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Does the Bible Foretell Future Events Accurately?

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Does the Bible Foretell Future Events Accurately?

The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies predicting future events. Imagine knowing in advance who will be the next Prime Minister of Great Britain or the President of the United States in 2050. Or, what the greatest invention of the 25th century will be. Or what the stock market will do next year. Or the winning number of the next Powerball lottery!

The Bible speaks of God as *omniscient*—all knowing of everything in the past, present and future. He also is the sovereign ruler of all history who, in some mysterious way, orchestrates all events into His plan for the ages.

In order to communicate His plan to us, God gave chosen Hebrew prophets a glimpse of future events for them to write down in the Old Testament. These prophecies reveal how God will fulfill His plan through the ages.

The test of a prophet's credentials was 100% accuracy. If a prophecy specific to the prophet's time proved to be untrue, he was subject to the death penalty. Many of the prophecies predict events far into the future.

Of the twenty-six holy books called "inspired" by various religions, the Bible is the *only* one containing *predictive prophecy*.¹ Biblical scholar Wilbur Smith compares the prophecies of the Bible with other historical books.

*The Bible is the only volume ever produced by man, or a group of men, in which is to be 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 one who was to be the Messiah.*²

The three central themes in Bible prophecy in the Old Testament are:

- Israel and its holy city, Jerusalem
- The coming of the Messiah
- The return of the Messiah as King

Prophecies regarding Israel and Jerusalem

The Old Testament is largely the story of God's people, Israel, and His dealings with them. But why did God choose Israel from all the other nations of the world? Why is Israel special to God?

Israel today traces its roots back to Abraham. Because of Abraham's faith, God promised him that he would become the "father of a great nation," and through his seed the entire world would eventually be blessed.

Although God is the God of all nations, because of Abraham's faith, He chose Israel as His special national representative to proclaim His message to the world. As His chosen emissary, Israel had three basic tasks:

1. To be the birthplace of the Messiah
2. To be the depository of divine revelation (Scripture)
3. To proclaim God's message to all nations

God promised the people of Israel great blessing if they obeyed His commands. Numerous prophecies foretold what would happen if they disobeyed. In Deuteronomy, God lays out through Moses what He required of Israel, and the consequences if they disobeyed Him.³

You must completely obey the Lord your God, and you must carefully follow all his commands. Then the Lord your God will make you greater than any other nation on earth....

But if you do not obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands and laws... the Lord will scatter you among the nations—from one end of the earth to the other. You will have no rest among those nations and no place that is yours.

Because God is omniscient, He knew they would disobey. But God also spoke through the prophets about a time when Israel would eventually be restored.

I will bring my people Israel back from captivity; they will build the ruined cities again, and they will live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink the wine from them; they will plant gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant my people on their land, and they will not be pulled out again from the land which I have given them.⁴

These prophecies of the Jews being scattered, and eventually regathered to the land of Israel, were written by several different prophets who lived between 500-1,500 years before Christ. Yet, their theme was consistent:

1. Israel would be destroyed.⁵
2. Surviving Jews would be scattered to foreign nations.⁶
3. Yet, God would one day regather His people from the nations.

These prophecies have been literally fulfilled. Since they were written, Jerusalem has been destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times.⁷

1. Israel's last destruction happened in AD 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed, and a million of its inhabitants were killed.
2. Jews who escaped fled to other nations. For 1,900 years there was no nation of Israel, and Jerusalem was a "no-man's land."
3. Yet, for nearly two thousand years, the Jewish people survived. The uniqueness of their survival is remarkable, considering its many neighboring nations that no longer exist.
4. After the Holocaust imposed by Hitler's Nazis, millions of Jews immigrated to Israel. On May 14, 1948, the Jews' 2,000-year-old dream of the rebirth of Israel became a reality.

How is it that the Jews survived while most of their neighboring nations didn't? As a historian, Paul Johnson is struck by their remarkable survival.

Where are the Canaanites? Where are the Edomites? Where are the ancient Hellenes and the Romans, the Byzantines the Franks, the Mamluks, and the Ottomans? They have vanished into time, irrevocably. But the Jews are still in Hebron.⁸

The desolate land has been restored. The vineyards have been planted. What other nation can claim such remarkable preservation and restoration after being totally destroyed and suffering so much for over two thousand years? How could anyone have predicted all these events so precisely—unless he or she had been given a glimpse of the future from God Himself?

Endnotes