

Prophecy in Perspective

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An email newsletter

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Trending for 2018



A few years ago I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Charles Ryrie at a prophecy conference he was teaching on the Old Testament book of Daniel at First Baptist Church of Dallas. (See picture on left). I was there just a short time before he went on to be with the Lord. He taught theology for many years at Dallas Theological Seminary and is perhaps best known for his Ryrie Study Bible. I have read many of his books and have followed his lead on much of the sound prophetic interpretations of the Bible that he has taught through his writings. Dr. Ryrie has been a faithful teacher and author of biblical and prophetic truth.

Regarding the coming of Christ for believers in the not too distant days ahead, an event called the rapture, Charles C. Ryrie states: "The Lord, then, expects us to understand prophecy, including prophecy about the rapture. Clearly that doctrine cannot be ignored if we enter fully into the fulfillment of Christ's promise." Ryrie is speaking of the many prophecies that the Lord gave concerning His return and the events surrounding His coming again (Matthew 24 and 25).

But, Ryrie relates, from the mid 1990s', that growing trends in the church have brought about more interest in personal experience over the reality of Bible doctrine. He states: "Doctrine today is not considered to be as important as experience. Cooperation among evangelicals, with a view to appealing to the largest possible audience, often precludes proclaiming eschatological distinctions (such as the study of the doctrine of the rapture). The spirit of our times looks down on dogmatism (certainty about the Lord's coming) even if it is truth. In other words, it is ok to speak about your personal experience with God, but not as acceptable to announce with conviction certain truths of the Word of God. Usually this is because of fear of division in the church. But as one wise man has said, "fear of church division is what will cause church division." It is much better, and safer, in terms of the Lord's promised protective power for the church, to simply believe the Word of God and state your belief as such with conviction, especially concerning the coming of the Lord in these last days!"

Ryrie writes further, "I detect today a spirit of eschatological agnosticism (uncertainty about prophecy), which is not healthy for the church. Some are saying that we cannot know (agnosticism) the answers to these minor eschatological questions, so we should simply ignore them. The church will not lose much, we are assured. But

if we lose any of God's revelation we lose something important. We need to make up our minds about eschatological truths so that we can proclaim all of God's truth. The rapture is a vital part of eschatology. It is a question worth studying, a truth worth proclaiming."

Ryrie writes that there are five aspects of the rapture event. "First, there will be the Lord's Return. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, especially in verse 16 we read how the 'Lord Himself will come for His people.' Second, there will be a resurrection of those who are already 'asleep' in Jesus. Third, there will be a rapture (snatching away) of both resurrected and living believers. Fourth, 'There will be a reunion (verse 17), first with loved ones and second with the Lord. In that instant of resurrection and translation, there will be countless reunions with loved ones. But the excitement of those reunions will pale in the light of what it will mean to the see the Lord.'

Following the resurrection and rapture of dead and living saints, Ryrie asks, "Where will He take us then? To heavenly abodes He is now preparing for His own (John 14:1-3). According to the pretrib view, the church will be judged and rewarded in heaven while the seven years of Tribulation are being experienced on earth; then Christ and His church will return in great glory to the earth at the end of the Tribulation to execute other judgments and to establish His millennial kingdom (thousand year on earth from Jerusalem)."

Finally, Ryrie explains the fifth aspect of the rapture: reassurance. "'Therefore,' Paul wrote, 'comfort one another with these words.' The word *comfort* also means 'encourage.' The doctrine of the rapture comforts all who have lost loved ones. Believers do not have to sorrow as those who have no eternal hope. The truth of the rapture encourages us with a certain knowledge and firm hope about the future. Loved ones will be raised and living ones will be changed when the Lord comes." (Quotes taken from Come Quickly, Lord Jesus, What You Need To Know About The Rapture, Charles C. Ryrie, pp 21-35.)

Indications that the Lord is Coming Soon

One indication is the focus on Jerusalem becoming the capital of Israel. President Donald Trump declared recently and formally that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. This has caused an uproar from leftists in America, Muslims in Islamic countries, and among the Palestinians in Israel. But what President Trump declared has always been the case. The Bible has proclaimed Israel as God's choice nation and as the home of the Jewish people, and Jerusalem as the capital, thousands of years ago. Further, prophecy foretells the future millennial kingdom from where Jesus will rule will be the capital of the entire earth, Jerusalem. Dwight Pentecost states that: "(1) Jerusalem will become the center of the millennial earth (Isaiah 2:2-4; Zechariah 2:10-11). Because the world is under the dominion of Israel's King, the center of Palestine becomes the center of the entire earth. (2) Jerusalem will be the center of the kingdom rule (Jeremiah 3:17; 30:16-17; Ezekiel 43:5-6; Zechariah 8:2-3). The city that was the center of David's government will become the center of the government of David's greater Son. (3) The city will become a glorious city, bringing honor unto Jehovah (Isaiah 52:1-12; Jeremiah 30:18; Zechariah 2:1-13). So closely is the King (Jesus) associated with Jerusalem that the city will partake of His glory. (4) The city will be protected by the power of the King (Isaiah 14:32, 26:1-4) so that it will never again need fear for its safety. (5) The city will be greatly enlarged over its former area (Jeremiah 31:38-40; Ezekiel 48:30-35). (6) It will be accessible to all in that day (Isaiah 48:8-9) so that all who seek the King will find audience within its walls. (7) Jerusalem will become the center of the worship of the age (Jeremiah 30:16-

21; Joel 3:17; Zechariah 8:8, 20-23). (8) The city will endure forever (Isaiah 9:7; 33:20-21; Joel 3:19-21; Zechariah 8:4). (Things To Come, J. Dwight Pentecost, pp 508-509).

American and European leftism has completely abandoned the Bible. Islamic teachings, also rejecting the Bible, deny that God became man in Jesus Christ and that He died on the cross for the world's sins and rose from the dead. They reject Israel and the Jewish people as being chosen by God. They will never acknowledge Israel's right to exist or that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. This hatred toward Israel will be fully demonstrated at the battle of Armageddon when all nations will be gathered against Israel (Psalm 110:5-6; Isaiah 63:1-4; Joel 3:12-13; Revelation 16:16).

Another indication of the Lord's soon coming is the resurgence of and new applications of evolution.

Evolutionists have long taught that not only has mankind evolved from ape-like creatures, but are now even espousing that morality and even gender identity is evolving. There is no limit to the kind of evil that has and will continue to come out of the evolutionary theory which rejects the God of the Bible and the Bible itself. Evolution has even found its way into the contemporary church by denying Scripture's testimony of the six literal days of creation and its devastating tentacles are creeping into many doctrines of the church. It is sad that so many Christian leaders have abandoned the Bible's testimony of the six-day creation as clearly written in Genesis one through three! No wonder that many churches and denominations are supportive of the current movement to redefine marriage in more humanistic and evolutionary terms.

The Berean Call newsletter reports: "A lengthy article re-featured recently by CNN, titled 'When Three Isn't a Crowd,' tells the stories of several polyamorous individuals. Polyamory is defined in the article as 'having simultaneous close emotional relationships with two or more other individuals,' and one of the polyamorists featured in the article claims, 'we're trying to promote the fact that everyone has a right to develop a relationship structure that works for them.'"

The Berean Call article continues: "Answers in Genesis has been saying for years, along with many Christian leaders, that once you redefine marriage to allow for gay 'marriage' (a perversion of God's original design) as many Western countries have done in the past years, you open the door for anything (and everything) else ... And for Christians who have already compromised on God's Word and affirmed gay 'marriage,' how can you say that polygamy or polyamory goes against God's design when you've already rejected God's clear definition of marriage? Our culture is very confused about the issue of marriage, and it will only continue to become more confused. Once a culture has abandoned God's Word as the foundation, moral chaos ensues as everyone does what's right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25). But when we start with God's Word, beginning in Genesis, we have answers and the true foundation for our worldview and conduct. There are standards for marriage because God created marriage and defined it as between one man and one woman for life. (*The Berean Call*, "Polygamy - The New Marriage Battle?," January 2018.)

Remember that mixing evolution with the Bible has influenced Christians, denominations, Christian schools and seminaries to compromise on the Word of God. This kind of compromise will hinder Christians from taking a clear stand against current diabolical trends to redefine marriage, redefine human life and when it begins, and to redefine sin and the true gospel of Jesus Christ! It is time to get back to preaching the entire Word of God and believing every Word.

Reading the Word of God

There is no substitute for reading the Bible every day! As this new year, 2018, gets underway, why not prayerfully purpose to read the Bible through this year! I have been personally doing this for years! I am presently reading six or seven chapters per day in the Old Testament beginning in Genesis. Also five Psalms per day and two chapters in the New Testament. This process may vary from time to time with more study on certain portions of Scripture as I make my way through. Three chapters per day will more than get you through the Old Testament in a year. And only one chapter per day in the New Testament will get you through the New Testament twice in a year. Mark your bible as you read and put in notes as the Lord speaks to you.

"... THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE
POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION..."

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

"I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST
JESUS."...

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

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