

Beyond Messianic Prophecies

The Bible immensely impresses the Bible student because of all its prophecies about Jesus (particularly in the Old Testament). Over 300 of them can be listed and studied, and that builds our faith in the Messiah as the Son of God, but there are other fulfilled prophecies that demonstrate the power of the scriptures and of the Almighty God.

In 1 Kings 13, God sent an unnamed man of God to prophesy against Jeroboam for his role in filling the hearts of the Israelites with idolatry (v. 2; cp. 1 Kings 12:25-33). The man of God called for King Josiah to cleanse the iniquity of Jeroboam which he very effectively did about 150 years in the future (2 Kings 23:15-18).

Assyria was singled out by God in Isaiah 10:1-14. She had taken the northern kingdom of Israel captive (2 Kings 17:1-23), but because of her proud heart, she too would fall. In history, this took place at the battle of Carchemish (Jeremiah 46:2-12) in 606 B.C. This was the same battle in which Josiah, who tried to prevent Pharaoh Neco from joining forces with the Assyrians, lost his life (2 Chronicles 35:20-24). The victory gave Babylon authority over all of western Asia within the next few years; for this reason it ranks as one of the most decisive battles of all time. And it was prophesied by God about 135 years in the future.

In Daniel 2:31-45, Nebuchadnezzar had an interesting dream of a statue that was then destroyed by a stone cut out of a mountain without hands. Daniel went on to interpret, completely by the hand of God, the dream. It represented four great world kingdoms, the first being the Babylonian Empire. After it, the Medo-Persian Empire would dominate the world, followed by the Grecian Empire. Finally, the Roman Empire was represented by the iron feet mixed with clay. This astounding prophecy, repeated in Daniel 7, looked almost 600 years into the future to explain that God would control His Son's coming into the world.

Babylon was used by God to destroy the kingdom of Judah after she had been dragged down into extreme idolatry, most notably by Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. In Habakkuk 2:2-20, after explaining to the prophet how God was using the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah, he adds that Babylon itself will then be destroyed. This took place in Daniel 5:1-39 when the Medo-Persian Empire suddenly overtook the Babylonian Empire.

Tyre was a world-class nation made rich by their commercial shipping trade. However, God was not pleased with them, and so in Ezekiel 26:1-21 God warned them that He would use the Babylonians to punish the nation. He even mentioned Nebuchadnezzar by name in v. 7. Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city from 586-573 B.C. but could not destroy it completely. A few hundred years after Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great destroyed the city by building a causeway over which he was able to move his war machinery. He conquered and razed the city in 332 B.C.

Daniel 11:1-45 was revealed by God to the prophet to inform and encourage the Jews about their future as a people. There are approximately 130 prophecies in the chapter, and it begins by foretelling that the Persian Empire would be supplanted by the Grecian Empire. We know that Alexander's untimely death allowed his kingdom to be divided into four parts. Two of the rulers, Ptolemy and Seleucus, who ruled Egypt and Syria, respectively, and their descendants, are exquisitely detailed in this chapter, which ends by revealing an exhaustive prophecy about one of the Jews' greatest adversaries: Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It is truly amazing when one remembers that these prophecies were disclosed hundreds of years before they actually took place.

In one of the few true prophetic passages in the New Testament, Jesus foretold of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:1-35. He gave several specific signs of the impending doom and encouraged His disciples to flee the city when they observed these signs. After the city was besieged for a few months, the Roman general Titus overtook it and Herod's temple was burned in A.D. 70. Jesus said, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (v. 34). The prophecy was fulfilled only 40 years after He spoke it.

As you can see, many prophecies in the Bible are not connected to the coming of Jesus. However, they address incredibly varied events, and they all came true — providing incredibly powerful evidence that the Bible is the word of God (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20-22).

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