

WHY WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE (PART 2)

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The testimony that God gave to the ones He inspired to speak His word by signs, wonders, and miracles is one of the major reasons we believe the Bible is the inspired word of God (Heb 2:3-4; Exod 4:30-31; 2 Kgs 17:24; John 3:1-2; 20:30-31; 1 John 5:9-10). Another related reason that we believe the Bible is God's word is that the Bible contains a multitude of prophecies that have all been fulfilled with one-hundred percent accuracy.

Only God can foretell the future

Only God has the power to perform a miracle. The magicians of Egypt recognized a true miracle when they saw one, and declared to Pharaoh of the plague of lice: "*This is the finger of God*" (Exod 8:19). Similarly, only God has the power to declare what is going to happen in the future and then make it happen. When foretelling the future reign and deeds of the "ravenous bird" Cyrus of Persia (even calling him *by name* more than a century ahead of time in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1), God let it be known that this was something that only He could do. Isaiah 46:9-11 says, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; *I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done*, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: *yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*" Man cannot accurately foretell the future. When they try, they are exposed as liars. In Isaiah 41:22-23, the false prophets and the idols they followed were given this challenge: "Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. *Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.*" Deuteronomy 18:21-22 says, "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken*, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Fulfilled prophecy is one of the major ways by which we can distinguish between what is God's word and what is man's. By this test, we know that the writers of the Bible are true prophets and what they spoke and wrote is the pure word of God.

Fulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament

There is not enough space to list all of the future events that were predicted in the Old Testament and then came to pass. In Genesis 49, the prophet Jacob foretold what would become of the descendants of his twelve sons (the future tribes of Israel), which included prophecies of Christ (verses 9-10). Moses foretold numerous future events (Exod 6:6-9; 12:21-23), including the coming

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of Christ (Deut 18:18-19). Jesus spoke of the fulfilled prophecies of Moses and how they should serve to build faith (John 5:45-47). Other notable prophets who had many prophecies that were fulfilled include Samuel (1 Sam 3:10-20), Elijah (1 Kgs 21:17-24), and Elisha (2 Kgs 3:5-27; 6:8-23; 7:1-20; 8:1-15; 13:14-25). Isaiah contains more prophecies about Christ than any other Old Testament book by far. Philip used it to convert the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Hananiah falsely prophesied peace to Israel, and Jeremiah the true prophet said to him, "The prophet which prophesieth of peace, *when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him*" (Jer 28:9). Speaking of Ezekiel's prophecies, God said, "And when this comes, ye shall know that I am the Lord God" (Ezek 24:24). There is no denying the accuracy of Daniel's detailed prophecies, so out of desperation unbelievers have tried in vain to argue that the book was written *after* the events occurred! The books of the "minor" prophets from Hosea through Malachi are also full of prophecies, none of which failed.

Fulfilled prophecy in the New Testament

In the New Testament, John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ (a fulfillment of prophecies by Isaiah and Malachi), and prophesied of what Jesus would do (Luke 3:15-17; John 1:19-37). John the Baptist did not perform miracles, but his fulfilled prophecies proved he was speaking God's word (John 10:41-42). Of course, Jesus was a prophet, and he also foretold many future events, and they all came to pass exactly as he said. He foretold his resurrection to the Jews in John 2:18-21, and the fulfillment of his prophecy accomplished its purpose of building faith in his disciples (John 2:22). In foretelling who would betray him, Jesus said, "*Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he*" (John 13:18-19). Christ foretold his ascension to heaven to his disciples, saying, "*And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe*" (John 14:28-29). Many other examples of prophecies by Christ and also by the apostles, such as Peter, John, and Paul, could be cited. The bottom line is the Bible contains a multitude of detailed prophecies of future events and none of them failed, meaning the Bible is truly inspired of God (2 Tim 3:16). In contrast, other men and books that claim divine origin are shown to be frauds because their prophecies have failed. As Jeremiah 44:27-30 says, in the end men "shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs." Lamentations 3:37 asks an excellent question: "*Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commands it not?*" The answer is obvious: nobody! This is a vital part of the foundation of our faith in the Bible as the inspired word of God.