

7 Reasons Some Pastors Don't Preach on End-Times Prophecies

After 68 years in the ministry and guest speaking in hundreds of pulpits, I often wonder why many ministers are so silent on teaching Bible prophecy from their pulpits, particularly when at least 28% of the Bible was prophetic at the time it was written.

Dr. John Walvoord, the great prophecy scholar, identified more than 1,000 prophecies in his book *The Bible Prophecy Handbook*. Of those prophecies, more than half have literally been fulfilled, assuring us that the other half are end-times prophecies that will also be fulfilled literally. These fulfilled prophecies should make it easy to believe that we are living in or very near what the Bible calls "the latter days" and "the end times."

Among the many fulfilled end-times signs, none is more obvious than the very existence of the Jewish people now living in their own homeland, having been driven or voluntarily migrated there from more than 170 nations of the world during the last 125 or so years.

Anyone familiar with this greatest end-times prediction recognizes what Jesus Christ meant in the Olivet Discourse when He said, "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: When its branch becomes tender and grows leaves, you know that summer is near" (Matt. 24:32). The fig tree represents the nation of Israel. In other words, when the Jewish people begin to gather back into their land, you will know the sign of His return and the end is "near."

Many prophecy scholars consider the Olivet Discourse as the most important end-times prophecy in the New Testament.

Personally, I believe it indicates that between the Islamic terrorism of the Middle East and many other signs of the end, we may be near what I call "the end of the end times." The tragedy is that many of our church pulpits are nearly silent on the subject.

As an evangelistic Bible-teaching pastor, I find there is nothing more inspiring to evangelism and spiritual growth than preaching on Bible prophecy and the certainty of Jesus' Second Coming. (It is the only source of hope and comfort for people living at a time when secular man has so obviously proven himself incapable of coping with the chaos that is exploding in much of our world, particularly in and around Israel).

Yet the amazing thing is that, here we are, living in a time when God has revealed much of His wonderful plans for our future eternal life in His Word, yet many pulpits remain silent about this comforting truth that is so obvious by studying fulfilled prophecy. Why? I believe there to be several reasons. Consider some of the following:

1. A minister does not take the Bible literally, as God intended. Many mainline and some Reformed churches do not take the Bible literally. Whenever you spiritualize or allegorize God's meaning, you make it all but unintelligible. Instead, those who do not take the Bible literally often ridicule those of us who do, accusing us of a "wooden, literal interpretation of Scripture."

We believe that God said what He meant when He spoke through His Holy Spirit to special prophets and apostles, yet we also should understand what He meant to their generation and make a common-sense application to our own. Language has a way of changing through the years. After 300 years, it is difficult to understand Chaucer and Shakespeare in their original language. Parts of the Bible were written more than 3,000 years ago. We are fortunate today to have many modern translations and study Bibles in which Bible scholars have

properly interpreted the modern equivalent to the ancient Scriptures.

We also believe there are many passages that include symbols, metaphors and figures of speech that must be considered in light of their original context to ensure that we have exactly the original meaning.

2. A minister takes the Bible literally, except the 28% that is prophetic. Many otherwise evangelical churches have adopted the strange idea, propounded by Augustine in the fifth century A.D., that the Bible should be taken literally except for the prophetic passages. Thus, they avoid teaching prophecy even amid the many signs that exist in our modern era that are obvious signs of the end. One such sign is the miraculous return of the nation of Israel to the Holy Land in our own generation. Israel's very existence 4,000 years after Father Abraham started the Hebrew people, even as many other nations have sunk beneath the sands of time, is itself a miracle. However, today, Israel exists and occupies the daily news on TV, radio and the media worldwide, exactly as the prophets and apostles predicted for the last days.

3. A minister receives his education from secular educators. Too many seminaries and even Christian colleges have employed professors and teachers on the merit of earned "accredited graduate degrees" from secular colleges, where the core educational program either was secular and hostile to God and the Bible, or simply ignored them altogether. Many of these professors ridicule those who would teach the divine nature of the Bible, particularly that of future prophecy.

My good friend, Dr. Howard Hendricks, propagated a very important educational principle: "You cannot impart what you do not possess." The ugly fact is many of our pastors silent on prophecy don't deal with the subject because they know so little about it. Educators who had pastoral experience themselves did not plan their curriculum, but they had

“accredited graduate degrees.” That might help their university or seminary get accreditation from the regional accrediting association, but it also means pastors are not trained to “preach the Word” as the apostles Paul, Peter, James and others admonished. It would be better for churches everywhere if seminaries found experienced men with two or three decades of successful pastoral experience to teach the next generation how to pastor and preach the Word of God.

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