

Evidence from Prophecy

Isaiah 46:9-10 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done..."

"God gave the prophecies, not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event, and His own providence, not the interpreters, be thereby manifested to the world." – Sir Isaac Newton

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of prophecy to the Bible. It is the way that God establishes His credentials –

Isaiah 46:9-10 (See above)

God makes a distinction between Himself, and idols based on fulfilled prophecy

Isaiah 41:21-24 *Set forth your case, says the Lord; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob. Let them bring them and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come. Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified. Behold, you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing; an abomination is he who chooses you. ESV*

Isaiah 42:8-9 *I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them."*

What are the characteristics of a true prophecy? (H. W. Everest- The Divine Demonstration)

1. The event must be beyond the power of man to foresee. It is not a vision of hope or fear, not the result of a mathematical calculation, not the forecast of political or scientific sagacity, and not a fortunate conjecture.
2. It must be demonstrated that 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.

For a book to make the claim that it is the word of God, **all** of the prophecies it contains must be shown. The bible is the only book of religion which contains prophecies where the fulfillment has met these criteria.

Before we can go into the prophecies, we must establish some dates. We will briefly discuss some prophecies concerning Israel then next week talk about prophecies concerning Christ.

1445 BC – Giving of the Law

931 BC – Death of Solomon and kingdom divided

722 BC – Assyrian captivity of the Northern kingdom (Israel)

606 BC – First group of captives from Judah taken to Babylon

597 BC – Jerusalem captured by Babylon

586 BC - Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon

536 BC – First group of Israelites released by the Persians from Babylon to go back to Judah

520-516 BC Temple rebuilt

458 BC – A second group of captives returns under Ezra

444 BC – The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt

400-100 BC The Hebrew bible was translated into Greek (the bible Jesus used – Septuagint)

ISRAEL

Deut. 28 – Blessing and curses of the Law

If Israel was obedient blessings 28:1-14

Curses if disobedient – 28:14-64

Prophecies –

1. The nation would have a king.
2. Go into captivity (28:41)
3. Nation would come from afar (28:49ff)
 - a. Assyria took away Hoshea (2 Kings 17:4-6)
 - b. Babylon took away king Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:10)
 - c. Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD
4. Suffering of the people
 - a. Families would eat their children (Deut. 28:53-57) Fulfilled in II Kings 6:24-31 when Samaria was under siege by Syria and in the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem Lam. 2:20, 4:10)
5. The nation would be scattered and never a nation again. - Jer. 19:10-11 22:29-30
 - a. The people who live in Israel are not descendants of Abraham. Jewish people have no record of their heritage (as was in the OT). Jews are scattered throughout the world today.

Questions for Discussion

1. As different evidence for the Bible being the word of God is considered, how important is prophecy?
2. How would you approach someone with prophecies from the bible?
3. Comment on a prophet who has a 99% success rate in foretelling the future (Deut. 18:22).
4. What would you think of a prophet who foretold that it would rain next week? Why would this not fit our definition?

Note: Much of this material was taken from Ferrell Jenkin's "An Introduction to Christian Evidences"