



THE THREE QUESTIONS SERIES: Part 1 of 3

As a Bible Study teacher and frequent speaker, Rick is often asked a variety of questions about the focus of his ministry. There are three basic questions that seem to arise in many of these discussions. They are all inter-related, and they have come to form the foundational statements of **Zion's Roar Ministries**:

1. Why Study Bible Prophecy?
2. Why Care About Israel?
3. Why Believe in a Rapture?

QUESTION #1: Why Study Bible Prophecy?

ANSWER: Let's address some reasons why Bible prophecy is not studied and taught more frequently, then we'll look at why we highly recommend the competent, comprehensive study of Bible prophecy.

First, let's be perfectly honest. There ARE a lot of so-called "prophecy buffs" out there, and many of them can seem just a bit "whacko," right? We've all seen our fair share of folks that claim to have some type of prophetic insight, but actually have very little in the way of a solid biblical foundation. Sometimes, the "hype-type" prophecy enthusiast devolves into nothing more than a mere news headline aggregator and may remind one of the old sandwich-board wearers of the 1960's with the cliché, "The End is Near!" signs.

Thus, much of mainstream Christianity (and Judaism) has become cautious about the study and teaching of Bible Prophecy. Many respectable pastors, rabbis, and teachers are concerned about their ministries being labeled or associated with fringe and oft-times unstable elements. They are responsible to G-d to ensure their congregants are not led astray by faulty teachings, as well. Consequently, many spiritual leaders have minimized or altogether avoided the topic of Bible prophecy in our time, simply to maintain a "respectable" reputation within their sphere of influence. While this is perhaps understandable, this approach is somewhat like, "throwing the baby out with the bathwater," as they say.

The second reason the study and teaching of Bible prophecy is avoided, is that local pastors, rabbis, and teachers tend to experience what I call the "one-room schoolhouse" effect. In any given service, there may be visitors, unbelievers, and/or new believers in the audience. These are intermingled with a congregation that may also have a wide-range scale of spiritual maturity and biblical literacy levels.

Clearly, it would be difficult (impossible), to teach basic arithmetic AND advanced quantum field equations to all grade-school through high-school aged students in a one-room schoolhouse. Likewise, it is difficult to fathom the depths of Bible prophecy with a wide-range scale of potentially biblically illiterate and/or spiritually immature persons within a congregational setting. Therefore, many spiritual leaders attempt a middle path in order to do, "the most good, for the most people." This generally leads to an avoidance of the complex and controversial studies that may be found in Bible prophecy.

A third reason for avoiding the study and teaching of Bible prophecy (and the final one to be discussed), is that it is actually very time-consuming and a lot of hard work. To competently examine the many latent



prophetic patterns of the text, develop an understanding of the linguistic and cultural contexts behind it, become familiar with period resources, and to become well-versed in various methods of both Christian and Jewish hermeneutics requires a tremendous amount of dedicated time and man-hours. The so-called “layman” is often not equipped with adequate time or resources to do so, and it may all seem too baffling to him anyway. Meanwhile, most “clergy” in mainstream ministry may have the necessary resources, but they generally lack the time for such intense studies too. This is not meant as an indictment of them, but merely an acknowledgement of the primary duties of their calling.

In addition to their obvious duties to conduct multiple worship services throughout the week, they are also expected to handle the administrative and business affairs of the organization; the operational and maintenance needs of the facility; develop additional programs and special events; visit the sick (in or out of the hospital); care for the poor, disadvantaged or disenfranchised; attend community events; handle transient persons seeking material and/or financial assistance; perform marriage and funeral ceremonies; provide prayer, counseling, and support; and respond to any and all congregational emergencies, whether night or day; and so on, and so forth. Undoubtedly, those filling such demanding roles do not have a great deal of time for the sustained academic study that Bible prophecy requires.

That is why there exists the five-fold ministry as found in **Ephesians 4:11-13**: “*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of G-d, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*” Each of the five-fold callings has a role to play in bringing the believer to fullness in Messiah. These roles are complimentary one to another. They are not adversarial or in competition with one another. So, if the shepherds are busy shepherding...then others are called to do their part as well. And thus, **Zion’s Roar Ministries’** own engagement with Bible prophecy.

Of course, some people (laymen and clergy) simply do not see the value of studying and teaching Bible prophecy. With limited time and resources, it may not seem to provide the best return on time invested. After all, would we not be better off just telling people about the Gospel (good news of salvation) of Jesus Christ (Yeshua Ha’Mashiach)? Wouldn’t it be far better to just help people deal with their here-and-now “real-world” problems? Perhaps, but this leads me into the actual answer to our original question, “Why Study Bible Prophecy?”

First, let’s take a look at a scripture found in **Revelation 19:10** of the New Testament (Covenant). In this passage, John, a disciple of Yeshua (Jesus) is experiencing an incredible vision of future events and is quite literally overwhelmed by all that he sees. In acknowledging his supernatural guide to these events, John writes: “*And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship G-d: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” (underlined emphasis my own)



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You will note that the inspiration of scripture indicates that the sharing of the Gospel (good news) of Jesus (Yeshua) is actually equated with Bible prophecy. Therefore, to neglect Bible prophecy, is to neglect JESUS (Yeshua) Himself! Why? Because without a thorough understanding of the prophecies found in the Old Testament (Tanakh), there would be no way to validate and/or authentic Yeshua's messianic claims. Thus, knowing and understanding Bible prophecy is crucial to knowing and understanding Jesus Christ (Yeshua). Our faith and belief in Him is rooted and grounded in the unbreakable Word of G-d spoken to the Jewish prophets for centuries, and even for millennia, prior to His actual appearance as The Messiah.

For example, the following passage is applied to the Messiah by both Jewish and Christian scholars: ***Psalms 40:7-8***, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my G-d: yea, thy law is within my heart."

Taken together, these two passages (***Revelation 19:10 + Psalm 40:7***) follow the principle of commutative mathematics. That is, if A = B, and if B = C, then, of course, A = C. So then, IF the testimony of Jesus (Yeshua) is the spirit of prophecy (***Revelation 19:10***); and IF the entire volume of the Bible is written about Him as the Messiah (***Psalms 40:7***), THEN the entire Bible is truly prophetic. The Bible is not a superficial collection of random historical events, or just a book containing important life lessons.

To truly discover Jesus (Yeshua) as The Messiah, and to fully see that He is exactly Who HE said He is, one must not only read the biblical text at the surface level, but one must also discover how to *prophetically* interpret its latent patterns. As testified, the spirit of prophecy actually runs throughout the entire biblical text, overtly and covertly, as a testimony of Jesus (Yeshua). You will find that the Bible is supernaturally self-encoded with these encoded messages and their encryption keys.

For example, let's look at the passage cited above (***Psalm 40:7-8***). This passage is repeated only one time in the entire Bible. It is found in the New Testament (B'rit Chadashah) within the Epistle to the Hebrews. ***Hebrews 10:7-9***, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O G-d." This scriptural repetition is actually quite prophetically significant. When first cited in ***Psalms 40:7-8***, the Messiah had not yet arrived. It was a prediction of His coming (*Lo, I come*). Hundreds of years later, Jesus (Yeshua) was born in Bethlehem as predicted by the Prophet Micah (***Micah 5:2***). He was later slain, buried, and resurrected in order to provide for our redemption as predicted by the Prophet Isaiah (***Isaiah 53*** and many others). But for now, let's examine this dual repetition further...

Please realize that it is a common misnomer to say that the Jews did not accept Jesus (Yeshua). After all, His disciples were all Jewish. The people who shouted "Hosanna" (Save us now!) as he entered Jerusalem (Yerushalayim) on a prophesied donkey were Jewish. The multitudes that followed and praised Him were Jewish. And it is also a common misnomer to ascribe these followers to only the poor, uneducated classes. It is often overlooked that many Jews in His day believed upon Him, including many chief rulers, and even several among the oft-villainized, educated rabbis, the Pharisees (***John 11:45; John 12:42; Acts 15:5***).



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Yet, many faithful Jews to this day still fail to acknowledge Yeshua as Messiah. Why? Well, there is a long-standing rabbinical tradition of denial from their own leadership, but this denial is strongly supported in Jewish minds by something that cannot be denied. Although Jesus (Yeshua) fulfilled several Messianic prophecies during His lifetime, there were also many more prophecies which He did not fulfill. That's right. There are additional prophecies that **MUST** be fulfilled by the true Messiah, that were **NOT** fulfilled during Yeshua's appearance in the early first century. It just so happens, that these remaining prophecies are very specific to the Jewish people of Israel, and not so much regarded by the rest of the world.

And this is where the scriptural repetition previously discussed becomes so prophetically important.

As you will recall, the predicate we discussed for the coming of Messiah was found in the Book of Tehillim (***Psalms 40:7***) in the Tanakh (Old Testament). This book is widely regarded as a book of songs and poetry, but never forget, it is also a book of prophecy (aside from ***Revelation 19:10***, the Bible records that the spirit of prophecy fell on David when he was anointed to be King of Israel). The book was primarily written by King David, who serves as a prophetic type of both the struggles of Israel and the Messiah. Portions of the book were written by the anointed Levitical prophet/musician, Asaph the Seer (***2 Chronicles 29:30***).

Now, please recall that the Messianic predicate of ***Psalm 40:7*** is repeated within the New Testament (B'rit Chadashah) in ***Hebrews 10:7***. This is prophetically important because it fits a rabbinical *pattern*. The Messianic phrase (*Lo, I come*) is repeated not just anywhere in the New Testament, but specifically, within the self-titled, "Epistle to the Hebrews." This was a book specifically written to Jews (not Gentiles) that were torn between observing the Mosaic covenant or recognizing the Messiah and the implementation of the New Covenant spoken of by the Prophet Jeremiah (***Jeremiah 31:31***). The strategic placement of this predicate verse was divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit (Ru'ach Ha'Kodesh), for the use of this phrase (*Lo, I come*) in Hebrews constitutes a specific message; one *specifically* intended for the Jewish people.

You see, the Jewish rabbis have long recognized an apparent contradiction in their Messianic prophecies. The Messiah is simultaneously said to be slain (***Daniel 9:26***), yet also said to reign forever (***Isaiah 9:6-7***). In order to reconcile this paradoxical difficulty, the rabbis developed a doctrinal concept of TWO Messiahs: one, called the Meshiach ben Yoseph (the suffering Messiah, "son of Joseph") and two, the Meshiach ben David (the ruling Messiah, "son of David").

However, the Bible clearly indicates (here and elsewhere) that these are actually two aspects of one and the SAME Messiah. Under the prophetic inspiration of the Spirit, the Messiah is recorded as saying to the Jews, "*Lo, I come.*" This occurs not once, but twice, in both Psalms AND Hebrews. Both books were specifically drafted to and for the Jewish people (not Gentiles). In both cases, the utterance, "*Lo, I come,*" uses the singular, "I" and not the plural, "we." This singular usage prophetically anticipates the ingenious "Two Messiah" solution of the rabbis, to argue there is one unique Messiah, but two "comings" of Him.



ZION'S ROAR

MINISTRIES

Joel 3:16



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Just as the first utterance of “Lo, I come,” as recorded in **Psalm 40** of the Tanakh (Old Testament) was the predicate for Yeshua’s arrival in New Testament times (B’rit Chadashah), the same announcement, “Lo, I come,” as repeated in **Hebrews 10** in New Testament times is the predicate for His arrival at the end of our own age. Why is this important? Because it is then, the second time, that He will fulfill the remaining Messianic prophecies...and these are the very signs for which the Jewish people have long-awaited (if you conduct a study of various “second-times” within the Bible, some very interesting things emerge).

Now, if all this seems somewhat contrived to you, then you’re simply not thinking like a rabbi! Yeshua (Jesus) was, is, and is to come, under many titles and roles. But the one most often ignored by all is this: He was, is, and is to come... a Rabbi! (see **John 1:38,49; 3:2; 6:45; 20:16**)

Rabbinically, there are four methods of biblical interpretation: 1) *Parashah*, which deals with the contexts and meaning of the time; 2) *Remez*, which deals with the hidden prophetic patterns of the text; 3) *Drash* which deals with the Bible’s application in our lives; and finally, 4) *Sod*, which deals with the secrets of the supernatural realm. Thus, these four interpretations respectively represent: 1) Past, 2) Future, 3) Present, and 4) the Eternal. Therefore, it must be understood that the Bible is far more than a simple book. It is the Infinite Word of an Infinite G-d. There is still much more detail that lies encoded beneath the surface of the text... just waiting to be discovered.

But, the study of Bible prophecy is not just about “knowing the future,” and obtaining mystical insights, as some would like to see it. It is about recognizing the open and closed messages of the biblical text that affirm Yeshua was actually who He said He was: The Son of G-d and The Son of Man: The Messiah. It’s about recognizing what HE means to both Jew and Gentile.

This prophetic realization testifies of Him, and it testifies of His LOVE for us. It therefore strengthens and builds one’s FAITH in to Him. Once faith in Him is developed, then our glorious HOPE is kindled in the precious promises He gave that yet remain to be fulfilled. Therefore, these three spiritual qualities are the true reasons **Zion’s Roar Ministries** commends the study Bible prophecy: FAITH – HOPE – LOVE. And the greatest of these...is Love (**1 Corinthians 13:13**).

Selah.