

## Introduction to Prophecy

Opening words.

I came to understand God's sovereignty through the study of prophecy.

Principle: Prophecy only works if the future is definite.

### Why do we study Prophecy?

- Roughly one-quarter of the Bible is prophetic.
- Prophecy is a unique characteristic of the Bible.
- First prophecy in the Bible: the *protoeuaggelion*. The first telling of the gospel was also the first prophecy.

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### Definitions:

Hebrew נָבִי (navi), "spokesperson" traditionally translates as "prophet".

The Old Testament (or Tanakh) is divided into three large sections.

T is for Torah (instruction).

N is for Nevi'im (prophets).

K is for Ketuvim (writings).

The prophets are an instrumental part of Israel's history and of the Bible's overall construction. Deuteronomy 18:15-22

The English word 'prophet' comes from the Greek word προφήτης (profétés). So, to be a prophet it to speak words forward, to foretell, or to tell forth. "to speak under inspiration."

Rule: God's word is always consistent with itself.

Prophecy may be fulfilled immediately, or take thousands of years.

### The Importance of the Prophets to Old Testament History

The appearance and writing of the prophets, followed by the silence of the prophets determined the Old Testament canon.

1Samuel 10:25, 1Chron. 29:29, 2Chron. 20:34, 2Chron. 26:22, Jeremiah 30:2

Old Testament canon ended around 435 BC with the completion of Malachi (currently the last book in the OT).

Apocrypha -- "hidden", "esoteric" books from the Greek ἀπόκρυφα, meaning “those hidden away”, not counted as Scripture because they did not have imprimatur of prophets who heard from God. These speak of the lack of prophets in Israel.

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Josephus (Jewish historian) 39-100 AD

*Against Apion* 1:38-42

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, [as the Greeks have,] but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but it is become natural (or, an instinct) to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines (or “decrees of God”), and to persist in them, and, if occasion be willingly to die for them.

*Flavius Josephus Against Apion*, translated by William Whiston (University of Cambridge, 1736).

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All that to say: Prophecy is fundamental to the Old Testament, and the canon was closed when the prophets were silent.

### Christ in Prophecy

Fulfilled prophecy is evidential proof of the God-breathed (2Tim. 3:16) character of the Bible.

By some counts, there are over 400 prophecies in the Old Testament that point to the coming Messiah, His life, and His death

Prophecies About Jesus	Old Testament Scripture	OT Text	
1	Messiah would be born of a woman.	Genesis 3:15	Matthew 1:20 Galatians 4:4
2	Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1 Luke 2:4-6
3	Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:22-23 Luke 1:26-31
4	Messiah would come from the line of Abraham.	Genesis 12:3 Genesis 22:18	Matthew 1:1 Romans 9:5
5	Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 17:19 Genesis 21:12	Luke 3:34
6	Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob.	Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:2
7	Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.	Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:33 Hebrews 7:14
8	Messiah would be heir to King David's throne.	2 Samuel 7:12-13 Isaiah 9:7	Luke 1:32-33 Romans 1:3
9	Messiah's throne will be anointed and eternal.	Psalms 45:6-7 Daniel 2:44	Luke 1:33 Hebrews 1:8-12
10	Messiah would be called Immanuel.	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23
11	Messiah would spend a season in Egypt.	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14-15
12	A massacre of children would happen at Messiah's birthplace.	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
13	A messenger would prepare the way for Messiah	Isaiah 40:3-5	Luke 3:3-6
14	Messiah would be rejected by his own people.	Psalms 69:8 Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11 John 7:5
15	Messiah would be a prophet.	Deuteronomy 18:15	Acts 3:20-22
16	Messiah would be preceded by Elijah.	Malachi 4:5-6	Matthew 11:13-14
17	Messiah would be declared the Son of God.	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:16-17

18	Messiah would be called a Nazarene.	Isaiah 11:1	Matthew 2:23
19	Messiah would bring light to Galilee.	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13-16
20	Messiah would speak in parables.	Psalms 78:2-4 Isaiah 6:9-10	Matthew 13:10-15, 34-35
21	Messiah would be sent to heal the brokenhearted.	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
22	Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.	Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 5:5-6
23	Messiah would be called King.	Psalms 2:6 Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 27:37 Mark 11:7-11
24	Messiah would be praised by little children.	Psalms 8:2	Matthew 21:16
25	Messiah would be betrayed.	Psalms 41:9 Zechariah 11:12-13	Luke 22:47-48 Matthew 26:14-16
26	Messiah's price money would be used to buy a potter's field.	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 27:9-10
27	Messiah would be falsely accused.	Psalms 35:11	Mark 14:57-58
28	Messiah would be silent before his accusers.	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
29	Messiah would be spat upon and struck.	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
30	Messiah would be hated without cause.	Psalms 35:19 Psalms 69:4	John 15:24-25
31	Messiah would be crucified with criminals.	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38 Mark 15:27-28
32	Messiah would be given vinegar to drink.	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34 John 19:28-30
33	Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced.	Psalms 22:16 Zechariah 12:10	John 20:25-27
34	Messiah would be mocked and ridiculed.	Psalms 22:7-8	Luke 23:35
35	Soldiers would gamble for Messiah's garments.	Psalms 22:18	Luke 23:34 Matthew 27:35-36
36	Messiah's bones would not be broken.	Exodus 12:46 Psalms 34:20	John 19:33-36

37	Messiah would be forsaken by God.	Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46
38	Messiah would pray for his enemies.	Psalms 109:4	Luke 23:34
39	Soldiers would pierce Messiah's side.	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
40	Messiah would be buried with the rich.	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
41	Messiah would resurrect from the dead.	Psalms 16:10 Psalms 49:15	Matthew 28:2-7 Acts 2:22-32
42	Messiah would ascend to heaven.	Psalms 24:7-10	Mark 16:19 Luke 24:51
43	Messiah would be seated at God's right hand.	Psalms 68:18 Psalms 110:1	Mark 16:19 Matthew 22:44
44	Messiah would be a sacrifice for sin.	Isaiah 53:5-12	Romans 5:6-8

### The God of Prophecy

God declares Himself to be the God of prophecy. This is definitional to whom God is.

Isaiah 42:9, Isaiah 46:9-10, John 13:19

2Pet. 1:20-2:3 -- Peter makes the point that accurate prophecy must come from God.

### *The Bible is 100% Accurate in Historic Fulfillment (4 examples)*

The prophet Isaiah foretold that a conqueror named Cyrus would destroy seemingly impregnable Babylon and subdue Egypt along with most of the rest of the known world. Isaiah 44:28; 45:1; and 45:13

Jeremiah predicted that despite its fertility and despite the accessibility of its water supply, the land of Edom (today a part of Jordan) would become a barren, uninhabited wasteland (Jeremiah 49:15-20; Ezekiel 25:12-14).

Daniel predicted the rise and fall of the nations that would follow Babylon, occupy that same territory, and oppress the children of Israel: Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome.

And, of course, Jesus Himself calls Daniel a prophet in Matt. 24:15.

Some 400 years before crucifixion was invented, both Israel's King David and the prophet Zechariah described the Messiah's death in words that perfectly depict that mode of execution. Further, they said that the body would be pierced and that none of the bones would be broken, contrary to customary procedure in cases of crucifixion. Psalm 22 and 34:20; Zechariah 12:10.

So, we study prophecy because:

It is evidence of God's sovereign control over history.

It is proof that God has the future in His hands.

It is definitional of who God is.

It is part and parcel of the whole Bible.

It defines the canon of the Old Testament.

It tells us what is coming in the future – including the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Rev. 1:3 says, “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”)

And that's a good enough reason for me.

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