

## WHY SHOULD WE STUDY BIBLE PROPHECY?

Tonight we are going to begin a verse by verse study through the book of Revelation. The study will be from a literal, futuristic, pretribulation, premillennial point of view. By that I mean we will understand the events that take place in the book of Revelation from chapter 4 onward as literally going to happen in the future and not having occurred yet. By pretribulation we mean that the Rapture of the Church will occur before the Tribulation period. By premillennial we mean that the events recorded in the book of Revelation before, leading up to, and including the Second Coming of Christ will take place before the millennial kingdom. I pray that you will join us for this in-depth and fascinating study.

As we prepare to begin a study of the book of Revelation some have asked why we should studying this book. They say it is mostly about the future and not relevant to us today. These are probably some of the same people who faithfully read their horoscope every day but that's a whole other sermon. I believe that people really do want to know what the future holds for them. I also believe that, as Christians, no part of the Bible should be excluded from our careful study and especially this book (but you'll have to come back tonight to find out why especially this book).

The Bible itself gives us a number of reasons why we should study prophecy. This morning we are going to look at some of them.

### **We should study Bible prophecy because it...**

**1. is part of the Scriptures:** In fact, the Bible is 27% prophecy. In the Old Testament, there are 23,210 verses and 6,641 are prophetic for a total of 28-<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>%. In the New Testament, there are 7,914 verses and 1,711 are prophetic for a total of 21-<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>%. You would have to ignore over one quarter of the Bible if you didn't want to study Bible prophecy.

### **2 Peter 1:19-21 (NIV)**

*And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

- Peter emphasizes for us the importance of paying attention to God's written word over even personal experiences. From [Genesis 1:1](#) to [Revelation 22:21](#) it is all God's Word.

## **We should study Bible prophecy because it...**

**2. proves the accuracy of the Bible:** Some Christians struggle with Bible inerrancy. By that I mean they are unsure if the original Scriptures are without error. When we study Bible prophecy and God says He will do something and then it is fulfilled, it confirms the fact that His Word is true. Based on the Bible's track record of fulfilled prophecy so far, there is no valid reason to ignore prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled. If you want to know what God's plans for the future are, you have no more accurate source than His Word, the Bible.

### **Isaiah 46:8-11 (NIV)**

*"Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.*

- There are still prophecies in the Old Testament that have yet to be fulfilled, but they will be one day. Some may be fulfilled in our life time or we may be witnesses to the events that lead to their fulfillment. Either way, we can be certain that God will bring about all that His Word tells us He will.

**3. gives us a proper perspective of our time:** Bible prophecy helps us to understand the future so we can make the best of our life now. Our world and this life are just temporary. Our focus should be on eternal things.

### **1 Corinthians 7:31 (NIV)**

*...For this world in its present form is passing away.*

- Bible prophecy motivates us to live wisely in this present time.

### **Ephesians 5:15-16 (NIV)**

*Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

- Bible prophecy helps us to understand the last days so we are not taken off guard or overwhelmed by the sinfulness of men and coldness of some professing Christians.

### **2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NIV)**

*For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

- A proper perspective of our time enables us to make the most of this temporary life for the sake of the permanent one to come.

## **We should study Bible prophecy because it...**

**4. provides encouragement in times of sorrow:** the Bible assures us that our loved ones, that die knowing Jesus, go to be with Him immediately. The Scriptures also assure us that one day we will be reunited with them in one big heavenly reunion where there will be no more sorrow or pain and death will never again separate us from one another.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)**

*Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

- My friends, what great comfort it is to know that the separation of death is only temporary for those that are in Christ Jesus.

**5. proves God is in control of the affairs of men:** God didn't just create it all and then leave it alone to see what would happen. He has not left us to fend for ourselves. God is intimately involved in His creation.

### **Acts 17:24-28 (NIV)**

*"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'"*

- And not only is God in control of the affairs of men, but we can have great confidence that He will finish what He has started in each of our lives just as surely as He will finish His plans for all of mankind.

### **Philippians 1:6 (NIV)**

*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

- In [Rev 21:6](#) where God says "It is done," it will truly be done, nothing will be left unfinished!

## **We should study Bible prophecy because it...**

**6. helps produce spiritual maturity, stability, & purity:** Knowing Bible prophecy helps us not to be afraid of serious world events. Instead, we can look at them in light of Scripture and realize that God is setting the stage for His coming. Events that look frightening to the lost can actually be encouraging and exciting to the Christian because we know that the Lord is getting ready to return. These frightening events are all pieces of God's puzzle and plan for the world. Knowing God's plan gives security and confidence in troublesome times. It gives hope when hopelessness may abound.

### **1 Corinthians 15:52,58 (NIV)**

*in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.... Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

- Because of our victory in Christ both now and in the future, we can stand strong in Christ and mature in our faith. Unafraid of what the future holds because we know who holds the future.

**7. is a tool for evangelism:** Because the Lord is returning soon, we must do all we can now to reach the lost before He returns. The understanding of the fate of the lost that comes from studying Bible Prophecy should cause us to redouble our efforts to bring them to Christ. Talking to the unsaved about the return of Christ is a great tool of evangelism.

### **Hebrews 9:27-28 (NIV)**

*Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

- Knowing God's Word will enable you to be a more effective witness for Christ and will help you answer the questions that the lost have about the Lord and about life. God's Word provides real solutions to man's problems. Knowing those solutions will help you reach others for the Lord.

## **We should study Bible prophecy because it...**

**8. encourages moral and social responsibility:** We are to be an example to a lost and dying world in the way we live. Our lifestyle should reflect the Christ that lives within us. It is our responsibility to be godly ambassadors of Jesus Christ. We may well be all of Christ the lost will ever see.

### **Romans 13:11-14 (NIV)**

*And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

- Many times I have said that I wish people would stop calling themselves Christians if they are going to live for the devil. If you are not going to live in obedience to God's commands then why on earth would you want to be called by His name? It is our privilege, as believers, to represent our Lord here on earth, it is our responsibility to protect His holy name by our obedience to His Word.

**9. provokes a genuine love for the Lord Jesus Christ:** As we study Bible prophecy and understand all that God has done for us in the past when He fulfilled Bible prophecy by sending His one and only Son to die for sins, as we experience the blessings of walking with Him daily, as we study and understand all that He has planned for our future in eternity with Him, our hearts should overflow with love for the one who loves us so much. The more we study God's Word and the more we understand His plans and purposes for our lives, the deeper our love for Him will grow.

### **1 Peter 1:8-9 (NIV)**

*Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

- God's love for us is unconditional, there is nothing you can say or do to make Him stop loving you. Our love for Him should also be unconditional.

## **We should study Bible prophecy because it...**

**10. produces praise for the Lord Jesus Christ:** After describing, in the 11th chapter of Romans, how God will one day restore the nation of Israel, Paul launched into a song of praise for the Lord.

### **Romans 11:33-36 (NIV)**

*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

- God's plans for our future includes a home He has prepared for us in a city that never sees night, access to the Tree of Life and the presence of God Himself. Never again will we know any sorrow or pain. We will be forever free from the presence and the power of sin. If that don't just make you want to praise Him I'm not sure what will!

### **Conclusion:**

The study of Bible prophecy is an important part of any Bible study for the reasons we've looked at this morning and so many more. God has given us His Word and a peek into our future. If we fail to make the study of Bible prophecy part of our overall study of the Bible, we will be guilty by omission of ignoring and neglecting such an important part of God's Word. As we close this morning, let me give you one more reason why we should study Bible prophecy: and the reason is that the proper study of Bible prophecy brings God's approval. God approves of those who rightly handle His Word.

### **2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)**

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

I can think of no greater goal than to one day hear my Lord say to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" ([Mt 25:21](#)) This should be the goal of every believer.

### **Worship Team please come forward**

Although the message this morning is not primarily an evangelistic one, I believe we still need to pause for a moment to allow for the opportunity to respond to God's prompting. If there is something you need to pray about this morning I would consider it an honor if you would allow me to pray with you or for you. Whatever the Lord may be leading you to do I pray that you will be obedient to the Spirit's urging as we stand and sing...