

## BIBLIOLOGY (28)

(Area #3) - The Bible has survived through Criticism .

Infidels, atheists, pseudo-"intellectuals", agnostics, unbelievers and skeptics have all taken their verbal shots at the Scriptures in an attempt to discredit it or to promote a disbelief in it. No other book in history has drawn as much criticism as the Bible. In spite of all of the abuse, the Bible is still loved, studied and believed by untold millions. The sales of the Bible continue to soar, and ever secular book-stores find it to be a book that is in much demand. Certainly the Bible has received great criticism, however, it has **always** stood up against its critics. Critics come and go, but the Bible still stands. The Bible is a book that has moved through history as no other book which has ever been written. Any intelligent person, truly desiring to know truth had better take a close look at the Bible. Regardless of the critic or scoffer, whether neighbor or politician, whether manager or professor, they will all come and go, but the Bible will stand forever.

Without a doubt, there is a unique eternal, survival lifespan to the Bible. Whether the destructive danger was time, persecution or criticism, the Bible survives and will always survive. There is an eternal character to this book because it is the **Eternal Book**. The Bible is the Word of God and if any person will take an honest look at the objective, factual evidence, that evidence demands this conclusion.

(External Proof #8) – The Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy.

Here is a very remarkable and very Biblical proof that the Bible is completely set apart from any other book that has ever been written. In fact, this external proof was actually used by God to convince His own disciples that the Bible was the inspired word of God (John 2:19,22). No other book in all of history has been able to predict, with perfect accuracy, specific things which were to take place in the future. Yet hundreds and hundreds of times that is exactly what the Bible does do.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer made an important observation of Biblical prophecy when he wrote: "Based on obvious conditions, a man might make a fortunate guess as to the turn of events on the day that follows; but the Bible prophecy disregards the element of time. ... Who would be prepared to believe that hundreds of predictions which are fulfilled on the pages of history and extending over thousands of years of intervening time are the work of unaided men? Yet there is no other alternative for the one who questions the divine origin of the Scriptures." (Vol.1, p.30)

The purpose of this part of Bibliology is not to study Eschatology, the doctrine of future events. The purpose is to give a few brief illustrations of prophetic predictions and their fulfillment. This study does force any honest, thinking person to admit the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Prophetic Text #1 – Psalm 22

Notice carefully verses 1,7,16,17,18. These verses were predictively written 1000 years before Jesus Christ was born. It is obvious that these verses give a clear prediction of Christ's crucifixion.

## BIBLIOLOGY (29)

This Psalm actually begins with the very words Jesus Christ would cry out, while hanging on the cross (i.e. Mark 15:34). This is an amazing prophecy in its specific accuracy of actual words to be spoken and actual detail of events: (1) "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Ps.22:1/Mk.15:34); (2) "All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head..."(Ps.22:7/Luke 23:35; Mt.27:39; Mk.15:29); (3) "They pierced my hands and feet"(Ps.22:16/Jn.20:25-29); (4) "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots"(22:18/Mt.27:35). Certainly we must admit that since this prediction was made 1000 years before Jesus Christ would fulfill it, it is one of the most amazing and precise predictions ever made.

However, perhaps the most amazing factor of this prophecy is that it was written hundreds and hundreds of years **before** crucifixion was even invented as a form of punishment. Crucifixion was a Roman form of punishment, not a Jewish form of punishment. The earliest record of any crucifixion occurred 500 years after this prediction was made. The Grolier International Encyclopedia states: "Though closely associated with Rome, crucifixion originated with the Phoenicians and Persians. It was practiced from the 6th century BC until the 4th century AD. The Roman emperor Constantine I banned crucifixion in 337." (Vol.5, p.364)

What this practically means is somehow David was able to accurately describe a type of death that would not even come into existence for the next 500 years. He was also able to describe the actual cross scene of Jesus Christ with precise accuracy, even citing the very words that Jesus would utter. Now the question is- "How is this possible"? How could a person write and describe a type of death that was not even in existence yet? How could he know the actual words that would be uttered in a type of death that was not even known to man when he describe it? There is **only one** true answer to this question- whoever was truly behind the writing of the Bible had the supernatural ability to look hundreds of years into the future and clearly see and accurately predict the events. The **ONLY** Person capable of this is God. The fulfillment of prophecy in the Bible is one that most assuredly proves that the Bible is God's book, it is God's word.

### Prophetic Text #2 - Micah 5:2

This prediction was made approximately 700 years before Jesus Christ was born. How did a farmer, who lived in a city 25 miles from Jerusalem (Moreseth-Micah 1:1) have the ability to look into the future and from all the cities he had to choose from precisely predict that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem? There is only one answer to this. That which is written in the Bible is not the product of any human, it is the written product of God. It is His inspired word.

### Prophetic Text #3 - Ezekiel 26.

Here is one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible. Ezekiel was one of three writing prophets who ministered to the Jewish people during the Babylonian Captivity (Daniel, Jeremiah).

## BIBLIOLOGY (30)

Tyre, at the time of this prophecy, was a great commercial city that was so prosperous and successful that it gloated over the fact that Jerusalem had fallen in 586 B.C. and said that Jerusalem's fall had been their gain. It was this proud arrogance of this impressive city that Ezekiel was moved by God to make an almost unbelievable prediction. This prediction, made by Ezekiel contains some very specific claims:

(Claim #1) - Many nations will come up against the city of Tyre. Ez.26:3

(Claim #2) - The walls of the city would be destroyed and she would be scraped bare and would end up looking like a bare rock. Ez.26;4 (Keep in mind this is a major city at this time).

(Claim #3) - Fishermen will be able to spread their nets over the city that would be located somewhere out in the sea. Ez.26:5

(Claim #4) - Nebuchadnezzar would be one of the leaders who would lead his nation to persecute and destroy many of Tyre's people. Ez.26:7-8

(Claim #5) - The city of Tyre would be leveled and the debris of the city would be thrown out into the water. Ez.26: 12

(Claim #6) - The city of Tyre would **never** be rebuilt. Ez.26:14

(Claim #7) - The city of Tyre would never again be found. Ez.26:21

We must again remind ourselves that at the time Ezekiel made these predictions, Tyre was one of the most successful and powerful cities in the World. It was a business trade center which was ideally located in the middle-eastern coastal region of the Mediterranean Sea (i.e. Ez.27). This was an unbelievable prediction to make at the time and yet as unbelievable as it was, it was precisely and amazingly fulfilled to the very letter:

1. In 573 B.C., approximately 13 years this prediction was made, Nebuchadnezzar broke down the gates of Tyre, only to find the majority of people gone. The people, sensing trouble, had moved to an island in the Mediterranean, about half a mile from shore and they had reconstructed a new city which would stand for many more years. Nebuchadnezzar's attack of Tyre started a couple of years after this prophecy was made, but it was not until 573 B.C. that he destroyed the mainland city.
2. In 332 B.C., approximately 241 years later, Alexander the Great decided he wanted to conquer the new reconstructed city of Tyre. His logistical problem was that the new Tyre was a mighty "Alcatraz-like fortress" located in the Sea with huge walls surrounding the island. Alexander was a brilliant military strategist, who decided to scrape all of the ruins of old Tyre into the Sea and use the ruins as a means of constructing a bridge out to the new Tyre.

## BIBLIOLOGY (31)

In the process of constructing this bridge, he literally scraped the old Tyre bare and the stones, timber and debris were thrown into the water. Alexander ended up conquering the new Tyre and reduced it to ruins.

3. In 314 B.C., Antigonus, one of the successors of Alexander the Great, in his continued efforts to control the Eastern provinces, launched another successful military attack against the already ravaged new city of Tyre.
4. In AD. 690, the island was taken over and controlled by Muslim Arabs. It remained under their control until it was conquered and destroyed by the Mamelukes in A.D. 1291.

Thus, it is very evident and clear at this point that "many nations" did come up against Tyre, which was exactly what Ezekiel did predict (26:3).

5. Today, the island once known as Tyre, is nothing more than a bare rock sitting in the Mediterranean Sea. It is primarily used by fishermen as a place to dry their fishing nets. Again notice the precision in which this prophecy is fulfilled (26:5).
6. The old city of Tyre has **never** been found or rebuilt which is precisely what was predicted (Ez.26:14,21).

Every one of Ezekiel's prophecies came true just as he said they would. The question we must ask is, "How could a man put in writing such amazing predictions against one of the most successful cities in the world?" "How could Ezekiel precisely predict things that would happen over the next 1000 years?" There is **only** one possible answer to these questions- this prediction and this writing did not come from a man, it came God. The Bible is God's supernaturally, inspired word and prophecy proves that.

There are many other prophecies given in Scripture which clearly prove the point that the Bible is not a normal book but is a supernaturally inspired book of God. It is not our intent to study Biblical prophecy here but we do make the following observations about the theme:

- 1) When God's word makes a prediction, it eventually comes true precisely as His Word predicted.
- 2) When God's word makes a prediction, it may be many years before the prophecy is literally fulfilled.
- 3) God will use evil leaders, nations and powers as "pawns" in His prophetic program.

The fulfillment of Biblical prophecy absolutely proves that the Bible is **the inspired word of God**. (For an excellent discussion of these and other prophecies, see the book Evidence That Demands A Verdict by Josh McDowell, pp.277-332).