

19. MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

“Therefore, we regard the message of the prophets as confirmed beyond doubt, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp that is shining in a gloomy place, until the Day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Pet 1:19).

The Jewish belief in the coming Messiah

This chapter is important because one of the main issues involved in interpreting the future correctly is one’s attitude toward the nation of Israel and the way one interprets Old Testament prophecies. Sam Storms, in his 2013 book ‘Kingdom Come,’ page 16, gives the amillennial alternative to a premillennial interpretation of eschatology or the last things. He says: “The central and controlling thesis that I believe is warranted by the biblical text is that the fulfillment of Israel’s prophetic hope as portrayed in the OT documents is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ and the believing remnant, the Church which he established at his first coming” (page 16).

So make up your mind as you read these OT prophecies. Are they to be spiritualized, Christianized, and made to refer to Jesus and the Church when the OT prophets didn’t know about the Church? Or are they to be taken literally? They predict a regathering of Israel to their historic land and this miracle has happened in our generation over the past 100 years. They also predict the coming of a Jewish Messiah as king of the world and the subsequent establishment of his kingdom based in Jerusalem in place of the empires of the nations who now rule. Jerusalem, the Holy City that God chose as his city, has been a constant source of contention between Jews and Muslims, and this disagreement will not go away until Jesus returns. It is destined to be the focus of a rebellion of the nations against God, culminating in the battle of Armageddon. Jerusalem is the place where Jesus died and was resurrected, the place from where he ascended, to where he will return, and the place from where he will rule the world with his saints. The angel Gabriel told Mary concerning her son:

“The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:32b-33).

That can mean nothing but the Messiah reigning over Jerusalem and Israel. The prophecy is based on Isaiah 9:6-7:

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom,
establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”

The OT prophecies were predicted by the prophets as they were led by God’s Spirit and the apostle Peter encourages us to take notice of them. According to Jewish scriptural tradition, the Messianic era will be one of global peace and harmony, an era free of strife and hardship, and one conducive to the propagation of the word of God. The following themes are common to these prophecies.

- Antichrist
- Israel’s return to their land
- The Day of the Lord
- The Battle of Armageddon in Israel
- Destruction of the present world
- The Messiah’s return to Jerusalem
- Israel’s conversion
- David’s throne
- The Messianic reign from Jerusalem
- The Messianic temple on Mount Zion
- Glorified Jerusalem
- World renewal
- A new heaven and a new Earth
- The saints of the Most High who rule with the Messiah

The major OT prophecies are now presented in the order of that order. However, some prophecies cover more than one topic. It should be

noted that these prophecies have never been fulfilled, except for those that predict details of the first coming of the Messiah and those that predict the regathering of Israel which has been happening before our very eyes. The selected verses relate to the Kingdom of God, although it is never called that in the OT. The Messiah's kingdom can be defined as God's rule on Earth through his Son Jesus as regent, and his co-heirs, the elect children of God. Many of these prophecies are guaranteed by the words, 'The Lord declares', 'The Lord has sworn,' or 'The Lord will make it happen.'