



## Wayne's Words

Rev. Wayne Walters



### Prophecy Then and Now

Prophecy is much misunderstood. It is usually seen in terms of predicting the future - which occasions much scepticism when anyone claims to be doing so. At the same time, many are seduced into believing predictions of the timing of the end of the world. Such attempts have been an embarrassment for various sects, who then must explain why their followers are still here. Many also flock to fortune tellers and mediums, who God forbade his people to chase after. Nor were they to put any trust in astrology, but rather to place their trust in the One who put the stars there in the first place. However, prediction is only part of biblical prophecy. Prophecy is primarily concerned with calling people back to God's ways. In the Old Testament this involved strong rebukes and warnings of God's judgement for those who refused to change their ways. Once judgment became imminent, strong themes of hope emerged - hope of return from exile and hope of a future free of pain and grief, free from war and destruction. The key to this future hope was the coming of a king, a Righteous One, a Servant of the Lord who would bear the sin of many and through whom sin would be removed from the land in a single day.

In the New Testament, prophecy takes a different shape – being for the purpose of encouragement, upbuilding and comfort. We are encouraged by St Paul to eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially that we might prophesy. As we immerse ourselves in God's word and open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, so may we find our loving attempts to build others up with words of assurance, being received as the very encouragement and words of God.

God bless you,

*Wayne*