

Understanding Bible Prophecy

To understand prophecy, first we must understand what is the intent of the prophecy.

With few exceptions, Bible prophecy is not so we can "predict" the future. It is so we can understand events as they are occurring or shortly thereafter. Some exceptions would be the prophecy naming a specific future King, Cyrus of the Persian Empire (Isaiah 44:28) and Daniel's 70 weeks (Daniel 9) in which a specific timeline is given for the coming of Messiah.

Most prophecy is understood in the moment or after.

John 1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

John 1:20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

John 1:21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

John 1:22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

John 1:23 He said, **I am the voice** of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

John said **I am** the voice – present tense.

John 12:12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

John 12:13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

John 12:14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

John 12:15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

John 12:16 **These things understood not his disciples at the first:** but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

The disciples understood not at the first, but when (after) Jesus was glorified.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

Luke 24:45 **Then opened he their understanding,** that they might understand the scriptures,

Then (after it happened) he gave the disciples understanding.

Acts 2:16 But **this is** that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

This is – present tense – this is happening right now.

With current events now in early 2020 there are many once again proclaiming specific prophetic fulfillment and timelines. This desire to know the future isn't anything new. The disciples had the same desire.

Matthew 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

Matt 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Signs of the End of the Age

Matt 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, **Tell us, when** shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matt 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

No One Knows That Day and Hour

Matt 24:36 **But of that day and hour knoweth no *man***, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Matt 24:37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matt 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Matt 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matt 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matt 24:41 Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matt 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Matt 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Matt 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Here Jesus' closest followers are asking about a specific time. Jesus tells them no person knows the time. Rather it's going to be just a regular ordinary day. It will be a day that people don't think it will happen and suddenly it WILL happen.

Jesus tells us all to Be Ready. Be Ready at all times.

In another conversation the disciples asked Jesus again about the timing of His return.

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him,

saying, **Lord, wilt thou at this time** restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know** the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Acts 1:8 But **ye shall receive power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and **ye shall be witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This time Jesus tells them “**it is not for you to know**” the timing of those prophecies. He then gives a specific prophecy that they should focus on – receiving the Power of the Holy Ghost and working for the Kingdom.

Ye shall (prophetic) receive power.

Ye shall (prophetic) be witnesses.

The Lord puts their attention on the immediate need. The need to be born again into the kingdom **by** the power of the Holy Ghost and to be a witness for the kingdom **through** the power of the Holy Ghost.

There are the kingdoms of this world; there is the kingdom of Darkness; and God has a kingdom for us to enter. It is a spiritual kingdom.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

This is not a complete lesson about entering God's Kingdom, but I will draw your attention to what the Apostle Peter said in his first message to people wondering what to do on the day that the God's church first started.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

What shall we do?

The same thing that the apostles did from the beginning. Preach and teach that God has a promise for people that allows them to enter His kingdom.

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