



Foundations of

FAITH

Fulfilled Prophecy

Lesson 8

One of the great proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is fulfilled prophecy. Prophecy is history written beforehand. When a prediction of future events comes to pass hundreds of years later it is a strong indication that the prophet possessed a supernatural power. Occasionally someone might make a lucky guess, but when dozens of predictions are accurately fulfilled the possibility of chance is entirely removed. The Bible contains dozens of fulfilled prophecies which must convince us that its writers were divinely inspired.

For any prophecy to be unquestionably true, several conditions must be met. (1) It must be beyond the power of men to foresee. (2) It must not be a vision of hope or fear. (3) It must not be a scientific or political forecast. The amazing predictions of Jules Verne in foretelling the day of the submarine and similar inventions were simply scientific forecasts and therefore not true prophecies. (4) The prophecy must be clear and its fulfilment plain. If it is capable of many explanations it does not constitute proof of the inspiration of its author.

For the purpose of this lesson we will confine ourselves to prophecies thus far fulfilled. Prophecies are generally written in symbolic or allegorical language. While most of the Bible is to be understood in a literal sense unless there is evidence in the context indicating otherwise, prophecy is seldom to be taken literally. If the interpretation is not given with the prophecy, its fulfilment may not be clear until after the events which it depicts have come to pass. An excellent example of fulfilled prophecy is found in Daniel 2. It is the prophecy of the great image.

THE GREAT IMAGE. This prophecy had its inception in a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The king forgot his dream and Daniel was called in to explain it. He not only reminded Nebuchadnezzar of what he had dreamed, but also gave him its interpretation.

In the dream the king saw a great image. The head was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay. Then the king saw a stone cut out without hands which smote the feet of the image, breaking them in pieces, and completely destroying the rest of the image. The stone then became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel's explanation was that the image represented four kingdoms. The first one, signified by the head of gold, was that headed by Nebuchadnezzar. It was to be succeeded by a second kingdom represented by the silver and the third one of brass. The fourth would be both as strong as iron and as brittle as clay. The little stone cut without hands was to be a kingdom which the God of heaven would set up in the days of the fourth kingdom "which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever." (Daniel 2:44)

One writer has said of this, "One who does not know that here the correspondence of prediction and history is perfect is ignorant of the simplest elements of history." (**The Divine Demonstration**, Everest – pg. 295, 296) The prophecy was fulfilled when the great Babylonian kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar (the head of

gold) fell to the Medes and Persians (the breast and arms of silver). Alexander the Great, with his brazen-coated soldiers, then overthrew the Persian kingdom and established in its place the Greek (the belly and thighs of brass). The fourth kingdom, both strong and brittle, was the Roman Empire. It was the last of these four great universal empires which succeeded one another. It was both strong enough that it became the greatest of all, and yet brittle enough that it crumbled without any great strength being launched against it. The little stone which broke in pieces the great image is the kingdom of Christ, or the church, which God set up in the days of the Roman Empire. Unlike the other kingdoms which were temporal, it is spiritual. As predicted by Daniel, it will never be destroyed, but "shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." It has been said that "Christianity is a growth in the world rather than a revolution or a conquest; yet a growth such as the world had not seen before." The similarity here between prophecy and historical events is amazing. Remember that Daniel's revelation was prior to the establishment of all but one of these kingdoms.

THE JEWS. Before Moses died, he called the children of Israel together. He told them that God would bless them or curse them in accordance with their obedience to him. They chose to disobey and received the curses rather than the blessings. Several examples from Deuteronomy 28 follows:

"And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." (verse 37) An example of this is the characters of Shylock and Fagin in fiction.

"The Lord shall bring a nation against you from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue you shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young." (verses 49, 50) This was fulfilled in the Roman conquest of Palestine in 63 B.C. and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. As predicted, the Romans came from a great distance and spoke the Latin tongue which Israel could not understand. Their ensign was the eagle, the bird mentioned in this prophecy. The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived through the siege of Jerusalem, says of the ferocity of the Romans, "They did not so much as spare young children." "They slew those whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the houses whither the

Jews were fled and burnt every soul in them." "But together with those whom they had orders to slay, they slew the aged and infirm."

In verse 57 it is prophesied that in a siege a mother would eat her own child. Josephus tells us how this actually happened in this disaster which according to his testimony, took over a million lives.

"And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other: and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind." (verse 64, 65) The fulfilment is so well known as to hardly need comment. The Jews have been scattered throughout the world, have been forced to live in ghettos, and millions have paid with their lives in persecutions. Truly, in their wanderings the sole of their foot has found no rest.

NINEVEH. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, once the world's greatest city. It is unlikely that in all history there has been a more evil and hated city. The atrocities of King Assurbanipal were so terrible as to bring horror even to the hearts of the most hardened. Once he cut off the hands, feet, ears and noses of the people of a conquered city, put out their eyes and raised two mounds outside the city – one of human heads and one of human limbs. Then he burned all the children with fire. Small wonder that God determined to destroy the wicked city. At its zenith, Nahum and Zephaniah prophesied the utter destruction of Nineveh. Nahum said, "And it shall come to pass that all they that look upon you shall flee from you, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? Whence shall I seek comforters for you?" (Nahum 3:7) Zephaniah predicted, "And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness ... How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! Everyone that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand." (Zeph. 2:13-15)

Two hundred years later when Xenophon passed by the ruins of Nineveh, he took the debris for the ruins of some Parthian city. When Alexander the Great fought the battle of Arbela a short distance away, after Nineveh had been laid waste, he did not even know he was close to what had once been the world's greatest

city. Other cities have continued to the present time, but Nineveh has fallen, never to rise again.

BABYLON. The Babylonian Empire succeeded the Assyrian. The Bible several times predicts the end of Babylon. A graphic illustration is Isaiah 13:19-21. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, 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 shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." At that time Babylon was the queen city of the world. Its famed hanging gardens were renowned as one of the seven wonders of the world. It was fifteen miles on each side, a tremendous size for an ancient city and had walls 300 feet high and 80 feet thick extending 35 feet below the ground. Yet this great city was so utterly destroyed that only a cheerless waste now greets the eyes of those who come to see its remains. One traveller said of it, "Nothing is left of Babylon but heaps of earth trodden under foot of men!" How could any prophecy be more explicitly fulfilled than that of Isaiah regarding Babylon!

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE. Mark writes of Jesus, "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what

manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, See these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 23: 1, 2) This prophecy was in general circulation in three of the gospels several years before the Jewish temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Josephus tells us that the stones of the temple were "white and strong", 37 feet long, eight feet high, and 18 feet broad. That they should be entirely torn down was almost beyond comprehension. But the prophecy was amazingly fulfilled. When Titus conquered Jerusalem he decreed that the temple should be spared. But, says Josephus, "One of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window." The building burned and Titus ordered it demolished. So completely was this done that the very ground on which the temple stood was ploughed and the foundations dug up. Truly, as Jesus had prophesied, not one stone was left upon another.

Many other scriptures could be given to prove the inspiration of the Bible. In another lesson those relating to the Messiah will be studied.

TEST ON LESSON 8

Fill in the blanks:

1. Fulfilled prophecy is proof of the of the Bible.
2. The four universal empires represented by the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream were:
..... , and
..... .
3. The Jewish historian who related an account of the siege of Jerusalem was
4. Two prophets who foretold the destruction of Nineveh were And
.....

Write true or false after the following statements:

1. Prophecy is history written after it happens.
2. A scientific forecast is not prophecy.
3. Prophecies usually should be interpreted literally.
4. The breast and arms of the great image were of brass.
5. The children of Israel disobeyed God and received God's blessing as a result.
6. Babylon was an average size ancient city.
7. Jesus prophesied that every stone in the temple would be thrown down.

In each of the following passages one or more prophecies are made. In the first blank after the scripture reference, tell who the speaker is or, in the case of a book of prophecy, who the writer is, even though God may be represented as speaking. In the second blank, write the person, cities or countries which are the subject of the prophecies. Where several are referred to, more than one blank is supplied.

	The Prophet	The subject of the Prophecy
1. Genesis 9:27.
2. Ezekiel 26:7-11.
3. Acts 20:29-30.
4. Genesis 16:10-12.
5. Jeremiah 50:9.
6. I Samuel 15:26.
7. Zephaniah 2:8-9.
8. Acts 21:10-11.
9. Isaiah 19:1-4.

Fulfilled Prophecy

Lesson 8

Answers

These lessons are based on the King James Version, so if you are using another translation the words employed may vary slightly. Sometimes an alternative answer is possible. The following is a useful guide.

- Section 1 –
1. inspiration
 2. Babylonian, Medes & Persians, Greek, Roman.
 3. Josephus.
 4. Nahum, Zephaniah (or Jonah).

Section 2 – F, T, F, F, F, F, T.

- Section 3 -
- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Noah | Japheth, Shem, Canaan |
| 2. Ezekiel | Tyrus (Tyre) |
| 3. Paul | Elders of church in Ephesus |
| 4. Angel of the Lord | Hagar |
| 5. Jeremiah | Babylon |
| 6. Samuel | Saul |
| 7. Zephaniah | Moab, Ammon |
| 8. Agabus | Paul |
| 9. Isaiah | Egypt |

Enquiries to - graemestudy@gmail.com