

(Psalm 16:10, 22:22).

And prophecy tells how Jesus Christ will return, not as a humble child but as the reigning King of Kings. The more we understand prophecy the more we will be drawn closer to Jesus. We will find ourselves wanting to know more about the Lord Jesus, whom the Bible describes as that true Prophet of whom all the prophets spoke.

4. PROPHECY HELPS US COPE WITH LIFE UNTIL JESUS COMES BACK

The Bible calls this steady patience, or trust in the Lord. We read of this patience in James 5:7: *"Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."* Note the emphasis on—patience. That is, simply living one day at a time, knowing that all things are under His control and will unfold in His way. An understanding of prophecy helps us wait patiently upon the Lord. A further reason for studying prophecy is that:

5. PROPHECY ENCOURAGES US TO BE THE BEST WE CAN UNTIL JESUS RETURNS

The thought of someday standing face to face with Jesus Christ makes me want to obey Him now, so that I'm ready for when He comes. The Scriptures warn, *"You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come when you do not expect Him"* (Matthew 24:44). When we study prophecy, we encourage watchfulness. We need to be in readiness. We don't know the day or hour Jesus will come. We need to watch our life-style, dedication, and loyalty to Christ. We need to wait. We need to watch. We need to be ready!

6. PROPHECY MOTIVATES US TO SERVE JESUS EARNESTLY UNTIL HE COMES

The apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:10: "We

are his (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared for us to do." In one of His parables, Jesus said, *"Occupy till I come"* (Luke 19:13). Paul served and suffered in the glow of the *"any time now"* return of Jesus. In Philippians 3:14, he wrote, *"I work, strive, reach out toward the mark for the prize of the high (heavenly) calling of God in Christ Jesus."* Men and women who believe in the prophesy of the return of Jesus, are driven beyond human limitations and human understanding to heights of service for their Lord. Prophecy helps us to wait, watch, and work.

7. PROPHECY SETS EVERYTHING IN PERFECT PERSPECTIVE

A study of prophecy frees us from an earthbound view. Our hope is the world to come. The future is important to here and now, and today touches eternity. This world's value system will perish, so don't get tied to it. *1. Prophecy tells us Jesus Christ will come to right earth's wrongs. 2. Prophecy explains the Church. 3. Prophecy tells us Jesus Christ will come to receive His own. 4. Prophecy also tells us that when Jesus Christ comes some people will unprepared.*

Prophecy tells every non-Christian to do two things and to do them NOW. First, **repent!** - Change your mind about Jesus. Turn from yourself, your neglect of the gospel and your sin. Forsake your sinful ways and evil thoughts. Second, **receive Christ** as your personal Lord and Saviour. The promise of Jesus in John 1:12 is, *"To all who receive Him, to those who believe in His name. He gives eternal life"*.

To know the Saviour as your Lord and God, just bow your head and sincerely ask Him into your life. Jesus said, *"Look I'm here, knocking at your heart's door. If you open the door and let me in I will come in and we will live together forever"* (Revelation 3:20"). The gift of God is Eternal Life.

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BEYOND THE CRYSTAL BALL

Almost everyone has an interest in prophecy. People want to know the future. Lately, we are conscious of impending doom. Catastrophic events are worrying us. Everyone wants to know what's ahead! The unstable political climate worldwide is generating an interest in prophecy. Government leaders demonstrate all too often, that they do not have the answers. Many seem to realise more than ever today, that the Bible has something reliable to say about tomorrow's headlines. And in fact, is the only accurate source of information about the future.

The Christian is indeed highly privileged. We not only have the blessed joy of knowing what Jesus Christ did for us in the past at His first coming to earth, but we have the honour of being privy to much of what is going to happen in the future. An understanding of prophecy results in a new interest in spiritual things and a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ.

WHAT IS PROPHECY? The word comes from two Greek words - "*pro*" which means "for" or "in front of" or "on behalf of" and "*phanai*" - which means "to speak". Therefore, the Biblical prophet had two responsibilities: **1.** To speak out in behalf of God. That was **Preaching!** **2.** To speak 'beforehand' about the future in behalf of God. That was **Prophecy!** But why should we study Biblical Prophecy?

Let me suggest **7 Reasons Why I Believe We Need To Study Biblical Prophecy.**

1. BECAUSE PROPHECY OCCUPIES AN ENORMOUS PART OF THE BIBLE

The Word of God in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 affirms that: "*All scripture is God breathed and is profitable*

for teaching, for reproof, for discipline, and for instruction in right living." Why is this? - "*That the man or woman of God may be mature, completely equipped to do good deeds.*" The prophetic Scripture, like all other Scripture, is a sacred word from God. It is profitable, practical and relevant in teaching us how to live.

At least 27% of the Bible is prophecy. One prophetic event, the Second Coming of Christ, is so prominent that it is mentioned in every New Testament book. Matthew, chapters 24 and 25, Mark chapter 13, and Luke 21, deal specifically with Christ's second coming to earth, as well as 2 Thessalonians and Revelation.

The return of Jesus Christ is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament, which means, one out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament deals with this event. Dr. James Gray said, "*Taking it in bulk, so much of the of the Bible is predictive, that no further reason is necessary for why Christians should study prophecy.*"

In simple language, Jesus said, "*If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also*" (John 14:3). In Acts 1:11 we read the two angels saying to the disciples, "*Men of Galilee, this same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.*" The ascension of Jesus was a bodily, visible, literal ascension. The promise is He "*will come in exactly the same way.*"

Since these promises are the unshakable, unmistakable, unchangeable Word of God, we dare not neglect prophetic Scripture.

2. PROPHECY PROVIDES ANSWERS TO LIFE'S MOST DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Only the prophetic Scriptures answer tough questions like: Where are the dead? Is there life after death? Is there such a thing as re-incarnation? Is there a Hell? What will heaven be like? Who goes where? Will we know each other in heaven? How many judgments are there? Who will be judged? Will believers be judged? Will the nations be judged? When will the Tribulation take place? How long will this time last? Will believers be present or absent? What about the battle of Armageddon? When will it take place? Where? What about the 1,000 year reign of Christ? Who will reign with Him? Is it literal? When will the lion and the lamb lie down together? Who are the 144,000? These and hundreds of other difficult question can only be answered by a study of prophecy.

3. PROPHECY BRINGS US CLOSER TO JESUS

Time after time, Jesus referred to the prophetic Scripture. Jesus lived in the awareness of prophecy. Actually, He Himself fulfilled some of it. For example, we read in Matthew 1:22-23, "*Now all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet Isaiah: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel— which means 'God with us' ".* Four more times in the same chapter - in verses 4,14,15 and 17 - Matthew points out that Jesus fulfilled prophetic Scripture. Jesus knew that His disciples were familiar with the prophetic Scriptures. Surely Jesus would expect the same from you and me. Prophecy is woven around Jesus.

The birth of Jesus was prophesied (Isaiah 7:14 Micah 5:2). His life and death were prophesied (Psalm 110:4 Psalm 22 Isaiah 53). His three days in the grave were prophesied (Jonah 3:5 -9, cf. Matthew 12:40). His resurrection from the dead was prophesied