

## CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE? Part 9

### “The Witness of Fulfilled Prophecy” (Lesson 1)

**INTRO:** Is there solid evidence to trust the Bible? Yes, multiple and strong witnesses testify to its inerrancy, accuracy, and authority. God Himself, OT & NT writers, Jesus believed OT to be Scripture and promised inspiration for the new, the Gospel writers were eyewitnesses, recorded miracles in the Bible (Creation & Resurrection). Next, one of the greatest proofs of Scripture is prophecies that came to pass years after they were spoken. The accuracy of fulfilled prophecies leaves us with one conclusion – they were authored by God (Isa. 46:9-10). Only God can predict the future with 100% accuracy (Deut. 18:20-22; Jer. 28:9). 25-30% of the Bible is devoted to predictive prophecy (one every four verses – 8400 / 31, 102). Only the mind of our omniscient God can predict the future *before* it happens.

#### I. DEFINITION OF PROPHECY

- A. Prophecy is a declaration of future events which no human is capable of making because it depends on knowing the innumerable contingencies of human affairs which belong exclusively to the omniscience of God.
- B. Extent – About 2000 prophecies in the Bible (1817-2500). The *first* is Gen. 3:15 of the first coming of the Messiah. The *last* in Rev. 22 the promise of His second coming (3 times!) At least 1/2 to 2/3 have been fulfilled. The rest will happen (Num. 23:19).
- C. Areas addressed – large groups of people, individuals, rulers, cities, nations, world (very broad). In OT, Isaiah has 20 chapters, Jeremiah (17), Ezek. (9), Amos (2), plus Daniel, Zechariah, etc. The NT has Jesus Olivet Discourse and John’s Revelation.

#### II. EXAMPLES OF FULFILLED PROPHECY

##### A. INDIVIDUALS

- 1. *Cyrus* the Great of Persia to overthrow the Babylonian empire in 539 BC (Isa. 44:28). Isaiah said this 200 years before Cyrus was even born! Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in  $10^{15}$ .
- 2. Good King *Josiah* of the Southern Kingdom (640-609 BC). In 1 Kings 13:2 he is named 300 yrs. before his birth! 2 Kings 22
- 3. *Ahab and Jezebel* ruled Northern Kingdom (874-853 BC). Elijah encountered these wicked rulers (1 Kings 18-19; 2 Kings 9:10, 35-36).

##### B. CITIES/NATIONS

- 1. OT (Ezek. 25:1 - 28:19) – 9 cities or nations predicted to fall, some never being rebuilt as prophesied.
  - a. Jericho’s destruction by Joshua (6:26; 1 Kings 16:34)
  - b. Tyre (Ezek. 26:1 - 28:19) – Tell the story . . . 7 events prophesied . . . chances all 7? 1 in 75 mm.
  - c. Memphis, Egypt (Ezek. 30:13-16)
  - d. Nineveh, Assyria (Nah. 1:8-10; 3:12, 19)
  - e. Babylon (Isa. 13:19-22; 14:23; Jer. 51:26, 43; Dan. 5:5-12, 18-31) plus Samaria (Mic. 1:6), Moab, Ammon, Edom. All were forecasted for destruction and all came to pass.
  - f. Daniel and future world kingdoms (Dan. 2, 7) – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persian, Greeks, Rome.
- 2. NT (Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum) – Matt. 11:20-23. Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Matt. 24-25; Mk. 13) almost 40 years before it happened! Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost (2:22-36) fulfilled Joel’s prophecy (2:28-32). Peter made reference to His death and resurrection (Psa. 16:8-11).
- 3. Other – increase in education and communication in latter times (Dan. 12:4), repatriation and rebuilding of Israel. (Isa. 11:11; 61:4; Jer. 31:31-40; Rom. 11:26-27), closing of Eastern (Golden) Gate (Ez. 44), and many more!

**ILL:** Peter Stoner took these prophecies and figured out that the probability of them all coming to pass by accident was 1 in  $5.76 \times 10^{59}$ . No way only by chance. Someone ordered them, namely God.

**CONC:** Some say that *fulfilled prophecy doesn’t prove the Bible is the Word of God, but unfulfilled or wrong prophecies could surely prove the Bible is NOT the Word of God*. It had only to be wrong once. But it isn’t wrong – the Bible is reliable; it is NEVER wrong! Next week look at fulfilled prophecy about the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Over 300 prophecies with over 200 still to be fulfilled in His Second Coming!