

# Your QUESTIONS About Prophecy ANSWERED Part 13

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## Is the Study of Prophecy Important? PART 3

# If You Don't Ask the Right Question, You May Be Missing the Truth

Previously, we discussed how the subject of prophecy has become a taboo subject in the church of today. The sad reality is that as a consequence, we tend to overlook a key teaching in scripture; Jesus is coming again as king to reign with the raptured and resurrected saints over a physical kingdom.

Just before Jesus' ascension the disciples ask Jesus, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They were asking about a literal kingdom where Jesus as the promised Son of David (the Messiah) would reign. Notice that Jesus' answer is not a correction of wrong thinking, but rather insight into when the kingdom would be restored. "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority." (Acts 1:6-7) Just as these first followers of Jesus asked a question, we need to ask an important question. The question we need to ask is whether or not it is important for us in the church to be informed about this literal "kingdom" that so concerned the disciples.

A number of years ago I was having coffee with a pastor after I had spoken in the evening service. My message had been on the fall feasts of Israel and how they

picture Jesus' Second Coming. Our small talk eventually led to a discussion of more serious matters such as the present world scene and the return of Jesus Christ.

Soon a puzzled look came over the pastor's face. Then he confessed that he really struggled with understanding God's plan for the last days and asked if I could recommend any books for him to read. I listed off several books and he had read several of them. As he began asking more questions, I came to realize his study of prophecy had begun at the wrong place. He had begun his study by asking "What is going to happen to the church in the last days?" This is a good question, but it is not a good starting point. The first question we need to ask is "What is God's plan for the Jews and the promised kingdom of God?" Like many Christians today, this pastor was so focused on the church that he missed the big picture which includes Israel and the Jews.

We all struggle with trying to see the bigger picture. The Jews in Jesus' day were so focused on the kingdom promised to them by God that they missed the King-Redeemer when He came. Even today this narrow focus on the kingdom is a stumbling block for Jews considering

Jesus. This is beautifully illustrated in a testimony I just finished reading of a rabbi who came to believe in Jesus as Messiah. He was a Zionist rabbi who was led to research the scriptures and other Jewish writings concerning Israel's promised future kingdom.

*In my double duty as Zionist Rabbi and teacher, I began delving into the more than 150 prophecies relating to Zionism. To my astonishment, I realized that more than 90 percent of these Zionist prophecies had to do with either the Messiah or the Messianic age and the road to peace. My research soon brought me face to face with questions that I could not avoid: 'Did Yeshua actually fulfill all the prophecies of His coming, as Christians claim?' Why had I never heard these scriptures discussed? I had no other choice but to seek out the answers, which I prepared to do.*

While the Jewish people have focused on the kingdom and missed the King/Redeemer, we Christians have so focused on the King/Redeemer that we have tended to ignore the coming

<sup>1</sup> Don Goldstein, "I Have a Friend Who's Jewish...Do You?" p. 68. This book can be downloaded free by going to [www.prophecyrevealed.com](http://www.prophecyrevealed.com)

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### PART 3

Kingdom and God's plan for the Jews.

This can be illustrated by a typical church doctrinal statement. A church's doctrinal statement is an indicator of what a local assembly of believers considers essential doctrine. With this in mind, I wanted to see what was emphasized doctrinally in churches reaching the younger generations. I checked the doctrinal statements on the websites of 23 church plants or new churches, all of which belonged to solid evangelical denominations. Only one church stated they believed Jesus would return to reign. Two churches did not even mention the Second Coming of Jesus. The remaining twenty stated Jesus would come back to judge the world. While the sampling of churches was small, it nevertheless revealed a prevailing trend—there is an attitude that the return of Jesus and the events surrounding His return are no big deal.

Church history has shown that ignoring the Second Coming and God's plan for the Jewish people surrounding His coming has led to disturbing results. The most tragic has been the doctrinal position held by some that God has condemned the Jews. This always leads to anti-Semitism in the church. I witnessed this firsthand.

Early on in my ministry, I had the privilege of witnessing to a young Jewish couple in Denver. I had been to their home several times. The last time I visited them was just after the Passover/Easter season. As the husband received me into his home, I noticed his welcome was different. He was very cool, even cold to me. After a few pleasantries were shared, I soon understood the reason for the cool reception. On Good Friday,

their 6-year-old son had come home from school crying and dirty. When the mother asked her son what had happened, all he could say was, "Mommy, what does Christ-killer mean?" It turned out some older boys had approached him on the way home from school calling him a "dirty Jew" and then began beating him up because he had killed Jesus. You can imagine the parents' reaction toward me as I tried to tell them that Jesus loved them. Sadly, over the years I have heard similar stories from others.

It could be said that this incident was carried out by some kids who didn't know any better, but where did they hear that Jews killed Jesus? More than likely, it was from their parents or other adults who in turn heard it from church leaders who believed God was finished with the Jews thus condemning them.

Ignoring God's plan for the Jews doesn't always result in such overt hatred. Instead, it leads to ignoring the Jewish people's need of salvation. Dr. Harold A. Sevener, in his history of Chosen People Ministries, "A Rabbi's Vision," writes the following:

*Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the church, and most Christian theologians, held the position that the church had superseded Israel. Most theologians and the clergy taught that the Old Testament promises concerning Israel and the Jewish people found their fulfillment in the church. They further taught that the Jews were responsible for the death of the Messiah and were therefore under the curse of God. Such teaching caused Christians to look upon the Jewish people as*

*renegades to Christianity - outcasts. But as some Christians and ministers began to study the scriptures, they recognized that God's program for the Church was inseparably linked with the Jewish people. Their study of God's Word led them away from popular opinion, and to the conclusion that God was not finished with the Jewish people.*

*Many concluded, in fact, that the Messiah could only return when the Jewish people were allowed to return to the land of Israel... The outgrowth of these convictions brought about a renewed zeal for the Jewish people to accept Yeshua (Jesus) as personal Messiah and Savior.*

Understanding God's future plan for Israel and the Jews is important. It helps us to more fully understand the events of the end times. It also helps us avoid the pitfall of anti-Semitism that has often characterized the church in history. Finally and most important, by understanding God's plan for the Jews, we better understand God's heart for them and His desire for them to come to the truth of Messiah. This subject is so important that a former colleague did his doctoral dissertation on it. He observed that Israel had been left out of theological study. Today that dissertation is a 1000 page textbook titled, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*. We hope you see the importance of this study and we hope you ask the right question.

**Larry Jaffrey**

<sup>2</sup>Harold A. Sevener, "A Rabbi's Vision - A Century of Proclaiming Messiah, A History of Chosen People Ministries, Inc. 1994- pg. 1

<sup>3</sup>Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology", 1994, Ariel Ministries Press, [www.ariel.org](http://www.ariel.org)