

WHY SHOULD WE STUDY BIBLE PROPHECY?

1. PROPHECY IS A MAJOR PART OF DIVINE REVELATION.

Approximately 27% of the Bible is prophecy. 28.5% of the Old Testament and 21.5% of the New Testament.

- There are 333 prophecies concerning Christ: 109 of which were fulfilled by His first coming; leaving 224 yet to be fulfilled in the second coming.
- One out of every 30 verses in the New Testament refers to the Lord's coming.
- Twenty-three of the 27 New Testament books mention the Lord's coming.
- There are 1,527 Old Testament passages that refer to the second coming.
- People are exhorted to be ready for the return of Jesus Christ over fifty times.

In Bible study, there's a principle known as the "Law of Proportions." This simply means that you can discern the importance of a subject by how much attention is devoted to it. By applying the law of proportion, biblical prophecy warrants serious study.

2. STUDYING PROPHECY HELPS PROTECT PEOPLE FROM HERESY.

From the earliest days of Christianity, true teachings of the church have been attacked and corrupted by false teachers. False teaching is addressed in almost every book of the New Testament.

- Speculative errors on the return of Christ have continued throughout church history. Date setters such as William Miller, who predicted Christ's return in 1843 and 1844 and Harold Camping, who set dates for the Rapture in 1994 and 2011. Many others have also set dates and all have been proven wrong.

Matthew 24:36

³⁶ *But of **that day and hour knoweth no man**, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

- The number of cults seems to be on the increase. Cults know people want answers about the future so they often start by talking about future events which deceives a lot of people into believing their false teachings. (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and others.)

Mark Hitchcock quote:

"Taking the time to study scripture and find out what it really says can go a long way in preventing the spread of false teachings like these. **An accurate understanding of Bible prophecy protects God's people from those who misuse it.**"

3. STUDYING PROPHECY SHOULD PROMPT US TO EVANGELIZE.

When people ask questions about future events or end times, it gives an opportunity for witnessing.

I Peter 3:15

¹⁵ *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: **and be ready always to give an answer** to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

4. PROPHECY SHOULD MOTIVATE CHRISTIANS TO LIVE GODLY LIVES.

II Peter 3:10-14

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

¹¹ *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, **what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,***

¹² *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

¹³ *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

¹⁴ *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, **be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.***

Charles Dyer a prophecy teacher says, “God gave prophecy to change our hearts, not just to fill our heads with knowledge. God never predicted future events just to satisfy our curiosity about the future. Every time God announces events that are future, He includes with His prediction’s practical applications to life. God’s pronouncements about the future carry with them specific advice for the **‘here and now’.**”

PROPHETIC TERMS

The “**last days**”, “**end times**”, and “**the day of the Lord**” are terms used in scripture. Although they are somewhat interchangeable terms, they also have somewhat more technical definitions too.

I. There are two separate **last days** recorded in the scriptures.

A. **The Church.**

1. In the New Testament, the term **last days** refers most often to the church and the church age.

2 Timothy 3:1

¹*This know also, that in the **last days** perilous times shall come.*

2 Peter 3:3

³*Knowing this first, that there shall come in the **last days** scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

2. For the church, the **last days** began at Pentecost and continues to the rapture of the Church. Therefore, the entire current church age can be called the **last days**.

Referring to this age as the **last days** is a sobering reminder that Christ could come at any time. His return is imminent.

B. **Israel.**

1. In the Old Testament, **last days** refer to the time leading up to and including the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom on earth. So, for Israel the **last days** begin with the Tribulation and end with the Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah 2:2

²*And it shall come to pass in the **last days**, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*

Ezekiel 38:16

¹⁶*And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the **latter days**, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.*

LAST DAYS FOR THE CHURCH	LAST DAYS FOR ISRAEL
Began at Pentecost	Begins at the start of the Tribulation
Ends with the Rapture	Ends with the Millennial Kingdom

II. END TIMES

A. **End times** is a broad term and **last days** is more specific.

1. The **end times**, refers to the events beginning with the Rapture and includes the Tribulation, the second coming of Christ, the Millennium, and ends in eternity. When the rapture takes place the **End Times** will begin.

III. THE DAY OF THE LORD

A. The Old Testament refers to **the Day of the Lord** nineteen specific times, but dozens of other places refer to **the day** or **that day**. The New Testament mentions **the Day of the Lord** four times.

B. What is the meaning of **the Day of the Lord**?

1. Does the word **day** refer to a 24hour day or a period of time? The word day is used in the Bible in three main ways, daylight, 24hr day, and a period of time.

2. Isaiah 13 and Zephaniah 1 describe **the Day of the Lord** as a dramatic judgement on the whole world, which will interfere with the light of the sun, moon, and stars. God will put down the proud and deal with sinners in judgement.

Isaiah 13:9-11

⁹Behold, the **DAY OF THE LORD** cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

¹⁰For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

¹¹And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Zephaniah 1:14-16

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of **the DAY OF THE LORD**: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

¹⁵That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

¹⁶A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

3. Zephaniah 3 and Joel 3 describe **the Day of the Lord** as a time of deliverance and blessing for Israel.

Zephaniah 3:14-17

¹⁴Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

¹⁵The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.

¹⁶In **THAT DAY** it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

¹⁷The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Joel 3:14, 17-18

*¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for **the day of the LORD** is near in the valley of decision.*

¹⁷So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

*¹⁸And it shall come to pass in **THAT DAY**, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.*

4. Putting these scriptures together, **the Day of the Lord** is any time God intervenes directly and dramatically in history, either to judge or to bless.

C. The future **Day of the Lord** is a period of time which includes divine judgments and blessings. It begins with the rapture and extends to the creation of the new heavens and new earth. There is also a specific future **Day of the Lord**.

Zechariah 14:1-4

¹Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

²For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

³Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

*⁴And his feet shall stand in **THAT DAY** upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

So, the **Day of the Lord** can be either a 24hour day or a period of time.

CONCLUSION:

We are **NOT** living in **the End Times** or **the Day of the Lord**. We are however living in **the Last Days** of the church age. The **End Times** and the **Day of the Lord** along with **the Last Days for Israel** will be a time of divine judgment upon the world followed by a time of unparalleled blessing.