

Bible Prophecy

Foundations of Prophecy

Defining Prophecy

- Webster's 1828 Dictionary – "A foretelling; prediction; a declaration of something to come. As God only knows future events with certainty, no being but God or some person informed by him, can utter a real prophecy. The prophecies recorded in Scripture, when fulfilled, afford most convincing evidence of the divine original of the Scriptures, as those who uttered the prophecies could not have foreknown the events predicted without supernatural instruction. 2 Peter 1:19."
- Henry Thiessen (*Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 1949)– "...the foretelling of events, not by virtue or mere human insight or prescience, but by virtue of a direct communication from God."
- Though not our focus in this series, there is a secondary definition that equates prophecy (*foretelling*) with preaching (*forthtelling*).
- The branch of Theology that deals with end times studies is called *Eschatology*.

Theological Foundations

- Omniscience of God
 - Thiessen – "... He knows Himself and all other things, whether they be actual or merely possible, whether they be past, present, or future, and that He knows them perfectly from all eternity."
 - Prophecy is not speculation or prediction on God's part, He already knows what will be.
- Sovereignty of God
 - Thiessen – "...as Creator of all things visible and invisible, God is the owner of all; that He, therefore, has an absolute right to rule over all (Matt. 20:15; Rom. 9:20,21); and that He actually exercises this authority in the universe (Eph. 1:11)"
 - What God wills to happen *will* happen.
- Providence
 - Thiessen – "...that continuous activity of God whereby He makes all the vents of the physical, mental, and moral phenomena work out His purpose; and that this purpose is nothing short of the original design of God in creation."
 - This is displayed in many directions, including toward nations (Job 12:23), individuals (Jeremiah 1:5), and even into the freewill acts of men (Proverbs 21:1)
- Revelation

- Thiessen – "...that act of God whereby He discloses Himself or communicates truth to the mind; whereby He makes manifest to His creatures that which could not be known in any other way."
- The revelation of prophecy to man is often attributed to the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16, II Peter 1:21)

Why Study Prophecy?

- Because vast sections of Scripture are prophetic in nature.
 - Various sources, including Tim LaHaye, claim the percentage of verses in the Bible that contained prophecy when written at around 27%.
- Because it answers many of mankind's greatest questions.
 - Examples: What happens when we die? Will everyone go to Heaven? Will evil win?
- Because of its effect on believers.
 - Prophecy motivates us to engage in reaching the lost and in living a holy life in the expectation of Christ's return (Matthew 25:13, I Peter 4:7).
- To discern the times and seasons.
- To gain a heavenly perspective.
- To witness God's glory and power (Isaiah 42:8-9)