

Your QUESTIONS About Prophecy

ANSWERED Part 12 By Larry G. Jaffrey

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Is the Study of Prophecy Important? PART 2

The study of prophecy over the past several decades has become a very emotional and often avoided subject. As we discussed in the last issue, there are many reasons for this situation. They range from the “here and now” mindset of the day to the differing interpretations of the various prophetic passages.

The tendency may be to avoid the topic concerning the study of “Last Day” events, but we need to remember two things. First, if prophecy is unimportant, why did God inspire the writers of the scriptures to write so much on the subject? Second, we are commanded to understand one of the key issues in the prophetic scriptures - the “abomination of desolation.”

A study of the events leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus is a look into the future. Yet, there are present benefits to such a study.

We will be blessed

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. (Revelation 1:3 NKJV)

No other book of the Bible claims that readers and hearers of its words will be blessed as does the book of Revelation. In *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes:

“There are many blessings of God which are unconditional, and the believer is entitled to them simply by virtue of the fact he is a believer. However, other blessings of God are conditional, and the blessing of God available to the believer who studies this book is one of them. Studying prophecy gives one a love and longing for the return of the Messiah. Those believers who love and look for His return are promised a special crown.... Believers often rob themselves of certain blessings available to them because they fail to take God’s conditional aspects seriously. The promise attached to the study of the Book of Revelation is one of these conditional blessings. While blessings are available for the study of God’s Word in general, a unique blessing is available through the study of this particular book.”

The qualifying ingredient to receiving the blessing is “keeping” or taking to heart the truths revealed in the book. This would include the dangers of rebelling against God, the reality of heaven, the spiritual battle between good and evil, the judgment of sin and, most importantly, the return of Jesus.

We are enabled to live holy lives

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16 NKJV)

Peter is stressing in these verses that we are called to be holy. Holiness will come when we “gird up” or prepare our minds for the active spiritual battle, are “sober” or self-controlled, and “rest” or set our hope on the appearing of Jesus.

Isn’t it interesting that Peter includes the Second Coming in the steps to having a holy life. The grace that will be bestowed at Jesus’ return should motivate us to live obedient lives today. Sadly, by de-emphasizing the study of prophecy, we have de-emphasized the Second Coming of Jesus thus eliminating one of the steps to holy living. This may help explain why today in North America the moral standard of the Church is not much different from that of the world.

This hope not only motivates us to live holy lives, but it also enables us to more effectively share our faith. In chapter 3 of the same epistle Peter writes:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” (1 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV)

Here Peter is building upon one’s knowledge of prophecy. Not only do we believe in the Second Coming, but we understand the spiritual battle as well. Being called “evildoers” is nothing more than the temporal outcome of the spiritual battle that is going on and is so vividly explained in the book of Revelation.

We have a better understanding of the world situation

What’s wrong with the world? Why can’t we just get along? So goes the frustration of those who desire to see peace in the world.

If one does not have a biblical understanding of how the world will be in the last days, there is a tendency to deal with the symptoms instead of the real cause. The common mantra is that we don’t have peace because of poverty

and greed. Therefore we are told that the rich nations must give up their wealth to help the poor nations. Also we are told that nationalistic governments foster this bad situation so we must have a one world government which propagates peace. The basic premise is if we really try hard enough we can have peace.

A student of Bible prophecy understands that the real problem in the world is sin. Sin leads to wars, poverty, greed and unjust governments. Jesus said this will be indicative of the church age. It will be an age of “war and rumors of wars.” (Matthew 24:6) Paul writes,

“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 NKJV)

We would like to see a world at peace, but we realize from our understanding of prophecy that any peace will be temporary at best.

Then there is the nation of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole. Why is there such hatred for Israel and the Jews in the world? A study of the book of

Revelation provides the answer. The hatred of Israel began with Satan and his desire to destroy the “woman” (Israel) through whom the Messiah (male Child) would come. (Revelation 12)

We strengthen our walk with the Lord

A major benefit to the study of prophecy is that we gain a greater appreciation for the fact God is in control of His creation. If we understand God is in control of history, we grow in confidence that He can handle our life situations as we place them in His hands.

Faith is action based upon fact. As we see God’s prophesied plan for the ages begin to take shape, our faith in God becomes stronger.

We also grasp the urgency of the times as we begin to realize this age will come to an end in the near future and then there will be judgment. This knowledge motivates us to keep “short accounts” in our relationships with others and it strengthens our resolve to be diligent in our walk of faith.

Yes, the study of prophecy is important. Not only are we commanded to understand prophecy, but there are spiritual benefits as well.

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