

**FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
THE BIBLE
PREDICTING THE FUTURE**

This morning, in our Foundation of Faith series, we are going to be looking at the topic of the Bible predicting the future or Bible prophecy. And once again I believe this is a very important topic for us to understand not only because God has given it to us, but over ¼ of the Bible is predictive in nature. Some of those prophecies have come to pass and some are still future! Think about this for a minute. The Bible, God's Word contains 1,817 individual predictions concerning 737 separate subjects found in 8,352 verses. And these numerous predictions comprise some 27 percent of the 31,124 verses in the Scriptures. What other religious book even comes close to what the Bible has in it? There is none. Go to the Koran, the Book of Mormon, any other religious book and you will not find prophecy like we find in the Bible! In fact, you just won't find prophecy!

Now let me ask you this. If God is real how can He show His creation that He is real? One of the ways is by prophecy! There are two Scriptures references I want to share with you to show you what I mean. First of all in Isaiah 42:8-9 we are told, "**I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.**" In other words, God's prophetic Word that has been fulfilled shows us the confidence we can have in His Word. God tells us what is going to happen with 100% accuracy before they even take place!

In Isaiah 44:6-8 we are told, **“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’”**

There is no God like Yahweh! Thus, a challenge to these idols, those people and those nations who worship them, to step forward and speak of things that were to come with 100% accuracy, showing that they are going to come to pass. And, of course, they could not do these things, only God can!

Go back to the timeframe of the Scriptures and look at the classical and religious literature of the Greeks, of the Romans, of the many other Middle Eastern cultures and you will find that they contain no specific, detailed prophecies regarding future events, people or trends. Think about it, where there any prophecies concerning the coming of Buddha, Mohammed, Joseph Smith or for that matter any other religious leader? Absolutely not but as we will see there are over 300 prophecies related to the first coming of Jesus Christ!

Now some of you may be thinking, “Yes, that was then but there are many today who can predict the future!” And yes, today you will find all kinds of people from all walks of life looking for people who will predict the future for them. They want to know what is going to happen down the road or even the next hour. Folk’s don’t waste your money. Do they get it right sometimes? Sure, but that is just chance, if your prophecy is vague enough, it is a lot easier to be right. But God is very, very specific and thus, when it comes to pass it is beyond any mathematical possibility! Look at some of the predictions that have been made and see how they have done and then we will look at what God has said and we will see how He has done. You might call these the world’s worst predictions but they are predictions none the less. We are told,

Theoretically, television may be feasible, but I consider it an impossibility - a development which we should waste little time dreaming about.

- Lee de Forest, 1926, inventor of the cathode ray tube

I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.

- Thomas J. Watson, 1943, Chairman of the Board of IBM

It doesn’t matter what he does, he will never amount to anything.

- Albert Einstein’s teacher to his father, 1895

It will be years - not in my time - before a woman will become Prime Minister.

- Margaret Thatcher, 1974

This “telephone” has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.

- Western Union internal memo, 1876

We don’t like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out.

- Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962

Louis Pasteur’s theory of germs is ridiculous fiction.

- Pierre Pacht, Professor of Physiology at Toulouse, 1872

Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons.

- Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949

We don't need you. You haven't got through college yet.

- Hewlett-Packard's rejection of Steve Jobs, who went on to found Apple Computers

An official of the White Star Line, speaking of the firm's newly built flagship, the Titanic, launched in 1912, declared that the ship was unsinkable.

In 1939 The New York Times said the problem of TV was that people had to glue their eyes to a screen, and that the average American wouldn't have time for it.

With over 50 foreign cars already on sale here, the Japanese auto industry isn't likely to carve out a big slice of the U.S. market.

- Business Week, 1958

Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau.

- Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, October 16, 1929

Now some of you may be thinking these were just normal people you might say and not psychics, I am sure they would do much better. Think again! And what I want you to see here is the accuracy of these so called professionals with the accuracy of God because when you see this, there will be no comparison. What is a good test for a prophet or psychic? His prophecy has to come to pass, plain and simple! That is the main point, if you don't get it right then you are a false prophet!

There was a study done of the prophecies that psychics made between 1975 and 1981 and it showed that of the seventy-two predictions that were made, only six were fulfilled in any way. In fact, two of these predictions were very vague and two of the others were not surprising at all. They were that the United States and Russia would remain leading powers and there would be no world war! Hey, I can tell you that the sun will rise in the morning and set in the evening and if you call that prophecy, then I guess I am a prophet! But that is not what the Bible does; the Bible is very specific, even calling people by name hundreds of years before they were born!

In 1993 when the predictions were looked at these psychics missed every major unexpected news story! Some of the major ones were: Michael Jordan's retirement, terrible Midwest flooding, the Israel-PLO peace treaty. What they did predict and of course did not come to pass were: the Queen of England would become a nun, Kathy Lee Gifford would replace Jay Leno as the host of The Tonight Show.

Okay, then what about all those famous predictions that Nostradamus made and came to pass? Please understand that his predictions were very vague and after the fact people looked at them and felt he had predicted them. Think about that for a minute. If you can't get the prophecy until after it comes to pass, is it really a prophecy? Really, what good is it? And yes, many New Agers have linked themselves to Nostradamus and wrote books regarding his prophecies. In fact, many of his writings were "unintelligible and garbled to the uninitiated" as one New Age writer put it. So you have to have some special skills or maybe some special glasses to understand what he is saying? That is just foolish and it tells me that you can then make the text say whatever you want it to say.

We all remember the terrorist attack on America back on September 11, 2001. With the destruction of the World Trade Center by two commercial airplanes crashing into them, another commercial airplane crashing into the Pentagon, and still another crashing to the ground, probably brought down by the passengers on the plane and not the terrorists, avoiding it from crashing into the White House. Out of this some 3,000 people were killed, or should I say murdered.

What is interesting is what came out of that regarding prophecy. You see, many people began to listen to the prophecies of the French physician and astrologer, Nostradamus. Maybe you remembering hearing about all this on the news or read it in the newspaper or magazine, maybe it was the talk at work. If not, this is what Nostradamus said, dated 1654:

“In the city of God there will be a great thunder,
Two brothers torn apart by chaos,
While the fortress endures,
The great leader will succumb,
The third big war will begin when the big city is burning.”

- Nostradamus 1654

Now as people began to interpret what Nostradamus said, they came to the conclusion that after the fall of “two brothers,” which is a reference to the destruction of the World Trade Center Towers, at least that is what they tell us, World War III will begin.

First of all, and probably the biggest problem with this prediction of Nostradamus, is that he lived from 1503 to 1566. Thus, he died 88 years before his prediction was even made! That is better than the prediction itself! You see, this quatrain that was being attributed to him, was a fake. It originated in Canada at Brock University in the 1990's. The author of this forgery was Neil Marshall. But why did he do it?

He wanted to show how easily it is to use abstract imagery, vague terms, so they could fit into any number of cataclysmic events. And the same is true with the prophecies or quatrains that Nostradamus penned. He used obscure imagery and people today try to fit them into the events of their day! How foolish. How hopeless. How desperate.

Now keep in mind that people had interpreted the end of the world, according to Nostradamus, to be in the year 2000! Why in the world would he write about anything occurring after that, but, like the Energizer Bunny, his predications, and even those forgeries, keep going and going and going . . .

But, when the Lord said that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judah He was 100% correct and the religious leaders knew exactly where this was to take place long before it did! In fact there were two Bethlehem's and God said that it was the Bethlehem in Judah. That is very specific, it is not vague and you don't have to have special glasses or be some kind of trained professional to understand them! When God tells us about the future He wants us to understand what He is saying and thus, He is very clear! That is prophecy and God is 100% accurate and only God can be 100% accurate every time! I guess that is what 100% accurate is!

Let me share with you some Scriptures, and there are many, that show what God's Word is all about. Jesus told us in John 5:39, "**You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.**" In Luke 24:27 Jesus spoke to the men on the road to Emmaus and we are told, "**And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**" Also, in Luke 24:44 we are told, "**Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.'**" In Luke 4:20-21 as Jesus began His ministry, we are told, "**Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'**" And there are more but you get the idea.

We also see the New Testament writers speak of Jesus being spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures. You see, all that was written was to happen in the life of Jesus and it did! In Acts 3:18 we are told, "**But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.**" In Acts 17:2-3 we are told, "**Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.'**"

In Romans 1:1-7 we are told, **“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”** And there are more but I think you get the idea here!

So what are Jesus and the writers of the New Testament saying here in the verses that we have read? First of all in John 5:39 we see that Jesus is saying to the religious leaders of His day and to us that the Old Testament Scriptures speak of Him. And that is exactly what we see in the other verses we have read. That the Old Testament speaks of Jesus. That means that there must be prophecies that refer to the Messiah, to Jesus. If we don't find them or if we find some to be true and some to be false, we can't believe any of them. But if we find these prophecies to be fulfilled in Christ it not only shows us that Jesus is the Messiah, that He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, but these prophecies must have been made by God. You see, if they are all accurate then we can trust God's Word because the Bible predicts the future with 100% accuracy and only God can do that!

Peter Stoner, in his book *Science Speaks* took just eight prophecies related to Jesus to see what the mathematical probability of these eight prophecies coming to pass in one man would be. Again, keep in mind that there are over 300 prophecies related to the first coming of Jesus Christ but we will start out small and see what the mathematical possibility to eight of them coming to pass in one man is just to start with.

And once again, when you compare these with what man has to say, what he predicts, it is comical. In fact, Bill Gates, the creator of Microsoft declared, “640K (640,000 bytes of memory should be enough for anybody.” Let me show you how far things have come, much father than the 64,000 bytes the early computers had or even the 640,000 that Bill Gates was talking about. For example a normal CD holds up to 700MB of information (or 700,000,000 million bytes) and an average hard drive can hold 60GB which is 60,000,000,000 billion bytes. If a MB (megabyte) is 1 million bytes then 1 GB (gigabyte) is a billion bytes and some hard drives are now even 1 terabyte which is 1 trillion bytes or 1000 billion bytes of memory. Wow . . . now that is a lot of memory. I guess Bill Gates was just a little off, but I will tell you this, God is never off as you will see!

Now here are just eight of them that Jesus had no control over and yet fulfilled them all down to the tiniest detail:

1. Place of birth (Micah 5:2)
2. Time of birth (Daniel 9:25, Genesis 49:10)
3. Manner of birth (Isaiah 7:14)
4. Betrayal
5. Manner of death (Psalm 22:16)

6. People's reactions (mocking, spitting, staring, etc.)
7. Piercing
8. Burial

Now before I speak of the probability of these eight coming to pass, let me just speak of the first one because Jesus could not have any control over where he was going to be born if He was just a man. And if He was not born in Bethlehem of Judah the religious leaders would have Him because that is where the Messiah was to come from! But if He is God then He knew exactly where He was to be born, the Incarnation and He told us long before it ever happened!

In Micah 5:2 we are told, "**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.**" We don't have to guess what this prophecy is about; it is about the birth of the Christ, the Messiah. Also, we don't have to guess the location because God is very specific about where He is to be born. He is to be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah or the Bethlehem that is in Judah, as I have said already. Again, God is very specific here.

In knowing that, our question is, “One man in how many, the world over, has been born in Bethlehem?” That is what we are trying to determine here. What we need to do is determine the average population of Bethlehem from Micah’s day to today and then divide it by the average population of the earth during that same period of time. Dr. Peter Stoner figured out that the average population of the earth is less than 2 billion and the average population of Bethlehem is less than 7,150. Thus, for this first prophecy to be fulfilled in one man is one in 2.8 times 10^5 . (Another way to look at this is that one man in $7,150/2,000,000,000$ would be born in Bethlehem). And keep in mind that this is just one prophecy that was fulfilled.

We see the New Testament fulfillment of this prophecy made by Micah in Matthew 2:1 where we are told, “**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.**” So here is the first prediction that any one man could fulfill this prophecy of being born in Bethlehem, one in 2.8 times 10^5 .

Now if we were to evaluate all of these prophecies and look at the probability of them occurring, as Peter Stoner did, we would come up with the odds of this occurring all in one man. And I realize that some may doubt his work or say that it is one-sided in favor of Christianity but his probability studies have been evaluated and proven to be very good.

In the forward of Peter Stoner's book H. Harold Hartzler of the American Scientific Affiliation at Goshen College wrote, "The manuscript for *Science Speaks* has been carefully reviewed by a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation members and by the Executive Council of the same group and has been found, in general, to be dependable and accurate in regard to the scientific material presented. The mathematical analysis included is based upon principles of probability which are thoroughly sound and Professor Stoner has applied these principles in a proper and convincing way."

Now there may be some out there this morning in church or listening on the radio or Internet that are thinking, "Hey, you can find some of these prophecies in various people who have died like Kennedy or Kings or others. So what is the big deal?" I don't think any of them were born in Bethlehem but just think about what they are saying. You see, it is a big deal because we are not just talking about one or two or even eight but over 300 of them and as you will see, there is no possible way that this could happen in any one man!

So let's look at this probability from Peter Stoner's book, *Science Speaks*. He tells us,

We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} [(10 to the 17th power). That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (17 zeros after the one). In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing that] we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them according to their own wisdom.

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10^{17} of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ. This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only once chance in 10^{17} of being absolute. (Stoner, *SS*, 100-107).

- Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, pp. 193-194

Now think about that for a minute. If the Lottery or Las Vegas or any gambling spot had those kinds of odds, no one would go to them or use them. And truly, their odds are not that great or they would not be in business but they can't be that bad or they would not be in business either! And here is the tragedy, people will gamble with their life when everything is against them. God makes it very clear that He is real and He has shown us that He is real through prophecy. Why take a chance in life when you have the surety, the security of God's Word!

Now keep in mind that this was only eight of the over 300 prophecies related to the first coming of Jesus Christ. Let's increase that number slightly and see what would happen. Imagine if we considered just 16 of the over 300 prophecies related to Christ, what is the probability of them coming to pass in one man? Peter Stoner continues on as he tells us,

“Suppose we add eight more prophecies to our list, and assume that their chance of fulfillment is the same as the eight just considered. The chance that one man would fulfill all sixteen is $1 \times 10^{28} \times 10^{17}$ or 1 in 10^{45} .

Let us try to visualize this as we did before. Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all directions more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun. (If a train had started from the earth at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, and had traveled steadily toward the sun at the rate of sixty miles per hour, day and night, it would be about reaching its destination today. But remember that our ball of silver dollars extends thirty times that far in all directions.)

If you can imagine the marking of one silver dollar, and then thoroughly stirring it into this great ball, and blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one dollar, and expect it to be the marked one, you have somewhat of a picture of how absolutely the fulfillment of sixteen prophecies referring to Jesus Christ proves both that He is the Son of God and that our Bible is inspired. Certainly God directed the writing of His Word.”

That still is a very small number of prophecies; imagine 48 of them being fulfilled in one man down to the smallest detail. What are the odds of that? Again, we don't have to guess because Peter Stoner tells us,

We find the chance that any one man fulfilled all 48 prophecies to be 1 in 10^{157} . This is really a large number and it represents an extremely small chance. Let us try to visualize it. The silver dollar, which we have been using, is entirely too large. We must select a smaller object. The electron is about as small an object as we know of. It is so small that it will take 2.5 times 10^{15} of them laid side by side to make a line, single file, one inch long. If we were going to count the electrons in this line one inch long, and counted 250 each minute, and if we counted day and night, it would take us 19,000,000 years to count just the one-inch line of electrons. If we had a cubic inch of these electrons and we tried to count them it would take us, counting steadily 250 each minute, 19,000,000 times 19,000,000 times 19,000,000 years or 6.9 times 10^{21} years.

With this introduction, let us go back to our chance of 1 in 10^{157} . Let us suppose that we are taking this number of electrons, marking one, and thoroughly stirring it into the whole mass, then blindfolding a man and letting him try to find the right one. What chance has he of finding the right one? What kind of a pile will this number of electrons make? They make an inconceivably large volume. (Stoner, SS, 109, 110)

Such is the chance of any individual fulfilling forty-eight prophecies.

- Josh McDowell, The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict, p. 194

Really, at that point do you even need to blindfold him? Of course not but I think you get the point of how impossible it is for this to happen by random chance! Now, let's look at another amazing and accurate prophecy that God has given to us. In Isaiah chapters 44 and 45 we are told of this man named Cyrus who would be the King of Persia. There is only one problem. Isaiah wrote this around 700 B. C. and Cyrus would not be born for another 100 years or so and he would not be King of Persia for around 150 years and yet God called him by name. Let's look at these verses and then I will expound on them.

First of all, in Isaiah 44:26-28 we are told, **“Who confirms the word of His servant, And performs the counsel of His messengers; Who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited,’ To the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ And I will raise up her waste places; Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers’; Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.””**

Then, in Isaiah 45:1-3 we are told of this man Cyrus, **“Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held - To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: ‘I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel.’”**

The fulfillment of this prophecy is given to us in Ezra 1:1-3, where we are told, **“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.”**

Now keep in mind that in 539 B. C. Cyrus overthrew the Babylonians. Then, in 538 B. C. he made this decree or proclamation. Now this was not the first year that Cyrus was King, but the first year he had defeated the Babylonians, his first rule over the Babylonian kingdom and making his kingdom a world power. So we see here that God named this King over 100 years before he was born and said that he would be King of Persia just as came to pass. And not only that, but that he would release any Jew who wanted to return home from Babylon to Jerusalem. A coincidence or the providence of God who knew what would take place and told us before it did so we would know that He truly is God!

Another fascinating prophecy to me is the ancient city of Tyre that is situated in the country of Lebanon. Let's read what God says will happen to this city and then see what actually transpired. In Ezekiel 26:3-14 we are told, **“Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for spreading nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,’ says the Lord God; ‘it shall become plunder for the nations. Also her daughter villages which are in the fields shall be slain by the sword. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.’ For thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. He will slay with the sword your daughter villages in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. He will**

direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. Because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, the wagons, and the chariots, when he enters your gates, as men enter a city that has been breached. With the hooves of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water. I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the Lord have spoken,' says the Lord God.

Here we see the Lord make this interesting prediction regarding the destruction of Tyre. And notice again that the Lord is very detailed here, nothing vague about it. In fact, Peter Stoner, in his book, *Science Speaks*, says that the probability of these things happening by a random chance occurrence is 1 in 400 million! And that drives the critiques of the Bible crazy. They can't understand how this can be. But for the Christian who believes the Bible is the Word of God, and that God is omniscient or all-knowing, this is easy for us to understand and believe! And so let's examine this incredible prediction in light of the historical events that have taken place.

Only a few years after this prophecy was spoken, in 588 B. C., King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians came down, and for some reason they turned from going to Egypt, and they headed towards Tyre. The problem the Babylonians encountered was that the people of Tyre were stronger than they thought and they held on for some 13 years. From verses 7-11 we see this spoken of. And after 13 years they finally breached the walls of the city and to their surprise they only found a few soldiers remaining in the city as a decoy.

What happened to the people of this city? Well, over a period of time the people and their possessions were moved out of Tyre and onto an island that was off shore about half mile away. And the night time exodus that occurred, paid off. The people and the wealth were gone, and for his 13 years of battle, the Babylonians got nothing in return. So they destroyed the buildings, the structures and the soldiers who remained, but that was all they got out of this battle. They had no booty. And since Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians were exhausted from the 13 years of battle with nothing to show for it, they did not bother to take the island but left it alone. But it doesn't end there.

As you read these verses you see that in this judgment of God He is going to flatten Tyre, - a flat Tyre you might say! Sorry about that. But the idea here is that they are not going to be spared - no spare Tyre you might say! Again, sorry about that!

The thing we need to remember is that this was not fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. In fact, it would not be fulfilled for another 243 years or so. You see, in 332 B. C., Alexander, a great man, of course he was Alexander the Great, came sweeping across the land with the intention of conquering the whole known world, which he did.

And as he came to Tyre he was determined to destroy it. This was a challenge to this great military leader. In verse 3 it speaks of many nations coming down upon Tyre, and that is exactly what took place. As Alexander the Great conquered other nations he put them into his military, made them slaves and used them to defeat Tyre. In this second phase of the destruction of Tyre we see Alexander the Great build a causeway out to this island that was a half mile off shore using his soldiers and slaves to do the work.

Where did he get all the materials to build this causeway? He took the rubble, the ruins from the city of Tyre that was on the mainland and destroyed by the Babylonians. And he took all these materials, scraping the dust from the land, and pushed them into the sea and he built this half mile causeway out to this island that was now the city of Tyre. He also organized a flotilla of ships from several conquered nations. He had 80 from Sidon, Aradus, and Byblos; 10 from Rhodes; 10 from Lycia; and 120 from Cyprus. And as he completed the work, his soldiers marched right in and took the city of Tyre, something that the Babylonians were not able to do. But it doesn't end there!

Three years after he had begun his siege of Tyre, he conquered the city. In this battle Tyre lost eight thousand men, another two thousand men of military age were crucified around the city; and thirty thousand women and children were sold as slaves!

Now, in verse 12 it changes from "he" or Nebuchadnezzar and/or Alexander the Great, to "they" or another group of people I believe. You see, Tyre did become a city once again. In fact it became a major Islamic city as Islam was sweeping across the land. And in 1290 A. D. the Crusaders from France, England, and Germany came to take the holy land from the infidels. And they did defeat the Muslims and made Tyre into a Crusader city!

But within a few years the Muslims mounted up their forces and took back the city of Tyre from the Crusaders. And the Muslims were so upset that Christians had overtaken them and used this land for their own purposes, and I use that term “Christian” very loosely when I speak of the Crusaders, that the Muslims dismantled the city. They took every timber, every rock, anything that was left in this city and threw it into the sea. And so, as verse 4 says, nothing is left of Tyre but the dust of the city, just as God had said would take place.

Now if you go to this area today, all you will find is a small fishing village that uses this causeway that Alexander the Great had made, to dry their fishing nets upon. It is just as verse 5 and verse 14 says! The strange thing is, the location of this city is ideal to flourish as a big city; it should have been rebuilt again. It has been estimated that the water supply they have in this area, fresh water, is between 10,000 to 1 million gallons of water per day! But, as verse 14 says, **“I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,’ says the Lord GOD.”**

God declared it, and we see it, and the skeptics are going crazy trying to figure out how this can be! But we have no problem understanding this, because the creator of heaven and earth knows the future as if were the present, and He declares it to us with 100% accuracy! Awesome prophecy, don’t you just love it?

There is one more that I think we need to cover and it is a prophecy that was partially fulfilled in our day or close to it for many of us. It is the prophecy related to the rebirth of the nation of Israel. In Ezekiel 37: 1-14 we are told, **“The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ So I answered, ‘O Lord God, You know.’ Again He said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, “O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.’”” So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, “Thus says the Lord God: ‘Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’”” So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, “Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!” Therefore prophecy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and**

bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.”

And drop down to verse 21 of Ezekiel chapter 37 where we are told, **“Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.””**

Ezekiel 37:21-22.

Here we see that Ezekiel is given this vision by God of this valley that is packed with these dry, sun-bleached bones. A massive graveyard that once represented life, but now all that is seen is death. What is this all about? I believe there are a few ways to look at this, and one of them being the complete fulfillment. First of all, at this point in time, the nation of Israel was in captivity in Babylon. Many people were killed and the nation was, in a sense, dead. Can this nation come to life again? You bet! God did raise them up and bring them home again. We can call this a partial fulfillment or a glimpse of what is to come.

The second view is seen in our recent past. In 70 A. D. the Jews were scattered throughout the world as the Romans came in and destroyed Jerusalem. Then, in 1948 God brought His people back home again, but not before 6 million Jews were murdered by Hitler and the German army. Again, picture in your mind this massive graveyard, 6 million dead bodies, can they live? You bet! God brought them back into the land of Israel, this people who were almost wiped out. He preserved the Hebrew language. Think about this for a minute. For almost 2000 years they had no homeland to live in, they were scattered throughout the world and yet, in all those years they remained a separate people, they were not assimilated into other cultures as should have been the case and is the case for any other people.

Then, back on May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, proclaimed the birth of the sovereign state of Israel and he called this land not Jerusalem or Palestine, but Israel as the prophet Ezekiel said it should be called. In fact, he said it was in fulfillment of what the prophet Ezekiel spoke! He saw this as the fulfillment of that prophecy. And this too is only a partial fulfillment of what is to come.

I truly believe we have not seen the complete fulfillment of this prophecy as yet and that is the third view. I believe this comes to fulfillment at the end of the Tribulation Period as God is going to set-up His kingdom here on this earth. You see, at the 3½ year mark of the 7 year Tribulation Period, the Antichrist will go into the holy of holies and demand to be worshiped as God. At this point many Jews will flee for their lives to Petra as 2/3 of the Jewish population will be wiped out by the Antichrist and his forces, only 1/3 making it through the Tribulation Period. And once again, can this people live? You bet! God will restore them and they will enter into the Kingdom Age with Him.

God said that He would restore the nation of Israel and just like He said it came to pass. There is no doubt about it. The interesting thing is that prior to 1948 many pastors and Bible scholars did not believe this could be speaking of the Jews, even though it is very clear. They thought it was impossible for these dry, dead, lifeless bones to live and God said that they would and here they are today from all over the world living in the land of Israel.

Now here's the thing. You have to decide for yourself but are you willing to risk eternity because you do not want to believe? God has shown us in His Word that these predications are beyond any mathematical probability and the reality is, it is not a matter of math but of the heart! If you don't want to believe then it won't matter what I show you, it won't matter what the Bible says.

But for those that do, understand this. If God has fulfilled all those prophecies relating to His first coming, over 300 of them, then that should give us assurance that what He has predicted about the future, His second coming will come to pass, it is a guarantee! In fact, there are over 500 related to His second coming!

And please remember that the evidence of fulfilled prophecy is the unmistakable proof of God's inspiration of the Scriptures. We can trust them because they are not given to us through man but breathed from the mouth of God! That is what II Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

You see, as Christians, we know what's ahead for this world, and that knowledge should keep us living close to God. We know that the things of this world are temporary but what we do for the Lord is eternal. I truly believe that prophecy is important because it helps us to see what God has in store for this world, what is ahead and we have that assurance because what He has said before has come to pass with 100% accuracy! We can trust in the Lord and His Word!

Dr. Norman Geisler makes these remarks about the Word of God. He wrote,
The Bible is the only known book in the world that both claims to be and proves to be the Word of God. . . . The testimony of science that demonstrates it, of the scrolls that transmit it, the scribes who wrote it, the supernatural that confirms it, the structure that manifest it, the stones that support it, the Savior who verified it, the Spirit that witnesses to it, and the saved who have been transformed by it. These combined testimonies confirm that the Bible is what it claims to be – the divinely inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God.”

- Dr. Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 561

Make no mistake about it, when you add it all up you can come to no other conclusion than this. What we hold in our hands is the Word of God breathed from the mouth of God! As I close this morning let me leave you with this to think about. There are many people today who have their palms read, go to mediums and wizards, they see what the Tarot cards say, they go to psychics to find out what the future holds. They will spend all kinds of money to have this done. How sad that truly is when God said that He paid it all in full, our sins are forgiven and if you want to know the future, just come to Him and He will show you through His Word.

Thus, do you want to pay all kinds of money to have some nut job try to tell you your future or do you want to go to the One who holds the future in His hands – Jesus? It truly is up to you but to me the decision is easy. It is as Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”** Won’t you come?