

Three Major Benefits of Studying Prophecy

- The study of prophecy encourages a high view of Scripture.
 - The harmony of Scripture becomes evident.
 - The accuracy of prophesied events is testimony to the veracity of Scripture.
- The study of prophecy is essential to a Biblical worldview.
 - Worldview is your philosophy of existence or theory of past, present, and future.
 - Both beginnings and endings are essential to worldview.
 - If you don't know where we came from or where we are going, you have a very inadequate worldview.
- The study of prophecy solidifies your eschatology.
 - This is the most evident, but is more of a byproduct than the actual product of studying prophecy.
 - You study Scripture to know what it says. When you know what it says, you will know what it means.

How to study prophecy

- Start with the Bible, not a book.
 - Every book on prophecy has some degree of interpretation.
 - Know what The Book says before you learn what books say.
- Start with the Old Testament, not the New Testament.
 - If you start with Matthew 24 or Revelation 4-22, you will have confusion.
- Start with the first coming, not the second coming. (or with fulfilled, not unfulfilled prophecy).
 - Be consistent in your interpretive method.
 - If you are literal in fulfilled prophecies, be literal in unfulfilled prophecies.

Bedrock Principles for Prophetic Interpretation

- The Bible is written progressively (dispensationally).
 - Later Scripture will add more information that earlier Scripture, but will not contradict.
- The Old Testament and the Gospels do not prophesy about events concerning or related to the Body of Christ (that is, the church).
 - These were a hidden mystery.
 - When you ignore this bedrock principle, you end up with unfortunate application.
- The prophecies of the Old Testament and the Gospels will be in, of, through, or about Israel.
 - They are not about the church.
 - When they speak of the nations (gentiles), it is the relation of the nations to God through Israel.

What we expect from the Old Testament

- The Messiah in a two-fold ministry.
 - Ministry of the sinless, suffering servant.
 - Interim period of waiting.
 - Ministry of royal reign.

- A coming Day of the Lord –
 - Preceded by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit
 - “before the great and terrible day of the Lord” - Joel 2:28-30
 - The age of grace is unseen but comes between vv. 29 & 30
 - We only know this by reading what is revealed *later*, in the pages of the New Testament.
- The restoration of the Jewish nation – Joel 3:1, Jeremiah 30:3
- War! – Joel 3:9
- The Messiah and His Kingdom – Joel 3:18

Why do people teach the rapture where the rapture isn't taught?

- Because they do not take the “mystery” or the “Kingdom” literally (though they do take the rapture literally).
- Because they are working too hard to prove themselves.
- Where do they see the rapture?
 - Daniel 12:1 - http://www.solagroup.org/articles/faqs/faq_0004.html
 - Isaiah 26:20-21 - <http://www.lamblion.us/2012/07/the-rapture-in-old-testament.html>
 - Matthew 24:37-41

Dealing with a prophetic passage

- Familiarize yourself with the historical context.
- Use cross references to find patterns and insights.
- Recognize that large gaps may take place between two segments of the same verse or passage.
- Familiarize yourself with the *whole* of prophecy before you are dogmatic on the *parts* of prophecy.