the natural sex drive, Abraham surely approached his wife Sarah with a cognitive awareness of the prophetic promise. They kept on believing and acting. [6] So we have an example of cognitive prophetic cooperation.

Jewish Extermination Averted Through CPC

The Book of Esther provides an amazing example of providence and political action working in and through existing political structure. It is a biblical blueprint for civil responsibility illustrating the cooperative relationship between trusting God and taking action (CPC). It also gives us the biblical precedent for the first and second amendments to the United States Constitution.

The Circumstance

In 597 BC, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and made the Jewish people captives in Babylon. This captivity had been foretold by the prophet Jeremiah. The prophecy also promised that this captivity would last 70 years and then they would return to their land.

Jeremiah 29:10-11 (KJV)

10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Without a doubt, there were many Jews in Babylon who were counting the years, waiting for the 70 years to be completed, that they might return to their land. Yet during the captivity, after Ahasuerus became king, a situation arose that threatened the extermination of all the Jews in Babylon and the fulfillment of the prophetic promise.

There was a man named Haman, who had been appointed to a high position by the king. According to the king’s decree, people were supposed to revere and bow to Haman in the gate. However, Mordecai the Jew would not bow nor do any act of worship, except to God alone. This infuriated Haman, so he sought a way to destroy Mordecai and all the Jews.

Esther 3:8-11 (KJV)

8 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

9 If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

10 And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Without telling the king exactly who was being targeted, Haman provided funding and secured permission to conduct mass genocide against the people of God. A specific day was set in which it would be “open season” on Jews. Official documents were written up in every language and Haman had them sent to the king's lieutenants, the governors that were over every province, the rulers of every people of every province, and to every people group. The instructions were explicit. It would soon be legal to kill all Jews, including women and children, and keep their possessions.

Esther 3:13-14 (KJV)

13 And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

14 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

The Setup

However, even before Haman had devised his evil plan, God was working behind the scenes. [7] Mordecai and his younger cousin Esther, whom he had raised like a daughter, had favor from God in Babylon. Such was the favor upon them that Esther had become the queen, however she did not tell the king that she was a Jew. Besides this, Mordecai had discovered a plot to kill the king and had made it known to Esther who informed the king in Mordecai's name.

Now when Mordecai and the Jews learned of Haman's evil plot to kill them, they fasted and cried out to God, but they also took action. [8] Mordecai asked Esther to risk her life by approaching the king without being summoned, seek the king's favor, and expose Haman as the evil man he was. Mordecai sent word to Esther:

Esther 4:13-14 (KJV)

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Esther was received by the king and he asked her to present her petition. To do so, she prepared a banquet, to which Haman was invited. Esther planned to expose him there before the king. But as providence would have it, on the night before Haman was to attend the banquet and ask the king to hang Mordecai, King Ahasuerus could not sleep and asked for the book of records to be brought and read to him. It was read to him how Mordecai had saved the king's life by discovering and exposing a murderous plot. The king then planned to honor Mordecai.

Oh the irony! Haman did not know that Mordecai had saved the king's life and that the king had just been reminded of it and wanted to honor Mordecai. Nor did Haman have any idea that the queen, the king's wife, was not only a Jew, but was like a daughter to Mordecai. But there is more! The king called Haman and asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Haman, a classic narcissist, thought the king was about to honor him. Therefore he said to the king:

Esther 6:7-9 (NKJV)

7 And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,
8 Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:
9 And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

The Sting

The king then instructed Haman to do just as he had suggested — for Mordecai the Jew! Haman was forced to lead Mordecai, whom he hated, through the city proclaiming his honor. Totally humiliated, Haman went home and told his wife all that had happened. Then messengers came and summoned him to the banquet with the king and the queen, where Esther exposed him as an evil man trying to kill her and her people. Haman was then hanged on the very gallows that he had built for Mordecai. It was not a good day for Haman.

The Fix

But not so fast! Though an evil politician had been humiliated, exposed and removed from office, [9] the law he had sponsored still existed. This presented a real problem because, in Babylon, the kings' decrees were irrevocable. The evil law sponsored by Haman was still in effect! Therefore, Mordecai, who now had great favor and power, proposed a new legislation to counteract Haman's law. [10] The king agreed.

Esther 8:11-12 (KJV)

11 Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,
12 Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

It was now legal for the Jews to arm and defend themselves against any who might try to take their life or their property. [11] When the day came this is how it played out:

Esther 9:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)
2 The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.
3 And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.
4 For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

The Lessons

The lessons and parallels for today from this story are many. Here are a few.

- When we find ourselves under bad governmental circumstances, we must remember that just as God promised to visit and return the Jews to their land, Jesus will return and establish His government on earth. But the story of Esther and Mordecai illustrates that, until that happens, we can and should seek to influence the governments of this world according to God's purposes. God had told the Jews: "...seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace (Jeremiah 29:7 NKJV). As a result Mordecai and Esther had favor and were exalted to places of influence.
- Bad government officials can be removed. Evil government officials may arise who will seek to do us harm, but with God's help, it is up to us to take action and see them removed. Haman seemed very powerful, but he was removed in a day and Mordecai was exalted in his place. Not only should Christians exercise their influence through voting, but we should also be politically involved through strategic planning, exposing evil, and holding office as the Lord leads.
- Bad laws must be addressed and changed. Even though Haman was out of the picture, his law was still in place and the threat of genocide still loomed large. Good legislation was needed to counteract the bad. Though we have some horrible laws, thankfully we have a means of repealing or counteracting them. Laws that contribute to the destruction of the economy, destruction of the family and of life itself must be changed. A lack of action is not an option.
- Good laws must be protected and enforced. Even with the new decree in place, Mordecai and the Jews still had to practically enforce it. They had to defend themselves, otherwise their enemies could have just ignored Mordecai's law and killed the Jews anyway according to Haman's law. Mordecai's law had two key elements: 1) the right to gather together and organize; 2) the right to bear arms and use deadly force in self defense (see Esther 8:11). These have an amazing parallel with our 1st Amendment (freedom of religion, speech, and assembly) and our 2nd Amendment (the right to keep and bear arms against bad laws/government that threaten us, our families and our property). There is also some application to the 4th amendment which deals with protection against unreasonable search and seizure of personal property.
- We must not grow weary, but trust that God is working behind the scenes setting up His enemies for failure. The book of Esther shows us how important the human dynamic is in the workings of God. It is interesting to note that, though prayer to God is alluded to, God is not mentioned nor is the word "prayer" used in the entire book of Esther. Maybe this is because the book of Esther is designed to emphasize the importance of the human dynamic in the workings of God.

We cannot be passive and expect God's will to be accomplished in government or any other area of life if we do not take action. We must actively and strategically cooperate with the prophetic promises of God. [12] We have to wonder if the words Mordecai spoke to Esther apply to us today. If we remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance from the evil that is in our land may arise from an another place, but we and our house may suffer or perish. Yet, who knows whether you have been called to act for such a time as this.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Cognitive Prophetic Cooperation is very important to embrace if we are to develop a kingdom paradigm and embrace a preparation mentality. When God makes a prophetic promise to us, He expects our conscious cooperation in bringing it to pass. This was true in the case of Christ's first coming and it is true as it relates to His second coming and the appearing of His Kingdom.

Paradigm Builder:

Human cooperation is essential to the fulfilment of God's prophetic promises including the preparation of and the appearing of Christ and His Kingdom on earth.

Before reading this chapter, how would you describe your position regarding this concept?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree

How would you describe your position regarding this concept after reading this chapter?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree