

HOW IMPORTANT IS PROPHECY?

The Bible is full of prophecies that speak of unimaginable pain and suffering that the Creator God says he is going to pour out on his human creation before he returns to establish his Father's government on earth. But why would the loving God who gave his life for humanity as the Messiah want to inflict the kind of pain, agony, and terror that is spoken of throughout the Bible as the 'wrath of God'? If this wrath of God is inevitable, when will it come and what does God hope to accomplish by it?

In order to begin to understand the reason that The Sovereign God is going to send the Messiah back to earth to pour out his wrath on mankind we must first understand something about the book in which these prophetic warnings are written.

Among other things the Bible is a historical record of the past, present, and future of humanity. The Bible is composed of either two thirds or one quarter prophecy depending on who is doing the calculating; however, regardless of the exact amount of prophecy contained in the Bible, biblical prophecy is simply history written in advance of the actual event.

Humans are inexorably trapped in this dimension of time and space and can only know the present and the past because these are the limits of human existence. Although humans attempt to look beyond the present into the future, the natural constraints of this physical realm make it impossible for us to know with certainty anything that is beyond the past and present of this dimension of time and space. However, God is not limited to the past or the present, because his realm is outside these physical constraints. God created this dimension of time and space and has sovereign authority and power over it's present and future existence. Not only does God have the authority to dictate and predict this physical realm's future, God has the power to cause his predictions to come to pass.

THE BIBLE AND PROPHECY

The Sovereign God claims that what is recorded in the Bible by his servants and prophets are his words to humanity. Within this book God claims sovereignty over all things that exist and over all humans and their eternal destiny. The Bible is the only book on planet earth that can demonstrate that it's inspiration is supernatural in origin and that it is from a being that exists outside this physical realm. One way it does this is by predicting with incredible accuracy personal and world events before they happen and then bringing these events to pass in every detail within a specified time frame. The fulfillment of prophecy is a major proof of God's existence and that he has sovereign authority and power over his creation. Therefore, it would seem prudent to pay attention to what is written in this book.

Although the Bible is a witness to humanity that the Sovereign God and the Creator God exist, the Bible was written primarily for those whom God has called to salvation during this age. Through the Bible, it is possible to learn from the experience, teachings and warnings of others and gain valuable knowledge and understanding:

The apostle Paul says that the things that happened to the people of ancient Israel were recorded for those who would live in the end of the age; therefore, it seems logical that it is important for God's servants today to understand the writings of the prophets concerning national Israel's past and future as it impacts world events.

In his revelation to the apostle John about the events at the end of this age Jesus said. "He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches"

Biblical prophecies are not words to be taken lightly, they are not foolish ramblings, but are warnings and promises of things past, present, and future. Because Jesus was the Creator God before coming to earth in human form, he knew the truth about the beginning and end of mankind and the prophecies that must come to pass in order for his Heavenly Father's plan for humanity be completed.

Does it Matter?

Does it matter what you believe about prophecy and will these beliefs affect your salvation? The answers to both questions is both yes and no, depending on your attitude and behavior toward God and the current state of world events.

For ancient Israel, it was very important for them to heed a prophet's warning to repent of their individual and national sins in order to receive the blessing that God had promised and not suffer punishment for continued rebellion. Today, it is just as important to heed a true prophet of God as it was for ancient Israel. And it does matter how a person views prophecy, because if a person incorrectly understands a prophecy and makes decisions predicated on misinformation, these decisions could not only affect one's personal life, but can also adversely affect the lives of other people. History is full of examples of disastrous results from wrong decisions made by individuals and groups of people who based their actions on a misunderstanding of biblical prophecy.

THE REASONS

Believe it or not, there are many positive things that God hopes to accomplish through the massive destruction of much of the earth and the annihilation of most of its inhabitants. However, his reasons for bringing his wrath upon humanity and the positive outcome that will come through this devastation can only be understood if we first understand his purpose for mankind's creation.

In the Beginning

When humanity was created, God planned for people to prosper under his guidance and eventually become sons of God and enter into the Family and Kingdom of God as spirit beings. However, when we review the Genesis record, we find that the first two humans rebelled against God and rejected his plan through which they and their descendants could fulfill his purpose for them (Gen.3:1-23; 4:1-7). This rejection of God and his plan has continued from the time of Adam and Eve to this very day:

The genesis record tells us the following about early man's nature and the God family's response to a seemingly unresolvable problem.

In Genesis chapter six, we read:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And God was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it caused him great sorrow of heart. And he said, I will destroy humanity whom I have created and wipe them from the face of the earth: both humanity, and beasts, and the creeping things and the birds of the air; for I am sorry that I have made them" (Gen.6:5-7 Para.).

Here, we see that the Creator God was grief-stricken and extremely discouraged because of people's wickedness and their rejection of him and the opportunity that he had offered to them. Because they chose the way of evil over the way of good and would not change from their wicked lifestyle, God decided to kill them all, except for Noah and his family. It is a sad commentary on the human race that out of its hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of inhabitants, Noah was the only righteous individual that God could find on the entire planet.

The Israelites

Centuries after God had destroyed all but eight people in a great flood, he chose the Israelitish descendants of his friend Abraham to begin the next phase of his plan through which humanity could become sons of God and enter into the Family and Kingdom of God (Ex.19:5-6; Deut.7:6-9).

The Israelites were brought out of Egyptian slavery because the Creator God had a job for them to do and a purpose for their existence as a nation. These people were called to be a nation of priests who would represent God on earth and God's plan for the salvation of humanity by practicing God's laws, way of life for mankind, and worship system to perfection. However, these people also rejected God and his plan to save them from eternal death (Jer.3:1-25; Isa.16:1-34).

The Messiah

Over nineteen centuries ago, the Sovereign God sent the Creator God to become human and to offer an easier and more perfect method by which humanity could obtain eternal life, become his sons, and enter into his Family and Kingdom (Heb.10:1-21). When the Father's Son, in the person of Jesus Christ, delivered the good news of his Father's awesome and wonderful offer to the Jews, they not only rejected this offer but also murdered him for bringing them this good news (Acts 2:23-32).

After the murder of the Messiah (Who was the Creator God Incarnate), the Sovereign God began calling specific individuals to represent him on earth and to deliver his good news message concerning his plan for the salvation of mankind. And he also had his plan published in almost every language on earth in hopes that some would heed his good news message. However, history has shown that since the death and resurrection of his Son, most who have heard this message have rejected it.

THE WRATH OF GOD

The wrath of God that is to be poured upon the earth and its inhabitants will bring an end to about six thousand years of God's patience in dealing with rebellious people and their evil ways. God's chosen people, Israel, along with the rest of humanity have shown throughout the centuries that they cannot and/or will not live righteously or govern themselves fairly and equitably. Therefore, God is going to bring an end to human rule and will institute a new order of things for the purpose of furthering his plan and purpose for his human creation.

The earth and its inhabitants are about to enter into a new and different relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. However, prior to this new order of things and new relationship, God will pour out his wrath upon his chosen people which include the so called lost ten tribes of Israel, along with the rest of humanity because of their great wickedness.

Israel and Judah Punished

God said through the prophet Amos:

"Hear the word that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of the families of the earth: Therefore, I will punish you for all of your lawlessness" (Am.3:1-2 Para.). See also Isa.30:1-14; Jer.11:1-19; 30:1-14.

From the very beginning of the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, they have been a constant irritation to their God because of their rebellion. Throughout the centuries prior to and after the death of king Solomon, God continually urged Israel to obey the covenant that he had made with their ancestors in the wilderness. However, they would not obey. Instead, they sought false religious teachers and prophets who would tell them what they wanted to hear and hide the teachings of the true God from them.

Israel has turned their backs on the God of their ancestors, refused to obey him, rejected his good news of salvation, and refused to repent nationally and individually. Therefore, the house of Israel (who are the ten scattered tribes) and the house of Judah (who are the Israelis) will receive the full force of the wrath of God just prior to the end of this age and the return of the Messiah.

Babylon Punished

Since the death of King Solomon, the Babylonian system of government and religion has been embraced by the scattered tribes of Israel and Judah. Because this system is largely responsible for much of Israel's wickedness against God, it is therefore impossible to punish the nations of Israel and the Jews without punishing this Babylonian system and the nations that comprise it. (See Rev.14:8-10; 18:1-14; Jer. chaps.51-52).

The Nations Punished

Because the tribes of Israel are scattered among the nations of the world and these nations are under Babylonian governmental and religious systems that

are in opposition to the true God's governmental and religious system, his wrath will be poured out upon them as well:

The prophet Jeremiah records the following about the end of human rule on earth:

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with the nations; he will plead with all flesh; he will give those who are wicked to the sword, says the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be refuse upon the earth" (Jer.25:31-33 KJV).

God says that all nations and their citizens are wicked; therefore, he will punish them and none will be spared. He will cause a great destruction to come upon their cities and kill their peoples as he pours out his wrath during the end of this age:

Notice what the prophet Isaiah said about this time of punishment:

"Scream in terror, for the Lord's time has come, the time for the Almighty to crush you. Your arms lie paralyzed with fear; the strongest hearts melt, and are afraid. Fear grips you with terrible pangs, like those of a woman in labor. You look at one another, helpless, as the flames of the burning city reflect upon your pallid faces. For see, the day of the Lord is coming. The terrible day of his wrath and fierce anger. The lands shall be destroyed, and all the sinners with it. The heavens will be black above them. No light will shine from stars or sun or moon. And I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sin; I will crush the arrogance of the proud man and the haughtiness of the rich. Few will live when I have finished my work. Men will be as scarce as gold—of greater value than the gold of Ophir. For I will shake the heavens in my wrath and fierce anger, and the earth will move from its place in the sky" (Isa.13:6-13 LBP). See also Isa.26:21.

A Warning to the Elect of God

The messages in the Book of Revelation chapters two and three, are about the characteristics of the seven churches of God that will exist in the end of the age. These messages contain serious reprimands and dire warnings of severe correction by Jesus Christ. Each of the seven messages ends with the following admonition:

"He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches."

Unfortunately, during this age, the majority of those whom the Sovereign Father has specifically called to serve him are forgetting or have already forgotten the awesome meaning of their calling and responsibilities to him and his Son and are in a sad state of spiritual decay and in need of a dramatic change in attitude and behavior before the arrival of Jesus Christ on earth.

The messages of Revelation chapters two and three clearly show the severity of correction that will be needed to awaken many of God's people to their extremely dangerous situation. It is clear from these reprimands and warnings to the seven churches that Jesus will take whatever measures are necessary in order to stir the Sovereign Father's earthly children to action, so that they will not lose their salvation.

If this is the time just before Christ returns, it is imperative to recognize that nearly all the prophecies of the Bible are written in the context of the time of the end. Even if we are not in these times, these warning messages still apply and directly impact all whom the Father has called or will call to be his earthly children in the gospel age of salvation.

Evil Spirits Punished

The Bible reveals that a powerful evil spirit known as the Devil (Satan) and other evil spirits have politically, philosophically, and religiously deceived the entire world into rebelling against the true God.

We are told in the Book of Revelation, that it is, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, that is

deceiving the whole world . . ." (Rev.12:9 Para.). See 2.Cor.11:3-4; 13-15.

Because this evil being and his associates are one of the primary causes of human rebellion against the Sovereign God and Jesus Christ, he will also be punished: first with a thousand years of restraint in the abyss and then with death by fire (Ezk.28:16-19):

Notice what is said in Revelation chapter 20, beginning in verse 1:

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev.20:1-3 KJV). See also Isa.24:21-22.

The Days of Noah

Remember that in just over a thousand years after Adam and Eve were created, people had become so wicked that God was sorry that he had made them. This same evil situation exists today. Look around. This world is an extremely evil place, just as it was prior to the great flood; therefore, God will again bring a great destruction upon the earth and its inhabitants:

Notice again what is said in Genesis chapter 6 verses 5-7 about people who lived just prior to the great flood that destroyed almost all of mankind..

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually. And God was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it caused him great sorrow of heart. And he said, I will destroy humanity whom I have created and wipe them from the face of the earth: both humanity, and beasts, and the creeping things and the birds of the air; for I am sorry that I have made them" (Gen.6:5-7 KJV).

The people who lived prior to the great flood were extremely wicked; their thoughts, attitudes, and behavior were all in opposition to God's way that would bring about eternal life and sonship in the Family and Kingdom of God. Today's age is a repeat of Noah's day, and the Sovereign Father and his Son are just as grief-stricken and discouraged because of the wickedness of people and their rejection of the opportunity that they have been offered:

Jesus said of the times just before his return:

"But as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be when the Son of man comes. For in the days before the flood, they were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them away; so shall it be when the Son of Man comes" (Matt.24:37-39 Para.). See also Lk.17:28-30.

Jesus said that just prior to his return, people's attitudes and behavior would be exactly the same as they were during the days just prior to Noah being saved from God's wrath upon humanity. But what were these attitudes and behaviors of the people of Noah's day?

During Noah's day, belief in and obedience to the true God and his ways were almost non-existent (only Noah was righteous). People were going about their lives with no thought of the true God or the consequences of their lifestyles. When the flood came, some who had heard the preaching of Noah realized that what he had said was true, but it was too late for them to escape the wrath of God. Today, God offers escape to anyone who will repent, begin living by his laws and ways, and believe his good news message.

God is Persistent

The Sovereign Father and his Son are persistent and extremely long-suffering in their desire to save humanity from eternal death. The apostle Peter said the following about this persistence and long-suffering:

"But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2.Pet.3:8-9 KJV).

Because of their desire for all to repent and reap the benefits of a positive change in the human heart, God the Father and Jesus Christ are going to give humanity one last opportunity to accept their offer of eternal life and sonship in the Family and Kingdom Of God. However, prior to this opportunity humanity will suffer the wrath of God. God is going to punish all of mankind for their rebellion, eliminate all evil, and remove any physical and spiritual opposition to his government.

When will the wrath of God come and what does God hope to accomplish by it?

The full wrath of God will only come after the Sovereign Father's good news message has been delivered in a powerful way as a warning and a witness to all nations, just before the return of Jesus Christ. When this happens, God's wrath will come upon all the scattered tribes of Israel, the Jews, and the rest of humanity. Because the vast majority of people and nations have shown that they do not want God's rule in their lives; Biblical prophecy shows that God is going to kill all but a very few of earth's inhabitants just prior to and during the return of Jesus Christ.

After the full fury of the wrath of God has been poured out and the earth lies in ruin and its population is drastically reduced, the Kingdom of God will be established as an all-powerful, world-ruling government. This government will solve all of humanity's problems in a fair and equitably manner with true justice and liberty for all. It will not be a government ruled by selfishly motivated humans, but a government ruled by the righteous all-powerful family of God.

The Sovereign Father and his Son have not forgot their master plan for humanity. It is after the completion of God's wrath upon the earth during

the rule of Jesus Christ that all humans will come to fully understand and appreciate the awesome grandeur of the opportunity that they have been offered: the opportunity to become a son of God the Father and enter his Family and Kingdom.

It is this message of opportunity that has mostly been hidden from humanity since the demise and disappearance of the early church that will again be delivered just before God's wrath is poured out on the earth and its inhabitants and Christ returns to conquer and rule the earth.

In the millennia of eternity past, a plan unfolded that is more fascinating and engrossing than any science fiction story or real life saga that has ever been told. That plan involves every person who has lived, is now living, or is yet to be born.

With the creation of humans, the Sovereign God embarked upon the greatest and grandest of all his creations; he is creating beings just like himself; and his intent is to share with them, all he has created or will ever create throughout eternity.

Herein is a great truth of the Sovereign Father's good news message. The Father and Jesus Christ have always loved mankind, who are all sinners, and it is because of, and through their great love for mankind that we have hope for salvation:

In the gospel of John, we read:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jn.3:16-17 KJV). See Mk.16:16; Rom.5:6-10; 8:7-18; Jms.4:4; 1.Jn.4:9-10.

There is only one Sovereign God who is above all else that exists and he is the one who allowed the Creator God to come to earth and sacrifice himself for humanity. When the decision was made concerning the method through which humanity would be able to have their violation of the law of God forgiven and receive redemption and salvation, there were only two immortal beings in

existence—the Sovereign God and the Creator God.

The decision to allow the Creator God to divest himself of his immortality and become human not only placed the Creator's future existence in great jeopardy, it also had a tremendous impact upon the Sovereign God's future. If the Creator had failed in his mission, he would have died and ceased to exist forever, and the Sovereign God would have lost his closest friend and companion. The Father would have been the only immortal being in existence. He would have had no one like himself with whom to share eternity. The Sovereign's decision to allow the Creator to attempt to save humanity was a selfless act and shows a love of awesome proportions for humanity.

Human words or emotion cannot begin to adequately express the grace, mercy, compassion, and love that God the Father and Jesus Christ have for humanity. And words cannot adequately describe the price that the Father and his Son were willing to pay for our redemption and salvation.

Death was to be the cessation of our existence; never again would we experience the pleasures of life, smell the fragrance of a flower, feel the sun and wind on our face; never again would we see a beautiful sunset or hear the voice of a loved one. We were destined to return to the basic physical elements from which we are composed.

Before the Creator God came to earth as a man to deliver his Father's good news message, each and every individual who had ever existed, or would ever exist was under the curse of eternal death that was inherited from the first humans as a result of their poor judgment and rebellion against God.

The Creator God who became the Messiah said: "Look to me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa.45:22 KJV).

The message from the Sovereign God through the Messiah to mankind is about the fantastic future in store for anyone who will heed the instructions given in his good news message.

However, most of what people hear about the Sovereign God's message, is focused solely on Jesus Christ, and as a result, millions do not believe what Christ taught concerning how to obtain salvation. They only believe certain things about him and do not understand the message that he brought about salvation and the Kingdom of God.

Because most of the professing Christian Community have been greatly deceived, concerning the Sovereign God's good news message, they simply do not believe what Jesus Christ said or the early church taught concerning the process of salvation and therefore many are the victims of a false conversion that does not lead to eternal life.

To Become an Immortal

God the Father offers much more than eternal life to those he calls to salvation in this age. The angels have eternal life and are sustained by God's life-giving power, yet they can be destroyed if they disobey him. The life God offers to the elect during this gospel age of salvation is immortal life, which can never be destroyed.

The quality of life promised by the Father is comparable to that which he himself has. God is a spirit-being who inherently possesses the highest form of life: immortality on the divine plane of existence. Immortal life springs forth from itself and is not dependent on any other source to sustain it, because it is self-sustaining:

It is abundantly clear from studying the Bible that God the Father intends to share immortality with those he calls to repentance, baptism, and conversion prior to the first resurrection. It is the acquisition of immortality that allows a person to pass beyond this physical existence into the Family of God as a son of God.

If you want to know what the Bible actually says about immortal life and how to obtain it, get a copy of my book "How to Become Immortal."

Although immortality represents the highest reward that is granted for faithfulness to God, there are many more. The reward for being righteous is not to

float around heaven playing harp music for eternity. God the Father and Jesus Christ have something far more spectacular in store for those who are found worthy to take part in the first resurrection.

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The following list contains some of these rewards:

- Becoming an immortal spirit-being
- Becoming a son of God
- Becoming a joint-heir with Christ
- Becoming a co-ruler with Christ
- Becoming a King and a Priest
- Inheriting the Kingdom of God
- Inheriting all things

These are only a few of the awesome rewards that are promised to those the Father calls to salvation through his message of the good news.

God the Father still hopes to increase his Family and Kingdom. The wrath of God upon this wicked and perverse generation is regrettable, but necessary in order for him to implement the next phase in his grand and awesome plan for the salvation of humanity.

Tucked away in the prophecies for the end of this age are a number of prophecies that very specifically pointed to a very small group of people. If you are one who understands this message, then the following is specifically meant for you to hear and heed. Because the apostle Peter said:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as to a faithful Creator. Peter 4:17-19

I see that my time is up, if you want to know more about Bible prophecy or the other subjects that I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org.