

Eschatology 101
Week 1

Why Study Prophecy?

1. Almost 30% of the Bible is prophecy

2. Prophecy is all about Jesus!

Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

He is front and center of end times prophecy. Everything that is foretold to happen is leading up to His second coming!!

3. When we study prophecy, we see that God is sovereign over us, over this world and everything in it.

The Bible is clear that God is sovereign over us. He does not control us like robots, but he is in control of our circumstances if we fully submit to His will.

[Pro 16:9 NKJV] 9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

And one of our favorite verses to quote in hard times:

[Rom 8:28 NKJV] 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to [His] purpose.

Earlier in Romans 8 it tells us that creation itself groans in expectation of His coming to rescue it from the curse.

[Rom 8:19-22 NKJV] 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected [it] in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

The world we live in is fallen. It is not the way God intended.

**Isaiah 11:6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.**

God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men:

[Dan 10:12-13 NKJV] 12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia....

[Dan 10:20 NKJV] 20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.

Daniel was in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar at the time of this prophecy. We know from world history that after Babylon came Medo-Persia, then Greece, then Rome.

If there was a spiritual power behind the world empires of Daniel's day, do you not think there is one behind the empires of today?

God is directing the world powers and orchestrating the kingdoms of this world to line up with His plan for the end.

4. The study of prophecy protects us from heresy.

In 2 Thessalonians 2 Paul writes correcting the believers who have been fooled into thinking the Day of the Lord had come.

[2Th 2:1-4 NKJV] 1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for [that Day will not come] unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Paul goes on in chapter 3 to admonish those who were not working. They apparently figured since the Lord was returning soon they didn't need to work. In 2 Peter there were apparently scoffers suggesting that the Lord was not returning.

Peter apparently encountered false teachers and scoffers saying that the Lord would not return.

He explains in 2 Peter 3:9

[2Pe 3:9 NKJV] 9 The Lord is not slack concerning [His] promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The fact the Jesus has not yet returned for His Bride, the Church, is evidence of His abundant mercy and grace.

We have seen through the ages, those who set dates or pick a certain celestial event to point to the return of Jesus.

If we study Biblical prophecy we will not get caught up in the false teachings of man. We will maintain firm footing in the word of God.

5. The study of prophecy promotes evangelism in the Church.

As we study end times prophecy in scripture we see things coming to an end as God has said. It should bring an excitement and anticipation to the Church and that will lead to an increase in evangelism.

6. Prophecy Acquaints us with God's plan for man.

The more we know about God's plan for mankind, the easier it is to understand the Word of God, and especially the prophetic parts of it.

Timeline

A timeline through Biblical history would start at the Creation and span approximately six thousand years to our modern day. The major events on this timeline would include:

- The fall of man
- The flood
- The call of Abraham
- The exodus from Egypt
- The birth of the nation of Israel
- The Dynasty of David
- Solomon's kingdom
- Civil war and the split of the Nation
- The Northern kingdom destroyed by Assyria
- The Southern kingdom taken in to exile for 70yrs by Babylon. (This is a Key event in Israel's history that we will refer back to)

- The return to the Land
- 400 yrs of Silence (This is the 400yr period between the Old and New Testaments when no prophet spoke to Israel and God appeared to be silent.)
- The Birth of Jesus
- The Crucifixion (This is the central event in all of world history)
- The Resurrection
- The Church age
 - Israel becomes a nation in one day May 14, 1948.
 - **[Isa 66:7-8 NKJV] 7 "Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child. 8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? [Or] shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.**

The Church age is ongoing today and will end when the Church is taken out of this world in the event known as the Rapture.

[Rom 11:25 NKJV] 25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

After the Church age begins the culmination of all things. The rest of the timeline is derived from many different passages of scripture. Some of these events, such as the Ezekiel 38&39 Magog invasion could take place at anytime, but we believe it is post rapture for reasons we will cover when we take on that study in depth. The rest of the timeline is as follows:

- Rapture of the Church
 - Judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:9-11; Rom 14:10-12)
 - Wedding feast of the Lamb (Rev 19)
- Magog invasion of Israel (Ezekiel 38&39)
- Seven year covenant between the “Prince of the people who shall come” and the nation of Israel (Daniel 9:27)
 - Starts the 70th week of Daniel 9
- The Seven years of God’s wrath begins
 - At the 3.5 year mark, the Man of Sin proclaims to be God while in the Holy of Holies.
 - This begins the Great Tribulation mentioned by Jesus (Matt 24:21)
- Israel acknowledges Jesus as Messiah (Zech 12:10)
- Jesus’ 2nd coming (Rev. 19:11-16)
- Battle of Armageddon (Rev 16)
- Satan and his angels bound in the Bottomless pit for 1000yrs (Rev. 20)
- The Millennium (Rev 20)
 - Believers reign with Jesus (First Resurrection)

- Satan loosed at the end of the 1000 years (Rev. 20)
- The final battle and Satan defeated. (Rev. 20)
- The Great White Throne judgment (Second Resurrection)(Rev. 20)
- Satan and non-believers cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20)
- Heaven and Earth destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10; Rev 21)
- New Heaven and New Earth (Our eternal dwelling place)(Rev. 21)

7. Studying Prophecy gives us hope and causes us to live pure lives!

The more we study the Word of God we will see it as true and active in our lives. We will see the Lord moving through our lives and speaking with us, directing our steps.

We will be aware that His Word is true, and if that is the case we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is coming again for us!

Children are on their best behavior when they know that their father could come home at any minute.

[Tit 2:11-13 NKJV] 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Terminology:

Amillennialism: The belief that the 1000-year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20 is figurative in nature, not a literal period of time. Amillennialists believe that we are currently in the Millennium and that at the return of Christ, the final judgment will happen; the earth we live on today will be destroyed, and the new heaven and earth will be created. (2 Pet 3:10)

Preterist: holds that the contents of Revelation constitute a prophecy of events that were fulfilled in the 1st century. Preterists believe the dating of the book of Revelation is of vital importance and that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Full - All events foretold in scripture have been fulfilled.

Partial - Most of the prophecies foretold in the book of Revelation have been fulfilled, but events such as the Second Coming of Jesus, Resurrection of the Dead, and the Final judgment have not occurred.

Premillennialism: The belief that the 1000-year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20 is a literal period of time that begins with the second coming of Jesus. During this time, Satan and his angels are bound and peace will exist on the earth. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will be loosed and allowed to go out and gather all that would join him to make war against Jesus. Jesus will destroy them and the final judgment, known as the “Great White Throne Judgment”, will take place.

Historic Premillennialism: Those that hold this view believe that scriptural prophecy, especially the passages in Daniel and Revelation, give the entire history of the Church in symbolic form. They look into the Church’s past and present to find prophetic fulfillment and to figure out where we are on God’s prophetic timetable. Most of them believe that the nation of Israel will undergo a national salvation just prior to the millennium, but that there will be no national restoration of Israel. They do not believe that Israel has a separate and distinct role or function that is apart from the Church.

Dispensational Premillennialism: Those that hold this view believe that Israel and the Church are distinct in scripture. That God originally chose Israel as his people to work through and bring forth salvation through Jesus. He made many promises to them that have yet to be fulfilled, such as the eternal kingship of the line of David. They believe that due to Israel’s rebellion, God has “paused” his work through Israel and is currently working through the Church. God will work through the Church until the time of the Rapture at which time He will turn His attention back to Israel. (Rom. 11:25) Some time after the rapture of the Church, a final 7-year period of time known as the tribulation period will begin, culminating in the second coming of Jesus to set up His millennial kingdom. The purpose of this final 7-year period is to bring Israel to the point where they recognize Jesus as Messiah. The purpose of the Millennium is to fulfill the promises to the nation of Israel.

Postmillennialism: This is the belief that Christ will return after the 1000 years mentioned in Revelation 20. They believe that the “1000 years” should not be taken literally, but should be understood as a long period of time. Christ return comes after the Church has established the kingdom of God on the earth. They believe that the world will continue to get better and better until the kingdom is established and there is worldwide peace. This will usher in the return of Jesus to the earth.

Tribulation Period: This is a period of seven years begun by the signing of a covenant between the Antichrist and the nation of Israel (Daniel 9:27), and culminating in the second coming of Jesus. This period of time is well documented in the book of Revelation from Chapter 4 onward. The term “tribulation period” comes from a misapplication of what Jesus said in Matthew 24:21. The “Great Tribulation” talked about by Jesus is actually the final three and a half years of the final 7 year period. This period is defined in Daniel 9 as the 70th week in the prophecy of the 70 weeks of years. A more appropriate term for this period would be the 70th week of Daniel 9.

Rapture of the Church: The rapture of the Church is when Jesus returns in the clouds and gathers the Church from the earth (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Although the word rapture is not in our English translation of the Bible, it does occur in the Latin translation. The Greek word for “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is harpazo, in latin the word is rapiemur from which we get our English word rapture. There are three main views on the timing of the rapture.

Pre-Trib: Those that hold this view believe Christ will rapture His Church prior to the 70th week of Daniel 9.

Mid-Trib: Those that hold this view believe that the Christ will rapture His Church at the mid point of the 70th week of Daniel 9.

Post-Trib: Those that hold this view believe that Church will go through the 70th week of Daniel 9 and be raptured at the end of that time.

Hermeneutics:

(Theory of interpretation)

Allegorical Method

Bernard Ramm defines it this way “Allegorism is the method of interpreting a literary text that regards the literal sense as a vehicle for a secondary, more spiritual and more profound sense.”

In this method the historical significance of the text is either denied or ignored and the emphasis is placed entirely on the secondary sense so that the original words or events have very little significance.

Dwight J. Pentecost, in his book “Things to Come” writes this “It would seem that the purpose of the allegorical method is not to interpret scripture, but to pervert the true meaning of scripture, albeit under the guise of seeking a deeper or more spiritual meaning.”

Literal Method

The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage whether employed in writing, speaking, or thinking. It is also called the grammatical-historical method to emphasize the fact that the meaning is to be determined by both grammatical and historical considerations.

The Literal method interprets the Bible to mean what it says.

David L. Cooper gave us the Golden Rule of Interpretation:

“WHEN THE PLAIN SENSE OF SCRIPTURE MAKES COMMON SENSE, SEEK NO OTHER SENSE; THEREFORE, TAKE EVERY WORD AT ITS PRIMARY, ORDINARY, USUAL, LITERAL MEANING UNLESS THE FACTS OF THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT, STUDIED IN THE LIGHT OF RELATED PASSAGES AND AXIOMATIC AND FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS INDICATE CLEARLY OTHERWISE.”

There is an allowance for allegory, figures of speech, and types when using the Literal method of interpretation.

(example)

[Psa 91:4 NKJV] 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

No one I have heard of believes God has feathers, He is obviously using an allegory here to provide an image of comfort and protection to the reader.

Lets take a look at a couple of examples of interpretation from scripture, one from the Old Testament, and one from the New Testament.

[Jer 25:11 NKJV] 11 'And this whole land shall be a desolation [and] an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

**[Dan 9:1-2 NKJV] 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans--
2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years [specified] by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah**

the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Daniel is reading Jeremiah and understands that the 70 years written about are a literal 70 years. This causes Daniel to begin to pray which gives way to one of the most astonishing prophecies in scripture which we will cover in detail later.

[Mar 9:9-10 NKJV] 9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

What did Jesus mean when he said “till the Son of Man had risen from the dead”?

Everywhere prophecy is interpreted in scripture, the literal method is used.

We will be approaching this study from a pre-millennial, pre-trib rapture, dispensational point of view. This is not the only view on these matters and you are encouraged to study for yourself and come to your own conclusions through prayer and careful study. The conclusion you come to will be greatly influenced by your attitude towards scripture, and the nation Israel.

If you hold scripture in high regard as the literal (allowing for figures of speech etc.) word of God, then you will lean towards a Pre-trib rapture of the Church, and the view that God is not through with Israel and they are still His people. If you more loosely interpret the word of God and its prophetic verses as mostly allegory, then you will lean towards an amillennial point of view and the view that the Church has replaced Israel as God’s chosen people.

I believe the Bible is clear on this and it is the teaching in this Church that Israel and the Church are separate.

They have different promises given to them, different purposes in God’s plan and different destinies.

Our focus next week will be on Israel and the Church, how they are different, and God’s plan for both.

I believe that once you settle your view on Israel, it will go a long way toward settling your views on the order of end times events.

