***Biblical Prophecy

RV222-02***

We are studying "Political Babylon," segment number 10 in Revelation 18:1-24.

**The Destruction of Babylon**

Near the end of the seven-year tribulation era, God, under the seventh bowl judgment, recorded in Revelation 16:19, will obliterate the city of Babylon located on the Euphrates River in modern-day Iraq. That prophecy and that event is a done deal, and it's expressing the holy wrath of God. It will happen. When Babylon is destroyed, it will send enormous reverberations throughout the world's financial institutions. Revelation 18 is devoted to explaining that financial disaster that will have struck the whole earth with Babylon's fall. The reason for this is that, by then, Babylon will be under the antichrist's world government – the world control center for all commercial activities. With the destruction of Babylon, as the control center of world commerce, will come the collapse of banking and international business activities. The Bible is very clear that once the antichrist is a world ruler, nobody does any business without his approval: nobody buys; nobody sells; and, nothing goes on.

Well, when the control center collapses, then everything comes apart in all the financial world, throughout all the echelons of the industries. The merchants of the earth have supported the idol business of worshiping antichrist, and they have pledged allegiance to Babylon's world government. The political leaders of the world will have entered into all the immorality and the sensuality promoted by Babylon in exchange for her financial favors. With the destruction of Babylon comes total chaos then to the financial world.

The merchants, we learned in Revelation 18, are suddenly deprived of their lucrative incomes and of their wealth. Consequently, we're told that the world's businessmen sob, and they shake in emotional trauma because of their financial ruin. People whose whole lives are centered upon material things, and material possessions, and the pursuit of accumulating material wealth will have this kind of a reaction when it's suddenly cut off from them.

This was not uncommon during the Great Depression, when suddenly, in 1929, overnight, a man who was a millionaire on paper in the stocks and bonds that he possessed, woke up the next morning and found that all of that had dropped precipitously in value so that he was barely worth a few thousand dollars by the next morning. Consequently, commitments that had been made could not be paid. These men went into a panic. Those of us who were young, and were reared in that era of history, heard about men who would walk to their office door in the downtown office buildings, and jump out the window. They would kill themselves because suddenly their wealth; their power base; and, all that they had lived for had overnight dissipated.

That's what's going to happen at this point in time near the end of the tribulation. So, these businessmen worldwide are sobbing uncontrollably. They're shaking with the emotional trauma. These merchants, we're told, watch from afar in horror. Some are on-site, but most of them are watching through television in horror and disbelief as they see the whole city of Babylon reduced to a pile of ashes within a day's time, and even within an hour's time. The collapse of Babylon's financial empire is sudden, and it is complete.

**Bible Prophecy**

What are we talking about? We're talking about Bible prophecy. That raises questions in the minds of some people, especially as, we read about such unbelievable events on the near horizon of our own lifetime. It raises the question: is Bible prophecy really a preview of future events? Is this thing that the Bible is telling us here about Babylon something that is really going to historically take place? I can tell you that probably the vast majority of Christian denominations do not believe in prophecy as a record (a preview) of history. But the question is: does God in Scripture tell us what He plans to do at a certain point in future time; and, has past experience demonstrated that He fulfills these prophetic utterances, and does so in detail? In other words, has biblical prophecy in the past proven to be reliable so that when we read about such things as Babylon's doom, we can take it seriously? If we can't take prophecy seriously, what else in the Bible can you take seriously?

**The Bible**

That's the reason for which people cast doubt upon biblical prophecy – so they can undermine the authority of the Bible. The Bible is the problem for humanity today. Its authoritative declarations are a problem to the sin nature of man. So, in many circles, Bible prophecy is not taken seriously. It is considered wild speculation with no basis for certainty. The problem, as always, is to discredit the Bible's authority.

In "U.S. News and World Report," December 20th, 1993 is a picture on the cover of Jesus. The title article is "Who was Jesus, a New Look at His Words and Deeds." This is an old attempt to examine whether Jesus really was the person that He was, and that He did what He said He did. This article goes on, quoting all these magnificent and pompous and scholarly people from various universities and institutions around the country, who are casting aspersions upon Jesus as He is presented in the Bible. The point is that He's a made-up figure by the people who wrote the gospels. He didn't perform those miracles. They were illusions of a magician, and Jesus was a good magician. His words were expanded beyond what He said. His claims to deity were not from Him, but they were made up by His followers. All the basics that the Bible tells are being pursued by these people and outside sources that they consider more reliable than the Bible itself.

Here is the Scripture – a book that has been under attack for centuries in seeking to find a mistake in it. That's all. They just to find a good major error, so that the claim to inspiration, and that the Bible was governed and guided by God, could be undermined and dismissed. If you can do that, then the Bible does not hold authority over you. So, here's "U.S. and News and World Report" giving front-page prominence to casting aspersions upon the Son of God and what the Bible presents concerning Him.

So, prophecy is not an insignificant thing. You, in your own mind, have to be settled on the issue that the book of the Revelation, which is dismissed by almost every church in this city in its literal meaning; you must have the courage to say, "Prophecy is true. It's part of the Word of God. And it is presented in literal language, and we can understand it." Our problem is that we don't want to believe it. Our problem is that these things are so staggering to the human imagination that we can't believe that these things are going to take place. You can easily be intimidated.

People may not outright say, "Well, I don't believe what the book of the Revelation reveals," come along and say, "We don't know what those things mean. These are symbols, and we can't understand what it is that the book of the Revelation is talking about." That's not true. Those of you who've been faithful in attending here on our studies of this book know very well that this is a literal book which is very clear, and when it use symbols, it explains the symbols – either right there in the book of the Revelation, or someplace else in the Bible.

I want to give you one example to perhaps encourage your soul not to be intimidated by the things that we read in the book of the Revelation. One reason for this is that there's a great deal of antagonism toward the Bible because American society is moving so far away now from the things of God that it must try to justify on the basis of its Christian heritage that it was wrong. ... I hope you understand that the pilgrims were completely politically incorrect. Everything the Pilgrims did that produced a nation of freedom and power and what we have today was wrong by today's standards, because the pilgrims acted on biblical principles.

**King Hezekiah**

One of the great prophecies in the Word of God concerns one of the better kings of the Jewish people, the southern king of Judah: King Hezekiah. During King Hezekiah's reign, the prophet of God was Isaiah. He ministered to this king and the people at the time. Hezekiah himself, we find in Scripture, was a godly king, in contrast to so many others, who obeyed God and who actually made it his business to destroy the places of the worship of the idol gods, the Babylonian system of idolatry. In 2 Kings 18:1-6, we have this commendation about King Hezekiah. I want to stress to you that this was a good man.

In the northern kingdom of Israel, they didn't have a single good king. They were all the Ahab and Jezebel types. But in the south, periodically, would come up a good king. 2 Kings 18:1-6: "Now it came about in the third year of Hoshea, the son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz king of Judah became king. He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places, and broke down the sacred pillars, and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days, the son of Israel burned incense to it, and it was called Nehushtan."

They had kept the bronze serpent, and it had become an object of worship. Now, Hezekiah says, "That's it. We're going to destroy that thing once and for all. He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. For he clung to the Lord. He did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments which the Lord commanded Moses."

So, we're dealing, first of all, with King Hezekiah, a good man. King Hezekiah, at this time, was under the control of the Assyrian king, and he was having to pay tribute (money) in order to avoid invasion and conquest. When this Assyrian king died, Hezekiah teamed up with a couple of other kings and friends, and rebelled against the Assyrian king, and stopped paying him the tribute money. Sennacherib, who was the king of Assyria, sent his army to Judah to attack Jerusalem and to punish Hezekiah. Hezekiah, in fear, consulted with the prophet Isaiah. The prophet comforted Hezekiah with a word from God concerning Sennacherib's doom.

In Isaiah 37:6-7, Isaiah said to them, "This you shall say to your master (that is, to Hezekiah), 'Thus says the Lord, 'Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.''" That is prophecy. God says to Hezekiah, "Don't worry about Sennacherib." I'm going to send a rumor to Sennacherib that there's a rebellion taking place at home in Assyria, and he is going to immediately turn to rush back home to control the situation. And when he gets there, I will cause him to be killed in his own land.

That's a prophecy. Nobody can control something like that. Is this going to happen? And this is a near prophecy, because the people who heard it will either see it fulfilled or not fulfilled. So, Hezekiah has this word of comfort.

In the meantime, there is a man known as Rabshakeh. He was the field commander. The word "Rabshakeh" means the position of the field commander. That's not a name. The field commander sends an ultimatum to Hezekiah, and in it, he ridicules Hezekiah's God. He names all the pagan gods of the countries that Assyria has conquered, and he demands immediate surrender.

I should remind you that in the ancient world, Assyria was a frightful empire. They were a very cruel people. It was Assyria who invented the form of execution which eventually became crucifixion. Their form, at the first stage of the process, was to have a slender tree that was cut down; sharpened to a point; and, then to impale their enemies upon the tree, and let them writhe there in agony until they died. People were afraid to become prisoners of the Assyrian army in battle.

So, Hezekiah knows what he's dealing with in this ultimatum from a powerful enemy. Hezekiah does a thing that is in keeping with his godly background and attitude. Hezekiah takes the ultimatum (the letter) into the temple, and spreads it out before God, and proceeds to pray and ask for guidance. That was a smart move on his part. It is a doctrinal principle that: "You have not because you ask not."

Isaiah 37:14: "Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it, and went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it out before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord saying, "O Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Inclined your ear, O Lord, and hear. Open Your eyes, O Lord, and see, and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent them to reproach the living God. Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire. For they were not gods, but the work of men's hands: wood and stone, so they have destroyed them. And now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, that all the kings of the earth may know that You alone, Lord, are God."

Now Hezekiah has a prophecy from God: "I'm going to send this king scurrying back to Assyria, and I will save Jerusalem and Israel. God responds to Hezekiah's prayer through the prophet Isaiah, where, in Isaiah 37:33-35, he says, "Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the King of Assyria: 'He shall not come to the city, nor shoot an arrow there. Neither shall he come before it with a shield, nor throw up a mound against it. But the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come to this city,' declares the Lord. 'For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'" This is another prophetic utterance from God. These are very specific details, even to the fact that they're not going to shoot a single arrow. Did God keep his promise?

Verse 36: "Then the angel of the Lord." In the Old Testament, when this phrase occurs, "the angel of the Lord," this is the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ; the Lord Jesus Christ; and, the Lord of Hosts, which means the Lord of the heavenly armies. The Lord Jesus Christ shows up as the commander-in-chief in the field of battle. And Jesus Christ, the pre-incarnate: "Angel of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. When the men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead."

That night, Jesus Christ goes through the camp of the Assyrians, and he puts the death 185,000 of the crack infantry troops of Sennacherib's army. When the rest of the army wakes up that morning, the corpses are lying all over the field:

"So, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed, and returned home and lived at Ninevah. And it came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his God, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with the sword. And they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place." God kept His promise to save Hezekiah and Judah. Prophecy is for real. Prophecy takes place just exactly as God predicts.

What happened as a result of this is that great fame came to Hezekiah. Who could have thought that Hezekiah could have stood up against the king of Assyria, and could have brought the king down, and could have been confronted with the king's army, and the Assyrians turn tail and run home? Well, Hezekiah became a very prominent person, and that led to Hezekiah's folly.

It's so sad that we believers cannot enjoy a great victory with God, and still keep our eyes on the Lord, knowing where the victories came from. Instead, we begin to switch our eyes to ourselves. I have seen more destruction come to Christians who get their eyes on themselves than any other single sin that people are capable of committing. This is what brings Christians down by the droves – Christians who once were powerful instruments of God's service, because their eyes were on the Lord, and it was all to the Lord's glory. Then suddenly something switches within them. They get their eyes on themselves, and everything they do is to their own glory.

Almost overnight, this happened to Hezekiah. And one of the people who heard about Hezekiah's great victory was a former king of Babylon who was now out of office because the Assyrians had deposed him: Merodach-baladan. So, Merodach-baladan sends an envoy to Hezekiah to find out how he had defeated the Assyrians, because he'd like to do the same thing and get his throne back in Babylon.

Hezekiah, on this occasion, there in his throne room, with this contingent from Merodach-baladan, the deposed king, could have pointed to the God of heaven who gave him the victory over the Assyrians. But instead, what Hezekiah's pride led him to do was to take credit personally for the victory, and to show that he did it because of the power of his possessions and his army.

So, he took this contingent (this delegation), and he showed them all of his gold and silver in his treasury houses. He showed them all of his weapons. He showed them all of the spices and valuable things in his storehouses. And this was presented to them as the means by which he had won this great victory.

**The Babylonian Captivity**

The year was 700 B.C., and Hezekiah, in his folly, showed it all to the Babylonians, who were a potential enemy of Judah herself. Isaiah 39:1-2: "At that time, Merodach-baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and recovered." Hezekiah had a very serious illness, and he had prayed to God again, because he was a godly man, and God had heal him. So, these people came to congratulate him on his recovery.

Verse 2 says, "And Hezekiah was pleased, and showed them all of his treasure house: and the silver; and the gold; and the spices; and the precious oil; his whole armory; and, all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah did not show them." That was a very foolish thing to do. Now the judgment of God must come down upon the prideful folly of Hezekiah. And this leads us to another great biblical prophecy – one that is now going to be more distant than the one concerning Sennacherib. Is God going to say something that's going to take a long time to fulfill, and is it going to happen?

In Isaiah 39:3-7, the prophet is sent to declare God's judgment upon Hezekiah's prideful folly: "Then Isaiah the prophet came in and said to him, 'What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?' And Hezekiah said, 'They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon.' And he said, 'What have they seen in your house?' So, Hezekiah answered, 'They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.' Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of the Lord of Hosts. Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left,' says the Lord (prophecy). And some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you shall beget, shall be taken away. They shall become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon." Even the royalty will be taken as captives to Babylon.

In verse, Hezekiah himself indicates that: "Well, God has spoken, but at least it won't happen in his lifetime," so he took some comfort from that. God predicts that in the future Babylon will remember what Hezekiah showed them, when they are in a position of power, and when they had thrown off the yoke of Assyria (which, in time they did). They will then be motivated to attack Judah to secure all those treasures. And God says, "When they do it, they're going to succeed. Jerusalem will be looted; the walls will be torn down; the temple will be burned; and, Hezekiah's physical descendants will be taken as captives to Babylon.

**King Nebuchadnezzar**

100 years later, God fulfilled this prediction in exact detail through the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Prophecy is not just blowing smoke. When we read about things that are coming in the future, you can count on it – that the God who makes those prophetic utterances is going to carry them through, no matter how unrealistic; how unbelievable; and, how impossible they might seem to you at the time. 100 years later, the hostages (the royal family and others) were carried to Babylon, and booty from Jerusalem was taken to Babylon, including the sacred vessels from the temple. Royal families were taken as captives. Daniel was among these captives. They were taken to work in the Babylonian government. God had clearly predicted the future to Hezekiah, and it did all come to pass.

**Prophecy is Truth**

Prophecy is truth. God uses prophecy to prove that He alone is the true God, and that the Babel religion of idolatry is a delusion. No other religion of the world, in its writings, ever makes prophetic utterances about the distant future. I'll save you all the reading to check that out, but you will find that in all the sacred writings of the world, there are no long-range predictions made.

Those leaders, whenever they do try it, as Joseph Smith of Mormonism did, on occasion, have been proven to have been false prophets. But God says, "I do this to show you that I'm the true God." So, prophecy not only is for real, but it should encourage us to realize that we're dealing with a God who is in control.

In Isaiah 41:21-23, God says, "'Present your case,' the Lord says. 'Bring forward your strong arguments,' the King of Judah says. 'Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place (speaking about the idol gods), as for the former event. Or announce to us what is coming. Declare the things that are going to come afterward that we may know that you are gods. Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us in fear together.'"

In Isaiah 44:6-7, God says, "Thus, says the Lord, the King of Israel, and His redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: 'I am the first, I am the last. And there is no God beside Me. And who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it. Yes, let him recount it to me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation, let them declare to them the things that are coming, and the events that are going to take place."

God has made a prediction. 100 years later, it took place. But this captivity of Israel in Babylon also brought another great prophecy – a prophecy of very precise detail. That is the problem with prophecy – when you make them very specific. You really have to have the almighty power of God to fulfill them when they're going to happen in the future.

**Cyrus**

Now, in Isaiah 45:1, God makes another prophecy concerning Israel once the judgment of God has been executed upon them such that they're taken into captivity: "Thus says the Lord to Cyrus, his anointed: 'Whom I have taken by the right hand to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings, to open the doors before him so that the gates will not be shut.'"

We're talking about something that's 160 years in the future. Somebody who is going to be a ruler by the name of Cyrus, who is not even born yet. He is not on the historical scene. God says to this man, "Cyrus, you are My man. I'm going to take you by My right hand, and I'm going to accomplish something great through you."

Look down at Isaiah 45:4-5: "For the sake of Jacob, My servant, and Israel, My chosen one, I have also called you by your name, and I've given you a title of honor, though you have not known me." He's addressing this Cyrus, this future ruler: "I am the Lord, and there is no other. Beside Me, there is no God. I will gird you though you have not known me."

God says to this future ruler, "I'm going to support you. I'm going to make you the ruler of a great empire." So this ruler is raised up, and the specific reason for being raised up is that he is going to rescue the Jews from their Babylonian captivity, and return them to Jerusalem. More than 160 years later, this happened precisely under the Medo-Persian King Cyrus, who defeated Babylon. As a matter of fact, the Jews showed him this passage of Scripture, and said, "Our God predicted that he would raise you up and make you a mighty ruler, and that you would be the means of returning our people from captivity in Babylon back to freedom in their own land."

Daniel's response to this promised restoration is recorded for us in Jeremiah 25:11. Daniel lives at the time when the restoration should take place. Daniel read something in Jeremiah one day of a prophecy in connection with this release by King Cyrus. In Jeremiah 25:11, God says, "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and a horror, and these nations shall serve the King of Babylon 70 years."

This was a prediction that the Jews would be taken to Babylon, and they would be in captivity there for 70 years. Daniel had been among the first of the captives taken to Babylon in 605 B.C. And the Jews had remained captives until Cyrus came on the scene in 539 B.C. Daniel is reading the prophet Jeremiah, we're told, in the first year that Darius (which was another name apparently for Cyrus, or one of his sub-lieutenants) was king. The first year that Cyrus is king, Daniel is reading the book of Jeremiah. This was the year 538-537 B.C. So, the time frame was about 69 years since the Jews were taken from Jerusalem.

So, God's prediction was that: "I'm going to keep you there for 70 years. Then I'm going to raise up a foreign ruler named Cyrus, and he will authorize your return back to Babylon." The time had now come for that prophecy to be fulfilled. How did Daniel respond to this prophecy? Did he say, "That's unbelievable? That just happens to be coincidence. We've got a ruler over us named Cyrus. 70 years has almost completed." Daniel believed God literally. There was no question in Daniel's mind that prophecy was true, and that prophecy, no matter how stupendous and unbelievable, we should be treated as such.

In the book of Daniel, we read of Daniel's experience relative to this 70-year captivity. Daniel 9:2: "In the first year of his reign (that is, of King Cyrus), I, Daniel observed in the books the number of years which was revealed as the Word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolation of Jerusalem; namely, 70 years. So, I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplication with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes." What did Daniel do? Did he say, "I can't believe that? That's ridiculous." No. Daniel says, "Wait a minute." He gets his calculator out, and he starts punching buttons, and he starts subtracting years, and he sees that it's the 69th year. He says, "Hey, we're almost to 70 years."

So, what does he do? He turns to God and he says, "God, this was your prophetic utterance. Please keep Your Word as You always do. Your prophecies are always true. And now the time has come for you to fulfill this for your people. Daniel prayed that God would fulfill this prophecy to restore the Jews (after 70 years of captivity) to Jerusalem. And God responded to Daniel's prayer because, indeed, Cyrus gave the order, "Go back." And the Jews completed their 70 years of captivity, and prophecy was fulfilled. It's for real.

**The 490 Years**

However, in the process of this, God gave Daniel another prophecy, which was going to take 600 years in the future to be fulfilled. That's the famous timetable of God's dealing with the nation of Israel to complete all of His covenant promises to them. This is the famous 490-year prophecy.

**The Tribulation**

This is the 70 weeks of seven that would bring the completion of God's promises to Israel of the covenant promises. This 490 years began ticking away. And after 483 years, they came to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and the years stopped. At that point, there was an interruption which has now continued for almost 2,000 years – seven years of the 490, when God will have fulfilled all of his promises to Israel, and the covenants are still hanging out there. They've never been fulfilled.

**The Antichrist**

So, the Jews killed their Messiah with seven years to go, and the clock starts ticking on prophecy. The tribulation years are those seven years. God predicted that the final seven years would begin by the signing of a peace and protectorate treaty of the antichrist with the nation of Israel. Daniel 9:27 tells us that: "And he (the antichrist – the man of sin) will make a firm covenant with the many (the people of Israel) for one week (that is, a seven-year period), but in the middle of the seven years, he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering, and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

What all this means is that in the middle of the seven-year period of treaty agreement between Israel and this antichrist protector, he will turn against them, and set up his own image in the temple to be worshiped by them. And he will set this up on a wing of the temple that will have been rebuilt in Jerusalem, and which is all that is coming together today. These are all the pieces that are being brought together by God in our very day – prophecy being fulfilled. This very passage (this very promise), that the Jews would think they have come to peace only to be double-crossed halfway through the treaty period, was confirmed by Jesus in Matthew 24:4-16. Six centuries after this prophecy was given to Daniel, Jesus says, "Yes, it's true. It's going to happen."

The last half of the tribulation which was predicted by Daniel is referred to by Jesus in Matthew 25:15-21. Jesus specifically refers to the last three-and-a-half years when the antichrist has made himself a god. Later, all of these events are confirmed by the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. So, we have Jesus; we have the apostles; and, we have Daniel. We have all these great men of God who say, "Prophecy is true." ... It will happen.

So, when you read things in the book of the Revelation, don't blow them off. And don't be intimidated by the fact that you're the minority. Most churches don't believe this. Most Christians will laugh at you. Most Christians don't even know about this. If you sit in a church that gives you a Bible in the pews to use, and the Bibles have been there for very long, one of the cleanest pages you'll find it will be the book of the Revelation. They never preached on that, and they never touch it.

**Biblical Prophecy is True and Detailed**

So, let's get some conclusions about biblical prophecies. God proclaims specific events that are going to take place in the near or the far future. He predicts those things in detail – not just broad generalities. God brings to pass all that He has predicted, near or distant, and He does it in detail. We have had many experiences of predictive passages being fulfilled in this way. Jesus and the apostles treated Bible prophecy as true, and as inevitable of fulfillment. They never questioned it. That's the true Jesus. That is not the fake Jesus that "U.S. News and World Report" is going to try to find, who doesn't exist, and never did exist. This is the Jesus that's reported in the reliable documents, the inerrant Scriptures.

**Biblical Prophecy should be Accepted at Face Value**

Then Jesus and the apostles accepted God's prophecies at face value. They did not try to spiritualize the words out of the literal meanings. Most preachers, when they speak about the book of the Revelation, spiritualize the words out of their literal meaning. Jesus and the apostles always took prophecy literally, as it should be. Then, as we come closer to the fulfillment of a divine prophecy, we should remember that things become clearer because the details begin to fit together. The prophets themselves could not always put the pieces together, but it's easy for us to put the pieces together because we've got a fuller perspective.

**The Atomic Bomb**

Some prophecies once seemed impossible. It seemed impossible when the Bible predicted that there was coming a time in the human race when there would be weapons by which mankind could be destroyed in such large numbers that if God did not intervene, mankind would completely destroy itself, and rub itself off the face of the earth. I read that as a teenager. You have heard that in earlier times from the Scripture – a time when God must come in and preserve humanity from completely destroying itself. What kind of a weapon could that be? The atomic bomb. Now we know that that prophecy is exactly true.

**The Computer Age**

Another prophecy that seemed impossible was that one man could control all the buying and selling of all the people of the world individually. How could one man control buying and selling? In the age of the computer, it suddenly becomes a reality.

**The Nation of Israel**

It was seemingly impossible that God's prediction that the nation of Israel would be restored to its land. Yet, in 1948 that's what happened.

**The Jews**

It would be impossible to believe that the Bible said that as the Second Coming of Christ approaches, all of mankind would be in turmoil in fighting about the Jew. Yet, that's exactly what's happening today.

World events begin to line up with biblical prophecy as the point of fulfillment nears. God does predict the future for our spiritual enlightenment, and for our guidance, and what He predicts is going to happen just that way.

I will close with the admonition and encouragement to you of Peter in 2 Peter 1, in his commendation to us to pay attention to prophetic Scriptures. Study them, and become serious students of the Word of God. One of the first of the long line of antagonistic, feisty females of my career at Berean Church, over these past four decades, popped up within the first few weeks of my administration here. That was because I proceeded to teach the people some of the basic grand panoramic view of the future – prophecy. This lady took me to task, and said, "We don't need to learn about prophecy. We just need to learn about Jesus," and her eyes and would roll up in her head. She was that type.

I said, "Madam, when the apostle Paul came to the city of Thessalonica, he only spent six weeks there. The primary subject of his instruction to them was Bible prophecy, now recorded in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Are you smarter than the apostle Paul?" I loved it. I love feisty females, especially when they talk to you. Most of the time, they scurry and hide behind things.

Well, Peter says, "No, that's wrong." Peter says, "Learn the word. Learn the doctrines of prophecy. Take them seriously. Do not be ignorant about the future. 2 Peter 1:19: "And so we have the prophetic Word (that is, the word written by the prophets of Scripture), made more sure, to which you will do well to pay attention, as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns, and the morning star arises in your hearts."

Peter says, "Prophecy recorded by the prophets is a work of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And you should pay attention to it as a lamp of spiritual enlightenment shining in this dark world of spiritual ignorance, until the day dawns (referring to the rapture), and the morning star (Jesus Christ) arises in your hearts." Until Jesus Himself is here to enlighten us about what's coming, we have the Scriptures. And you should pay attention to it.

Verse 20: "But know this, first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation." The word "interpretation" means "invention." What you read of prophecy in the Scripture was not invented by the prophets. If it were, it wouldn't come to pass. You couldn't fulfill it. It is because these prophetic insights about the future were given to the writers of Scripture by God Himself, that they are always fulfilled. So, prophecy is not a human invention, which is what most Christians are being told.

Then verse 21 says, "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will. But men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This reinforces what is said in verse 20. No prophecy was ever recorded in Scripture because somebody decided, I'm going to write this down, and say this about the future. This sounds good." It is written in Scripture because these men "were moved by the Holy Spirit," who spoke from God. And when it says, "They were moved," it means that they were carried along like the wind carries a sailboat along on a lake. These men were carried along as their pens wrote out the prophetic Scriptures. God spoke through them.

So, what, we read about the destruction of Babylon, and the economic disasters that we will look at now in greater detail next time, is something that is going to happen to this world. The exciting part is that all the world's financial institutions are teaming up and gearing up into an international conglomerate to bring about the condition so that when Babylon falls, the world comes apart financially. That can't happen yet, but it's almost there. When Babylon becomes the control center, and it falls, the disaster that will hit the financial institutions and the individual citizen will be beyond anything that the human race has ever experienced beyond our human imagination. We live in an exciting time of history. Prophecy tells us where history is going, and you better believe it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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