

Prophecy
St. John's Lenten Bible Study
April 1, 2020

- In the Old Testament, the Prophetic Books are usually grouped into the Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel and the Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah and Nahum
- Jesus prophesied the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple, his crucifixion and resurrection as well his second coming (Parousia), as well as other events such as Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial
- In Paul's letters, there are also prophecies of Christ's Parousia
- The book of Revelation is also prophetic; however, it is also highly symbolic. There are themes or symbols such as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", "The Seven Seals", "The False Prophet", "The Anti-Christ". Interpretations of Revelation run the gamut from those identifying these themes with famous leaders, famous people or precise places to those, such as Martin Luther, denying Revelation should even be included in the Bible since it is esoteric and not "Gospel" (Revelation has scant mention of salvation by faith in the grace of Christ, which Luther thought was the essence of the scripture).

Questions:

1. During the Gulf War (Desert Storm 1990-91), many were convinced, since much of the aggression took place in Iraq (the "cradle of civilization" where the Garden of Eden might have been), that those events were the beginning of the prophecies in Revelation. Does God want us to look at current events for signs of Christ's Parousia?
2. One aspect of prophecy is telling the future. Another aspect of prophecy is revelation or bearing a message. For instance, while Isaiah and Jeremiah predicted the downfall of Israel, they also rebuked Israel's immorality on God's behalf. What is your conception of prophecy? How does it play out in your life? In church? In culture?
3. Jesus predicted his crucifixion, the fall of Jerusalem, Peter's denial, etc. Did he do this from his divine knowledge (or omniscience) or did he simply guess, with his human intelligence, what was going to happen to him? Does it make a difference?