

BIBLE PROPHECY

C. ERNEST TATHAM



Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

Bible Prophecy

C. Ernest Tatham

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PO Box 1028

Dubuque, IA 52004-1028

phone: (563) 585-2070

email: ecsorders@ecsministries.org

website: www.ecsministries.org

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Does Bible prophecy have you scratching your head? It is important for every Christian to be informed on this subject because over one-third of the Bible is directly prophetic. This survey will help you see how the pieces of the prophecy puzzle fit together. By carefully studying this twelve lesson course, you will gain a better understanding of God's wonderful plan for the ages.

Lessons You Will Study

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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

The Broad Outline

Even though the area of Biblical prophecy may be considered controversial, we believe that this furnishes no valid reason for avoiding it. Indeed, if we were to totally avoid it, we would deprive ourselves of the major part of our Bible, and this would cast a serious light directly on the God Who gave it. Because a particular doctrine of Scripture is abused provides no reason for avoiding that doctrine. On the contrary, it should make us all the more determined to understand and propagate it.

Right at the outset it should be stated that there are three main schools of interpretation among evangelical believers today: (1) a-millennialism;¹ (2) post-tribulation rapturism, and (3) pre-tribulation rapturism.

By *a-millennialism* we mean that “. . . there will be no millennium other than that which supposedly is in progress at the present time . . . there remains no earthly kingdom reign whatever for Christ in the body. Such a theory . . . teaches that the church is the kingdom and therefore is reigning or should be reigning now” (Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. VII, pp. 237–38. Dr. Chafer thus defines, but does not *endorse* this view). The a-millennialist professes to find support for his position by the many New Testament quotations of Old Testament passages, where such passages, originally addressed to Israel, are applied by the New Testament writers to Christians of this Church age. Because of these

¹To understand these views, and the issues they raise, a preliminary word is necessary. The student should fix firmly in his mind the following sequence of events:

1. The Church will be raptured to heaven by the Lord when He returns *to the air* to claim His Bride.
2. There will follow a period of great trouble on earth usually called the Great Tribulation.
3. This period will terminate when the Lord returns *to the earth* to set up His Millennial kingdom and reign on the earth for a thousand years.

quotations and applications, the a-millennialist concludes that prophecy finds exhaustive fulfillment in Christianity, and hence that the Christian Church of today is the true Israel. In the light of this conclusion he finds no room for any future national Israel or any literal kingdom to be established on a world-wide scale under Christ.

We believe that this is a serious error. While it is perfectly true that the Holy Spirit quotes certain elements of Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament and applies them to the Christian Church, it is extremely important that we distinguish between the primary interpretation and the secondary application. The primary interpretation should be accepted in the light of all the contextual elements and factors. The application of some of these experiences and blessings to believers today simply indicates that Christians already enjoy certain of the spiritual benefits that will ultimately be enjoyed by Israel and the nations when their reconciliation to God has been effected. This principle, known as “the law of double reference,” we shall be looking at in more detail later on.

By *post-tribulationism* we mean that the Church will be caught up to be with Christ at the close of the Great Tribulation period. *Pre-tribulationism* asserts that the true Church, which is Christ’s body, will be raptured before the outpouring of divine wrath upon the earth. This course holds to the latter view.

We shall consider (1) *the purpose of prophecy*; (2) *the Person Who is its subject*; (3) *the plan of prophecy*.

The Purpose of Prophecy

Prophecy is not so much for the head as it is for the heart. It is not so much mental as it is experiential. If we would know heaven’s plans for tomorrow, then we must be the obedient friends of Christ today (see John 15:14-15). It is not without significance that, although Lot was a child of God (see 2 Peter 2:7-8), he knew nothing of the impending doom of Sodom until a few hours before the judgment fell on that city. On the other hand, Abraham had been taken into God’s confidence regarding this quite some time before. This was no arbitrary dealing on Jehovah’s part. He has no favorites among His children. Why, then, was Abraham so favored? The answer is to be found in the fact that he was living a life of separated obedience to the will of God, whereas Lot was compromising in Sodom’s iniquity (reread Genesis 18, 19).

Just as a prospective traveler to some distant foreign land prepares for days and weeks ahead by acquainting himself with such matters as language, customs and climate, so knowledge of the prophetic future is furnished us so that we may live now in the light of it. Its aim, therefore, is to shed the light of the future on our present conduct, so that we might be molded accordingly. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).

The Person Who Is the Subject of Prophecy

The statement of Revelation 19:10, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” may be reversed and still be perfectly true. In fact, this reversal is probably closer to the real meaning, for “the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.” This means that the object of all Biblical prediction is Christ, and that every part of it is related to Him, either directly or indirectly. He is its Center, and unto Him all of its lines converge. Moses, the human author of the first section of the Bible, wrote of Him (see John 5:46); John, who concluded the Canon, gave us “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1). The fact is that “to him give *all* the prophets witness” (Acts 10:43).

Prophecy presents Christ in His varied glories as Prophet, Priest, and King. He is the authoritative Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:18-19; the Melchizedek Priest of Psalm 110:4; and the righteous King of Psalm 2:6 and Isaiah 32:1.

If our study of this subject fails to make Jesus Christ real to us, it will fail to achieve its supreme object. He and His glories fill the future, and the Christian is destined to share these glories. This arms him with courage to suffer and serve in the interval.

The Plan of Prophecy

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (1 Corinthians 10:32). In the main, the subjects of prophecy concern these three great classes. By the terms “Jews” and “Gentiles” we are not to think of two very small segments of the human race, but rather of the seed of Abraham in contrast with the great masses who are known as Gentiles. And by the term “church of God” we are not to think of the masses who compose baptized Christendom, but rather of those who are limited to the community of regenerated believers.

The great bulk of Bible prophecy is concerned with the nation of Israel, here described as “the Jews.” The great section of the Old Testament known as the Major and Minor Prophets has to do, very largely, with this people. Though the *uninspired* historian would give much more prominence to the rise and fall of great Gentile world empires, these are noticed in the Bible narrative only as they affect Israel, God’s earthly people. We shall see the reason for this in a subsequent lesson, but we must bear in mind very carefully that the prophetic Scriptures clearly distinguish between the seed of Abraham, on the one hand (sometimes called “Israel,” or even “the Jews”), and the Gentiles (sometimes called “the nations” or “the heathen”).

But there are those who belong to neither Jews nor Gentiles! These are known as “the church of God.” This Church is limited to “them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” It is described as Christ’s “body” (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:23, etc.). It is neither a denomination nor an organization, but is rather an organism, instinct with the life of Christ, Who is its glorified Head in heaven. In this company there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Christ Jesus. (Read carefully 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.)

BIBLE PROPHECY

EXAM BOOKLET AK '11 (2 UNITS) BP

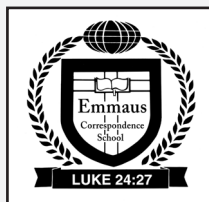
STUDENT NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

THE BROAD OUTLINE

EXAM GRADE

Directions: Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet. Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The study of Bible prophecy can be controversial. Therefore,
 - A. study of prophecy should be avoided as much as possible
 - B. prophecy should be diligently studied and propagated
 - C. the student should concentrate on those areas of prophecy which are the least controversial
 - D. once an opinion is formed on any given prophetic theme it should be rigidly adhered to

2. The word "a-millennialism" expresses the idea that
 - A. there will be a Millennium which will precede the Millennium
 - B. the Millennium will be brought about by natural processes of evolution
 - C. the Millennium will be brought about by Divine intervention in human affairs
 - D. there will be no Millennium or literal reign of Christ on the earth

3. The basic error of a-millennialism is that of
 - A. denying the verbal inspiration of the holy Scriptures
 - B. attacking the deity of Christ
 - C. applying to the Church, Old Testament prophecies which have a literal fulfillment in the nation of Israel
 - D. concluding that Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel have a full and complete fulfillment in the rebirth of the modern State of Israel

4. Which of the following laws of Bible interpretation is mentioned in this lesson, especially in connection with the unsound hermeneutical practices of the a-millennialists?
The law of

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| A. prior claim | C. first mention |
| B. double reference | D. progressive revelation |

5. The view of the Great Tribulation adopted in this course is that
- A. the Church will go through the Great Tribulation
 - B. the Church will be raptured half way through the Great Tribulation
 - C. the Church will be raptured prior to the Great Tribulation
 - D. the Church has been going through the Great Tribulation ever since Nero launched the first major onslaught on the Christian community
- _____
6. The study of prophecy
- A. should take precedence over all other forms of Bible study
 - B. deals with future events so such study is of little present practical value
 - C. is so complex that it should be avoided
 - D. ought to result in practical godliness of life
- _____
7. The statement of Revelation 19:10 that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” means that
- A. all Bible prophecy relates to Christ
 - B. we should always be Christlike in dealing with those whose prophetic views differ from our own
 - C. the sole purpose of prophecy is to provide the believer with a means of giving testimony to Christ
 - D. the Lord Jesus was the greatest prophet of them all
- _____
8. Prophecy presents the Lord Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King. It was foretold, for example, that He would be “a priest forever.” This statement was made by
- A. Abraham
 - B. Moses
 - C. David
 - D. Aaron
- _____
9. Prophecy usually concerns three main groups of people. They are
- A. Romans, Greeks, The Church
 - B. Jews, Gentiles, The Church
 - C. Jews, Americans, Arabs
 - D. Jews, Arabs, The Church
- _____
10. Gentile World empires are mentioned in the Bible when
- A. they become very large
 - B. they affect Israel
 - C. they develop new weapons
 - D. they are destroyed
- _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Do you think it is important to study Bible prophecy? Give the reason for your answer.
