

2 - UNDERSTANDING PROPHECY: A BACKGROUND

I. The Nature of Prophecy

A. What is It?

- Biblical prophecy is not a prediction about the future.
- Biblical prophecy is the proclamation of what God is going to do and what he has said.

B. Understanding Prophecy

- Prophecy can have a near and far fulfillment.

Scripture Isaiah 7:10-16, 8:3-4, Matthew 1:23

- We do not necessarily understand all of the prophecies.
- You must make a decision concerning the role of Israel in prophecy.

C. Methods of Interpretation

1. The Allegorical Method

- This is an ancient method of interpretation.
- It views the text as an allegory with a spiritual meaning.
- It often disregards the literal meaning of the text.

2. The Literal Method

- This is an ancient method of interpretation.
- This method looks at the literal meaning of the text.
- The text is interpreted based upon its grammar and historical context.

II. A Realistic Approach

A. A Diversity of Views

- Recognize that good Christians have different views concerning prophecy.
- Believers hold differing views about the millennium, the tribulation and the rapture.

B. Definition of Terms

The Prophecy Series: Introduction

- The millennium is the thousand-year period of peace in the Kingdom of God.
- The tribulation refers to a seven-year period in which God's wrath is poured out on this world.
- The rapture is the church meeting Jesus Christ in the air at his second coming.