

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 11/19/16

Bible Prophecies

The Importance of Prophecy

Because the Bible is the only book which gives us an accurate forecast of the future, we must turn to its pages in order that we may be delivered from inexcusable ignorance and be prepared as God unfolds His prophetic program (Matthew 22:29). Many Christians do not study prophecy, and there are several reasons for this:

1. **Some mistakenly think** that the subject is too involved and difficult. It is true that prophecies can only be fully understood in the light of their fulfilment, but the "main lines of prophetic truth" revealed in the Bible may be understood by all who will obey 2 Timothy 2:15.
2. **Some feel that** to study prophecy leads to speculation. There is a danger of this, but surely we can be Spirit-led in our study of God's truth?
3. **Still others say** that the prophetic outlook is a very dark one and that to study it leads to pessimism ☐- but can a believer be pessimistic? ☐- see what Isaiah 53:11 and Hebrews 10:13 say.

Consider the following propositions which constitute some of the reasons why we should study prophecy:

1. The major portion of the Bible consists of prophecy; thus, if we neglect this portion we neglect the major part of our Bible.

Glance through the pages of your Bible and notice how much is composed of prophetic statement, and then remember that the major part of Bible prophecy still awaits fulfilment. If we do not study prophecy we must confine ourselves to a very selected section of the Old Testament. Moreover, we shall need to be very careful in reading the sayings of our Lord recorded in the four Gospels, for many of them are prophetic. The Epistles also contain much prophecy, and so does the book of Revelation! The whole Bible is inspired, and it contains God's message concerning future things.

2. The Scriptures cannot be rightly understood or unfolded if the prophetic sections are neglected.

The Bible is one glorious whole, and there is a unity running through the entire book. Only by accepting the whole can we have at our disposal all the truth God wants us to know, and only thus can we rightly divide the Word (2 Timothy 2:15). If "the New

(Testament) is in the Old concealed and the Old (Testament) is in the New revealed", then we must study Old and New in order to gain the message of the whole.

3. There is a special reason why we should search, study, understand and believe the prophetic Word.

In Luke 24, notice that the word "all" is used three times in verses 25 and 27. By this statement our Lord set His seal to the reliability and the authority of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. Does this not constitute a strong reason why we should study these prophecies, especially as they reveal Him? Look up Luke 24:27 and John 5:39.

4. The already fulfilled prophecies in the Bible in a special way confirm the inspiration, the accuracy and therefore the authority of the Book.

Why is this? Because all the Bible prophecies which have been fulfilled have been fulfilled literally, to the very letter. Prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah, to the Jews and to the Gentiles were written hundreds of years before they were fulfilled. Take the following prophecies relating to our Lord's first advent:

Isaiah 40:3 tells us that John was to be His forerunner; **Isaiah 7:14** that He would be born of a virgin; **Micah 5:2** that He would be born in Bethlehem; **Psalms 72:10 and 15** that the Wise Men would visit Him; **Isaiah 53** that He would be the sin-bearer of His people; **Zachariah 11:12-13** that He would be betrayed and sold for thirty pieces of silver; **Psalms 22:14 and 17** that He would be crucified; **Isaiah 53:9** that He would be buried with the rich; **Psalms 16:8-10** that He would rise again; and **Psalms 68:18** that He would ascend on high.

Thus, seeing that all the prophecies concerning our Lord's first advent were literally fulfilled, does not this fact give us great confidence in the Bible, and are we not also perfectly justified in expecting that all the prophecies concerning His second advent, and all the prophecies which await fulfillment, will also be literally fulfilled?

5. Only by reading and studying the prophetic Scriptures can we know what God is doing and thus be prepared for events.

The prophetic word is God's blueprint of future events □- look up Amos 3:7, and then Genesis 18:17; John 15:15 and 16:4, and compare Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

6. Prophetic truth strengthens faith at a time when the whole world is gripped with fear.

Luke 21:26 is certainly true of many in the world today, but Luke 21:28 should be true of all believers. If we leave God out of our reckoning, how can we help being fearful as we look out on the world with all its unrest, alarm, arming for war and wickedness?

7. We must warn the ungodly of what is going to happen in the future, and in order to do this we must be instructed in God's program for the days ahead. Every Christian should be constantly re-echoing John the Baptist's warning □- Matthew 3:7, for God's solemn judgments are soon to fall upon a Christ-rejecting world □- look up 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and Ezekiel 33:7-8. Do you know any more solemn words than these?

8. Only as we understand the prophetic Word shall we be safeguarded against the perils and vices which are peculiar to these closing days of the age.

We should constantly read 2 Timothy, chapter 3, and notice that verses 1-13 show the characteristics of these days, and that verses 14-17 tell us how we may be delivered from the "pull" of these evil things.

9. Prophetic truth received into the mind and heart powerfully influences character and conduct.

In Romans 15:4 we are told about three results of studying prophecy, and Daniel 10:19 has something important to say to us about this too!

10. There is a special blessing promised to all who will read and study God's prophetic truth.

We are specifically told this in Revelation 1:3 and 22:7.