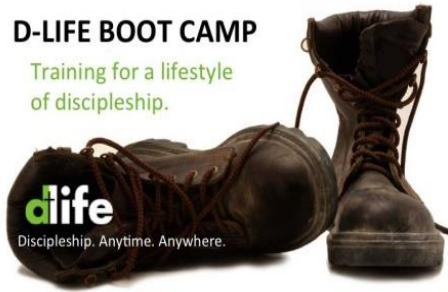


## D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle  
of discipleship.



# Keeping it Real

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

---

Rev. Dr. Deborah Crawley, Teacher  
Sis. Tammi Brown, Asst. Teacher

## WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD STUDY PROPHECY

**God** has given us three important signs that He is a **supernatural** God. The first is creation, the second is His Son Jesus Christ, and the third is His written revelation of Himself that we call the Bible.

**Creation** provides ample evidence that He exists (Romans 1:19-20). Because it is totally impossible to get order out of disorder, only a blatant skeptic would deny that the magnificent order in this well-designed universe demands a Super designer. All creation testifies that there is a God of creative design behind this universe, this earth, and mankind.

**Jesus Christ**, the most famous and influential man who ever lived, is the evidence of both God's existence and His incredible love for mankind. For God not only sent His Son Jesus into this world to identify with mankind, but to *die* for mankind, so that men and women could have their sins forgiven and enjoy God forever.

But the very best **revelation** we have is the Bible. Creation is limited in what it can tell us about God; it does not reveal His love or His forgiveness—only His almighty power. Jesus the Son is the complete revelation of God, for His words, actions, and teachings were the exact expression of God. Yet they were dependent on the written Word of God for preservation and present-day discussion. We would know very little about Christ if it were not for the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible, however, is filled with prophecies that have come to pass—prophecies about Israel, the Gentile nations, and most important of all, the Messiah. The fact of fulfilled prophecy is how we can know without a doubt that Jesus Christ is the Messiah

---

<sup>1</sup> LaHaye, T. (2016). [Bible prophecy for everyone: what you need to know about the end times](#). Harvest House Publishers.

of God: More than 100 prophecies about His first coming were fulfilled in His birth, life, and death!

And that is why we can be so confident that He is coming again. In fact, someone has counted eight times as many prophecies regarding Christ's *second* coming as for His *first* coming! But as comforting and exciting as that certainty is, it will be of no help to the Christian unless he studies it for himself, or it is taught to him by someone else.

There are, of course, other reasons for studying this very important subject. Consider the following:

### **1. *God must consider prophecy important, for He has put so much of it in the Bible.***

The Bible is not a single book but rather a library of books, of which almost one-third are prophetic writings. Of God's 66 volumes to mankind, you will find that most of the books were written by prophets. Even Moses, the lawgiver and author of the first five books of the Old Testament, was a prophet. In fact, most of God's messengers to man—including Samuel, Elijah, Daniel, and John the Baptist—were prophets. In the New Testament, there was a special first-century gift known as the gift of prophecy. Peter, Paul, James, Jude, and others had that gift. Our Lord, of course, knew all things, and He gave the most definitive prophecy of things still to come in His Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24–25. There are 16 books on prophecy in the Old Testament, including the Minor and the Major Prophets. In the New Testament, God used four books to cover the subject—Revelation, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Jude. In addition, many of the other books include long prophetic passages or subjects, including our Lord's Olivet Discourse. The fact so much of Scripture is called prophecy makes it clear God intended for His children to study it. If we omit the study of prophecy as too controversial or too complex, we will omit almost one-third of the entire Bible!

### **2. *Prophecy reveals our Lord as He really is.***

One reason I have always loved prophecy is because of the exalted view it gives of our Lord. The prophetic portrayal of Christ is different than that found in the Gospels, which tell the wonderful story of His humiliation, including His birth, suffering, and death. In order to "taste death for everyone," Christ had to humble Himself and make Himself "lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:9); and during His time on earth, He was abused by His creation. It was not a pretty sight to see our Lord abused, rejected, and crucified.

But the second coming is a different matter! Never again will Jesus Christ come into this world to suffer or be subject to the whims of people. The next time He comes it will be "with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30) as "King of kings and Lord of lords"

---

(Revelation 19:16). At that coming the Bible says “every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:7 KJV) and “every knee [shall] bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and...every tongue [shall] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).<sup>2</sup>

### **3. A proper understanding of prophecy arms the believer against cults and false prophets.**

Scripture teaches that false Christs and false teachers will arise in the last days. Although there have always been false teachers, their numbers will increase as we approach the end times. The best defense is to “put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes” (Ephesians 6:11 NIV). Our Lord predicted that these false Christs and false prophets will be able to perform great signs and miracles and deceive even the elect—that is, believers who do not know the Scriptures well, particularly those Scriptures that relate to future things.

A good illustration of this are the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who came on the religious scene at the latter end of the nineteenth century. They predicted that a special group of 144,000 witnesses of Jehovah would arise just before the coming of Christ, and that they were commissioned to recruit them. Those Christians who understood Revelation 7:5-8 (from which Jehovah’s Witnesses claim to get this teaching) were not deceived, for they knew that those 144,000 witnesses would arise during the coming Tribulation period, and that all of the witnesses would be Jews. (The Jehovah’s Witnesses are primarily Gentiles.) In 1960 the Witnesses realized that they had recruited more people into their membership than 144,000, so they changed their interpretation of prophecy to fit their growth. From then on, they began teaching that only special members who did a lot of witnessing got to be a part of the 144,000 who would go to heaven. The rest were promised that they would “inherit the earth.”

A more recent illustration is the man who sold 300,000 books explaining his claim that Christ was coming in September 1988. The date came and went, and he realized he was wrong. So he refigured his teaching and decided he had missed the date by exactly one year—so he put out another book. This one sold only 30,000 copies! Many individuals, on the basis of his false teaching, are said to have sold their homes and quit their jobs to await the Lord’s return. Such Christians would have known better if they had been taught this simple fact our Lord had proclaimed regarding the time of His coming: “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matthew 24:36).

A good rule to follow about any teacher of prophecy who sets a day or hour for the coming of Christ is this: *Don’t believe him!* As our Lord said, “Many will come in My

---

<sup>2</sup> LaHaye, T. (2016). [\*Bible prophecy for everyone: what you need to know about the end times\*](#). Harvest House Publishers.

name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:5). The best way to avoid being deceived by the false teachers is to know the prophetic teachings of the Word of God.<sup>3</sup>

#### **4. *The study of prophecy promotes an evangelistic church.***

The most evangelistic periods of church history have been times when the church studied prophecy. The church at Thessalonica, an infant church to which Paul taught the truths of prophecy, was an evangelistic church. So also was the early church as a whole. From the time that our Lord said, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself” (John 14:3), the early church had an evangelistic fire that lasted almost three centuries. True, it was a persecuted church, but part of the reason it was persecuted was because of its evangelistic fire that was due in part to the emphasis given to teachings about our Lord’s soon return.

Later, when paganism was brought into the church during about the fourth century, the Bible was no longer taught widely. What’s more, certain religious leaders felt the Bible shouldn’t be read or handled by the common people. That was the view during the Dark Ages—an era that was dark toward the truths of the Word of God, for the Bible was kept from people. That is why John Wycliffe (1330–1384) is considered one of the greatest Christian leaders of all time. In the fourteenth century, he determined to translate the Word of God into the common language so everyone could read it. He was called “the morning star of the Reformation,” and the Bible began to be studied again. In the nineteenth century came the rediscovery of the study of prophecy, or the study of last things. It was during this period that the greatest missionary and evangelistic emphasis of the modern church era was born. Throughout the twentieth century some of the most evangelistic and missionary-minded churches were those that taught prophecy, especially the prophecies of our Lord’s soon return.

The study of prophecy is also helpful in counteracting the materialism of this present age. I need not convince the reader of this book that we live in a society that is not conducive to sacrifice or spiritual dedication. Even some Christians have gotten caught up in materialistic pursuits that detract from their relationship with God. But those who study Bible prophecy recognize that this world is very temporary. One day “the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10), and, as Scripture asks, “Then whose will those things be?” (Luke 12:20). The Christian untaught in prophetic truth is prone to get the idea that “all things [will] continue as they were” and “Where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Peter 3:4). But the promise is there; it just needs to be found in the study of prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> LaHaye, T. (2016). [\*Bible prophecy for everyone: what you need to know about the end times\*](#). Harvest House Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> LaHaye, T. (2016). [\*Bible prophecy for everyone: what you need to know about the end times\*](#). Harvest House Publishers.

---

## **5. The study of prophecy tends to purify the believer.**

It is no secret that we live in an unholy age. Unfortunately, too much of that unholiness is found even in the church. One tool the Holy Spirit uses to help believers live holy lives is the study of prophecy, particularly those passages that relate to our Lord's soon return. The apostle John said this about those who hold to the promise of the Lord's second coming: "Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3).

Many a believer, including this writer, has in a moment of temptation thought, *Do I want to be doing this when Christ returns?* When the answer is a resounding "No!" it is easier to reject the temptation. Instead, we are challenged to so live that when Jesus comes we will be found doing those things that will earn the praise, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21) rather than the rebuke that will be extended to those who are "ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2:28). It is my prayer that the study of the exciting prophecies we will examine in this book will produce a heightened degree of holiness in your life so that you will be ready when Jesus comes.<sup>5</sup>

## **6. Prophecy offers confident hope in a hopeless age.**

People can absorb many pressures in life, but lack of hope is not one of them. The world in which we live has no hope. Looking back, we see an unending history of war, war, war, all of which reveals the inhuman traits of mankind. The very study of history is a study of war and man's inhumanity to his fellow man. Yet the whole world yearns for peace, but knows no peace. Even the world's greatest thinkers have no workable solutions to the myriad problems facing humankind.

Prophecy students, however, not only know what our loving God has planned for the future of this planet and the billions who live on it, but they have a firm confidence (that is the biblical definition of *hope*) toward the future and are not afraid. We can say, "If we live, praise the Lord! If we die, praise the Lord!" Or we can say with the early Christians, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Those Christians had a greeting that needs to be rekindled in the church today: "Maranatha," which means "O Lord, come" (1 Corinthians 16:22). The student of prophecy will not dread the uncertain future, for he not only knows some of the things that must come to pass, but he also knows the One who holds the future.

The sad part is that the worst days in world history are not behind us but are still ahead. Our Lord Himself warned that toward the end of human history as we know it there will be a time of "great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). When we study that

---

<sup>5</sup> LaHaye, T. (2016). [\*Bible prophecy for everyone: what you need to know about the end times\*](#). Harvest House Publishers.

passage in detail, we see that this terrifying future will be unparalleled in all of human history. Yet it should offer no great personal concern for the Christian who rightly understands God's prophetic plan as outlined in the Scriptures, for he is confident of his place in that plan. Unfortunately, many Christians unnecessarily experience the same distress and insecurity that unbelievers do when they read about the things destined to come upon the earth. That's the price of being ignorant of Bible prophecy.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> LaHaye, T. (2016). [\*Bible prophecy for everyone: what you need to know about the end times\*](#). Harvest House Publishers.