

Chapter 1

*"The Ship is
Docking"*

In New England, USA, there is a special architectural feature called a “widow’s walk” or “widow’s watch.” Specifically, these features were platforms built on top of the houses of seafarers, upon which their wives would walk daily as they waited for their husbands to return to shore. Ships were often lost at sea, and many of these women consequently became widows. The image of a returning ship is a good illustration as to why study prophecy.

First, on the distant horizon, only the tops of the masts are visible. Then, as they get closer, more details come into view, such as the sails, the decks, and men scurrying up and down the rigging. When the ship enters the harbor, the wife knows time is short and that it won’t be much longer before the ship docks and the unloading begins. While preparing to go down to the dock, these women must have been very excited in the anticipation of her husband’s return and feeling his embrace. Then, when she finally meets her husband, she is overcome with joy. In this scenario, when Jesus’ ship is far off, only little details are known. As it comes closer, more and more signs are recognized and understood. We, who are watching and waiting with anticipation for His arrival, believe that the ship is getting ready to dock and are looking for our savior to come ashore.

Are we there yet? If you have ever traveled with a child, this question was probably asked a multitude of times. They didn’t know how to read the signs that tell the driver just how far they are from the destination. Prophecy is similar, in that it is a way to read the signs. Accordingly, if we want to clearly understand what clues to keep an eye out for regarding Jesus’ return, we need to tune into His wavelength. Prophecy can be found in His word. The study of prophecy is called Eschatology. So why study Prophecy? What does the Bible say about the subject?

- The Old and New Testaments have books on law, history of the Jews, poetry, Jesus’ life and ministry, the formation of the church, the first missionary journeys, promises of future events, and prophecy. [Revelation 19:10b \(NIV\)](#) “For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.” There are 31,124 verses in the Bible. According to *J. Barton Jayne’s Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, prophecy covers 8,352 verses or 27%. Of those verses, the Old Testament encompasses 1,239 prophecies and the New Testament contains 578 prophecies. Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, and resurrection as Messiah fulfilled as many as 400 of them as the Associates of Biblical Research website states. That means there are roughly 1,400 prophecies about His return yet to be fulfilled. Do we really want to ignore over ¼ of what God said? God must have thought this was important. We celebrate His birth on Christmas and His sacrifice and resurrection on Easter. We will look more closely at Jesus as the Messiah later in this book. By understanding and showing God’s faithfulness to keep His Word in the past, won’t it give us hope that He will keep it in the future? We can be assured of the future. Should we not be looking ahead with anticipation for His return!
- It brings blessings and hope. [Revelation 1:3 \(NKJV\)](#) “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” [Titus 2:13](#) “Looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” God is in control and has a plan from the first verse in [Genesis](#) to the last verse of [Revelation](#). [Revelation 22:7 \(NKJV\)](#) “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” [Jeremiah 29:11 \(NIV\)](#) “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Nothing surprises him. He knows the end as well as the beginning and has a plan for each of our lives. God has a purpose in everything He does. Nothing is frivolous, inconsequential, or useless. There is no extravagance or waste. God does not need man’s permission, cooperation or understanding of His design to do as He pleases. No amount of challenging or denial of His laws will make Him change them. [Isaiah 46:9-10](#) “⁹ Remember the

former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else I am God, and there is none like Me.
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.' [Psalm 2:4](#) "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision." [1 Corinthians 2:9](#) "But as it is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him."

- It is meant to prepare not to scare. Fear of the unknown may be one of the strongest fears man has. God wants us to know His plan and not be ignorant of it. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) "¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words." [Jeremiah 33:2-3 \(NLT\)](#) "² This is what the LORD says, the LORD who made the earth, who formed and established it, whose name is the LORD. ³ Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come." [Daniel 2:28 \(NIV\)](#) "But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these."
- For some Christians, prophecy is confusing and overwhelming. God wants us to be aware of what to look for in regards to Jesus' return. [Isaiah 42:8-9](#) "⁸ I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, neither My praise to raven images. ⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." There is a major difference between prediction and prophecy. Prediction is a fancy word for guessing. For instance, if you throw enough darts, you are bound to hit the bullseye once. Prophecy is the sure word of God and hits the mark every time. God left many clues with a myriad of commentators, and like all things, unfamiliarity and ignorance breeds misunderstanding; likewise, repetition and education breeds understanding. [Romans 10:17 \(NKJV\)](#) "So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ." God wants us to know of His plan and not be ignorant. Those of us who choose to seek answers will find them. [1 Chronicles 28:9 \(NKJV\)](#) "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever." [Jeremiah 29:13](#) "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." [Matthew 7:7-8](#) "⁷ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: ⁸ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." [Luke 11:9-10 \(NKJV\)](#) "⁹ So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Prophecy is meant to give signs to those who look to what lies ahead and before God acts. God provided clues of what to look for when that would happen so we believers in Christ, would not be caught unaware, unlike those who do not follow Christ will be. [Romans 11:25 \(NIV\)](#) "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in." Only those who look for Him would be able to recognize

the signs when they appear much like the three Magi recognized the star in the east as the sign of the Messiah. We should embrace it, not shy away from it.

- Jesus taught about things to come and that He would return. After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples He would soon be leaving to return to heaven. Remember, they had just seen Him conquer death by rising from the grave, and feeling empowered, they were ready to take on the world. His disciples became greatly distressed when He informed them that He would be leaving. The wind was taken right out of their sails. Jesus said in [John 14:1-3](#) “¹ Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” The concept of Christ’s return is not foreign to us. How many hymns do we sing where the last verse references God coming in glory. Does this sound familiar? “When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation, to take me home what joy shall fill my heart. Then I shall bow in humble adoration, and there proclaim my God How Great Thou Art!” If He is to come again He first had to leave, but He promised we would not be left by ourselves. The Helper, Advocate, Comforter or Holy Spirit was sent to indwell, inspire, and empower His followers. [John 14:16-18](#) “¹⁶ And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans (comfortless); I will come to you.” [John 14:26](#) “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” He also added that in order for the Holy Spirit to come, He would need to leave, which would be an advantage for us. [John 16:5-15](#) “⁵ But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest thou? ⁶ But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on Me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. ¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. ¹⁴ He shall glorify Me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” [John 20:21-22 \(NIV\)](#) “²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” [2 Peter 1:19-21](#) “¹⁹ We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: ²⁰ Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” However, the Holy Spirit has a finite period of ministry. He cannot be present when Jesus is on earth just as Jesus was not present when God dwelt among the Israelites when Moses built a tabernacle for Him. We will look at what happens to the Holy Spirit in the “end of days” after we delve into Jesus as the Messiah and a prophet later.