

Week of Meetings-02 Why Study Prophecy

by Dwight Pentecost

The study of prophecy is essential to understanding the authority and power of God, and it reveals the wisdom and plan of God for the future.

Duration: 49:40

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Eschatology", "Christian Hope"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of being a citizen of heaven while living on earth. He emphasizes that believers should eagerly anticipate the return of Jesus Christ, who will transform their mortal bodies into glorious ones. The preacher then moves on to the exhortation given by the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:1, urging believers to stand firm in the Lord. The sermon also touches on the background of Jesus' departure and the disciples' concerns about who would provide for and guide them in his absence. The preacher concludes by highlighting the importance of studying prophecy, as it constitutes a significant portion of the Bible and helps believers understand future events.

Transcript

Doctrine, or reproof, or correction, or instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, truly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead it is appearing in his kingdom, preach the word. Be instant in season, out of season.

Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering in doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall by each of themselves teachers having itching ears. They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered in the time of my departure as at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearance. May God add his blessing to the reading of this portion of his word. If you have followed through the subjects as they have been announced, you will notice that it is our purpose to try to take you in progressive steps from the present

day through to the consummation of God's great prophetic program.

It is our desire to consider with you, for instance, the rapture of the church. Lord willing, next Sunday evening we will be speaking on the next event in the prophetic program, that is, the translation or rapture of the church. Who will be raptured? Do we know when it will take place, and what will the rapture mean for the child of God? We will follow that with messages in the tribulations period.

We will be dealing with such subjects as the Federated States of Europe, the revived Roman Empire, the rise of the beast, the great false religious system. Many of those kindred subjects will occupy our attention. We want to give some attention to the doctrine of the millennium and our Lord's return.

How will Christ reign? What will the government of the millennium be like? Wherein will the millennial earth differ from the conditions today? Will all men really drive Cadillacs or Imperials at that time? We will continue through the events of the tribulation and the millennial reign of Christ till we see the consummation of all things in glory. I realize as I go through these subjects that I am going to leave many questions unanswered. There will be many things that you will want to know that you will be a little hesitant, I hope, to raise your hands and interrupt me in the course of the message to ask.

And that is why you will find on the bulletin a detachable corner that just says questions, and it was with this series in mind that we decided to provide that. And during the course of these messages, and later on as well, we will take some time in the evening service to try to answer the questions which you may ask. There will be a question and answer period.

Now, the only way I can know what questions you have, and on what point I have most thoroughly confused you, is for you to ask for clarification. It's not necessary to find them if you don't want to. If you're afraid of revealing your ignorance or my stupidity, then just don't find it, but let us have the questions as we go along.

It is our purpose this evening to speak in a very general and in an introductory way on the question, why should we study prophecy? You will recognize that there are many people today that have relegated the prophetic scriptures for the thematic. They feel that a man has to be either mentally unbalanced, or else some religious fanatic to manifest any interest in the prophetic scriptures at all. This is particularly true among men who profess to love the word of God, but who have no respect for the authority and the integrity of scriptures at all.

Those who we would call liberals or modernists in their theology say that what we have here and now is far more important than anything that's going to happen in the future, and since they do not really believe that God gave us the word, they do not believe that God can reveal future events, they feel that any study of prophecy is just a mysticism or a fanaticism that is unworthy of one who has gotten beyond about the sixth grade in school. And yet, we find that the prophetic scriptures occupy a great portion of the word of God. If we are to look at the major divisions of the word of God, for instance, we are acquainted with the fact that we have, first of all, the books of Moses or the books of law in the Old Testament.

This is followed by the books of history where we have the record of God's dealing with the nation Israel, and the events under the judges and the kings are given to us. Then we have a section in the Old Testament known as the political books, in which the worship and praise of Israel is recorded. Then we find a large number of books in the Old Testament that we call the prophetic books, sometimes dividing them into the major and minor prophets, and if we are to take the Old Testament just by the number of

books, we realize that a large section of the word of God was prophetic at the time it was written.

When we come into the New Testament, we have the gospels which are history, and we have the epistles which are doctrinal, and the New Testament concludes with the book of the revelation which is again a book of prophecy. So, that in both the Old and New Testaments we have whole books and whole sections of the word of God devoted to this subject. But when we look at all of Scripture, we find that Scripture falls under several main headings as to the nature of the writings.

There is much that we would call history, where the record is given to us in the Old Testament and the New of historical events. Then there is the division of history that we would call doctrine, where there is teaching and instruction. I think, for instance, of a passage like Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, "...for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, but as the gifts of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." That is a doctrinal passage, whereas you can turn to the opening chapter of a gospel of Matthew, and you get the long list of begat so-and-so, begat so-and-so, from Abraham and David all the way down to Christ.

That is just pure history. Then we have a division that we would call exhortation, where there is the application of doctrine to the believer's life. Paul can write, for instance, to a young preacher and say, "...stand fast in the Lord," or he can say to believers, "...put on the whole armor of God." There, the teaching is applied to the daily life, so we find that there is that division of scripture that we would call exhortation.

Then there is scripture that we would call invitation, as our Lord says, "...come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And many passages and sections of scripture would fall into the area of invitation, but there is again that great area of prophecy. And, as we analyze scripture, we find that one-fourth of the books of scripture are one-fourth. Let me put it this way, that one-fourth of the Word of God was prophetic at the time that it was written.

One-fourth of scripture prophetic at the time that it was written. We have 25 percent of the books of the Word of God we call prophetic books, and one verse in four deals with some future events. Now, when on the basis of just this arithmetic analysis, if we are to neglect the study of prophecy, we see that we would be ignorant of one-fourth of that which God has recorded for us in the Word of God.

And, if God has devoted that much time to this subject, it certainly behooves us to give some attention to it. Now, I recognize that there are some real dangers in the study of prophecy, and I want to mention briefly some of these dangers so that we can be on guard against them as we continue in our studies from week to week. I am reminded of what the Apostle writes concerning the Athenians in Acts chapter 17 and verse 21, where when Paul came into that great metropolis of Athens that controlled so much of the intellectual and social life of Greece, the Apostle records in Acts 17 21, all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new things.

And while the Athenian culture and civilization died out, Athenianism never did, for there are always those whose major emphasis is in hearing some new things. Now, therein lies one of the dangers of prophecy. There are many who are lifted up in pride because they have been taught or studied something in the prophetic scriptures, because they are able to distinguish, for instance, between the king of the north and the king of the south, or between the first beast and the second beast, or they are able to interpret Daniel's image.

They think that they possess a spirituality that puts them on a superior plane. I was speaking with a young man recently, well it was last summer now, who is a graduate of our seminary here, who'd gone into a pastorate in a certain part of the country. He came to me, and he knew that I had given some attention to the study of prophecy, and he said, I wish to goodness that the men in my church had never heard of prophecy.

And I said, why do you say that? And he said, because those men won't listen to me preach, because they are confident they know far more about the scriptures than I do, because of all the prophetic conferences which they have attended. And every time they came to a board meeting, it turned out to be an oral exam of the preacher in how much he knew of the details of prophecy, and finally made that man's life so miserable that after he had delivered his wife from a nervous breakdown, he had to change pastors. It all went back to that sense of pride, because they knew more about prophecy than their pastor did.

Well, that was open to question, but they felt they did, and I believe that that was a misuse of the study of the prophetic scriptures. For, if we study to produce pride, and the result of our study is pride, then it has been an instrument in the hands of Satan rather than an instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God to reproduce the Lord Jesus Christ in us. Then there is another danger in the study of prophecy, and that is that among some it has become a false basis of fellowship.

Now, I believe from my study of the Word of God that fellowship between believers is on the basis of the person and work of Jesus Christ, that we unite together and have fellowship together because of our Lord and his work on our behalf. Yet, there are some who are not willing to extend the right hand of fellowship to others who may have different interpretations in the realm of prophecy, and they have said of putting the Lord Jesus Christ in the central place, and giving him preeminence, have elevated some other doctrine or teaching in the Word of God as a false basis of fellowship. And it is my earnest conviction that if any doctrine is elevated to the place of centrality, and is made the basis of fellowship, we are building a false text of fellowship, and we cannot know the blessing of God.

Then there are some people who have given such intensive study to the subject of prophecy, they have completely missed the Lord Jesus Christ in their study of the Word of God. The scripture was given to us to reveal him, and he is a theme. He is the center about which all of the scripture revolves, and if we become so interested in antichrist, that Jesus Christ is removed from the place of centrality, and if we study the Word of God to see on which side the beast parts his hair, and miss the Lord Jesus Christ, then we have been sidetracked and derailed from that, because it is not the spirit's work to teach the things of antichrist to us, but to reveal the things of Christ unto us.

And so, I say that by way of caution as we begin this series of studies, that we are studying that we might know the scriptures, that we might have the assurance in our hearts of the unfolding of God's program, but we are studying to see the Lord Jesus Christ in his centrality, in his preeminence, that we might be drawn to him in our study. So, there are some real purposes, I believe, in the study of prophecy, and it is principally these purposes that I want to call to your attention this evening, as we see something of why God has given prophecy in the Word of God. Let me say in a negative way, I do not believe that prophecy was given to us just to satisfy our curiosity.

Every one of us seems to have been born with a desire to know what's going to happen tomorrow. Then, if it were revealed what were going to happen tomorrow, we probably would want somebody to obliterate from our minds that which we learned was going to happen, because we find we didn't want to know after

all. Yet, there is that infeasible curiosity in the natural man, and that is why you will find the fortune tellers and the soothsayers and the astrologers can do such a thriving business because they pretend to give foretaste of future events to signify that which is going to happen.

Prophecy was not given us just to satisfy our curiosity about future events, but there were some very real purposes, I believe, which God had in mind in giving to us the prophetic scriptures. And the first one which I would call to your attention is the fact that the prophetic scriptures reveal to us, or prove to us, the authority of the Word of God. They prove to us the authority of the Word of God.

The Bible is different from every other religious book, for there is no other book upon which a religion has been founded which includes prophecy within it. You can take the great oriental religions with their millions of devotees, and you can search through the sacred books of the Middle East and the Near East and the Far East, but there is no predictive prophecy, for they made no attempt to reveal that which was future. You can take the writers of the false cults and sects which are rampant in our country today, and they make no attempt whatsoever to speak of future or prophetic events.

They seek to interpret or explain the past or the present, but they are entirely silent upon the future. And yet, the Word of God, from the opening chapters of Genesis right through to the closing chapters of the book of the Revelation, has interwoven the revelations of coming events as an authentication that that revelation was a true revelation from God Himself, and the test of prophecy is always its fulfillment. And if that which was prophesied comes to pass, we know that that which was prophesied is true, and there is no greater test or proof or demonstration of the inspiration and the validity and authority of the Word of God than the study of the field of prophecy.

If I could mention, for instance, just briefly some of the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ. The Old Testament, hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus Christ was born, told the actual time of His birth in Daniel chapter 9. The circumstances of His birth, that He was to be born of a virgin, revealed in Isaiah 7. The place of His birth, revealed in Micah 5. You can go on through our Lord's life, and you can find intimate details of our Lord's experiences of His suffering, of His death, the means of His death, the opposition to Him in His death, the facts of His burial and of His resurrection, all recorded in intricate detail in the Old Testament Scriptures. The one mathematician had figured out that there is only one chance in 87, with 93 zeros after it, that the Bible could be written on the basis of guess alone.

Just considering the prophecies concerning Christ. Now, somebody may be able to tell me what that figure is. I don't have the least idea, but one over 87 with 93 zeros written after it.

One chance in that number that the Old Testament could have been written and be written by guess alone when just the prophecies concerning the birth and death of Christ are considered. Now, God has revealed prophecy to prove that that Scripture which is given to us is of divine origin, is trustworthy, and we may study it with confidence. After all, that we know of God is recorded for us in this word.

If it is not trustworthy, we have no revelation at all. But prophecy proves to us that a God who can tell that which is yet in the future is a God who is to be trusted. Then there is a second purpose in prophecy, and I believe that prophecy was given to us to reveal the power and wisdom of God.

I would take, for instance, a passage like Isaiah chapter 7, where more than 700 years before Christ was born, the fact of Christ's virgin birth was predicted by God through the prophet Isaiah. If you will remember the historical background, you will recall that this man Ahaz, who was king, was a man known in Israel and

Judah for his godlessness. As wicked a king as Israel had ever seen, he descended to new depths of degradation and iniquity in leading the children of Israel into idolatry.

He had set up, within the borders of the land of Palestine, not only images and idols and groves to Baal and to Asherah, but he had set up as well those inhuman instruments of worship to Molech. Those images made of metal that were hollow, in which a fire would be built until the image was quite hot, and then infants would be placed on the lap of that quite hot image to sacrifice them to this god Molech. Now, Ahaz had brought all that idolatry and iniquity into the nation Israel, and God said he was going to punish the nation for their iniquity, and yet Ahaz said, I will forbid God to bring any punishment on this nation, and Ahaz thought that he could prevent the purpose of God, and so God sent Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah chapter 7 to Ahaz with the announcement that this judgment was coming, and that God was going to deal with his people.

God said, I'll give you a sign, Ahaz, that I'm going to bring an invader into this land, and Ahaz said, I won't ask of God a sign, I won't let him give me a sign, I refuse the sign that God is going to deal with the nation Israel. And so, in verse 11, we read the prophet says, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth that is in Hades, or in Sheol, or in the heights above. Ahaz, you can ask God to bring somebody back from the dead, or you can ask God to do what he did in the days of your forebears and turn the sun backward in its course.

Ask any sign that God is going to deal in judgment with this nation. Ahaz says, I will not tempt the Lord. This was not mock humility, or this was not humility, but this was rather the fact that he was forbidding God to intervene in the affairs of the nation Israel.

So God says in verse 14, The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. And I believe that there are two sons here in Isaiah 7. One was the son of the prophet Isaiah that is referred to in verse 3. Go now and meet Ahaz, thou and sheer Jeshub thy son.

And here is this small child, perhaps an infant in arms, that Isaiah carries with him out to meet Ahaz and to announce that judgment is coming. And God says, Before this son in Isaiah's arms can grow up enough to know the difference between good and evil, that the land shall be scattered of her kings. And God is revealing the near future of what is going to happen in the surrounding nations, and God is revealing the future 750 years away to show that he is a God of wisdom and a God of power, and no wicked godless king can prevent him from doing that which is his purpose to do.

So prophecy was given through Isaiah to reveal the power and the wisdom of God. Would you turn back into Genesis chapter 18? We have given to us, I believe, another purpose of prophecy, and that is that prophecy will reveal the purpose of God. We find in this chapter, in Genesis chapter 18, that God appears to Abraham and tells Abraham that the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are going to be destroyed.

That was a revelation which was being made from God to Abraham, which was a predicted prophecy. And then we read in verse 17, the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. God reveals there that he wanted to take Abraham into an intimate fellowship with himself, and to reveal what he purposed to do.

Now, Abraham was going to live to witness the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham might have witnessed that destruction, and asked himself the question, why did God do that? What was the purpose of destroying all that human life? But God says to Abraham, before it happens, Abraham, I want you to know what I'm going to do, so that when it takes place, you might understand that I am a holy and righteous God, and cannot continue to deal with this outbreak of sin any longer. And prophecy was revealed to Abraham so that he might understand the purpose of God. As we go through in our series, and we see the development of some of these great events in prophecy, when we shall study, for instance, and see the rise of a coming world dictator who will bring all of Europe under his authoritarian power, when we shall see the rise of Russia and of God's great judgment that destroys Russian Communism, when we see the return of the Jews to Palestine, and then all of the events that take place during the tribulation period against Israel and the greatest tide of antisemitism the world has ever seen.

We will be studying these things to see that God has revealed to us something of his plans and purposes, so that as we see these things looming on the horizon, our hearts shall not give way to fear as though God somehow has been deposed from his throne, that this world has gotten out of his control, and that its lawlessness is in absolute authority. There is nothing that will assure us as much that God is still on the throne, and that God is working all things according to the counsel of his own will, and the fact and the truth that God is ruling all things, and is causing all things to move according to his predetermined, and pre-arranged, and pre-revealed plans. The prophecy will bring us into an intimate knowledge of the purpose of God.

This message is continued on the other side, but I believe again there is revealed in John chapter 14 and verse 1 yet another purpose in prophecy. Our Lord says in those familiar words, Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. Now, the background of this passage is found in the fact that Jesus Christ has told the disciples that he is going to leave them.

He's going away. He has predicted to them of his death and his resurrection. These disciples have been under his tutelage.

They have been provided for by his power. They have been guided, they have been commissioned by his word. Their whole life has centered and revolved around him, and now he tells them he is going away.

What are they going to do? Who is going to provide for them? Who is going to empower them? Who is going to protect them from the enemy? Who is going to tell them where to go and what message to proclaim? They were at a loss. So, our Lord meets their heart's need by revealing a prophetic event, so that the Lord meets the problem of their heart trouble by the words in my Father's house, on many mansions, if it were not so, would I have told you I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. The answer to their heart trouble was faith.

Faith in the person of God, ye believe in God, believe also in me, and faith in the program of God. In my Father's house, on many mansions, I am going to come and receive you unto myself. So, that prophecy was that which was designed to bring peace to the believers, and that is one of the great purposes of prophecy in the word of God, to bring peace and assurance.

We can hardly pick up a news magazine or listen to newscasters today as they talk about the threat and the horror of the next atomic war, the nuclear war. They talk about wiping man off the face of the earth and the absolute destruction of human civilization and all the rest of it. Why don't we sit in the edge of our

chairs and chew our fingernails and worry whether a bomb is going to be tucked off that's going to blow everybody's kingdom come? Why do prophetic scriptures tell us that those things just can't take place? Why? Because God has a purpose, and God's purpose involves these nations and this earth, and God is working all things according to his own purpose, and that God has told us of the prophetic events so that we know that such a thing could never transcribe.

In the threat of all this world conflict, the believer in Jesus Christ who has been taught in the prophetic scriptures can trace the hand of God as these events will unfold, and I believe we shall see that in the progress of our study, that it gives us confidence and assurance that our night is not as a night with no star, and our day is not a day in which the light of the sun is obliterated, but we have the sun of righteousness, the bright and morning star to guide us through the doubts and darkness and uncertainty of this life as we come to understand the scriptures. But, of climaxing it all, I believe that God's great purpose in revealing prophecy to his children is to produce a holy life, to produce a holy life. Some short time ago now, I took the occasion to go through the New Testament to mark each reference to the coming of our Lord, and then to observe the use made of that teaching about Christ's coming, and I was struck anew with the fact that, almost without exception, when the coming of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament, it is followed by an exhortation to godliness, an exhortation to holy living.

To the exclusion of almost every other exhortation and application, the second coming of Christ was designed to produce a holy life, and while, as we go through the prophetic scriptures in these next weeks, I believe that the study of prophecy will give us proof of the authority of the word of God, and will reveal the purpose of God and the power of God, and give us the peace and assurance of God. I will feel that we have missed the whole purpose of the study of prophecy if our study does not conform us to the Lord Jesus Christ in our daily living. I want to mention just several of the many, many New Testament prophecies of the coming of Christ which we might study, to point this out to you as we draw our consideration to a close this evening.

I would suggest sometime you take the New Testament epistles and you read them. Read them through specifically to mark references to the second coming of Christ. You will have a hard time finding a New Testament epistle that does not refer to Christ's coming.

It's there through them all. We are not dealing with some isolated teaching, some of pure doctrine, but we are dealing with that which is preeminent in the word of God. But I'll just select several in order that we might emphasize this particular truth with you.

Will you turn with me, first of all, to the epistles of Philippians? Philippians chapter 3. And there, first of all, beginning at verse 10, Paul expresses the great desire of his heart, the desire that I might know him, that I might be made conformable unto his death. Verse 12, he says, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I pursue after, if I may lay hold of that for which also I have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold, but this one thing I do for getting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling, or the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Or, if I can paraphrase that, I am all my life pressing on in view of the prize that there is at the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. And then he concludes the fact in verse 20 as he says, our conversation is in heaven. And if you will allow me to change the reading of that to get the force of this across, Paul says, verse 20, the state of which we are citizens is in heaven.

From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. There in verse 20 and 21, the apostle has said, I am an absentee citizen. I am living here, and at the time he was writing, he was confined in a cell in Rome.

He says, I'm down here now, but I'm an absentee citizen. The state of which I am a citizen is up there, and from the place where my citizenship is, I'm looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ who shall translate this body of humiliation and suffering and death, and he will make it like unto his glorious body. Now, chapter 4 verse 1, what's the first word? Therefore.

Therefore, and the word therefore draws the conclusion to the fact he has been looking for the coming of Christ in verse 20 and 21. Therefore, my beloved brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy my craft, stand fast in the Lord. What was the exhortation on the basis of the coming of Christ? To stand fast in the Lord.

Will you look at it again? Turn over to Colossians in chapter 3. The apostle has given us the assurance of our identification with Christ. He says, if ye then be risen with Christ, and you certainly are, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. And he has pictured the Lord Jesus Christ ascended and throned in glory today.

And then he says in verse 4, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. And he has referred in verse 4 to the precious promise that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming, and when he comes he's going to translate us in glory. Now, the phrase in glory is not a geographical term like we would say in heaven, and he doesn't say, then shall ye also appear with him in heaven.

But the phrase in glory shows to us the condition into which we will be made when we see him. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him, glorious one. Now look at verse 5. Put to death therefore, and underline the word therefore.

He's drawing the conclusion to the teaching that Christ is coming in verse 4. Put to death therefore in view of the fact that Christ is coming to glorify your members which are upon the earth, and he gives that long list of the sins of the flesh which one may commit, and he says put off all these, verse 5 and verse 12, put on therefore as the elect of God the compassions of mercy, kindness, humbleness, and so on. Put off therefore, and put on therefore, because Christ is coming. We will look at this again in Titus 2, and this is a very familiar passage, and since we so recently studied, or many of us did, this epistle, I'll just touch on it briefly to call this to your attention.

As in verse 11 of chapter 2, the apostle writes and says, For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, and verse 13, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Now, go back to verse 12, and you get the exhortation. What does this hope, what does this grace of God that gives us the promise of the coming of Christ teach us? Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world while we are looking for that blessed hope.

And then just one more, and over in 2 Peter 3.10. The apostle Peter is outlining the prophetic event, and he says, The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, the witch of heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Fears also in the works that are therein shall be

burned up. Now, after giving us that fact of the prophetic scriptures, in verse 11 he draws the application, Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy manner of life and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.

Verse 14, Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blame. There the apostle Peter has added his testimony to that of the apostle Paul, that the Lord Jesus Christ has given to us the promise of his return, and that promise of his return will give us the proof of the authority of the word, reveal the power of God, the purpose of God, give the child of God the peace of God. Would it ought to be transforming us daily into a holy life as it produces the life of Christ in us? Recently, I was asked to come to make a call in a certain home, and I had told the folks that I would be there at my first convenience.

I had a meeting on Monday evening, and I said I may get there Tuesday, and it may be that I'll be interrupted and I won't get there until Thursday, but I'll come as soon as I can. Well, it happened that Tuesday went by, Thursday went by, and I didn't get there. The Saturday, I went and made the call, and midway through the call, some of the children in the family came in and began to look at their mother, and then they looked at me, and then they went out.

Mother began to smile, and she said, my children are glad that you have finally come. Or, she said, you had never been here before, you hadn't met us, and I told the children that when I got the living room cleaned up, they couldn't play in it until after the pastor had come and gone. Now that the pastor had come after he had gone, the living room that was kept clean for his coming could revert to its more normal usages.

The threat, shall I say, of the pastor's coming had produced a different kind of life in that home and in that living room. The apostle presents to us the blessed truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming. When? We don't know.

He has told us to expect him at any time, for he may at any moment appear. And it was the desire of Paul that, should he come in his day, that Paul would be found faithful, that he would be found doing those things that would please him. The Lord has not yet come in God's gracious power so that we might come to know him and enjoy his home forever, but he has still given us the promise, you can look for me at any time, and may the joy of looking for his coming produce enough that holiness of life that will not make us ashamed when we see him.

Our Father, we pray that thou will give to us a hunger to know that which thou hast revealed in the word of God, and as we next week, the Lord willing, shall turn to consider that particular prophecy addressed to us of the translation of the church as the Lord appears in the air. Even anticipating that study, may we live this week in the light of our Lord's coming. May our Father pray that our hearts shall be made steadfast in our faith.

We can know the peace of God even in the midst of turmoil because thou hast revealed the purpose of God, and wilt thou, our Father, give to us the joy of looking up for our redemption draws nigh, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dwight-pentecost/week-of-meetings-02-why-study-prophecy/>

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