

## Understanding Biblical Prophecy

- **The Bible is Authoritative** – It is God’s word, **revealed** by God to the mind of men, **inspired** from the mind of the author to the text, and **illuminated** from the text to the reader. It is inerrant in its original text and has the authority of God behind every word.
- **Good students of the Bible keep in mind Context, Context, Context.** A passage of scripture must be interpreted in light of what has been written around it. Think like this: Verse, Paragraph, Section, Chapter, Book.
- **The Bible should be literally or normally interpreted.** “When the literal sense makes good sense use no other sense, lest you have nonsense.” If you don’t interpret the Bible literally, then you have no consensus of meaning. The meaning of God’s word becomes subjectively formed in the mind of the reader rather than objectively formed in the mind of God. It is then just the words of men rather than the Word of God.
- **40% of the Bible is Prophecy** – John Walvoord wrote a book called “The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook” in which he discusses 1,000 passages of scripture on prophecy, some single verses and some entire chapters. Approximately 500 of those passages have already been literally fulfilled in the normal sense. This gives us intelligent reason for interpreting the yet-to-be fulfilled prophecies in the same way.
- **Obscure passages should be interpreted in light of passages that are clear.** God does not contradict himself. That wouldn’t make sense. If there is an apparent contradiction there must be an explanation for it. This prevents us from taking a passage of scripture out of context.
- **Israel and the Church are not the same thing.** There are prophecies about world events, about angels, about life after death, about Israel, and about the Church. It would be a mistake to think that all the prophecies that pertain to Israel pertain to the Church. The Bible is clear that God is not done with Israel.
- **Symbolic language should be interpreted normally.** Many prophecies of the Bible involve symbolic language. A literal interpretation takes into account figures of speech, similes, metaphors, personification, hyperboles, symbols and many other word pictures. It would be wrong to think that because something is symbolic, that it should only be taken symbolically.
- **There is great application to be found in studying prophecy.**
  1. Prophecy expands our understanding of the greatness of God.
  2. Prophecy emphasizes the sovereignty of God
  3. Prophecy helps us see ourselves in light of God’s overall plan.
  4. Prophecy strengthens our faith in God.
  5. Prophecy encourages our worship of God.
  6. Prophecy gives us confidence for the future.