

Introduction

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done... (Isaiah 46:9-10 KJV)

Only God knows the end from the beginning! God spoke many times in many ways through a variety of prophets, and then finally He spoke through Jesus the Son, and His apostles to give:

- Warnings, rebukes, peace, encouragement, and to tell us about His love.
- God also revealed the future to men and women.
- As much as 27% of the Bible is prophecy:
 - A total of 1,817 prophecies in the Bible and 8,000 relevant verses.
 - This means that about 27% of the Bible’s 31,000 verses is prophecy.

In this course we’re going to cover topics such as:

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| ● What is Bible prophecy? | ● Learning Prophetic Vocabulary |
| ● Why don’t people study prophecy? | ● God’s Plan for Israel |
| ● Why should we study prophecy? | ● God’s Plan for the Nations |
| ● Why is Jesus coming back? | ● The Times and the Seasons |
| ● How to read and understand the prophetic Scriptures | ● Great Tribulation: the Time of Jacob’s Trouble |
| ● Basics of the Second Coming | ● The Resurrection |
| ● Signposts of the Last Days | ● The Millennial Kingdom |
| | ● The New Jerusalem and Eternity Future |

1. What is Bible Prophecy?

1.1. Prophecy is God’s own account of what will happen in the future.

- Prophecy is not clever men figuring out what is likely to happen next!
- Prophecy is God telling you what is going to happen, and many times it is God telling us what He is going to *cause* to happen.

...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21 NKJV)

...when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come (John 16:13 KJV)

1.2 The Bible has an incredible track record in predictive prophecy.

The Bible has an amazing track record in revealing things to come:

- The Bible predicted the Babylonian Captivity of 70 years.
- The Bible predicted in Daniel 9 when the Messiah would come, perhaps even down to the precise day.
- Jesus predicted that the Temple would be destroyed in such a manner that not one stone would remain standing upon another stone.
- Nothing can be more amazing than the prophecies concerning Jesus Himself: read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 concerning His sufferings.

1.3. Only the Bible has been demonstrated to predict the future.

There is no other religious book which has such a record of fulfilled prophecy. False religions and psychics give vague and fuzzy prophecies.

1.4. Most of the prophecies in the Bible are still to be fulfilled.

Some say as much as 90% of prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. There are many events leading up to the Return of Christ which we have yet to see come to pass.

1.5. The focal point in Bible prophecy is the prophesied return of Jesus Christ to bring about the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is coming in glory to judge the living and the dead. That is the focal point of Bible prophecy, and its main subject.

2. Four Reasons People Don't Study Prophecy

2.1. Why worry about prophecy –won't everything just "pan out?"

It may sound like this is full of faith, but it isn't a wise position to take:

- *First*, Scripture counsels us to be students of the Word.
- *Second*, the Bible's teaching about the return of Jesus is a major theme of Scripture. As much as 20% of the Bible deals with the future.
- *Third*, the Bible doesn't teach fatalism, as some religions seem to.

If we really believe we're in the last days, shouldn't we know what the Bible says to people *living* in the last days?

2.2. Shouldn't we focus on evangelizing and doing good works?

We should indeed be focusing on evangelism and good works. But we shouldn't be dividing things that God has not divided. The message that Jesus is coming again has always spurred people to **do** good works.

- The Bible says that we should live holy and do everything that God commands, **especially** as we see the day of Christ approaching.
- Jesus said that the Gospel of the kingdom would be proclaimed in all the nations and then the end would come.
- The message that Jesus is coming to establish His kingdom helps to put accountability and soberness into the message: *...God... now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.* (See: Acts 17:30-31)

The message that Jesus is coming again is also a message of hope and encouragement for the believer; it is our Blessed Hope!

2.3. I can't study prophecy because it's too hard.

Even among the foundations of the faith (see Hebrews ch. 6) we see listed the teaching of eternal judgment. The New Testament shows us how the Apostle Paul taught churches about the end times very soon after he formed a church.

There are a number of false teachings about the return of Christ which any Christian who owns a Bible should be able to shoot down. And we're not being responsible, healthy disciples if we don't have at least **some** knowledge concerning the return of Christ.

2.4. It doesn't matter to me because I won't be there.

- Some people believe that they don't have to worry about it because they will die before these events come to pass. But in any generation, God could engineer the conditions for the return of Christ.
- Some say they won't see hardship because they're leaving in the Rapture.
 - We have no guarantee of being raptured at any particular time.
 - You can also experience quite a bit of unpleasantness in this world without being raptured.
 - You could also be living in the general timeframe of the Rapture and not live all the way until the Rapture.

3. Ten important reasons why we should study Bible prophecy.

1. If we are careful students of the Bible, we can't **avoid** studying it.
2. Bible prophecy is an essential part of the Gospel, because it completes the picture of the salvation that was won by Jesus Christ.
3. Prophecy gives us the complete portrait of Jesus. If we don't study Bible prophecy, we will be missing important facets of Jesus' nature.

4. Bible prophecy is of great value in apologetics: it helps us defend the Christian faith, and provides unbelievers with evidence for belief.
5. Bible prophecy is powerful because it causes our hearts to give glory to God. We can't help praising Him for his wisdom and power.
6. Studying Bible prophecy is important for our sanctification. It encourages us to live a godly life.
7. Bible prophecy is a practical topic of study, because it encourages us to labor for Christ and to do good.
8. Studying Bible prophecy will help us to be wise as we approach the end of the age; it will give us understanding of the times and seasons.
9. God **commands** us to study the prophetic Scriptures, and all of His Word.
10. There is a blessing that can attach to us when we study the prophetic Scriptures – God said so, in particular, about the Book of Revelation!

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” (Rev. 1:3, NKJV)

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