

OUR TRUSTWORTHY BIBLE

Part Two: Fulfilled Prophecy.

INTRODUCTION: Fulfilled prophecy is one of the strongest evidences that the Bible is inspired by God. Only God can foretell the future. The Bible has revealed the future. Therefore, the Bible is from God, not from man.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS. What is prophecy? To qualify as prophecy a declaration of the future must be such as man is incapable of making. It must be of such a nature that only God could reveal it. Prophecy is not an educated analysis of present conditions which point to a certain outcome. It certainly is not a guess or vague generalization.

Biblical prophecy is not a lot of predictions about the future of which a few are fulfilled. In the Bible, if a prophecy was conditional, when the conditions prevailed, the prophecy came to pass. Some prophecies were unconditional. This is, their fulfillment could not be brought about by any action of men, and neither could anything man did prevent their happening. One example of fulfilled prophecy shows that God revealed the prophecy. One failure shows that God was not involved (Deuteronomy 18:21,22).

THE PROPHETS OF GOD. Prophecy in Israel was a special gift from God. Called by God, the prophet spoke by God's guidance (Jeremiah 1:9; II Peter 1:21). The messages came to the prophets in a number of ways (Hebrews 1:1). That the prophet, through the power of God, had the ability to foretell the future, is woven into the very fabric of both Old and New Testaments. Jude traces prophecy back to Enoch (Jude 14). The prophets presented history in a linear pattern moving toward a goal. That goal includes Christ, salvation, the church/kingdom, and eternal life.

The Messianic expectation can be traced from the promise made to Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:6); and the promise of a new king from David's family (II Samuel 7:12; Psalm 9:6,7; 11:1). There are also other challenging subjects such as a great prophet (Deut. 18:15,18); the suffering Servant (Isaiah 53), and One like the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13,14; Matthew 26:64).

The fulfillment of prophecy is God's argument for His existence. God challenged the false gods to foretell the future (Isaiah 42:23; 44:6-8). Jehovah claims He knows the end from the beginning. The fulfilled prophecy is evidence that God has spoken.

Jesus used prophecy and its fulfillment to show that He was from God (John 5:39,46). He told the purpose of His prophecies to the apostles (John 14:29). He rebuked them for being slow to believe (Luke 24:25). The apostles pointed to fulfilled prophecy as evidence that Jesus is the Christ, and that a new age had begun (Acts 2:16,17, 25,34).

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES. The place of the Messiah's birth was foretold. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Micah lived about 700 years before Christ was born. It was impossible to know that Bethlehem would be the place. If he were guessing, it is not likely he would have guessed Bethlehem since it was an insignificant place. There were two Bethlehems in Israel (Joshua 19:15; Genesis 48:7). The prophet identified the village distinctly. Just as Micah could not have guessed, neither could Jesus have determined to be born in Bethlehem. His mother could have, but why, since she was from Nazareth.

Some other events in the life of Christ were foretold. His coming was to be announced by one chosen by God (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:3). Isaiah also lived about 700 years before Christ came. This is not something that could be anticipated based on things current in Isaiah's time. The Messiah would make a triumphant entrance into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1-9). Prophets may have guessed this would happen since it was something they greatly desired, but His entrance was one of humility, not conquest.

He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12; Mt. 26:14,15). This would never have been foretold by men unguided by God for it suggests defeat. No one could have thought that the Messiah would be rejected by His own. He would be pierced (Psalm 22:16; Zech. 12:10; Luke 23:33; John 19:34,37; 20:25,27). His garments would be divided (Psalm 22:18; John 19:24). He would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9; Mt. 27:57-60).

THE RESURRECTION OF THE MESSIAH. This, the greatest of all events of His earthly work, could hardly have been foretold for who would venture such a prophecy unless he was insane or guided by God. It was foretold! (Psalm 16:10). The explanation was made by Peter (Acts 2:24-32). Another prophecy, also made by David, is Psalm 2:6,7. "Yet I have set my king upon the holy hill of Zion. I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee." Peter explains the fulfillment. "God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Acts 13:33).

CONCLUSION: All available evidence shows the writing of these prophecies long before the time of Christ. With the prophecies in existence, Christ is the only fulfillment possible. Fulfillment of

prophecy is one of the primary arguments in apostolic preaching (John 1:45). Unbelievers can remain unbelievers, but the arguments for rejecting the fulfillment are weak to one with a sincere heart.

Our Next Study will be: **BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

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