

WHY STUDY PROPHECY?

BIBLE STUDY BY JAMIE MCNAB

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Why study Bible prophecy at all? It comes with an associated danger. It can be quite abused. It can have quite harmful circumstances.

There are more important topics according to lots of other Christians. For example ... Rick Warren ... in his book, "The Purpose Driven Life" describes prophecy as a distraction.

With all of the end-time prophecies ... people sometimes decided not to have a family or ... because Christ is going to return imminently ... some of these people didn't save for their pensions. Perhaps we made decisions on a short-term basis ... stocking up on food and drink and clothing ... for when the end-time comes in just a few years time. And now ... 50 years on ... ?

What about people like Harold Camping? Lots of people believed him and sold their homes ... left their jobs and careers to fund this final message. And Jesus didn't return as he promised.

What about Mr Ron Weinland? He declared himself and his wife as the two witnesses and that Christ should return in 2011. Then 2012. Then 2013 and on and on.

Perhaps that is why some people are put off the subject of prophecy. Would it be better to avoid prophecy? No. But let's avoid speculation.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

16 All Scripture (including the prophetic portion of about 25-33%) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So obviously we should be studying the whole Bible ...including prophecy!!

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NKJV)

19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed (pay attention to) as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,
21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

So ... prophecy originates by God through the Holy Spirit. So should we ignore prophecy? Absolutely not. God inspired it. It helps us to be instructed in righteousness and every good work.

2 Peter 3:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),
2 that you may be mindful (remember!!) of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour,

Peter seems to think that this is important.

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NKJV)

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

4 and **saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”**

The answer is that speculation hasn't come to pass. Prophecy does come to pass.

2 Peter 3:8-10 (NKJV)

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

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.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

What does this mean for us?

2 Peter 3:11-12 (NKJV)

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

We ought to be people of holy conduct ... living Godly lives.

Titus 2:11-14 (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 ... even the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,

14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and **purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.**

We have our eyes fixed on a glorious event. It should influence how you and I choose to live.

1 Peter 4:7-10 (NKJV)

7 But the end of all things is at hand (near); therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. (an expectancy of prophesied events ... therefore live right!!)

8 And above all things **have fervent love** for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

9 **Be hospitable to one another** without grumbling.

10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Because the end is near ... we should be living right.

Romans 13:10-14 (NKJV)

10 Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.**

11 And **do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.**

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. (Live right!!)

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Matthew 16:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’;

3 and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ **Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. (You can understand the weather ... but not the signs of the times)**

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And He left them and departed.

Let’s apply that to us. Can we discern the times or are we so ignorant that we ignore prophecies? How can we discern the signs of the times if we don’t know what they are? What about today’s signs of the times?

Jesus was a prophet like unto Moses.

Luke 21:29-31 (NKJV)

29 Then He spoke to them (**His disciples**) a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.

30 When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

31 So you also, **when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.**

Luke 21:34-36 (NKJV)

34 **“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.**

35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. (Suddenly! Unexpectedly!)

36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

We should be prepared ... watchful!!

Matthew 24:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, **“Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”**

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: **“Take heed that no one deceives you.**

Matthew 24:15-18 (NKJV)

15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”

(whoever reads, let him understand),

16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

A time of urgency ... “when you see ... “. If we have never read the Book of Daniel ... how would we know what the abomination is? We should be knowledgeable about all of the prophecies. If we did this ... we could avoid deception.

Matthew 24:21-26 (NKJV)

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

23 “Then if anyone says to you, (that would be you or me) ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it.

24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

25 See, I have told you beforehand. (I’m giving you a warning ...so you won’t be deceived!!)

26 “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it.

Matthew 24:32-33 (NKJV)

32 “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! (all of the things that Jesus has described here in his prophetic discourse)

Matthew 24:42 (NKJV)

42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Matthew 24:44 (NKJV)

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 (NKJV)

1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

3 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.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 (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.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (NKJV)

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Dramatic times are coming. Strong delusion. People who neglect prophecy will be vulnerable.

If we ignore prophecy ... we will miss out on a blessing.

Revelation 1:1-3 (NKJV)

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he who reads (aloud) and those who hear the words (aloud) of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Blessed is he that reads. There is a built-in blessing when you read the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 22:6-7 (NKJV)

6 Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

7 “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”(You can’t really keep them if you don’t know what they are)

Revelation 22:18-19 (NKJV)

18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Don’t add to the prophecy ... and don’t take away the words either. How can you take things out? By tampering with the scriptures. But more likely ... that you can take away the words of the prophecy by dismissing them ... neglect them ... and treat them of little value.

Don’t ignore prophecy. Try to keep our speculation from what prophecy says. We should know what we are looking out for.

So. Why study prophecy?

1. Because it is a big part of the Bible.
2. To encourage us to live right.
3. It warns us of specific things to come and protects us from deception. So ... if we’re not clued up we are vulnerable.
4. There is a blessing for studying prophecy ... at least the Book of Revelation.

Jesus has given us plenty of time to get ready ... plenty of time to be familiar with prophecy.

We'll soon be at that point ... Jesus will say ... ready or not ... here I come. It will be better if we are ready!!