

DIGGING DEEPER *with Dr. Jim Eckman*

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BIBLICAL PROPHECY, PART 1:

Session 1: Introduction

J. Barton Payne's *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* lists 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament, and 578 prophecies in the New Testament. That works out to a total of 1,817, by his count. And those prophecies involve 8,352 of the Bible's verses. Because there are 31,124 verses in the Bible, the 8,352 verses constitute almost 27% of the total, meaning over one-fourth of the Bible is prophecy.

Why study prophecy?

1. It produces comfort and consolation. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
2. It motivates us to be ready, to be watchful, Matthew 24:42.
3. It motivates us to be faithful, Matthew 25:14-30.
4. It gives us hope and motivates us to live pure, godly, righteous lives, Titus 2:13.
5. It cultivates a spirit of worship, adoration and the glory of God. (See Revelation, especially chapters 4 and 5.)
6. It promotes love and respect for the authority of God's Word: Since God fulfilled all the prophecies associated with the First Advent of Jesus, He will fulfill all those associated with the Second Advent.

TWO FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

1. The **Kingdom of God** Concept. It is used three ways in Scripture:
 - a. Universal Kingdom – This is the providential rule of God over everything that He has created. (See Psalm 145:14; 1 Chronicles. 29:12; Psalm 103:19).
 - b. Mediatorial Kingdom – This is the rule of God through a divinely appointed mediator, which refers to the rule over Israel by a divinely appointed king in the line of David. 2 Samuel 7:16 points to the covenantal relationship between God and David, who is the archetype of the Messianic King. His greater Son, the Messiah, will fulfill these promises (i.e., an eternal throne, dynasty and kingdom).
 - c. Eschatological Kingdom – Here is where the mediatorial kingdom will reach its ultimate fulfillment. For the most part, the use of the word, kingdom, in the

various prophetic passages of Scripture applies here. The Kingdom of God in all its fullness comes to earth.

Craig Blaising:

"This kingdom is earthly. The curse which came through sin will be replaced with the blessing of life and fruitfulness over the earth. Death, disease, and demonism will be eliminated and the City of God will be established on the earth. The kingdom is also spiritual, as redemption is extended in full in both individual and social aspects of human existence. It will be characterized by life eternal and immortal, by righteousness and justice, by the judgment and removal of the wicked on the one hand and yet by grace, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness of sins on the other. It will be characterized by peace, holiness, godliness, by regeneration and the indwelling Holy Spirit, by knowledge of, worship of, and willing obedience to God, in joy, gladness, and blessing forever. The kingdom is national, political, in that it involves the establishment and administration of Israel according to covenanted promises and the establishment and administration of all other nations through Messiah, Son of David. God will reign over the nations in glory, power, and majesty, blessed, honored and worshiped by all forever."

The New Testament makes clear that the realization of this kingdom, defined in the Old Testament revelation, will come in stages:

STAGE 1 The presence of the kingdom in the person of the King. (See Matthew, Luke-Acts 1-3.)

STAGE 2 The presence of the kingdom in the community of the King - the church. (See Acts, the Epistles.)

STAGE 3 The presence of the kingdom in the empire of the King – His millennial kingdom. (OT fulfilled prophecy, Revelation 20, etc.)

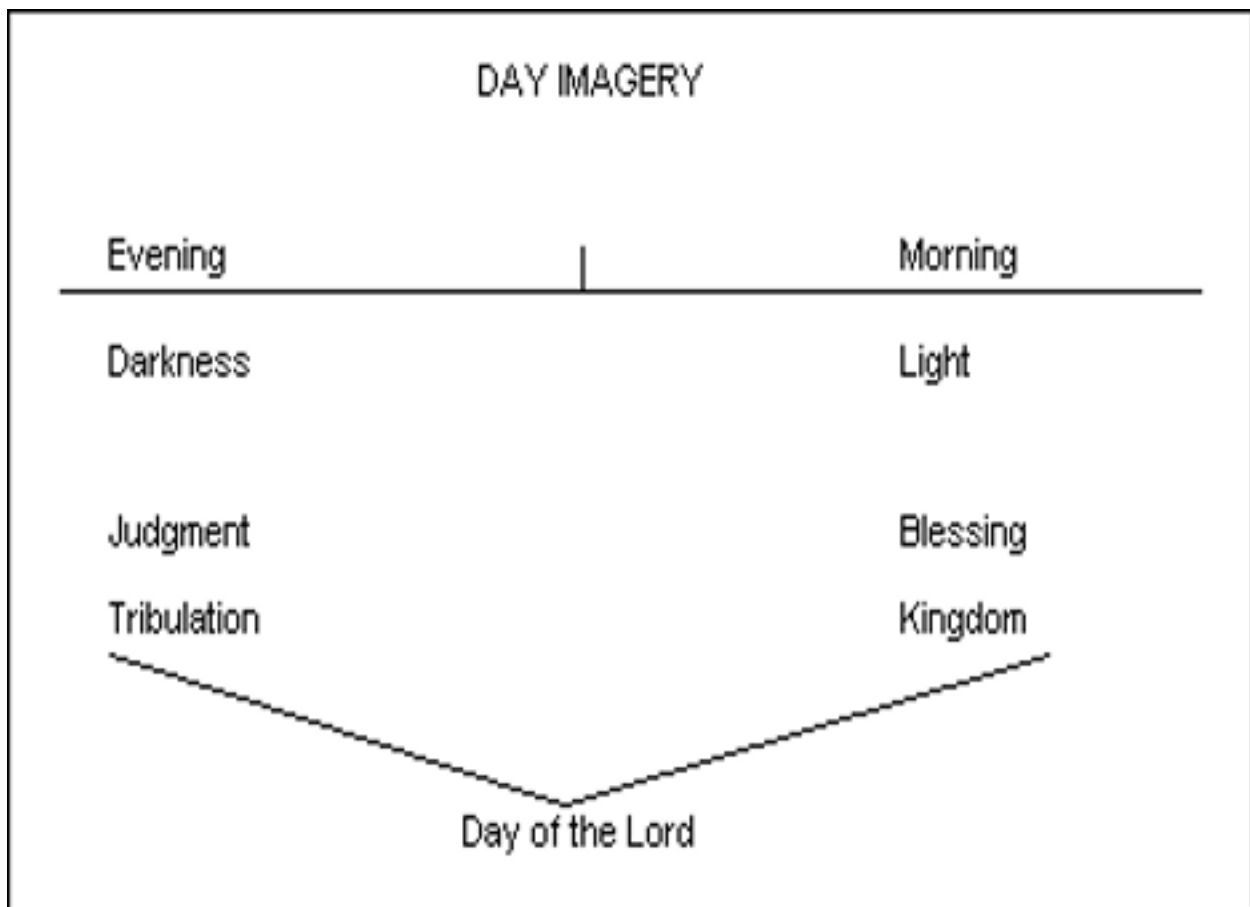
STAGE 4 The presence of the King as the eternal kingdom. (1 Corinthians 15:24-25, Isaiah 65-66, Revelation 21-22)

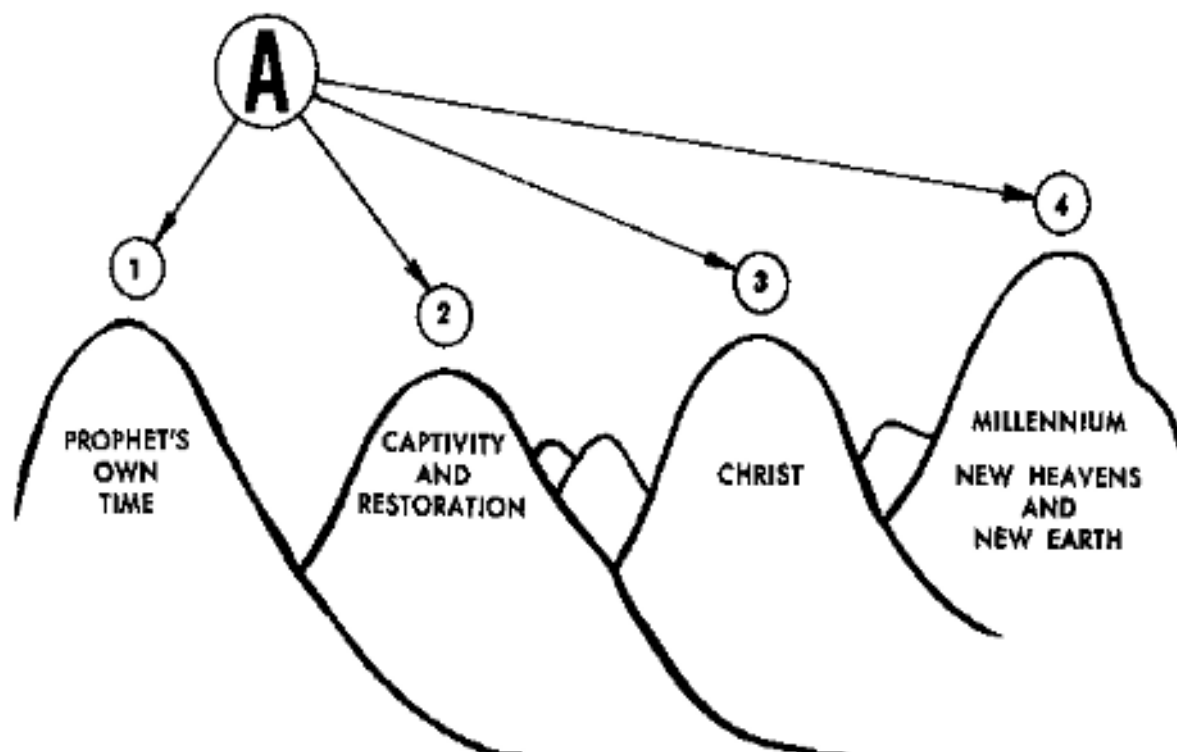
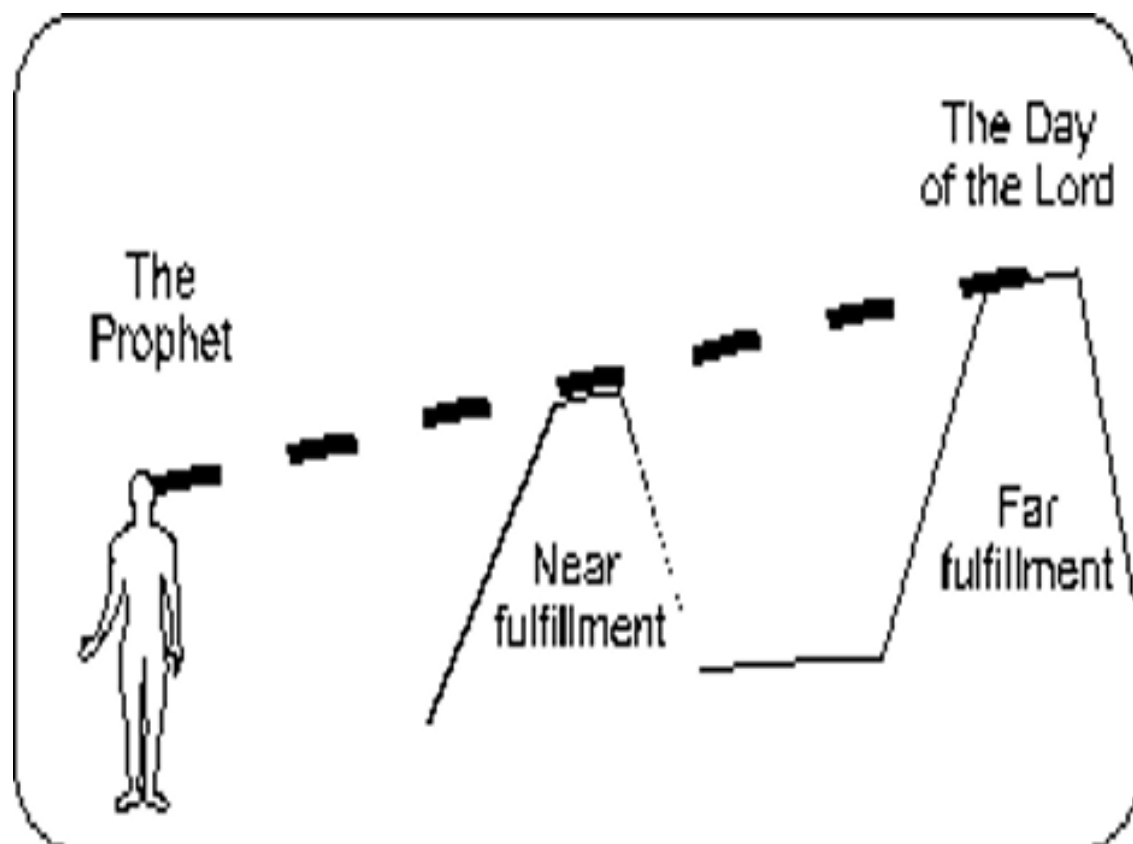
2. The **Day of the LORD** concept:

The phrase, the Day of the Lord, appears 15 times in the Old Testament, 13 of which are found in the Minor Prophets (aka "The Twelve"), and is a major unifying theme of The Twelve. (See especially Joel, Amos and Zephaniah.) (In addition, The Twelve, as well as the major prophetic books, use the term, day, "Yahweh has a day," "the day of the wrath of Yahweh," and "on that day" - all referring to the same event.) It is both a catastrophic **judgment** event and/or, in a complex narrative fashion, an unfolding disaster. It also includes a time of **blessing** from God's gracious hand. It has both **historical** applications (e.g., Israel in 722 BC [Amos 5:16-27], Nineveh [Nahum 1:1-15], Egypt [Jeremiah 46:1-12] Judah, Jerusalem [Isa. 22:1-25, Ezekiel 7:1-27, Zephaniah 1:1-18], Edom [Isa. 34:1-17, Obadiah 1-21] and Babylon [Isa. 13:1-21, Habakkuk 3:1-16, Jeremiah 25:30-38]) and **eschatological** applications (e.g., Judah,

Jerusalem [Joel 3:1-21, Zeph. 3:8-13], all nations [Joel 3:1-21, Isa. 2:6-22, Ezekiel 38:1-39:29], all the wicked [Malachi 4:1-3] and the purification of Israel [Zeph. 3:8-13, Malachi 3:1-5]).

The judgment **imagery** of the Old Testament texts dealing with the Day of the Lord is important for understanding how the term is applied in the New Testament: darkness, gloom; shaking, trembling, quaking of the earth, mountains and hills; signs and wonders in the heavens; wrath, fierce anger; fire; labor pains; terror, fear and panic; cup of judgment; winepress; locusts; famine; desolation; a sacrifice; gathering of nations for judgment; call to repentance (see the words Jesus uses in the Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24-25); Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5 and 2 Thessalonians 2; and the book of Revelation, especially chapters 6-18.





Sometimes a prophecy may have a multiple intention of fulfillment. E.g., a prophecy of restoration of the Jews may concern (1) return from Babylonian captivity, and (2) regathering of Israel from all parts of the world in the end times.