



April 18, 2025

Keep the Balance When Studying Prophecy

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

One of the proclivities of human beings is that we can at times be drawn to “insider information about events”, especially sensational ones. I’m reminded of the multiple movies and books about the JFK (John F. Kennedy) assassination. Some who read this may not be aware that he was the 35th President of the United States, who was assassinated on Friday, November 22, 1963, at 12:30 p.m. in Dallas, Texas while riding in a presidential motorcade in Dealey Plaza. It shocked the United States and many others around the world.

Many people contact so-called “psychics” who claim they have access to secret information about future events, information not available to most people. Not surprising, inside information regarding future events in God’s Word seems to be even more popular.

Over the years I’ve known many ministers who claim to have a keen insight into specific prophecies in the Bible, and folks seem to really be drawn to them.

I’ll certainly agree that there are past events and accomplishments that remain intriguing to figure out. I’ve often pondered and wondered who built the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx and how were they built and why? Were the walls around Babylon really 300 feet high and could accommodate 6 chariots with horses moving abreast on top of the walls? Why was Stonehenge built and by whom? The list goes on.

Bible prophecy also continues to be a subject that attracts the attention of many who are students of the Bible.

I know that over the years, whenever I began a series on the book of Revelation in a Bible Study, many more people showed up. Some thought that I was going to give some new understanding to this specific book. As time has marched on, and I aged, I realize many things I “thought” I understood, or had been told that “we in the church” were privileged to understand, well was simply not true. But it sure was interesting!

Some of the most popular booklets put out by churches deal with the subject of Bible prophecy. Some weekly television and webcast productions center around Biblical prophecy and have a following of thousands. Yes, there are basic prophecies that are more clearly understood. But, other prophecies are not completely understood or are even hidden. Yet many claim to have “inside information” when covering things written down.

Look at the many prophecies relating to the first coming of the Messiah. Many were understood only after they were fulfilled. Here’s one example "*So says the LORD: A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her sons.*" (Jeremiah 31:15) Matthew 2:16-18 quotes this prophecy in Jeremiah and interprets it to apply to the slaughter of the boy babies two years and under by Herod.

Here’s another example. "*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.*" (Hosea 11:1) One could see how this applies to the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt. But Matthew 2:13 applies this to the child Jesus being taken by Joseph to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod until Herod died and Jesus returned from Egypt. Some prophecies are understood only after they are fulfilled.

I was once asked about the message of the "seven thunders." In Revelation chapter 10 John sees an angel holding "*a little book open in his hand*" (verse 2).

The angel's voice is compared with the roar of a lion. As the angel speaks, John hears seven thunderous utterances. Then John says: "*... I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them'?*" (verses 3-4).

It appears that God revealed more prophecy to John than He allowed him to record. The Twentieth Century New Testament translation renders verse 3 as: "*and he cried in a loud voice like the roaring of a lion. At his cry the seven peals of thunder spoke, each with its own voice.*"

Here's a comment on verse 3 from Adam Clarke's Commentary: "Seven being a number of perfection, it may here mean many, great, loud, and strong peals of thunder, accompanied with distinct voices; but what was said, St. John was not permitted to reveal."

The timing of this section falls between the blowing of the sixth trumpet and the blowing of the seventh trumpet. The mighty angel who cried out just before the seven thunders sounded then proclaimed, "*. . . that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.*" (Vv.6-7)

John is given a little book by the mighty angel to eat and digest. Then John is told "*You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.*" (v.11) *Many events will take place next with the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath. They will involve many nations and kings who are called and gathered to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty."* (Revelation 16:14)

John heard what was voiced by the seven peals of thunder, but he was told to not write that down and to keep what was said secret. So, no one really knows exactly what was said. The message concerns events to happen on the earth as the mighty angel comes down from heaven to the earth where the sea and land are

located. The messages contained in the seven peals of thunder may be alluded to in the revelations that follow in the book.

The two witnesses or messengers described in chapter 11 may be given insight and revelation similar to those of the messages of the seven thunders. Time will tell, and we'll wait and see.

For now we have to be content with what is revealed in the book of Revelation and accept that even with what is stated, further understanding will come about in the future. It's important we don't state things like "what I'm going to reveal today, has not been clearly understood before".

There's no problem in studying Bible prophecy and trying to understand it. It is always important though to keep in mind the purposes for the prophetic messages within God's Word.

In July of 2020, I gave a message entitled "Keeping Prophecy in Perspective". I received a fair amount of correspondence from those who listened to it. Here's the link in case you are interested. <https://cogministries.org/message/keeping-prophecy-in-perspective-july-25-2020/>

Prophecies remind us that God is sovereign and His purpose will stand. They instruct us to take warning, repent, and turn to God. Practicing righteousness is far more important than becoming obsessed about the exact details of obscure prophecies. *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."* (Deuteronomy 29:29) God reveals what we need to know for dealing with the conditions we face at the time.

I'd encourage us all to remain balanced in our study of the Bible, and realize some things we simply will not know until God reveals them. I also encourage us, (you and me), to not become mesmerized by gifted speakers who claim to have special insight into understanding Bible prophecy.

The greater importance is to grow in grace and knowledge, become more like Christ with Him living in us, (Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:5) and be about doing and living what Christ would have us be doing and living.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Scott Hoefker', with a stylized, scribbled flourish at the end.

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