

Prophecy As A Proof Of Bible Inspiration

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One of the strongest objective evidences of biblical inspiration is the phenomenon of fulfilled prophecy. The Bible is essentially unique among the religious books of mankind in this respect. Some of them contain a few vague forecasts but nothing comparable to the vast number of specific prophecies found in the Bible. The same is true of modern "prophets," so-called. Such seers as Nostradamus, Jean Dixon, and others have made many predictions, but often they are nebulous and capable of various meanings. A few of their prophecies seem to have been fulfilled in a general way, but most of them have completely failed (Morris 181).

A legitimate prophet is correct 100 percent of the time. If he is not completely correct 100 percent of the time, he is a false prophet. For prophecy to be valid it must meet the following criterion:

1. It must predate the event.
2. It must be precise and detailed enough that it is not vague.
3. The events described must be beyond human ability to calculate or manipulate; in essence, it must be something that could not have been done without God's guidance.

Only God knows the future. He is able to (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. (Romans 4:17). He declares "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isaiah 46:10; Acts 15:18). If one can demonstrate the ability to foretell the future things that find exact fulfillment, it would follow logically that such a person, in possession of this gift, would be speaking on the behalf of God. His message, therefore, would be valid (Jackson 81-82).

"Scholars suggest there are about 1,000 prophecies altogether in the Bible – some 800 in the Old Testament and about 200 in the New Testament" (Jackson 82). It must be noted carefully that the gift of prophecy—clearly operative during those by-gone ages when the biblical documents were being prepared and validated as God's Word—was terminated near the end of the first century A.D. when the New Testament was completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Let us note here that many religions today claim to have "prophets," but remember, for a prophet to be from God there can be no errors, ever! That fact disqualifies all of the "prophets" since the first century.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY JESUS CHRIST

The Old Testament, written over a 1,000-year period, contains more than 300 references to the coming Messiah. All of these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and they established a solid

confirmation of His credentials as the Messiah, the Anointed One (King, Priest, Saint) and Intercessor (to release or deliver; help; meet; seek; accompany).

The Prophecies Concerning the Messiah Were Totally Beyond Human Control

Birth: Place, time, manner of

Death: People's reactions, piercing of side, burial

Resurrection: Where did His body go?

Someone once made this observation: By using the modern science of probability in reference to just eight of these prophecies, the chance that any man might have lived to fulfill all eight prophecies is one in 100 trillion! To illustrate this point: If we take 100 trillion silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas, they would be two feet deep. Now we mark one of these silver dollars and thoroughly stir the whole mass—all over the state. Now blindfold a man and let him travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick only one silver dollar. What chance would he have of picking the marked one? The same chance that the prophets would have of writing just eight of these prophecies and having them all come true for any one man if they had written them without God's inspiration! Jesus Christ, however, fulfilled every prophecy that was written about the coming Messiah - over 300 of them! Could this have been possible had He not been the Son of God? And if this be true, then we have proof positive that the Bible is the inspired Word of God!

A Short Listing of Some of the Hundreds of Prophecies Concerning Jesus

1. Ascension to right hand of God—Psalm 110:1; 68:18; Proverbs 30:4
2. Birthplace—Micah 5:2
3. Burial—Isaiah 53:9
4. Darkness—Psalm 22:2
5. Gambling for clothes—Psalm 22:18
6. Lineage—Genesis 3:15; 9:26; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-16
7. Mocking—Psalm 22:6-8
8. Nakedness—Psalm 22:17
9. Piercing of side—Zechariah 12:10
10. Resurrection—Psalm 16:10; Hosea 6:2; Psalm 30:3,9; Isaiah 53:10
11. Son of God—Psalm 2:6-7
12. Unbroken bones—Psalm 34:20
13. Vinegar—Psalm 69:21
14. Virgin birth—Isaiah 7:14

OTHER HISTORICAL PROPHECIES

The City of Tyre

In the 26th chapter of Ezekiel (592-570 BC), seven things are predicted to happen to the city of Tyre (McDowell 285):

1. Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the mainland of Tyre (Ezekiel 26:8).
2. Many nations will be against Tyre (Ezekiel 26:3).
3. Tyre will be made a bare rock, flat like the top of a rock (Ezekiel 26:4).
Fishermen will spread their nets over the site (Ezekiel 26:5).
4. Debris will be thrown into the water (Ezekiel 26:12).
5. Tyre never will be rebuilt (Ezekiel 26:14).

6. Tyre never will be found again (Ezekiel 26:21).

Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to mainland Tyre three years after the prophecy and after a 13-year siege (585-573 BC) Tyre made terms and acknowledged Babylonian authority over them (vol. xxii 452). When Nebuchadnezzar broke the gates down, he found the city almost empty. The majority of the people had moved by ship to an island about one-half mile off the coast and fortified a city there. The mainland city was destroyed in 573 BC, as predicted. The city of Tyre on the island remained a powerful city for several hundred years (McDowell 286).

Alexander the Great, in his war on Persia, marching southward called on each city to open its gates to him as part of his plan to deny their use to the Persian fleet. Tyre refused to do so, and Alexander laid siege to the city. Possessing no fleet, he demolished old Tyre on the mainland, and with the debris built a causeway 200 feet wide across the straits separating the old and new towns, erecting towers and war engines at the farther end (vol. xxii:452).

Tyre continually raided the causeway with fire-ships, greatly retarding progress until Alexander pressured conquered subjects to make ships for his operation. After attaining a superior naval force of some 220 war ships from the kings of Aradus and Byblus and from the island of Cyprus, Alexander finished the causeway, battering down the walls of Tyre, killing 8,000 of the inhabitants, and selling 30,000 into slavery (Unger 30-31).

A history book by a secular historian reads, "Alexander the Great...reduced Tyre to ruins.... The larger part of the site of the once great city is now bare as the top of a rock—a place where fishermen now spread their nets to dry" (Myers 55).

All the prophecies of Ezekiel about Tyre have come true: Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the mainland city of Tyre; many nations were against Tyre; Alexander made her a bare rock and threw debris into the water to make the causeway; fishermen now spread nets over the site (there is a city of Tyre today, but it is located down the coast from the original Tyre); the old city of Tyre has never been rebuilt, even though a great freshwater spring is located at the site, providing 10,000,000 gallons of water daily. It is still an excellent site today but has never been rebuilt, although many have tried. All seven of the predictions came true down to the most minute detail.

Other Examples of Fulfilled Bible Prophecy about History

1. Babylon (Daniel 2, 7; Isaiah 13:19-22; 14:22-23; Jeremiah 51:26, 43), Chorazin-Bethsaida-Capernaum (Matthew 11:20-24)
2. Gaza-Ashkelon (Amos 1:8; Jeremiah 47:5; Zephaniah 2:4)
3. Moab-Ammon (Ezekiel 25:3-4; Jeremiah 48:47; 49:6)
4. Nineveh (Nahum 1:8-10; 2:6; 3:10, 13, 19)
5. Palestine (Leviticus 26:31-33 & Ezekiel 36:33-35)
6. Petra-Edom (Isaiah 34:5-15; Jeremiah 49:17-18; Ezekiel 25:13-14; 35:15)
7. Samaria (Hosea 13:16 & Micah 1:6)
8. Sidon (Ezekiel 28:22-23)
9. Thebes-Memphis (Ezekiel 30:13-15)

CONCLUSION

Please ask yourself: If all the historical, scientific, and prophetic statements in the Bible are true and accurate, then what about what the statements in the Bible regarding eternal life or death? And what about those choices you make (or do not make) every day that will affect your future?

Isn't it in your best interest to study to find out what God requires of those who would be His children? (Romans 8:14-16). Isn't it worth examining the Bible to see if it is, in fact, the Word of God, and to see what you must do to receive eternal life from God?

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