

PROVING THE BIBLE

Lesson Four

Biblical Prophecy

Prophecy: Things said that happen exactly as stated, in the future.
For example: Predicting the weather and it coming true every time, exactly as said.

Today we are going to look at a few Old Testament prophecies and then look at Messianic Prophecies – which mean prophecies about Jesus.

1. The Fall of the City of Tyre

Most everyone understands that if there is a person or a book that can correctly predict the future, then it is beyond what humans can do. No human can predict the future. With prophecy, the Bible proves to be true and therefore from God. One specific prophecy is the fall of Tyre.

According to history, the Phoenician city of Tyre was a rich and famous city and was well known around 1200 BC. It is located in current day Lebanon.

In the book of Ezekiel the prophet predicted specific events that were to occur in Tyre as punishment for the city's arrogance and cruel actions against Jerusalem. Let's read from the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 26:1-3

In the eleventh year of exile, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man, Tyre said bad things about Jerusalem: 'Hurray! The city gate protecting the people is destroyed! The city gate is open for me. The city of Jerusalem is ruined, so I can get plenty of valuable things out of it!'"

So the Lord God says: "I am against you, Tyre! I will bring many nations to fight against you. They will come again and again, like waves on the beach.

Ezekiel says that the city of Tyre made fun of Jerusalem when they lost a war.

What is the first thing the prophet predicted?

Many nations would come against Tyre

Ezekiel 26:4

"The enemy soldiers will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers. I will also scrape the topsoil from her land. I will make Tyre a bare rock.

What does Ezekiel predict next? City would be broken down, scraped like the top of a rock

Ezekiel 26:5

Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord. She will become plunder for the nations,

What else is predicted? Place for spreading nets, plundered

Ezekiel 26:7-8

“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: From the north I am going to bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a great army. ⁸ He will ravage your settlements on the mainland with the sword; he will set up siege works against you, build a ramp up to your walls and raise his shields against you.

Now what is predicted? King Nebuchadnezzar would build a siege wall and kill

Ezekiel 26:12

They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea.

What strange thing is mentioned here? The stones, timber and soil will go into the sea.

Ezekiel 26:21

I will bring you to a horrible end and you will be no more. You will be sought, but you will never again be found, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

What is the final result of the Tyrians? Destroyed and never found again.

We see very specific predictions. These were strange predictions that could easily be proven true or false. And these prophecies all came true hundreds of years after Ezekiel was written:

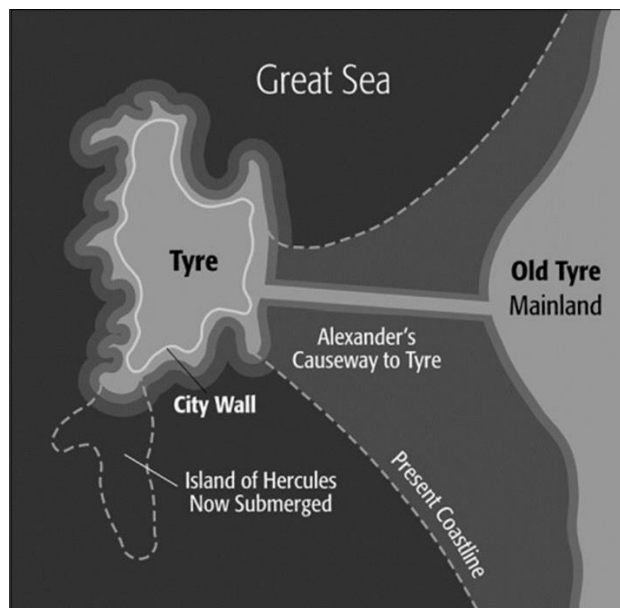
1. The King of Babylon, would make war.
2. Many nations would fight Tyre.
3. The city would be broken down and scraped like the top of a rock.
4. The stones, timber, and soil would be thrown into the sea
5. The city would become a place to spread fishnets.
6. The city would never be rebuilt.

History proves that everything Ezekiel prophesied about Tyre came true.

Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon fought against the city for about 13 years. During this time the people of Tyre moved all of their supplies to an island off the mainland that was less than a mile away. The king of Babylon severely damaged the mainland as Ezekiel predicted, but since the people of Tyre had moved their items to the island city, they were largely unaffected by the losses. The Babylonians left.

Regarding the prediction that “many nations” would come against Tyre, other nations did fight against Tyre. Then in 332 BC, Alexander the Great fought Tyre and crushed it. By 333 B.C., Ezekiel’s 250-plus-year-old prophecy that Tyre would be destroyed and its building material cast into the sea had yet to happen. But that soon changed. As Ezekiel had predicted, the stones, timber, and soil of the mainland city were thrown into the sea when Alexander the Great decided to create a land bridge so his army could walk across to defeat the island where the people of Tyre were staying. By Alexander taking all the stones, timber, and soil and throwing it into the ocean, he literally scraped the land like a rock. There is no way Ezekiel could have accurately “guessed” this.

See the result of Alexander’s remarkable plan below.



Finally, in A.D. 1291, the Sultan Halil killed the people of Tyre and destroyed the city. “Houses, factories, temples, everything in the city was consigned to the sword, flame and ruin.” A city named Tyre is in a similar location today but because the old city was

literally scraped to the ground, no one knows exactly where it is, it was literally removed and will never be built again because no one even knows where it is any longer.

What are your thoughts on this amazing prediction?

For Ezekiel to have predicted something like that is definitely strong evidence of the accurate prophecy of the Bible.

2. The Fall of Babylon and the Rise of Cyrus

Imagine finding a piece of paper in one of the government buildings dated 200 years ago that had the name of the current ruler in your land and where they came from. But how could someone know that this person would be born here, never mind predict he/she was going to be the ruler? And how could someone know more than 100 years before that he/she was from a specific area of the country and even name it? Such a prophecy truly would be amazing! Amazingly, the Bible makes the same kind of prediction, which came true.

In the eighth century B.C., Isaiah tells how God would destroy Babylon.

This is the same king that attacked Tyre.

Isaiah 13:1, 17, 19

A prophecy against Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:

See, I will stir up against them the Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold. Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the pride and glory of the Babylonians, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Question:

What did Isaiah predict? God will overthrow the Babylonians like he did Sodom and Gomorrah.

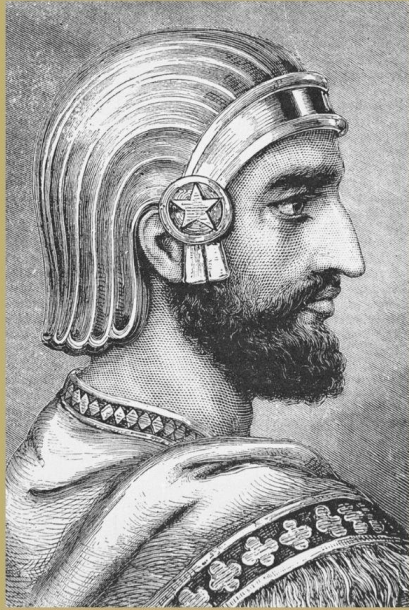
Later, Isaiah said Babylon would lose to a man named Cyrus and that Cyrus would rebuild Jerusalem.

Isaiah 44:28 and 45:3

(God) who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."

³I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

Fall of Babylon and Rise of Cyrus



This prophecy is amazing, since Cyrus was not even born until almost 150 years after Isaiah said these words. Isaiah predicted that Cyrus would defeat Babylon, he also wrote that Cyrus, would release the Jews that had been taken by the Babylonians and help them return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. All of this was written almost two hundred years before Cyrus defeated Babylon in 539 B.C.

Amazingly, history proves that all of these events came true. There really was a man named Cyrus who ruled the Medo-Persian Empire. He did defeat Babylon. And just as Isaiah prophesied, he helped the Jews return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple.

Remember that Isaiah said Babylon would fall to Cyrus? Jeremiah from the Bible also predicted the destruction of Babylon, the most powerful nation in the world at the time (Jeremiah 50-51). He predicted that Babylon's water would be dried up, and her soldiers would be drunk and die. This came true when Cyrus redirected and changed the Euphrates River so that he and his soldiers could enter Babylon through the opening where the river usually came in. The entrance was open because the Babylonians were getting drunk during a festival celebration, just as predicted.

Any questions about the fall of Babylon or Tyre?

Prophecies about Jesus

In the Old Testament there are over 300 prophecies about a coming Messiah (the expected king – Jesus). Each one of them came true perfectly. In addition, most of the

prophecies concerning Jesus Christ were very specific and could not have been arranged by someone falsely saying they were the Messiah. For example, the Old Testament told where the Messiah would be born and how the Messiah would die, that he would be betrayed, and how he was buried, something a person can't control – where they will be born and the way they would die.

In regards to the prophecies about Jesus—if it is true that Jesus fulfilled prophecies written hundreds of years before he lived—then his claim to be God must be true.

So did Jesus fulfill these prophecies? Yes. We are going to look at approximately seven or so of the 300 or more prophecies he fulfilled perfectly.

1. Prophecy: Jesus born of the seed of woman

Let's look at Genesis. It was written about 1450 BC. It talks about how God was going to put a curse on Satan, the devil.

Genesis 3:15

*And I will put enmity (war)
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.*

Now the question is, what is this talking about? He shall bruise your head and you His heel? It is talking about Jesus defeating Satan when Jesus rose from the dead. When Jesus rose from the dead, he crushed Satan's power – Satan was crushed. But, while Jesus was on the cross, it seemed that Satan bruised His heel.

But the Seed was puzzling to people since how could Jesus be the seed of a woman and not a man? Why would it say that?

Luke 1:30-31, 35

*But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.
³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*

We see the angel talking to Mary – the mother of Jesus.

What does the angel say to her? You will conceive and have a Son and the Holy Spirit will come upon you... no husband. So therefore Jesus will be called the Son of God.

Because Mary was a virgin and did not have relations with a man, the Messiah -Jesus, was the seed of woman and God. Not man. There would be no way for Jesus to manipulate this prophecy in His favor. Pretty hard to plan how to be born without a father! That would be impossible to humans, yet possible with God.

So how did the Genesis prophecy come true? Jesus the “Seed” came from a woman, not a man, exactly as Genesis had said.

2. Jesus would be born in Bethlehem of Judea

In Micah we see the location Jesus the “Ruler” was to be born. This was written hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

Micah 5:2

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting.”*

Where was Jesus supposed to come? From Bethlehem

Matthew 2:1-5 tells us where Jesus was born.

Matthew 2:1-2, 5

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

⁵ So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet

So we see that yes, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

Any thoughts or questions?

What did you like about the prophecies shared today?

Next time we will examine more prophecies about Jesus but we will focus on his death.