

## 91—The Evidence of Fulfilled Prophecy

Isaiah 41:26, “Who declared it from the beginning, that we might know, and beforehand, that we might say, “He is right”?”

Introduction: Fulfilled prophecy is one of the strongest evidences that the Bible is a special divine revelation, the word of God. It is a source of internal evidence—that is, evidence from the Bible which attests to its own inspiration. We can use the internal evidence of the Bible’s own prophecies coupled with the external historical testimony outside of the Bible to see the omniscience of God behind the author’s writings.

### I. What “Prophecy” Is Not...

- A. “Prophecy” is not the same thing as a “prediction.”
  - 1. Mere predictions are not made with God’s guarantee.
    - i. Incorrect predictions do not make me a liar.
    - ii. Correct predictions do not prove the omniscience of God.
  - 2. To the contrary, prophecy is made with God’s guarantee.
    - i. Incorrect prophecies make me a liar.
    - ii. Correct prophecies give credibility to the omniscience of God.
- B. Prophecy is not a guess, a forecast, a calculation, a mere conjecture, a vague generalization or an educated analysis of a forthcoming situation.

### II. Defining “Prophecy”

- A. McIlvaine said, “... prophecy is a declaration of future events, such as no human wisdom or forecast is sufficient to make—depending on a knowledge of the innumerable contingencies of human affairs, which belongs exclusively to the omniscience of God; so that from its very nature, prophecy must be divine revelation” (*Evidences of Christianity*, p. 238).
- B. Justin Martyr defined it as, “... to declare a thing shall come to be, long before it is in being and then to bring about that very thing according to the same declaration—this, or nothing, is the work of God” (quoted in Hopkins, *Evidences of Christianity*, p. 299).
- C. Looking at Scripture, the “prophet” was...
  - 1. A “prophet” did not just “foretell” events but was a “forthteller.”

2. The prophet's job was to act as a "spokesman" for God.
  - i. Moses was "as God to Pharaoh" (Exodus 7:1).
  - ii. Aaron his brother was his "prophet" or His "spokesman" or "mouth" (see Exodus 4:16).
3. A prophet's role is defined: "*I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*" (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).

### III. The Criteria and Power of True Prophecy

#### A. The Criteria of Prophecy

1. The event must be beyond the power of man to foresee.
2. It must be demonstrated the prediction was written before the event.
3. The prediction must be applicable to the event.
4. The language of the prediction must be unambiguous and unmistakable.
5. The prediction must have a clear and demonstrable fulfillment.

#### B. The Power of Prophecy

##### 1. In Syllogistic Form

- i. Man cannot know the future; only God can foretell history or events.
- ii. The Bible foretold the destiny of nations and the coming of Christ.
- iii. Therefore the Bible is the word of God, not man.

##### 2. In Scripture

- i. In the days when the northern kingdom of Israel was about to go into Assyrian captivity (732 to 722 B.C.), God challenged their idols to declare the future (See Isaiah 41:21-23, 26; 42:8; 44:6-8).
- ii. Jeremiah, the true prophet vs. Hananiah, the false prophet (Jeremiah 28:1-17).
- iii. Jesus used prophecy as evidence He was from God (John 5:39,46; Luke 18:31; John 14:29).
- iv. The apostles used fulfilled prophecy as evidence Jesus was the Christ (Acts 2:16, 25, 30, 34; 3:18, 22-24)

#### IV. The Uniqueness of Prophetic Evidence

- A. Hopkins wrote in *Evidences of Christianity*, "... Miracle and prophecy—those two grand pillars of Christian evidence—are neither of them even claimed by Mohammedanism, and are neither of them the ground on which it has been attempted to introduce any other religion" (p. 300).
- B. "No well-accredited prophecy is found in any other book or even oral tradition now extant, or that has ever been extant in the world. The oracles of heathenism are not to be classed as exceptions. There is not a single one of them that meets the tests required to prove supernatural agency, which every Scripture prophecy evinces. So far as we have been able to find there is not exception to this sweeping remark" (R.S. Foster, *The Supernatural Book*, p. 11. Quoted in Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences*, p. 90).
- C. "One real case of fulfilled prophecy would establish a supernatural act. But if our interpretation of the prophetic passages be correct, there are great numbers of them. One unequivocal miracle, one indubitable fulfilled prophecy would show the fallacy of naturalism, for the causal web of the universe would be ruptured at that point through which the supernatural is intruded. Therefore, radical doubt must be certain it has silenced the testimony of all prophecies, whereas the Christian asserts that rather than resting the case of one prophecy, we have dozens at our beck and call" (Ramm, Bernard. *Protestant Christian Evidences*, p. 86).

Conclusion: As we conclude today, let me remind you that the God of the Bible is the God who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. He was there at the beginning. He knows the end too. Jesus, the very image of God on earth, also had the power to prophesy. He called His own shot while He was here on earth and promised that after three days He would rise from the dead. He did exactly that as written down by many eyewitnesses. This same Jesus tells us a day is coming when He will return and judge us by the word He has spoken. If God's Word is the standard of your judgment, the question you should be asking is—have I obeyed it?