Introduction: Today we begin our new series on the end times, PERFECT ENDING: WHY YOUR ETERNAL FUTURE MATTERS TODAY. In the coming weeks we will study the events that will both precede and follow the most important event in human history: the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Many Christians are hesitant about studying eschatology (a word meaning the study of end times) for a number of reasons. Yet, the Bible refers to the return of Christ as “the blessed hope” for Christians (Titus 2:13). Today we are going to examine four reasons Christians sometimes resist the study of Bible prophecy and discover three practical reasons it is critical for every believer to understand the future God has planned for us.

I. Why People Resist Studying Prophecy

“The most neglected teaching in the church today is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.”
Billy Graham

A. “The Subject Is Too Confusing To Understand”

Matthew 24:3  “And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’”
Matthew 24:4-6, 15-16, 29-30  “4 And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘See to it that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in My name saying, I am the Christ, and will mislead many. 6 And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 15 Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.’”

B. “No One Can Know When Christ Will Return”

Daniel 12:9  “And he [the angel of the Lord] said [to Daniel], ‘Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.’”
1 Thessalonians 5:1-2  “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”
Matthew 24:36  “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”

• Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) thought the world would end in 1656. “There are but 155 years left…at which time…the world will come to an end,” Columbus prophesied.
• Martin Luther (1483–1546) didn’t think the world could exist past 300 years from his time.
• The psychic Edgar Cayce (1877–1945) predicted the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in 2000.
• Harold Camping falsely predicted that the Rapture - the removal of all Christians from the earth prior to the Great Tribulation - would occur on September 6, 1994; September 29, 1994; October 4, 1994; and on March 31, 1995, and he next predicted the Rapture and the Judgment Day would take place on May 21, 2011 with the world coming to an end on October 21, 2011.
• At the end of 2012, the world focused on the Mayan calendar which abruptly ended with the entry of December 21, 2012.

C.  “There Are Too Many Different Interpretations Of Prophecy”

2 Peter 1:20-21  “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
D. "Bible Prophecy Has Nothing To Do With Everyday Life"

II. Why Bible Prophecy Is Important

A. Bible Prophecy Is A Major Theme In The Bible

B. An Understanding Of Prophecy Helps Us To Interpret And Apply The Bible Accurately
1. Example from the Old Testament

Isaiah 65:20  “No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred shall be thought accursed.”

2. Example from the New Testament

Matthew 25:35-40  “35 ‘For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? 38 And when did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”

John 12:8a  “The poor you always have with you…”
C. An Understanding Of Bible Prophecy Motivates Us Toward Godly Living

2 Peter 3:10  “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

2 Peter 3:11-12a  “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...”

Conclusion