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Prophecy Tells Us God's Plans for the Future



By Steven J. Hogan

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Most believers don’t know, understand, or are in error with regards to prophecy, and that’s sad. The flesh is lazy and worldly, and the devil lies and deceives, wanting people to think prophecy isn’t true or important. But we must believe and be excited about prophetic truth, and it’s for our good and God’s glory. (I am talking about prophecy as it relates to what God says in His word about the future of this world and His people.) So let’s talk about the importance of prophecy.

* **Prophecy is God’s word,** not man’s, and every word of God is wholly and eternally true. God gave His word to His people, and we are to know and teach it, and that means every word, verse, subject, and passage, including prophecy. 2 Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 2:19-21

* **The sum of God’s word is truth.** If we leave out part of God’s word, like prophecy, then we miss out on what God wants us to know. If we don’t believe and teach all His word, we won’t learn all His truth and will succumb to false teaching. Knowing God’s word is the key to discerning

His will and living in the way He planned for us. Ps. 119:160, Mk. 13:23, 2 Tim. 4:1-2

* **Prophecy gives light.** *"We have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place..."* (2 Pet. 1:19). We live in a dark, devilish, evil world, and prophecy gives us light, helping us to see and love God, helping us to know where we are at and where we are going, helping us to be a good witness, and to persevere.

* **Prophecy gives hope.** Having hope means we believe and are looking forward to a great, God-given future. We must have hope to live in a sin-prone body in a sinful world – we must believe that we will be with Jesus, be in heaven, be with believers, be perfect, receive an inheritance, have a glorious body, a wonderful purpose, and be loved by God like never before.

* **Prophecy takes away fear.** Seeing sin and evil, and hearing about earthquakes, wars, and famines could be unsettling and fear producing. But knowing that God is our loving, powerful, wise, and sovereign Father, and knowing His general plan for these end-times and the coming age should calm our souls and give us peace and confidence. Is. 46:9-10, Jer. 29:11-12

* **Prophecy warns us about the future.** Dangerous and difficult times are coming upon this world. God's prophetic word tells us these things, and that it's part of His overall plans for the end-times. When there's birth pains, lawlessness, great persecution, and Antichrist is ruling, don't be surprised or fearful. God is in complete control, and these things must happen before God brings about the return of His Son. Matt. 24:3-31, Mark 13:5-23, 2 Thess. 2:1-4

* **Prophecy is no small subject in the end-times.** In these end times, prophecy is becoming an increasingly, important subject, and God wants us to understand it and teach it. A church's work must be

framed by prophecy, and be done in light of Christ's return and the coming kingdom. *"By His appearing and kingdom, preach the word."* 2 Tim. 4:1-2, Matt. 24:10

* **Many Christians are ignorant, naïve, or in error about prophecy.** The work of the church, the pastors, and the parents is to passionately, completely, and clearly teach prophetic truth. Just think – your Savior, Lord, Lover, and King will soon come back to earth, and it could be in your lifetime. 2 Thess. 2:1-3, Heb. 10:37

* **Prophecy is to wake us up,** to excite us about Christ's coming, and alert us to the dangers we will be facing. Many Christians are sleeping, fleshly, and worldly, and must awake from their slumber, and must *"behave properly," "put on the Lord Jesus Christ,"* and *"put on the breastplate of faith and love."* Rom. 13:11-14, 1 Thess. 5:4-11

* **Prophecy helps you understand God's plans for the Jews.** The Old Testament describes God's work with the Jews, and the New Testament focuses on His work with the church and His renewed work with the Jews. Many passages about God's future for the Jews sit next to passages about His future for the church. Knowing these side-by-side passages helps you see how God works with both Jews and Christians in these last days. Matt. 24:9-14 – 24:15-26; Luke 21:12-19 – 20-24; 2 Thess. 2:1-2 – 2:3-9; Rev. 7:4-9 – 7:9-15; Rev. 12:1-16 – 12:17, 13:1-18

* **Prophecy helps you learn God's character,** that He is holy in His ways, sovereign in His work, wise in His dealings, just in His actions, powerful in His deeds, faithful to His word, merciful to His people, compassionate to His children. Is. 6:3, Is. 46:9-11, Jer. 9:23-24, Rom. 8:28, Rev. 15:3

* **Prophecy helps you know God's purposes.** God is actively carrying out His purposes. Reading His prophetic word enables you to see the big picture, His plans from beginning to end, His purposes for all the people on this planet. There are many prophecies about Christ's 1st

coming and 2nd coming, and about His plans for the Jews and the church. Isaiah 60, John 14:1-3, Rev. 7

*** Prophecy tells us that this evil age is coming to an end,** followed by a righteous age that lasts for 1000 years. It's imperative that you understand God's overall plans about the past, present, and future. Not long from now, Christ will return to rapture the church, judge the world, save a remnant of Jews, and begin His reign on earth. Matt. 28:19-20, Gal. 1:4, Eph. 1:21, Rev. 21:1-7

*** Prophecy helps you be ready for the future.** God's prophetic word has much to say about what you are to do in the end-times, that you are to use your gifts, work for God, witness to the lost, and disciple the saved. And in the context of prophecy, much is said about the character God wants you to have, that you are to have faith (Lk. 18:8), be sober (1 Th. 5:8), be loving (1 Pet. 4:8), be holy (2 Pet. 3:11), be fearless (Rev. 2:10), and be persevering (Rev. 13:10).

*** Prophecy motivates you to serve the Lord.** God has special work for you, a part for you to play in the end-times. What a privilege it is to live for Him at this time in history. *"It is like a man away* (Christ) *on a journey*, *who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves* (believers) *in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper* (the watchman) *to stay on the alert"* (Mk. 13:34). *"He* (Christ) *called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten talents and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.'"* Lk. 19:13, 1 Th. 1:9-10

*** Prophecy speaks about the hope of Christ's return, and this is to help you grow in holiness.** *"Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ… be holy…"* (1 Pet. 1:13-15). *"When He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."* 1 John 3:2-3

*** Prophecy is a present and relevant truth, and should change**

and charge your life. *"Do this, knowing the time… salvation is nearer to us than we first believed"* (Rom. 13:11).It won't be long before Christ returns to rapture the church and set up His kingdom on earth. Now is the time to be spiritually awake and alert; now is the time to use your money, time, and talents to do God's work; now is the time to preach the gospel and make disciples; now is the time, like never before in history, to be looking for Christ, to be expecting His return. Heb. 10:37

*** Prophecy gives us a timeline of the future.** At the beginning of Daniel's 70th week, a 7-year period described in Dan. 9:27, there's an agreement between the Antichrist and the Jews. At this week's midpoint the Antichrist is revealed; at its end a remnant of Jews are saved; and sometime during the last 3½ years of this week Christians are raptured, are suddenly taken to join all believers from all time and meet Jesus Christ in the air. 1 Thess. 4:16-17

*** Prophecy gives much information about the millennial kingdom.** You need to study prophecy for it tells you about your future and that of all believers. Some key books describing this glorious, soon-coming, 1000-year age are Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Matt., 1 Thess., 2 Thess., and Revelation. *"The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before the nations"* (Is. 61:11). *"The Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth… Sing praises to our King."* Ps. 47:2, 6

*** Prophecy truly understood corrects errors with regards to the end times and Christ's return.** This is the truth: Christ is coming again; His coming is not imminent; tribulation is not wrath; Christians are on earth during the Antichrist's rule; Christians go through great tribulation but not God's wrath; Christ's coming is pre-millennial; Christ is not coming at the start of Daniel's 70th week but sometime during its 2nd half; the rapture occurs at the beginning of Christ's coming; we will know the general time of the rapture but not the specific time (Matt. 24:32-36); Iran (Persia), though recently defeated, will again be strong and attack Israel (Ez. 38); God's promises for the Jews have not been

reneged or canceled but will be fulfilled in the future. Ps. 105:8-11

* **Prophecy tells us the need for watchmen,** people who see God's prophetic word being fulfilled in the world and then alert others. Christians are to be like the sons of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what they should do. 1 Chr. 12:32, Ez. 3:1-11, Mark 13:33-35

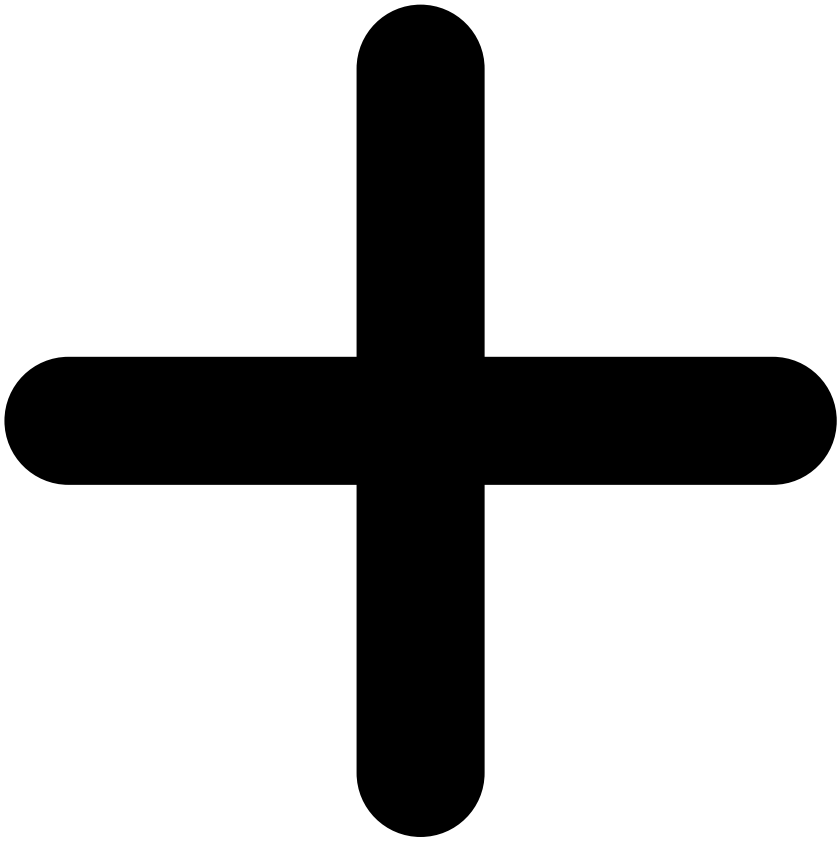
* **Prophecy is forward looking.** God wants you to thank Him for the past but not focus on it. Prophecy helps you to look ahead to the future, to press ahead, to be excited about your God-given future, and do the work He wants you to do. God's work is to result in fruitful labor, and the fruit He gives you will be an eternal blessing to Him, others, and yourself. "*I press on toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* Phil. 3:12-14

* **Prophecy describes your brand new body.** It says that your new body will be like Jesus Christ's (1 Jn. 3:2) and the angels (Luke 20:36). It will be perfect, powerful, glorious, immortal, and spiritual (1 Cor. 15:42-44). *"We eagerly wait the Lord Jesus Christ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory by the exertion of His power."* Phil. 3:21

* **Prophecy focuses on Jesus Christ,** that He will visibly, lovingly, and powerfully be your Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and King, that you will be with Him forever, and experience eternal life like never before. Eternal life is an eternal, everlasting relationship with Christ. (Jn. 17:3). *"To live is Christ and to die is gain"*(Ph. 1:21). When you die or when Christ returns, your relationship with Him will take on a new dimension, a glorious, wonderful, unbelievable change from what it is now. *"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand on the earth. And after my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see Him with my own eyes – I and not another. How my heart yearns within me."* Job 19:25-27

Isn't it encouraging to know that God tells us the future. Here are two

other posts that will help you understand prophecy: *“Prophecy Is Predicting the Future”* and *“What You Need to Know About Prophecy.”*



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