

## MISTAKE 34

### LAST DAYS BIBLE PROPHECY SHOULD BE STUDIED, BUT NOT ON ITS OWN: SEVEN LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

The study of last days Bible prophecy is important, very important. While this study is extremely valuable, what makes it all the more stronger and theologically sound is the fact that it does not stand on its own. Indeed, it is crucial that we view this particular subject in light of other biblical truths.

In other words, no Bible-believing Christian should limit their study of Scripture to the events of the last days and to them alone. It is a mistake to do so!

Accordingly, let's look at seven lessons that we need to learn about "where last days Bible prophecy fits in."

#### LESSON 1      GOD WANTS US TO KNOW THE FUTURE

This first lesson deals with the declarations of the Bible itself. Indeed, it is the Scripture itself which has made certain claims about the only God who exists and the evidence that He has provided to demonstrate His existence. This should be our starting point.

In my book, *God Wants Us To Know The Future*, I begin by listing six passages where the Lord makes it clear that He has given us Bible prophecy for a number of reasons. We will examine at three of these.

#### THE UNIQUE CLAIM OF THE BIBLE: GOD ALONE CORRECTLY PREDICTS THE FUTURE

Before we begin any examination of the vast subject of Bible prophecy, it is important that we understand that accurately predicting the future is something that the God of the Bible uniquely claims for Himself.

In fact, as we search the Scripture, we will find that God has specifically pointed to fulfilled prophecy to demonstrate that He exists, that He knows the future, and that He is in control of the future.

In light of this, we will cite three passages, make some observations about them, and then discuss what the God of Scripture has claimed about Himself through the predictions that He has made.

#### THE LORD CHALLENGES THE PAGAN GODS (ISAIAH 41:21-24)

In this context, the God of Israel is denouncing His people for worshipping idols—objects which their own hands have made! In these verses, the Lord directly addresses these non-existent idols:

"Present your argument," says the Lord. "Produce your evidence," says Jacob's king. "Let them produce evidence! Let them tell us what will happen! Tell us about your earlier predictive oracles, so we may examine them and see how they were fulfilled. Or decree for us some future events! Predict how future events will turn out, so we might know you are gods. Yes, do something good or bad, so we might be frightened and in awe. Look, you are nothing, and your accomplishments are nonexistent; the one who chooses to worship you is disgusting (Isaiah 41:21-24 NET Bible).

#### OBSERVATIONS ON THIS PASSAGE

1. The Lord is challenging these so-called "gods" to present arguments that they exist. He wants them to produce some evidence.

2. Specifically, He asks them to predict some specific future events so that we can know that they exist.
3. God also wants to see their past record—the Lord wants to know how and when their past predictions were fulfilled.
4. The Lord challenges them to do something! “Make us afraid, or in awe of you!”
5. He concludes by emphasizing that these gods are non-existent—those who worship them are fools.

**THE CLAIMS OF GOD: LOOK AT HIS PAST RECORD OF FULFILLMENTS! (ISAIAH 46:9,10)**

In contrast to these non-existent gods, the Lord makes the following claims about Himself:

Remember what I accomplished in antiquity! Truly I am God, I have no peer; I am God, and there is none like me, who announces the end from the beginning and reveals beforehand what has not yet occurred, who says, ‘My plan will be realized, I will accomplish what I desire’ (Isaiah 46:9,10 NET Bible).

**OBSERVATIONS ON THIS PASSAGE**

1. The Lord says that He is the only God who exists—He has no rival, no peer. How do we know this?
2. The people were told to remember what He had already accomplished in the past.
3. Namely, He has told them beforehand of certain things that will take place.
4. We should recall that the Book of Isaiah was written some 2,700 years ago. In other words, at that time the Lord had already made predictions that had come true!
5. The result: His plan will be realized—it will come to pass.

Continuing this thought (Isaiah 48:3-6):

I announced events beforehand, I issued the decrees and made the predictions; suddenly I acted and they came to pass. I did this because I know how stubborn you are. Your neck muscles are like iron and your forehead like bronze. I announced them to you beforehand; before they happened, I predicted them for you, so you could never say, ‘My image did these things, my idol, my cast image, decreed them. You have heard; now look at all the evidence! Will you not admit that what I say is true?’ (Isaiah 48:3-6 NET Bible).

**OBSERVATIONS ON THIS PASSAGE**

1. The Lord has announced events before they have taken place—He has made decrees, or predictions.
2. These predicted events have always come to pass!
3. Furthermore, He gave predictive prophecy because the people of Israel were stubborn.
4. Namely, they would give credit to their idols as “gods” instead of to Him.
5. Predictive prophecy from the God of the Bible, thus, was to demonstrate that all these idols and “gods” were false gods, and that there was only one God who exists, the Lord Himself.

6. The Punch Line: “You have heard, now consider all the evidence!” If you consider the evidence—God’s predictions and the fulfillment of them—you will have to admit that what He says is true: He is indeed the Lord.

We conclude that the Bible makes a number of claims about a God who exists and who has demonstrated His existence by predicting events that will take place in the future. These claims are either true or false. If true, there must be evidence to support them.

We will now begin to examine the evidence. This brings us to our next lesson.

## **LESSON 2 THE CLAIMS HAVE PROVEN TO BE TRUE: GOD HAS A PERFECT TRACK RECORD**

In my book, *God’s Work In History: 50 Biblical Prophecies Made and Fulfilled*, I look extensively at some of the many predictions found in Scripture which have already had their fulfillment. I will illustrate this by giving merely a couple of examples. The first one will deal with predictions fulfilled by Jesus while the second example will be some predictions of Jesus that were fulfilled.

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT PREDICTIONS MADE ABOUT THE COMING MESSIAH**

From the time humanity first sinned, the Lord had predicted that a Deliverer would be sent to bring the fallen human race back into a right relationship with Him. Centuries went by without the appearance of this promised Savior. The New Testament records that He did indeed finally appear in the person of Jesus of Nazareth!

#### **PREDICTION: THE MESSIAH WILL BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM**

In the Old Testament, a number of predictions were made about the Messiah. Among other reasons, this was done to make the message abundantly clear as to His identity.

One particular prediction would eliminate every city in the world but one in which the Messiah would be born. Indeed, anyone who would claim to be the Messiah had to be born in David’s city, Bethlehem. The prophet Micah wrote:

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times (Micah 5:2 NIV).

Therefore, every other city in the world is eliminated. The genuine Messiah can only be born in one city—the city of David, Bethlehem.

#### **THE FULFILLMENT**

The New Testament books of Matthew and Luke record the fulfillment of this prediction:

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them (Luke 2:1-7 NIV).

There are a couple of things that are fascinating about this passage.

### **THE DECREE OF CAESAR**

To begin with, we have this decree given by the Roman Emperor, Caesar. The decree announced that people must go to the city of their lineage to register for the purpose of taxation. Joseph went to the hometown of his family, Bethlehem. Had it not been for the decree, the baby would have been born in their own hometown—Nazareth.

We also discover it was when Joseph and Mary reached Bethlehem that the baby Jesus was born.

### **THE TESTIMONY OF MATTHEW**

Matthew also records that Bethlehem was the city in which Jesus was born:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him (Matthew 2:1-2 NIV).

To sum up the Old Testament predictions, not only would the Messiah appear, He would be born in a very special place—Bethlehem, the city of David. Indeed, the Lord had designated this one city to be the birthplace of the Savior.

We discover that Jesus was born in that predicted place. In other words, His birth testified that He had the proper credentials to be the Promised Messiah.

Of course, this is something that none of us have control over. Indeed, we cannot determine the precise geographical location of our birth.

Yet, because of a decree from a Roman Emperor, His mother Mary was brought to the city of Bethlehem to enroll with her husband, Joseph, for the purpose of registering for taxation. Jesus was then born in the little town of Bethlehem in Judea fulfilling the prediction of the prophet Micah.

The old hymn puts it perfectly as to what happened that day in Bethlehem.

For in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Indeed, all of our hopes and fears have been met in the Person of God the Son, Jesus Christ, who was born that day in the little town of Bethlehem.

### **PREDICTION: THE MESSIAH WILL BE A DESCENDANT OF KING DAVID**

Not only would the Messiah be born in the city of King David, He would also be a male physical descendant of the king. Therefore, merely being born in Bethlehem was not enough. To claim to be the Messiah a physical link to David must be shown. Jesus fulfilled both of these predictions.

### **THE BACKGROUND**

David was the first rightful King of Israel. The Lord made a number of promises to him. Among them was that his throne would be everlasting. In other words, his descendants would be the rightful rulers of the nation.

## **THE PREDICTION**

David was told that one of His offspring would be the Promised Messiah:

When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-19 NIV).

It will be through the house, or family, of David, that the Messiah will come.

The family line of the kings of Judah, the descendants of David and Solomon, are listed in 1 Chronicles 3:10-16. The list begins with Solomon's son Rehoboam and goes all the way to the last king of Judah, Zedekiah. However, the Messiah had not yet come into the world. The fulfillment of the prediction would have to wait another six hundred years.

## **THE FULFILLMENT**

In fact, the very first verse of the New Testament informs us that Jesus was a descendant of King David:

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1 NIV).

The promise was earlier made to Mary, the mother of Jesus:

So the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God! Listen: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:30-33 NIV).

Mary's child would be the promised descendant of King David. He would rule forever and ever according to the words of the angel Gabriel.

## **THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF THIS BEING CONTRIVED**

Interestingly, this is another one of those predictions about the coming of the Promised Messiah that is humanly impossible for someone to purposely fulfill. Indeed, nobody can determine what family they are going to be born into. None of us have any say so in that matter.

Yet, as we saw in our previous prediction, Jesus the Messiah was born at the right geographical location—Bethlehem—and now we discover that He was also born into the right family line—the line of David.

Can you imagine something like this happening by mere chance? Of course not.

But this is not everything with respect to the predictions Jesus fulfilled at His birth. There is indeed something else.

## **PREDICTION: THE MESSIAH WILL ARRIVE BEFORE JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE ARE DESTROYED AGAIN**

There is a third aspect to the coming of the Messiah that was supernaturally fulfilled. Not only would He be born in Bethlehem, and be a literal descendant of David, but the time of His coming was also predicted. In fact, according to the prophecy, the Messiah must arrive before certain events would take place in Jerusalem.

### **THE BACKGROUND**

In giving the outline of the future of the nation of Israel, the same angel, Gabriel, who made the announcement of the coming birth of her son to Mary, had told the prophet Daniel a number of things about the future some five hundred years earlier. Among them was the timing of when the Messiah would appear.

### **THE PREDICTION**

The prediction was that the Messiah would arrive before the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as the Temple:

After this period of sixty-two sets of seven, the Anointed One will be killed, appearing to have accomplished nothing, and a ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple. The end will come with a flood, and war and its miseries are decreed from that time to the very end (Daniel 9:26 NLT).

Notice the specifics that are listed here. The Anointed One, the Messiah, will arrive on the scene. He would be put to death. Afterward, the city of Jerusalem and temple would be destroyed. This Temple would be the one that would be rebuilt after the captives in Babylon returned to Jerusalem. Thus, Daniel is not only predicting the construction of a Second Temple, he is also predicting its destruction, too!

### **THE FULFILLMENT**

Jesus was born while the Second Temple was still standing; however, Christ predicted its destruction because the people had rejected Him as the Messiah:

Now as Jesus was going out of the temple courts and walking away, his disciples came to show him the temple buildings. And he said to them, "Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone will be left on another. All will be torn down (Matthew 24:1-3 NET).

Consequently, Jesus arrived on the scene of history before the Temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed a second time.

### **SUMMING UP THESE THREE PREDICTIONS**

From the Hebrew Scriptures, we discover that the Messiah will be born in the little town of Bethlehem, He will be a male descendant of King David, and He will come upon the scene of history before the city of Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed for a second time.

In other words, anyone who would claim to be the fulfillment of these three Old Testament predictions must have been born at least two thousand years ago, seeing that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple occurred in A.D. 70.

Consequently, we must look to history to find a literal fulfillment of these predictions. We find that only one person has the proper credentials to claim to be the Promised Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth!

## **PREDICTIONS MADE BY JESUS THAT HAVE COME TRUE**

We not only have examples of Jesus Himself fulfilling Bible prophecy by His coming to the earth, we also find that He made a number of predictions that have come true after His death, resurrection and ascension. We will give one example.

### **PREDICTION: THE FATE OF THE UNBELIEVING CITIES OF CAPERNAUM, BETHSAIDA, AND CHORAZIN**

The greater the light that the Lord shines upon us, the greater responsibility we have to respond to the light. There were several cities in Jesus' ministry who should have responded to His mighty deeds in their presence, but they did not. Consequently, judgment was pronounced against them.

#### **THE BACKGROUND**

Jesus' ministry covered the area of the Galilee. In fact, the Lord made one of the cities, Capernaum, His headquarters:

Jesus climbed into a boat and went back across the lake to his own town (Matthew 9:1 NLT).

Yet the people in Capernaum, His own town, and the surrounding cities of the Galilee, though seeing so many of His miracles, did not embrace Him as their Messiah.

#### **THE PREDICTION**

The lack of belief caused the Lord to specifically pronounce judgment upon these particular cities:

Then Jesus began to criticize openly the cities in which he had done many of his miracles, because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you! And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be thrown down to Hades! For if the miracles done among you had been done in Sodom, it would have continued to this day. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for the region of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you!" (Matthew 11:20-24 NET).

The predictions are clear. These three cities would receive the punishment from the Lord for rejecting Him. Strong words indeed from the Lord Jesus. Let's go down the list.

#### **CHORAZIN**

What do we find today? Ruins.

#### **CAPERNAUM**

More ruins.

#### **BETHSAIDA**

To this day, the exact location is unknown!

### **ANOTHER CITY ON THE SEA OF GALILEE: TIBERIAS**

What makes these predictions even more amazing concerns another city in Jesus' day in the same geographical vicinity as these three. This city, Tiberias, located on the Sea of Galilee, is mentioned in the Gospel of John:

Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten (John 6:23 NLT).

A thriving city in Jesus' day, but with no judgment spoken against it by the Lord Jesus.

In contrast to these other three cities, Tiberias has continued to exist throughout history and is still a thriving city today!

### **CONCLUSION**

Think about the odds of this happening by chance! Four cities around the Sea of Galilee that are specifically mentioned in the New Testament. Three of them have judgment pronounced upon them by Jesus. The fourth does not.

The result? These three cities Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin do not exist to this day. They are either ruins or, in the case of Bethsaida, unknown as to its exact location.

On the other hand, Tiberias has continually existed since the time of Christ. This is not a coincidence. Indeed, it is another example of the supernatural fulfillment of the various predictions made by Jesus.

### **CONCLUSION TO LESSON 2**

The claims of the God of the Bible have been shown to be true over and over again. Jesus Christ personally fulfilled a number of predictions about the coming Messiah which were made hundreds of years before His birth. In addition, He Himself has made numerous predictions that have also been literally fulfilled, both during His lifetime, as well as after His lifetime.

This is just a small sampling. When we examine the totality of the evidence we discover that the best explanation, the one that fits all of the facts, is that there is indeed a God who exists, who has told us ahead of time about certain things that will happen, and these things have all come true.

However, these are not the only miraculous fulfillments that we find. We now move on to predictions that are presently being fulfilled in our day and age.

### **LESSON 3 THE LORD ALSO HAS A PERFECT RECORD OF PREDICTING LAST DAYS EVENTS**

Our next lesson has to do with events that will take place at the time of the end, when God's kingdom will come to earth in the presence of the King. These predictions come under the heading of last days Bible prophecy. We will discover the miraculous nature of these predictions which provide further evidence of the claims of the God of Scripture.

### **TWO ILLUSTRATIONS WILL DO**

We will examine two aspects of last days predictions that found in the Book of Ezekiel. They have to do with a future invasion of Israel. All of this and much more is found in our book *The Ezekiel 38,39 Invasion*. This book is a free download on our website [educatingourworld.com](http://educatingourworld.com) under the heading of *Bible Prophecy*.

**EXAMPLE 1      WHAT THE WORLD WILL LOOK LIKE AT THE TIME OF THE EZEKIEL INVASION**

**THERE ARE AT LEAST ELEVEN ASSUMPTIONS PRIOR TO THE INVASION,  
AS TO WHAT THIS PART OF THE WORLD WILL LOOK LIKE**

Before the invasion will take place, there are, at least, eleven predicted things that are assumed to be true about the nation of Israel as well as the condition of the land at that time. They are as follows:

**ASSUMPTION 1              THE NATION OF ISRAEL WILL EXIST IN THE LAST DAYS**

This first prediction is obvious. In fact, it is their country that will be invaded by this coalition of nations led by a person called Gog. Before the invasion, we read the following in Ezekiel 37:

Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are all the house of Israel. Look, they are saying, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope has perished; we are cut off.’ Therefore prophesy, and tell them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says: Look, I am about to open your graves and will raise you from your graves, my people. I will bring you to the land of Israel (Ezekiel 37:11-12 NET)

After describing the results of the invasion the Lord says:

I will display my majesty among the nations. All the nations will witness the judgment I have executed, and the power I have exhibited among them. Then the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God, from that day forward (Ezekiel 39:21-22 NET).

Specifically, the nation of Israel will exist in the last days. This is the first assumption.

**ASSUMPTION 2              GOG, WITH HIS ARMIES WILL COME TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL:  
A LAND THAT HAD BEEN RAVAGED BY WARS**

Scripture says:

After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come to a land restored from the ravages of war (Ezekiel 38:8 NET)

**ASSUMPTION 3              THE PROMISED LAND WILL HAVE BEEN IN RUINS FOR A LONG TIME**

Ezekiel 38:8 predicts that this land had been devastated for a long period of time:

... with many peoples gathered on the mountains of Israel that had long been in ruins (Ezekiel 38:8 NET).

**ASSUMPTION 4              THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, HOWEVER, WILL BE NUMEROUS**

... with many peoples gathered on the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:8 NET).

Earlier, in Ezekiel 37, we are told the people would be “like a great army.”

So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army (Ezekiel 37:10 NLT).

**ASSUMPTION 5              THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SCATTERED**

... its people have returned from many lands to the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:8 NLT).

**ASSUMPTION 6                    YET, THE PEOPLE WILL HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR ANCIENT HOMELAND  
(IN THE LAST DAYS)**

We are specifically told that these events will take place in the “last days,” in the “distant future:”

A long time from now you will be called into action. In the distant future you will swoop down on the land of Israel ... after its people have returned from many lands to the mountains of Israel. At that time in the distant future, I will bring you against my land as everyone watches, and my holiness will be displayed by what happens to you, Gog (Ezekiel 38:8, 16 NLT).

We should note that Ezekiel had earlier recorded the Lord predicting this return:

I will bring them out from among the peoples and gather them from foreign countries; I will bring them to their own land. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams and all the inhabited places of the land (Ezekiel 34:13 NET).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, William Kelly explained the prediction in this manner:

The prophecy then supposes the return of the people as a whole to their land, not of a remnant only, as after the Babylonish captivity. But there is more. It supposes a condition of unsuspected quiet such as differs from any period of Israel's history in the past (William Kelly, *Notes on Ezekiel*, London, Blackheath, 1876, p. 197).

**ASSUMPTION 7                    THEY WILL COME BACK AFTER BEING AWAY FOR A LONG TIME**

The land had long been in ruins . . . without the people of Israel (Ezekiel 38:8 NET)

**ASSUMPTION 8                    THE DEVASTATED LAND WOULD BE RESTORED, ISRAEL WOULD  
THEN CREATE GREAT WEALTH**

Though they would return to a desolate land, once back in the land they will create great wealth. In fact, it is this great wealth that will cause this personage named Gog, along with his allies, to invade the land. The Lord said to him:

A long time from now you will be called into action. In the distant future you will swoop down on the land of Israel, which will be enjoying peace after recovering from war ... This is what the Sovereign Lord says: At that time evil thoughts will come to your mind, and you will devise a wicked scheme. . . You will say, ‘Israel is an unprotected land filled with unwalled villages! I will march against her and destroy these people who live in such confidence! I will go to those formerly desolate cities that are now filled with people who have returned from exile in many nations. I will capture vast amounts of plunder, for the people are rich with livestock and other possessions now (Ezekiel 38:8-12 NLT).

When he invades, the land will have been restored from the ravages of war, the cities will be populated and the ruins rebuilt. Gog will then invade to take a spoil, to plunder.

**ASSUMPTION 9                    WHEN THE PEOPLE RETURN, THEY WILL FORM A STATE  
(SOME POLITICAL ENTITY)**

Gog and his allies will attack a nation, not just a mob of people.

**ASSUMPTION 10            THEIR BORDERS WILL INCLUDE THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL**

...with many peoples gathered on the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:8 NET)

**ASSUMPTION 11            THEY WILL COME BACK IN UNBELIEF IN JESUS AS THEIR MESSIAH**

How do we know this to be true? Scripture tells us that it is only when the Lord destroys these invading armies do the people begin to recognize that the Lord is working on their behalf.

I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the judgment I have executed and the hand I have laid on them. From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God (Ezekiel 39:21-22 Christian Standard Bible)

This assumes that they were in a state of unbelief until that time.

**SUMMING UP**

According to the Prophet Ezekiel, there are at least eleven predictions, or assumptions, as to what the world will be like in the “last days” when this invasion takes place.

- Prediction 1    The nation of Israel will exist in the last days.
- Prediction 2    Gog, with his armies will come to the land of Israel, a land that will have been ravaged by wars.
- Prediction 3    The Promised Land had long been in ruins.
- Prediction 4    The people of Israel, however, are numerous.
- Prediction 5    The people of Israel will have been scattered.
- Prediction 6    Yet the people will have returned to their ancient homeland (in the last days).
- Prediction 7    They will return after being away for a long time.
- Prediction 8    The land would be restored though they initially returned to a desolate land. Once back in the land they will create great wealth.
- Prediction 9    When they return, they will form a state (some political entity).
- Prediction 10   Their borders will include the mountains of Israel.
- Prediction 11   They will come back in unbelief in Jesus as their Messiah.

Let us now look at these eleven predictions (assumptions), made about 2,600 years ago, which must be fulfilled before the invasion can occur.

**THE FULFILLMENT OF THE ELEVEN THINGS WHICH MUST BE IN PLACE**

Did you notice, every single one of them has now been fulfilled! Let’s go down the list.

**FULFILLMENT 1            THE NATION OF ISRAEL DOES INDEED EXIST IN THE LAST DAYS**

They do indeed exist. In fact, at the beginning of 2022, the population of Jews worldwide was about 14.6 million

**FULFILLMENT 2            THE LAND TO WHICH THEY RETURNED HAD BEEN DECIMATED BY WAR**

**FULFILLMENT 3            THE LAND HAD LONG BEEN IN RUINS**

We will look at fulfillments two and three together.

The Promised Land did not look anything like a “land of milk and honey” when the Jews returned to it. In fact, when he visited the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, American writer Mark Twain described it this way:

A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds... a silent mournful expanse.... a desolation.... we never saw a human being on the whole route.... hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive tree and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country” (Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 1867).

Looking back to 1867, we find that the Holy Land was a place that was desolate at that time. Indeed, no humans, no vegetation. These descriptions of the Holy Land were a literal fulfillment of the predictions of the Lord. Fortunately, the desolation was not to last forever.

**FULFILLMENT 4            THEY HAVE COME BACK IN LARGE NUMBERS**

Scripture predicted, like a large army. We find that the people have indeed returned to their ancient homeland, in the millions. There were about seven million Jews living in the Promised Land at the beginning of 2022.

**FULFILLMENT 5            THE PEOPLE FROM THE NATION ISRAEL HAD INDEED BEEN SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD**

This was not speaking of the Babylonian captivity since the people, at that time, were captives in the empire of Babylon.

This prediction has been literally fulfilled. There is scarcely a nation that does not have, or has not had, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In an appendix of our book, *25 Signs We Are Near The End*, we give about dozen predictions of past commentators living anywhere from one hundred to four hundred years ago. Each of them noted this scattering of the people, yet they all predicted their future return to their ancient homeland.

For example, F.J. Horsefield wrote the following in 1920:

The history of all the great empires of the Old Testament times bear witness to the fact that the truth of prophecy has, in all ages, been fully vindicated, however, improbable the fulfillment may have seemed whilst the present condition of the Jewish race bears absolutely irrefutable testimony to the same effect. . . It has been frequently pointed out that the present condition of the Jews, is, in itself, a proof of the fulfillment of prophecy. Our Lord foretold it when He said, “They shall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). And in this emphatic statement Christ was only confirming a multitude of Old Testament prophecies which speak of the desolation of the land of Israel; of the people being scattered amongst the heathen; and of the becoming “an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word amongst all nations whither the Lord should lead them (Deuteronomy 28:37). Yet they were preserved as a separate people, and after the

conclusion of the times of the Gentiles, to be brought back to their own land. . . . For the moment we simply notice that after 2,000 years of dispersion the Jews are as distinct as when they were first scattered from Jerusalem. Other races blend and mingle with each other, and in time lose their separate identity, but for twenty centuries that little nation of Israel, scattered all over the world, has been kept separate and distinct from every other nation and race, waiting for the time when they shall be restored in Palestine (F.J. Horsefield, *The Return of the King*, Fifth Edition, Good Books Corporation, Harrisburg, Pa., 1920, pp. 20, 27-28).

Notice the last sentence, “waiting for the time when they shall be restored to Palestine.” They have indeed been restored!

#### **FULFILLMENT 6            THEY DID RETURN TO THEIR ANCIENT HOMELAND**

As we have emphasized, this would have been a rather amazing prediction when first made. Indeed, the nation had been removed from their homeland to Babylon. Humanly speaking there was no guarantee that they would ever be able to return to their own land—let alone re-form their nation in their homeland.

Yet all this has happened, not once, but twice in their history!

In fact, in our book *25 Signs We Are Near The End*, under sign number three, we list some eleven specific predictions found in Scripture about their promised return!

#### **FULFILLMENT 7            THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN AWAY FROM THEIR HOMELAND FOR A LONG TIME**

Indeed, it was almost 1,900 years from the time that Jerusalem and the Second Temple were destroyed, and the people were scattered throughout the world, until they returned to their homeland.

Again, this is not the Babylonian Captivity. Ezekiel 38:8 is clear about this. All of this takes place in the “distant future.”

#### **FULFILLMENT 8            YET, ONCE BACK IN THE LAND THEY HAVE CREATED GREAT WEALTH**

When one looks at the land of Israel at the beginning of the twentieth century, and then compares it to what we see today, it is truly like “night and day.” The desert has been built up and waste areas have been beautified. Modern Israel is indeed a wealthy country.

Interestingly, writing in 1840, Hugh McNeile predicted this based upon the Scripture:

The present condition of the land of Palestine is well known to be one of extreme barrenness and desolation; whereas it was a land of flocks and herds, a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands. In this way we recognize the literal fulfillment of that clause of the prophecy which predicts desolation; and from the next clause of the prophecy, we confidently anticipate a literal renovation of beauty and fertility, accompanied by a multiplication of beasts upon it, as well as men, for the consumption of its produce. In the present condition of the Jewish people, divided and dispersed, we recognize the literal fulfillment of those claims of prophecy which imply division and predict dispersion; and from similar clauses, similarly interpreted, we confidently anticipate a similar literal fulfillment of the promised restoration and reunion (Hugh McNeile, *Popular Lectures on the Prophecies relative to the Jewish nation*, London, J. Hatchard and Son, 1840, pp. 156,157).

His reasoning was simple. At his time, there was a literal fulfillment with respect to the desolation of the land. Based upon Scripture, he predicted a literal fulfillment of the predictions concerning the renovation of the land.

While he did not live to see it, the predictions have literally come true.

**FULFILLMENT 9 THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL HAS INDEED FORMED**

Not only have the people returned to their ancient homeland, but the modern state of Israel was formed on May 14, 1948.

**FULFILLMENT 10 THEIR BORDERS NOW INCLUDE THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL**

This was not true in 1948 when the modern state of Israel was reborn. It was only in 1967, as a result of the Six-Day War, that this geographical area became under their control.

We have noticed that the Lord has emphasized over and over again that Gog's army would come down to the mountains of Israel to "take a spoil" and then find themselves defeated on these mountains. Interestingly, the mountains of Israel have only recently come into the hands of the Israelis.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum explains:

They extend the length of the center of the country at the southern point of the Valley of Jezreel at the town of Jenin in Galilee (biblical Ein Ganim), and continuing south until they peter out at a town north of Beersheba in the Negev. These mountains contain the famous biblical cities of Dothan, Shechem, Samaria, Shiloh, Bethel, Ai, Ramah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Debir, and most importantly, Jerusalem, which seems to be the goal of the invading army. Here is another example where the Six Day War has set the stage for the fulfillment of prophecy. Up to the Six Day War in 1967 all of the mountains of Israel, except for a small corridor of West Jerusalem, were entirely in the hands of the Jordanian Arabs. Only since 1967 have the mountains of Israel been in Israel, thus setting the stage for the fulfillment of this prophecy (Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah*, p. 114).

**FULFILLMENT 11 THEY ARE STILL IN UNBELIEF IN JESUS**

The nation today has certainly not accepted Jesus as their Messiah. Indeed, many Israeli Jews are secular, having no form of religion whatsoever.

In fact, according to Ezekiel 39, it will not be until the Lord supernaturally intervenes on their behalf, and destroys the invading armies, that the people will realize that the God of Israel has been fighting for them. Scripture says:

In this way, I will demonstrate my glory to the nations. Everyone will see the punishment I have inflicted on them and the power of my fist when I strike. And from that time on the people of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God (Ezekiel 39:21 NLT)

In sum, each of these eleven things, that must be in place before the invasion can occur, are now in place!

**EXAMPLE 2 THE PLAYERS INVOLVED IN THE EZEKIEL 38,39 INVASION**

We have a second example of the supernatural predictions of Scripture beginning to be fulfilled in our present age. Let's go back to the 1970's and compare what was going on in the world with what the Bible says about the coalition that will exist at the time of the end.

### **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

In the last days, there will be a coalition of nations that will invade Israel. The explanation is found in Ezekiel 38-39. We have specific geographical references as to where these invading forces will come from. Rosh is modern day Russia. It will be a Russian who is the leader of the coalition. His title as we mentioned is Gog.

Gomer and Beth Togarmah are found in modern day Turkey, Persia is modern day Iran. Egypt is conspicuously not mentioned as being part of the invading force.

So from Scripture we would conclude that there would be a coalition of nations, not including Egypt who would invade Israel at the time of the end. Since these are specific predictions in Scripture, Bible believers assume that this is where these nations will end up.

However, in the 1970's there was a problem!

Egypt had been involved in every war with Israel, in 1948, 1967, 1973. In fact, Egypt was the driving force in each of the three wars with Israel.

Iran was Israel's best friend in the Middle East. Their re-supplying of Israel was crucial to the nations survival in the 1973 Yom Kippur War

Turkey, a member of NATO, was Muslim in name only. It was the place where Israelis would take their vacations. They were a friend of Israel.

Furthermore, Scripture predicts a Russian/Iranian military confederation? Never in the history of the world has that taken place. In other words, the people from these two geographical areas have never fought together. Never...

### **EVERYTHING WAS SEEMINGLY WRONG!**

The point is that our prophecy charts were completely opposite of what was happening in the world at that time. The bad guys at the time of the end, Iran, and Turkey, were the good guys. Egypt, who will NOT be involved in this invasion, was the main nation that continually attacked Israel.

But we did not give up the faith. We knew that sooner or later this would change.

In 1979, Egypt, in the Camp David Accords, made peace with Israel. Jordan followed in 1994. They have had peaceful relations since then, no more wars.

However, Muhammad Morsi and the fake election caused the Muslim Brotherhood to be elected to lead Egypt. They are directly connected to Iran.

At that time, Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, California and I were doing the program World News Briefing on Hischannel.com. We stated that Morsi's government would not last. Egypt will NOT be in bed with Iran and the radical Muslims. Yet, this was threatened by this new government.

However, Morsi was soon overthrown by a military coup led by General Al-Sisi. Then the Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed and designated a terrorist organization in Egypt in December 2013. Egypt remains at peace with Israel.

## **IRAN**

In the mid-1970's Pastor Chuck Smith was on Israel's northern border with officers from the Israeli Defense Force. As they looked at both Syria and Lebanon from their vantage point, he told them that these two countries should not be their worry. Instead they should worry about Iran. They laughed at him when he said that since Iran was Israel's best friend in the Middle East. Chuck told them to remember what he said.

In 1979, the Shah of Iran was overthrown, and the Islamic Republic of Iran was established. Since then, Iran's state sponsored terrorism has spread throughout the world. Included also was the consistent drumbeat of "death to Israel." Global domination through worldwide Jihad has been their goal ever since.

At that time, Chuck started receiving phone calls from these same Israeli officers asking, "What's going to happen next?"

## **HOW COULD WE KNOW?**

So how could Chuck and I know that the Morsi government would not last in Egypt? How could he confidently tell these Israeli leaders that Iran would be their major problem in the future?

The answer: We are not prophets, or sons of prophets. Remember what Daniel wrote:

I heard, but I did not understand. So I said, "Sir, what will happen after these things?" He said, "Go, Daniel. For these matters are closed and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made clean, and refined, but the wicked will go on being wicked. None of the wicked will understand, though the wise will understand (Daniel 12: 8-10 NET).

We are promised that those living in the last days can understand what is taking place as well as what will take place. That's why we could make these claims!

Iran remains a clear enemy while Russia is seen as Israel's friend. Turkey has also turned to the dark side.

Conclusion: Not only are the eleven things in place for the Ezekiel 38, 39 invasion to take place but the countries that were Israel's allies in the 1970's, Iran, and Turkey, have now turned against them. Egypt, who was their main enemy from 1948-1973 has remained in a peaceful relationship with Israel since 1979.

The situation in the 70's has been completely reversed. The Bible proven right again!

Our takeaway from this is simple: God's Word will always turn out to be true, sooner or later!

## **CONCLUSION TO LESSON 3**

These two illustrations, to which many more could be added, make it all the more clear that we are dealing with an all-knowing God, the God of the Bible. Indeed, only He could make such precise predictions that have come true. For further information see our books *25 Signs We Are Near The End* and *The Ezekiel 38,39 Invasion*. Again, they are available for free download at [educatingourworld.com](http://educatingourworld.com) under the heading of *Bible Prophecy*.

## **SUMMARY OF LESSONS 1-3**

The Bible speaks of a God who exists and who has told us about certain specific events that will take place in the future. These are the claims of Scripture

These predicted events have not only come true in the past, they also continue to come true in the present. The Bible, therefore, is indeed a supernatural revelation of the one true God who exists.

### **SO WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE EXPECT FROM GOD?**

Based upon these above facts, there are three assumptions that we should make about the Bible itself.

First, we would expect that the text of the Bible has been transmitted to us accurately, nothing has been changed, added or lost.

Second, based upon the reliable text of the biblical books that have been handed down to us, there will be modern-day Bible translations which will accurately reflect God's message to the world.

Third, since the God of the Bible is a God of truth, we would expect that Scripture will be found to be historically accurate in all that it records.

Let's now make some observations about these three assumptions.

### **LESSON 4 THE TEXT HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED TO US IN A RELIABLE MANNER**

The evidence also shows that the written text of Scripture has been passed down to us in a trustworthy manner. We are documenting this in great detail in our forthcoming book *The Message Of The Bible Has Not Been Changed: A Look At New Testament Textual Criticism*.

When we examine the handwritten manuscripts of the Bible, we find that the message is consistent, it has not been changed. Furthermore, there is no guesswork needed to establish the text.

Since we do possess so many manuscripts, we can be assured the original text has been preserved. Consequently, we never have to revert to guessing to determine what the text originally said. The great scholar Samuel Tregelles wrote:

We possess so many mss. [manuscripts] and we are aided by so many versions, that we are never left to the need to conjecture as the means of removing errata (Samuel Tregelles, *Greek New Testament, Prolegomena*).

Modern day textual scholar Michael Holmes concurs:

The sheer volume of the information available to the New Testament textual critic makes it practically certain that the original text has been preserved somewhere among the surviving witnesses (Michael Holmes, *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*, Editors David Alan Black and David S. Dockery, Zondervan, 1991, p. 106).

Furthermore, the well-known textual authority, Sir Frederic Kenyon, emphasized that the totality of the evidence showed that nothing was lost of the original text of the New Testament:

The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities (Sir Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941, p. 55).

This is precisely what we would expect from a God who has supernaturally given us specific predictions about the future that have been fulfilled.

The conclusion is that we never have to resort to what scholars call a conjectural emendation, a fancy term for a good guess, to establish the original text. Textual scholar Peter Gurry states:

It is worth mentioning how rarely editors of the Greek New Testament have to guess or conjecture what the original text is—in other words, how rarely editors have concluded that *all* of our manuscripts are wrong and the original text is simply not to be found in any of them. Such conjecture is fairly common practice among editors of classical works ... Yet when we consider the mainstay scholarly edition of the Greek New Testament, the NA (Nestle/Aland), we see a decreasing use of conjecture over time. In the thirteenth edition published in 1927, editor Erwin Nestle (son of Eberhard Nestle) introduced eighteen conjectures in the apparatus that he thought must be considered original. Contrast that to the NA<sup>28</sup> released in 2012 where we find only two conjectures the editors think are original (one at Acts 16:12 and one at 2 Peter 3:10). Other editors such as those of the Tyndale House edition, reject all conjectures on principle.... Still, even the eighteen conjectures in Nestle's thirteen edition bear witness to the remarkable reliability of the New Testament text. The original reading is usually, if not always, there somewhere in our witnesses: the challenge where such exists, is in settling convincingly on where exactly it is (Peter J. Gurry, *Myths about Variants*, in *Myths and Mistakes*, pp. 197,198).

In sum, as we expected, the words originally written by the biblical authors have been transmitted to us in an accurate manner. This is the first step.

#### **LESSON 5 THE MESSAGE OF SCRIPTURE IS CLEAR**

This leads us to our next lesson. We also discover that the text that has been transmitted has a consistently clear message. This is crucial. Indeed, it would be of no help whatsoever if an accurately transmitted message makes no sense when translated. But such is not the case. The statement of Stephen Neil more than fifty years ago remains true to this day:

The very worst Greek manuscript now in existence...contains enough of the gospel in unadulterated form to lead the reader into the way of salvation (Stephen Neil, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961*, The Firth Lectures, 1964, Oxford University Press, pp. 63-64).

The message of Scripture comes through loud and clear. There is one God who exists and He has revealed Himself to humanity in the pages of Scripture.

#### **LESSON 6 THE BIBLE HAS PROVEN TO BE HISTORICALLY ACCURATE**

While the text of Scripture has been transmitted to us in a trustworthy manner, and the message comes through loud and clear, all of this is not enough. In fact, one could accurately transmit the ravings of a lunatic! In other words, this clear message of Scripture, accurately transmitted, must match up with known reality, it must be historically accurate.

And this is precisely what we discover. In our book, *Ancient Mysteries of the Bible Solved*, we look at the evidence for the historical accuracy of Scripture through a number of modern discoveries of archaeology. The verdict becomes clear when we see the same pattern over and over again. The people, places, events that are recorded in Scripture continue to match up with known reality. Simply put, we are dealing with facts, not legends!

However, there is something else. Not only do we show that the Bible, in this case the Old Testament, is historically accurate, we also find convincing evidence for the existence of three different biblical prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. This evidence confirms that they lived at the time that the Bible says that they did.

If so, then our only conclusion is that there is a God in heaven who exists and who has told us the future.

Why do we say this? We state this because each of these prophets predicted things to take place during their lifetime as well as things which would take place after their lifetime. These predictions have all come to pass! How could this occur on a natural level? Simply put, it could not.

Therefore, the historical accuracy of the Bible gives further testimony that God exists and that He has revealed Himself to humanity in a clear manner. Consequently, He holds humanity responsible for acting upon His revelation of Himself, specifically in believing in the person of Jesus Christ.

#### **LESSON 7      A PERSONAL APPLICATION: WE CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR PERSONAL FUTURE**

Given the above facts we now have one last lesson. This has to do with our own future. The God of the Bible has also revealed to us what that will be. We have documented all of this in our five-book series on the afterlife. They are: *Living In the Light Of Eternity*, *What Happens One Second After We Die*, *Resurrection and Judgment*, *Heaven*, and finally *Hell*. They can be found on our website [educatingourworld.com](http://educatingourworld.com) under the heading of *The Afterlife*.

From His revelation we know how we should live in the light of eternity, as well as what will happen immediately after death, the future promises of resurrection and judgment, which in the case of the believer means rewards, not punishment, and the final destinations, heaven and hell.

In other words, all of our main questions about the afterlife have been answered for us in Scripture!

#### **SUMMARIZING OUR SEVEN LESSONS:**

We can summarize our seven lessons as follows:

First, the God of the Bible has made certain claims about Himself. Among them is that He is the only God who exists, that He knows everything that will happen in the future, and that He has predicted certain events that have not yet taken place. These are His specific claims! We document this in our book *God Wants Us To Know The Future*.

Second, from Scripture, we discover that His claims are true. Time after time the Bible records where the Lord has predicted far off events, events that have now been literally fulfilled. Only an all-knowing God would be able to do this. This is documented in our book *God Wants Us To Know The Future*.

Third, not only do we find that He has accurately predicted events that have taken place in the past, He has also told us a number of specifics about what would happen in the last days.

Amazingly, we discover that these predictions have also been literally fulfilled. When we couple this with our previous lesson, we find that the Lord does indeed know all things. We document this evidence in our books *25 Signs We Are Near The End* and *The Ezekiel 38,39 Invasion*.

Fourth, building upon our last two lessons, we would then naturally assume that the Bible, His Word, would have been transmitted to us in an accurate manner. In other words, nothing would be added or lost to the text of the various writings. This is precisely what we find. This will be fully documented in our forthcoming book *The Message Of The Bible Has Not Been Changed: An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*.

Fifth, we would also expect that this accurately transmitted message would be understandable to the masses. Again, this is exactly what we find. The message that Jesus Christ comes through loud and clear! This includes His sinless life, His death on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead. This will be documented more fully in the updated version of our book *Bible Translations*.

## Where Last Days Bible Prophecy Should Be Studied, But Not On Its Own

Sixth, not only would we expect that the message be accurately transmitted and understandable, we would also expect to be trustworthy in all that it records. The historical events it records would match up with known reality. Again, this is precisely what we find.

However, there is another aspect to this that is important for us to appreciate. There is evidence that three of the Old Testament characters, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, did indeed exist at the time in history that the Bible records. If so, then there is no other conclusion that can be made than accepting the fact that an all-knowing God does indeed exist.

Why? Because each of these men predicted events that took place later in their lifetimes as well as after their lifetimes. There is no way, humanly speaking, that they could know these things. Hence, the historical accuracy of these particular biblical characters provides overwhelming evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible. We fully document this in our book *Ancient Mysteries of the Bible Solved*.

Finally, our seventh lesson has to do with our own personal future. The Bible records how to live a life that is pleasing to God, what will happen the moment we die, the promise of a future resurrection of our bodies, a time of reward for believers, and our eternal home with Him in heaven. It also records the destiny of those who have rejected His truth. These truths are documented in our five book series on the afterlife: *Living in the Light of Eternity*, *What Happens One Second After We Die?*, *Resurrection and Judgment*, *Heaven*, and finally *Hell*.

Given these seven lessons, we can conclude that there is indeed a God who exists, One who has given to us specific evidence to believe in Him. This includes last days Bible prophecy which continues His track record of listing future things ahead of time. As these predictions continue to come true, it provides convincing evidence that we are not believing a fairy tale.

Finally, we can also conclude that we can read the Bible, His written Word, with complete confidence. We can trust the promises found within the pages. This includes those promises about our personal future.

All in all, the Lord has provided everything that we need to live a life that is pleasing to Him. Indeed, the Scripture makes this promise to us:

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence (2 Peter 1:3 NLT).