

## Why Study Biblical Prophecy?

We're into a new study of the Book of Revelation in our Wednesday evening prayer meetings. It's a great study and many find blessing in it. Some may wonder why we spend time studying Bible prophecy--people are interested in the here and now, not some "Tribulation" that may come down the pike some day we know not when. Sometimes the study has been easy; sometimes it has taken a bit more work. Others are sometimes put off by teachers who make prophecy their hobby--to the seeming exclusion of more conventional Bible teaching. Still others still think it's a waste of time because of all the various interpretations and systems of prophecy developed over the years. And sadly, some don't believe the Bible and the prophecy it contains, so they would rather ignore something which seemingly has little relevance.

Why do we study Bible prophecy? Why examine Daniel and Revelation and other prophetic passages of Scripture?

**Prophecy is found in God's Word.** If God has ordained that prophecy be included in His revelation, then it has importance in itself.

Prophecy makes up one-fourth to one-third of the Bible's content. It is valuable because God has lifted the veil some to let us see and prepare for the future. God did not have to give us a glimpse of the future, but He did, so that we might better pray, work, and prepare for the inevitable return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

**Prophecy gives joy today and hope for the future.** Daniel was assured that God would prevail and righteousness would win out. John was given the final revelation so that he (and we) would be encouraged as the end times move on. Prophecy motivates us to endurance, for if we are winning, then we will keep on plugging away until the Lord returns or until He calls us home. Prophecy consoles us when we face situations we have never encountered before. Jesus reminded us in Luke 21:28 to "look up, for your redemption draweth nigh." The Book of Revelation is the last book in the Bible and one of the most hopeful

**Prophecy gives important evidence for the accuracy of the Scriptures.** One half of biblical prophecy has been fulfilled in a literal way. Unfulfilled prophecy will be fulfilled in the same manner. If the Bible is accurate in past fulfilled prophecy, then that is a reasonable assurance that it is accurate in the prophecy not yet come to pass.

**Prophecy gives a guideline for what is really important in life.** John Walvoord, former president of Dallas Theological Seminary and probably one of the best experts of Bible prophecy in history, wrote, "For a

Christian, the ultimate question is whether God considers what he is doing of value or not, and it is in contrast to the world's system of values which is largely materialistic" (p. 11, *Prophecy Handbook*).

The world (and the worldly church) emphasizes fun, relevance and pragmatism. God is not so oriented. Modern people ask "Does it work?" God asks, "Are you obedient?" The world says, "Play." God's Word says, "Worship." The world says, "Get what you can." God's Word says, "Give what you get."

**Prophecy indicates every act will come under judgment.** This motivates Christian conduct, as we ask ourselves the question, "If the Lord should return and find me doing this, would I be ashamed or embarrassed?" If prophecy is true and Christ is coming again to reclaim His own, then believers live in light of that coming. Prophecy encourages moral living now, and as we do not know at what point the end will come, we must prepare and be prepared.

It also serves as a warning to the wicked to repent. There will be an accounting, God's wrath is severe. But bless God, His mercy is great.

**Prophecy gives meaning to history.** It shows the unfolding of God's plan. History is not mere accident or happenstance. Daniel and John portray a God who is sovereign over His universe, and a God who is bringing all things to His intended climax. This encourages our worship in awe of God's great care in taking care of the details.

**Prophecy counteracts the humanistic evolutionary philosophy that says the world is getting better and better.** The Bible teaches that with man in charge, things are going downhill, and only God's intervention--in redemption and in Christ's return--will make things right.

Yes, study Bible prophecy--not with a singular interest in what will be, but with an eye to proper Christian conduct and to the praise of our sovereign God.

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