

First Tuesday Class Series
BIBLE PROPHECY & HISTORICAL ACCURACY:
Twin Towers of Evidence

If it is true that the prophets wrote at the time they claimed, their predictive prophecies serve as evidence for God's hand in the Bible. But if they wrote at a later date, as skeptics charge, how can we explain their historical accuracy regarding the time in which they claimed to write?

Isaiah 41:21-24

²¹Produce your cause, saith Jehovah; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

²²Let them bring forth, and declare unto us what shall happen: declare ye the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or show us things to come.

²³Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. ²⁴Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work is of nought; an abomination is he that chooseth you.

“Things to Come”: Predictive Prophecy

“Former Things”: Historical Accuracy

Predictive Prophecy as Evidence of Inspiration

● **Principle of Prophetic Evidence Stated:**

- ◆ *Isa. 42:5-9* God's place evidenced by prophecy
- ◆ *Isa. 44:6-8* No other God; none can tell future
- ◆ *Isa. 45:1f* Cyrus called by name to deliver Israel
- ◆ *Isa. 46:8-11* Declaring the end from beginning
- ◆ *Isa. 48:1-7* “Before it came to pass, I showed...”
- ◆ Many examples of fulfilled prophecy in nations

● **Messianic Prophecy Is Given as Evidence:**

- ◆ *1 Pet. 1:10-12* Suffering of Christ was foretold
- ◆ *Rom. 1:1-4* Christ's birth to resurrection foretold
- ◆ *Lk. 24:25-27, 44-47* In law, prophets & psalms

Historical Accuracy as Evidence of Inspiration

● **Facts Concerning Written Bible Record:**

- ◆ Written over 1500 year time span
- ◆ Written over 40 generations
- ◆ Over 40 authors from varying backgrounds
- ◆ Written in 3 languages; material from others
- ◆ Penned in various places & circumstances
- ◆ Abundant instances of historical accounts
- ◆ Not a single case of proven historical inaccuracy

● If product of man, inaccuracies expected

● If from God, none allowed (**Num. 23:19**)

Challenge of Historical Accuracy

- Difficult, if not impossible, to falsely represent time in which one is writing
- How difficult would it be to write as if...
 - ◆ *your daily life was in 1804, 1604 or 1404?*
 - ◆ *recording political action of 1804, 1604 or 1404?*
 - ◆ *correctly name leaders of 1804, 1604 or 1404?*
 - ◆ *name nations correctly in 1804, 1604 or 1404?*
 - ◆ *properly state territory of nations, cities existing and other details in 1804, 1604 or 1404?*
- Reasonable person must accept claimed time

CONSIDER:

These Two Principles Evidence Inspiration from Opposite Directions

- If one grants the prophet wrote in period he claimed to write, his historical accuracy is easier to explain, but his correctness in predictive prophecy cannot be explained by natural means.
- If one denies the prophet wrote in the period he claimed to write, his "prophecy" is easier to explain because it would not be predictive, but historical accuracy is impossible to explain.
- As one moves dates to more easily explain one, the other become more difficult to explain.
- Examining several specific cases of prophecy will illustrate the point.

Prophecies about Babylon

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there. And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged” (Isa. 13:19-22).

“...a possession for the hedgehog and swamps of water...” (Isa. 14:23).

Dimensions of Babylon:

Walls:

87 ft. wide
(Double-walled)
311 ft. tall
(Rode chariots on top for defense)

Area:

14 sq. miles

Gates:

100 solid brass

Moat surrounded it

History of Babylon & Prophecy

- Babylon was great city - marvel of its period
- On Oct. 13, 539 B.C., the city was taken by Cyrus & Medo-Persians in midst of drunken feast
- Stones not taken from city, but became desolate
- Alexander thought of rebuilding, but too costly
- Part of city overtaken by the desert (“heaps” - Jer. 51:37)
- Part of city became swamp due to shifting river
- By A.D. 117, Trajan used to hunt wild animals
- To this day, never has been rebuilt or inhabited

Prophecies about Tyre

Ezekiel 26

³ Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth its waves to come up. ⁴ And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock. ⁵ She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea... ⁷ For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and a company, and much people. ⁸ He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make forts against thee, and cast up a mound against thee, and raise up the buckler against thee.... ¹² And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise; and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses; and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the waters. ¹³ And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. ¹⁴ And I will make thee a bare rock; thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be built no more: for I Jehovah have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

History of Tyre & Prophecy

- Distinction made between “he” and “they”
 - ◆ “He” identified as Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon)
 - ☞ Comes with horses & chariots; Slays those in the field
 - ☞ Lays siege to city & makes forts against; Casts up mounds
 - ◆ “They” refers to those among other nations to conquer
 - ☞ Break down & destroy; Lay stones, timbers & dust in waters
- Perfect description of what different enemies did
 - ◆ In 586-573 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar besieged & defeated mainland city of Tyre
 - ◆ Many others came against Tyre to continue destruction
 - ◆ In 332 B.C., Alexander the Great destroys island city by scraping old city into the water to build causeway



