

BONUS CONTENT 12 - The Importance of Prophecy (Tony Evans)

Tony Evans said, "Anyone who has attempted to teach the subject of prophecy knows that it is no easy task."

"The heart of God's purpose for prophecy is changing our hearts and affecting the way we live our lives."
Tony Evans (*The Best is Yet to Come*)

- Dr Tony Evan reminds us that when we study prophecy it can be hard to understand the interpretations and what they mean.
- The point of prophecy is for transformation to receive revelation.
- It's about looking to JESUS and not CHARTS.
- This is the focus of our journey through the book of Revelation in our series called *The Majesty of Jesus*.

Tony Evans (*The Best is Yet to Come*) **6 Points on the importance of studying prophecy:**

1. Prophecy Helps Authenticate the Bible

- The thing that makes the Bible distinct from other writings that claim to be from God is PROPHECY.
2 Peter 1:20-21 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God...
- A book that claims to speak for God, should prove itself to us.
 - God is the one who has written these words down through the inspiration of the Spirit through men.
 - He included prophecy to prove that He is the only one who can know and predict the future as God is the Author and Finisher, (**Heb.12:2 NKJV**) the Alpha and Omega. (**Rev. 22:13**)

"Prophetic Scripture is accurate in all of its details because God moved the authors to record what was said." TE

- **20-25% of the bible is prophetic — meaning it tells of future events.**
 - Many of these prophetic events have already taken place.
 - As we study history, we can see that the things God predicted have come true.
 - A great example of this are the many prophecies about the nation of Israel OR the coming of JESUS. **Micah 5:2** revealed how the Messiah would come in Bethlehem. **Matt 2:1-6** records the fulfillment.
 - There are many prophecies about Jesus specifically and the probability of the fulfillment is compared to marking a certain half dollar and then mixing it with other half dollars 2' high in the state Texas and then picking the right coin on the first chance. (*Science Speaks* Peter W. Stoner)

"One thing that sets the Bible apart is its prophetic accuracy. A large portion of biblical prophecy has already been fulfilled with flawless accuracy." TE

If God is faithful and true to what has taken place, He will remain faithful and true to the things yet to take place.

2. Prophecy Reveals God's Character

"When you understand God's program, you get to know more about Him." TE

- God reveals through prophecy that we can truly know more of Him and that He is the True and living God and He wants us to know His character and power. **Isa 46:8-11**

- Whatever God plans He accomplishes, and we see the power and majesty of His Character as He prophecies.

“Prophecy not only reveals the character of God in terms of His perfect knowledge and power, but also in terms of His purpose to bring Himself glory and bless His people...A knowledge of prophecy gives you confidence to trust God for what’s ahead.” TE

- As we study prophecy and see God’s character our response should be worship! **Psalm 72:18**
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

3. Prophecy Promotes Holiness

“The more conscious of Christ’s return and of the fact that we could be standing face-to-face with Him at any moment, the more this knowledge will affect us. But if we forget that Jesus is coming back, we will start living like He’s not coming back.” TE

- John actually addresses this in **1 John 3:2-3** *2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*
- “When you have a prophetic mind-set, it will affect your preparation for eternity.” TE
- Example of a POP-QUIZ: When you don’t know when the test is, you study to be ready...this is the same way God wants us to be ready in knowing Him and living for Him now.
- **Matt 25** presents the parable of the ten virgins and the groom coming for them AND the parable of the Talents and the master coming back to reward the servants
- Before these parables Jesus tells us to be ready for His return by promoting holiness. **Matt 24:36-51**

4. Prophecy Brings Stability in Trials

- **Romans 8:18** Because Paul knew the future and the promises of heaven, it helped Him get through the trials in this life.
- Book of Revelation is a comfort to believers in knowing this is not the end.
- Suffering more bearable when it is just for a season or temporary. Example: pregnancy and some will go through the birth pains again because of the great reward at the end.
- Knowing the future helps us endure the present!

“There’s a lot to worry about today from a human standpoint. But if you have a firm grip on the fact that God has a prophetic program that nothing on earth can override, then you don’t have to have a coronary worrying about what might happen. Prophecy contributes to a right view of life.” TE

- The Bible exhorts us to keep our minds on Heaven and not earthly things (**Col 3:2**)
- Jesus prophecies in **John 14:1-3** about His returning for the disciples...He was bringing comfort to the situation about how He would return to them and us.
- Paul brings up the rapture in **1 Thes 4:13-18** as well (what we studied on Sunday) when the church is concerned about death and resurrection.
1 Thes 4:18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

5. Prophecy Promotes Witnessing

“God does not tell us about the future so we can argue about it or show how much we know. He wants us to know the truth about tomorrow; and about eternity, because people on their way to hell need to know God today, before it is too late for them.” TE

What will we do about the revelation we receive from God?

- God desires people to know Him and wants us to tell others about Him & His Gospel (**Rom 10:14-15**)
- Today is the day of salvation (**2 Cor 6:2**) for it is appointed for man to die once and then be judged (**Heb 9:27**).

- **John 3:36** *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*
- Knowing these truths about eternity and what is at stake, we should be doing anything short of sin to reach people for Jesus and proclaim His good news!
- It is ok to debate and have discussion on our eschatology....
BUT it should not be something that causes division within believers and causes us lose focus on what is most important...making disciples and sharing the gospel. **1 Cor 15:3-4** *3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*
- As we study prophecy through the book of Revelation, let's make sure it causes us to preach the gospel to others.

6. Prophecy Promotes Worship and Praise

- As we continue to study the prophecies of Revelation, we should be praising God!
- Hymns from heaven in this book because as God does His wondrous works the response is to worship.
- EXAMPLE: Paul praised God after explaining the prophecies of the people of Israel in **Rom 11:33;36 (NKJV)** *33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*
- Prophecy should make us realize that we are not God...and should cause our hearts to surrender in worship.
- When we see prophecy come to pass, it should cause us to praise God for who He is.
- In Revelation we see the response of heaven:
Rev 4:8b **"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"**
Rev 4:11 **"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."**