

I. Why prophecy?

- A. St. Augustine, talking about the relationship between the Old and New Testaments – “The **new** is in the old concealed; the **old** in the new revealed.”
- B. Roughly 25% of the entire Bible is prophetic – Some fulfilled, some not
- C. Prophecy, 2 Greek words – “to speak for or before”
- D. Speaking and writing about an event before it occurs
- E. 2 Peter 1:16-21 – Apostles did not make up stories, evidence-based faith
- F. 6 things about why prophecy is important: (not exhaustive list)
 - a. COMFORTS - 1 Thess 4:13-18
 - b. CALMS – Titus 2:11-15
 - c. CONVERTS – Acts 17:30-34
 - d. CLEANSSES – 1 John 3:1-3
 - e. COMPELS – 2 Cor 5:9-15
 - f. CLARIFIES – Prophecy is a harmonized message or pattern of God’s plan for the church, world, Satan, unbelievers, etc.

II. How does one understand prophecy?

- A. 2 significant guidelines for the foundation to understanding and using prophecy
 - a. The Bible is a book – collection of 66 books, common theme
 - b. The Bible is a divine book – written outside the constraints of time
- B. 7 things that need to be considered to understand prophecy:
 - a. Consider prophecy as literal as possible
 - i. Isa 65:20-21
 - ii. We usually don’t read prophecy literally enough
 - b. Consider figurative and symbolic language
 - i. Words “like” and “as”
 - ii. LIKE
 - 1. Likeness in external appearance
 - 2. From the writer’s perspective
 - 3. 22x in Revelation
 - iii. AS
 - 1. Similarity in action or quality

- 2. 65x in Revelation
- iv. Figurative language is present if the statement taken in its normal sense would be impossible or illogical
 - 1. Rev 8:10-11
 - 2. Most likely figurative language – stars are larger than earth
- c. Consider prophecy as it focuses primarily on the Messiah
 - i. Rev 19:1-10
 - ii. The purpose of prophecy is to testify of Jesus Christ and to bring Him glory.
- d. Consider the principle of “foreshortening”
 - i. AKA The law of double reference
 - ii. Partial (near) and Final (far) fulfillments
 - iii. Like 2 mountain peaks with a valley between
 - iv. Luke 4:16-21 – Partial fulfillment of Isa 61:1-2
 - v. Acts 2:14-21 – Partial fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32
- e. Consider God’s built-in interpretations
 - i. Dan 2:31-45 – Daniel receives clarity via the dream
 - ii. Sometimes an angel clarifies – Dan 7 (next point)
- f. Consider parallel passages
 - i. Dan 7 & Rev 13 (come back to this)
 - ii. Like a message, transmitted in parts, each supporting the other
- g. Consider fulfilled prophecies and those still unfulfilled
 - i. Fulfilled prophecies are always 100% accurate
 - ii. Matt 24 – Literal destruction of the temple
 - iii. Eze 26:1-14 – Literal destruction of Tyre (Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander)

III. How do you be careful with prophecy?

- A. Don’t get sloppy with interpretation – No assumptions
- B. When in doubt, check the context
- C. Check for supporting passages
- D. Don’t dismiss passages that you don’t understand
- E. Just because it’s a common view doesn’t mean it’s correct
- F. Dan 7 & Rev 13