

Introduction to End Time Prophecy.

1. Why are you interested in End-time Prophecy?
What are your questions?

2. What is the purpose of prophecy
(*note I said prophecy not prophets, because there have been good prophets, bad prophets and non-prophets who have all received valid prophecies from God.*)
 - a. To authenticate the prophet -- if it doesn't happen...STONED
 - b. to warn the sinful
 - c. to comfort the believers: *reassurance that the future is in God's hands.*

3. UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY.

"Eschatology" (means "last things") the study of religious doctrines concerning the human soul in its relation to death, judgment, heaven, and hell

"apocalypse" (means "the revelation") but in English language has come to mean the destructive end of the world.

There are 5 different ways to interpret the Bible's apocalyptic writings. The order in which I have listed them here moves generally from the theologically most liberal to most conservative --- but it is important to note that conservative evangelical theologians hold both preterist and futurist interpretations .

- A. **Just disregard them:** some liberal theologies just ignore apocalyptic portions of scripture as meaningless.

- B. **IDEALIST** (symbolic) interpretation: Many liberal theologies say that apocalyptic literature does not describe actual events but rather symbolically teaches "timeless truths" about the nature of humanity. (Harry E. Fosdick – "*discard the husk but keep the kernel.*")
NOTE: Most liberal theologians hold subscribe to the Idealist interpretation

- C. **HISTORICIST** interpretation: see's apocalyptic literature as referring to events that were future at the time of their writing but which have occurred or are now occurring during the life of the Church. Postmillennialism , generally followed this line of thinking, declares that we are living in the millennium now. The spread of

the gospel will make the world a better and better place to live until one-day Jesus would return - *Postmillennialism was theologically bankrupted by the World Wars.*

- D. **PRETERIST** interpretation: see's apocalyptic literature as being fulfilled in the same time that it is written. **Amillennialism** generally follows this view point, arguing, rightly, that prophecy had to have meaning and an application by the people receiving the prophecy or else what good would it do them. The prophets spoke in symbolically encoded language to protect the receivers from further persecution (i.e. the "whore of Babylon" = the Roman govt.)

NOTE 1: *Most Evangelical Presbyterians hold an Amillennial interpretation*

NOTE 2: *Evangelicals, who subscribe to Amillennialism, still believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ.*

- E. **FUTURIST** interpretation: sees "end time" prophecy as being for the future apocalypse of Jesus Christ which is still future for the modern church as it was for the early Christians.

a. **Historical Premillennialism (HP)**

- i. HP sees both a preterist and futurist application for apocalyptic prophecy; it had to have meaning both for the people receiving the message as well for those in the future (i.e. the "Immanuel" prophecy in Isaiah 7: 14-16 & Matthew 1:22-23)
- ii. **HP** acknowledges that some fulfilled prophecy is not to be taken literally, some is. (i.e. the Elijah prophecy: Malachi 4:5, Matthew 7:11-12)
- iii. **HP** recognizes that some of what the New Testament refers to as a fulfilled messianic prophecy, the OT saint would not have recognized as such.
- iv. **HP** sees a future for Israel and Jewish people in God's plans (Romans 11:1-12) but it also sees the church as "spiritual Israel" fulfilling some prophecies (Romans 9:6-8)
- v. **HP** sees evidence for a "Rapture of the Church" but not enough to determine whether it will be pre- mid- or post-tribulation.

b. **Dispensational Premillennialism (DP)** *The basis of most end-time stories*

- i. **DP** interprets apocalyptic prophecy as having only a future fulfillment and meaning.
- ii. **DP** interprets all apocalyptic prophecy as literally as possible.
- iii. **DP** sees a clear distinction between Israel and the Church in prophecy (that which is spoken about Israel will be fulfilled only by Israel) and a full restoration of the Hebrew sacrificial system in the Millennium.
- iv. **DP** interprets many OT historical events and objects as "typological" illustrations of eternal truths: "Song of Solomon" read as illustrating the relationship between Christ and the Church.
- v. **DP** insists that the Rapture will be pre-tribulation.

- 4. Old Testament Themes in prophecy** – Believers in Jesus day may have expected the following reality to occur in the near or distant future.
(they were very aware of previous prophecies)
- a. Daniel reading Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2-3)
 - b. asking John the Baptist and Jesus – are you Elijah? (Malachi 4:5)
 - c. Jesus reading a portion of **Isaiah 61:1-2** in Luke 4:18
- A. The coming of a redeemer: The Messiah (**Isaiah**)
 - B. The Kingdom of God to appear in history
 - C. Eternal life and resurrection from the dead
 - D. The Day of the Lord – a final judgment based on works (**Joel**)
 - E. The coming anti-christ and unparalleled persecution (**Daniel**)
 - F. The new Covenant replacing the old covenant (grace vs. Law)
 - G. the restoration of Spiritual Israel to the land (Ezekiel 37)
 - H. the outpouring of the Spirit
 - I. the universal fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (all nations blest)
 - J. The return of Elijah to prepare the way for the Messiah

5. Major apocalyptic passages:

Daniel, chapters 9 & 12 70 weeks till death of Messiah, 7 weeks [Tribulation]
 Joel, chapters 2 & 3 ("The Day of the Lord")
 Malachi 4
 Zechariah, chapters 12-14 (last great battle & return of the king)

6. Jesus' end time prophecies.

Matthew 24: 3-31 Matthew 25:31-46 (Sheep & goats)
 Mark 13:1-27
 Luke 21:7-28

1st Thessalonians 5:1-11 (the rapture)
 2nd Thessalonians 2:1-10 (we are not in the end times now)
 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (people's faith will grow cold)
 2nd Peter 3:1-18 (God will judge & destroy the earth)

7. Revelation chapters 4-20 (visions of "things to come")