

Truth or Consequences
The Uniqueness of the Bible
Prophecy

"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

^{NAS} **Acts 10:43**

'What is a prophet (or prophecy)?'

The Hebrew word for prophet is 'nabi' or 'navi' and it means; a spokesman, speaker or prophet.

<05030> נָבִיא (nabi) (611c)

Meaning: a spokesman, speaker, prophet

Usage: prophecy (1), prophesy (1), prophet (165), prophets (147).

<05016> נְבוּאָה (nebuah) (612c)

Meaning: prophecy

At the end of chapter six in the book of Exodus Moses is pleading with G-d saying:

"Behold, I am unskilled in speech; how then will Pharaoh listen to me?"

^{NAS} **Exodus 6:30**

Then the L-RD said to Moses, "See, I make you as G-d to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet."

^{NAS} **Exodus 7:1**

G-d was not making Moses "G-d". He was illustrating the point that as Moses – a prophet – was appointed to speak to the nation of Israel for G-d, Aaron was appointed to speak to Pharaoh on Moses' behalf.

G-d's Prophets are appointed to speak to us on G-d's behalf.

Note: Bill H. and I spoke the other day about **1 Chronicles 25:1** in which King David separated some of the Levites to 'prophecy with lyres, harps and cymbals'. It is unclear if they were singing while in the Spirit and uttering prophetic words or perhaps singing and playing Psalms that were written by a prophet or if the meaning of the word had expanded to mean bringing exhortation in the name of Praise to G-d.

Why does G-d use prophets to speak to us?

"The L-RD your G-d will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ¹⁶ "This is according to all that you asked of the L-RD your G-d in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the L-RD my G-d, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'"

"And the L-RD said to me, 'They have spoken well. 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'

"And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the L-RD has not spoken?'" *"When a prophet speaks in the name of the L-RD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the L-RD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.*

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 18:15-22

To hear the voice of the living G-d and to be in His presence is a terrifying thing! We constantly pray "come L-rd, Come!" but, seriously, could we really stand in His presence? Would we be able to calmly listen as He spoke?

My opinion is "NO WAY". It is His kindness and His grace that keeps us from melting before Him. Personally, I have no idea how we are going to be able to be in His presence when we finally abide with Him in heaven – it is beyond my comprehension.

I only know that He will provide the way. And for now, in this dispensation, he has provided His Word through prophetic writings.

Why is prophecy so important?

There are at least three good reasons to study prophecy.

- 1) First, the subject of prophecy is not something rare or occasional to the pages of Scripture. There are more than 600 direct references in the Bible to "prophecy" and "prophets".

The Tanakh consists of 23,210 verses.
And 6,641 of them contain predictive material.
That is over 28%!

The B'rit Hadashah has 7,914 verses.
Of which, 1,711 contain predictive material.
Or 21.5%

So, for the entire Bible we have **31,124** verses and **8,352** of them contain predictive material. Twenty-seven percent (**27%**) of the entire Bible is made up of predictive material.

Why is so much of the Bible made up of predictive material?

Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the L-RD your G-d." And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living G-d is among you..."
NAS Joshua 3:9-10

That they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the L-RD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it. "Present your case," the L-RD says. "Bring forward your strong arguments," The King of Jacob says. Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former events, declare what they were, That we may consider them, and know their outcome; Or announce to us what is coming. Declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods; indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together. Behold, you are of no account, and your work amounts to nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination.
NAS Isaiah 41:20-24

All the nations have gathered together In order that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them can declare this and proclaim to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified, or let them hear and say, "It is true." "You are My witnesses," declares the L-RD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, In order that you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no G-d formed, And there will be none after Me. "I, even I, am the L-RD; And there is no savior besides Me. "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange G-d among you; so you are My witnesses," declares the L-RD, "And I am G-d."
NAS Isaiah 43:9-12

Thus says the L-RD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, the L-RD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself, And spreading out the earth all alone, ***Causing the omens of boasters to fail, Making fools out of diviners, Causing wise men to draw back, And turning their knowledge into foolishness, Confirming the word of His servant, And performing the purpose of His messengers.*** *It is I* who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited!' And of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built.' And I will raise up her ruins again.
NAS **Isaiah 44:24-26**

<< The Bible stands alone in its predictive prophecy >>

In their book *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Norman Geisler and William Nix write:

Other books claim divine inspiration, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the [Hindu] Veda. But none of those books contains predictive prophecy. As a result, fulfilled prophecy is a strong indication of the unique, divine authority of the Bible.

Wilbur M. Smith (1894 – 1976), who compiled a personal library of twenty-five thousand volumes, concludes that

Whatever one may think of the authority of and the message presented in the book we call the Bible, there is world-wide agreement that in more ways than one it is the most remarkable volume that has ever been produced in these some five thousand years of writing on the part of the human race.

*It is the only volume ever produced by man, or a group of men, in which is found a large body of prophecies relating to individual nations, to Israel, to all the peoples of the earth, to certain cities, and to the coming of One who was to be the Messiah. **The ancient world had many different devices for determining the future, known as divination, but not in the entire gamut of Greek and Latin literature, even though they use the works prophet and prophecy, can we find any real specific prophecy of a great historic event to come in the distant future, nor any prophecy of a Savior to arise in the human race...***

Mohammedanism cannot point to any prophecies of the coming of Mohammed uttered hundreds of years before his birth. Neither can the founders of any cult in this country rightly identify any ancient text specifically foretelling their appearance. (Smith, IB, 9-10)

- 2) A second reason is that as we study Bible prophecy we learn that this is a serious matter because G-d Himself encourages its study.

Yes, we have the prophetic Word made very certain. **You will do well to pay attention to it** as to a light shining in a dark, murky place, until the Day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts. First of all, understand this: no prophecy of Scripture is to be interpreted by an individual on his own; **for never has a prophecy come as a result of human willing-** on the contrary, **people moved by the Ruach HaKodesh spoke a message from G-d.** **CJB 2 Peter 1:19-21**

All Scripture is G-d-breathed and is valuable for teaching the truth, convicting of sin, correcting faults and training in right living; **CJB 2 Timothy 3:16**

Prophetic Scripture is still Scripture!

- 3) A third reason is learning about prophecy is so important is because our L-rd Yeshua encouraged His disciples to *'know the seasons'*.

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them, **"See to it that no one misleads you. "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.** **NAS Matthew 24:3-5**

"But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.

NAS Mark 13:23

"And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many."And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved."And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. **"Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place** (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; **NAS Matthew 24:11-16**

According to Deuteronomy 18, a prophet [from G-d] was false if he made predictions that were never fulfilled.

"And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the L-RD has not spoken?'" **"When a prophet speaks in the name of the L-RD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the L-RD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.**

So what's the Probability that Yeshua is the Messiah?

There are many prophetic declarations in the Scriptures but let's take a look at just one aspect – **Messianic Prophecy** – and apply the laws of probability to this subject.

Anyone can make predictions – **and let's face it, even a blind squirrel finds a nut once in a while!** – but the more statements you make about a future event and the greater detail you provide, the better the chances proportionately, even exponentially, that you will be proven wrong.

For example, think how difficult it would be for someone to predict the exact city in which the birth of a future U.S. president would take place 500 years from now. But that's what the prophet Micah did with the birthplace of the Messiah *700 years before He was born* (Micah 5:2).

How difficult do you think it would be to indicate the precise kind of death that a new, unknown religious leader would experience a thousand years from today? Could you invent and predict today a new method of execution not currently known, one that won't be invented for hundreds of years? That's what David did in 1000 B.C. when he wrote Psalm 22.

Or how difficult would it be to predict the specific date of the appearance of some great future leader hundreds of years in advance? But that's what the prophet Daniel did 530 years before Messiah (Daniel 9:24-27).

If you were to create 50 specific prophecies about a man in the future that you would never meet, how difficult do you think it would be for one man to fulfill all 50 of your predictions? How hard would it be for him if 25 of your predictions were about what *other* people would do to him and were completely beyond his control?

For example, how could someone "arrange" to be born into a specific family? (Gen. 12:2-3, 17:1, 5-7, 22:18, Matt 1:1-24 and Gal. 3:15-16)

How does someone "arrange" in advance to have his parents give birth to him in a specified city, which is not their own? (Micah 5:2, Matt. 2:5-6, Luke 2:1-7)

I could go on and on with example after example, but I think you get my point.

It might be possible to fake one or two of these predictions, but it would be impossible for any man to arrange and fulfill all these predictions!

And just how many predictions did He fulfill? My study Bible has a representative sample of 44 of the best known prophecies that were fulfilled in Yeshua.

Wilbur Smith discusses 73; Payne (J. Barton Payne) more than 125; and Alfred Edersheim notes more than 400!

And! All of these prophecies refer only to Messiah's FIRST COMING!

G-d gave a great number of prophecies about the Messiah for at least two reasons: to make identifying the Messiah obvious and to make an impostor's task impossible.

I mentioned Alfred Edersheim a few minutes ago. Edersheim was a nineteenth century Bible scholar. He was born to Jewish parents of culture and wealth in Vienna. He was educated in the Talmud and the Torah at Hebrew school and in 1841 entered the University of Vienna but his father suffered illness and financial reversal before Alfred could complete his university education, and had to support himself. He emigrated to Hungary and became a teacher of languages. In Pesth he came under the influence of John Duncan, a Church of Scotland chaplain to workman engaged in constructing a bridge over the Danube and was converted to Christianity. His achievements were many and varied including serving as a missionary to the Jews in Romania and authoring a number of books including 'The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah'

In this book, Edersheim has this to say about Biblical prophecy:

The most important point here is to keep in mind the organic unit of the Old Testament. Its predictions are not isolated, but features of one grand prophetic picture; its ritual and institutions parts of one great system; its history, not loosely connected events, but an organic development tending towards a definite end.... The Messiah and His history are not presented in the Old Testament as something separate from, or superadded to, Israel. The history, the institutions, and the predictions of Israel run up into Him.... This organic unit of Israel and the Messiah explains how events, institutions, and predictions, which initially were purely Israelitish, could with truth be regarded as finding their full accomplishment in the Messiah. From this point of view the whole Old Testament becomes the perspective in which the figure of the Messiah stands out. And perhaps the most valuable element in Rabbinic commentation on Messianic times is that in which, as so frequently, it is explained, that all the miracles and deliverances of Israel's past would be re-enacted, only in a much wider manner, in the days of the Messiah. Thus the whole past was symbolic, and typical of the future – the Old Testament the glass, through which the universal blessings of the latter days were seen. It is in this sense that we would understand the two sayings of the Talmud: "All the prophets prophesied only of the days of the Messiah," and "The world was created only for the Messiah."

Edersheim also discusses the specific number of predictive passages.

“In accordance with all this, the ancient Synagogue found references to the Messiah in many more passages than those verbal predictions, to which we generally appeal; and the latter formed (as in the New Testament) a proportionately small and secondary, element in the conception of the Messianic era. This is fully borne out by a detailed analysis of those passages in the Old Testament to which the ancient Synagogue referred to as Messianic. Their number amounts to upward of 456 (75 from the Pentateuch, 243 from the Prophets, and 138 from the Hagiographa), and their Messianic application is supported by more than 558 references to the most ancient Rabbinic writings.”

THE SCIENCE OF PROBABILITY

The science of probability attempts to determine the chance that a given event will occur. The value and accuracy of the science of probability has been established beyond doubt. For example, probability statistics are the foundation on which all kinds of insurance rates are fixed.

Professor emeritus of science at Westmont College, Dr. Peter Stoner, has calculated the probability of one man fulfilling the major prophecies made concerning the Messiah. The estimates were worked out by twelve different classes of 600 college students.

The students carefully weighed all the factors, discussed each prophecy at length, and examined the various circumstances that might indicate that men had conspired together to fulfill a particular prophecy. They made their estimates conservative enough so that there was finally unanimous agreement even among the most skeptical students.

But then Professor Stoner took their estimates and made them even more conservative. He also encouraged other skeptics or scientists to make their own estimates to see if his conclusions were more than fair. Finally, he submitted his figures for review to a Committee of the American Scientific Affiliation. Upon examination, they verified that his calculations were dependable and accurate in regard to the scientific material presented.

For example, concerning Micah 5:2, where it states the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah, Stoner and his students determined the average population of Bethlehem from the time of Micah to the present; then they divided it by the average population of the earth during the same period. They concluded that the chance of one man being born in Bethlehem was one in 2.8×10^5 – or rounded, one in 300,000.

Here are just a few of the **Messianic Prophecies** that have been literally fulfilled:

The Time of Messiah's birth – Daniel 9:22-25

"O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision. "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy *place*. "So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

The City of Messiah's birth – Micah 5:2

" But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.*"

The Nature of Messiah's birth – Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the L-rd himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

He alone is the one true G-d!