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A Flat Tyre



Part 8 (960630AM)

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Ezekiel 26

Dr. John Phillips states in his book [Exploring Prophecy](#):

"Of the hundreds of specific and detailed prophecies in the Bible we could examine, here is one of the most famous: the body of prophecy concerning the destruction of Tyre. That magnificent Phoenician city on the coast of Palestine was leveled to the dust by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. in one of history's most spectacular battles."

Tyre was the proudest and most prosperous city on earth when Ezekiel wrote chapters 26 and 28 - the emporium of the world, its markets bulging with gold and precious stones from Ethiopia and Arabia, silver from Spain, tin from Britain, emeralds from Damascus, ivory from the East, and wheat, honey, and oil from Palestine.

What is the simplest and yet most profound evidence the Bible offers? Fulfilled Biblical prophecy. What an irrefutable verification reserved to the Judeo-Christian Scriptures alone. Prophecy is the missing element in all other sacred scriptures of the world's religions, It is not to be found in them, by contrast prophecy comprises about one third of the Scriptures! When we say PROPHECY we mean detailed, specific descriptions of future events.

- Not a few, hundreds.
- Not close calls, fulfilled to the letter.
- Prophecies written centuries, many centuries before they took place.

Because of the undeniable verification of history pre-written by God, may I impress upon your heart that the book you hold in your hands is unlike any other in the Universe? And with that truth deeply upon our hearts, in the days ahead, shouldn't we treat it differently, read it diligently, wait before it expectantly and from it learn to live triumphantly?

Last week we started to look at FIVE EVENTS GOD DIRECTED AND FORETOLD THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF THE WORLD!

God writes history in advance. Declaring the future with precise details is a proof of God and His Divine Power! Now lets examine some of those precise details about the future He has written down for us.

1. THE REIGN OF CYRUS [written in 740 BC -- 181 years before it happened in 559 BC] Open with me please to [Isaiah 45: 1-3](#) A ruler not even born yet is coming. He will subdue nations and open doors for God. He is called by name - Cyrus (He was born in about 589 BC and reigned from 559 to 530 BC) nearly 200 years after these words were written.

When God wanted to describe the fall of Satan there was no prouder and more haughty people than those of Tyre. As no other creature, Lucifer basked in the splendor and radiance of God's glory. The name Lucifer means "star of the morning" or, more literally, "the bright one." But he was not satisfied with living in God's glory, and he said in his heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High" ([Isa. 14:13-14](#)). His ambition was not to reflect God's glory but to usurp God's sovereign power-while forsaking righteousness. Therefore when Satan declared his intention to make himself like the Most High, the Most High responded by declaring to His adversary, "You will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit" (v. 15).

The first sin was pride, and every sin after that has been in some way an extension of pride. Pride led the angel Lucifer to exalt himself above his Creator and Lord. Because the bright "star of the morning" continually said, "I will, I will, I will" in opposition to God's will, he was cast out of heaven ([Isa. 14:12-23](#)). Because he said, "I am a god," the Lord cast him "from the mountain of God" ([Ezek. 28:11-19](#)). The

original sin of Adam and Eve was pride, trusting in their own understanding above God's (**Gen. 3:6-7**). The writer of Proverbs warns, "When pride comes, then comes dishonor" (11:2), "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling" (16:18), and again "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, is sin" (21:4).

Pride comes in many forms. We may be tempted to be proud of our abilities, our possessions, our education, our social status, our appearance, our power, and even our biblical knowledge or religious accomplishments. But throughout Scripture the Lord calls His people to humility. "Before honor comes humility" (**Prov. 15:33**): "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life" (22:4); "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips" (27:2).

Humility is an ingredient of all spiritual blessing. Just as every sin has its roots in pride, every virtue has its roots in humility. Humility allows us to see ourselves as we are, because it shows us before God as He is. Just as pride is behind every conflict we have with other people and every problem of fellowship we have with the Lord, so humility is behind every harmonious human relationship, every spiritual success, and every moment of joyous fellowship with the Lord.

In Ezekiel's day such predictions as those in chapter 26 must have sounded ridiculous. Tyre was mistress of the seas, the seaport of the world. Even mighty Carthage, whose troops under Hannibal almost conquered Rome, was a mere colony of Tyre. Tyre enjoyed its great prosperity between 1100 and 573 B.C. Its location enabled it to resist capture for centuries. Its walls defied even the siege-wise troops of Assyria.

2. THE DESTRUCTION OF TYRE: [written in 593 BC -- 261 years before it happened in 332 BC]

The story of Tyre's doom originated several centuries earlier when the prophet Ezekiel (who wrote for God from 593 to 571 BC) pronounced the city's destruction because of its traffic in slaves and its vile, cruel religion. In foretelling Tyre's overthrow, the prophet added detail after detail (Ezekiel 26).

- COALITION: that many nations would come against the city (26:3);
- COMPLETE: that the actual site of the city would be left flat and scraped as clean as a rock (26:4);
- CLEARED: that where Tyre once had stood fishermen would spread their nets (26:5);
- CAMPAIGN: He said that the invader Nebuchadnezzar would first take the suburbs of the city (the "daughter" cities of Tyre) in 26:6;
- CONQUEST: and then he would take Tyre itself (26:6-11);
- CAST DOWN: that Tyre itself would be thrown into the sea (26:12);
- CURSED: and finally, for good measure, the city known to Ezekiel would never again be rebuilt (26:14).

THEY WERE PROUD! By the time Nebuchadnezzar's troops came hammering at its gates, Tyre was riding the crest of imperial might and power, secure in the belief that, having defied the Assyrians for five years, its defenders could certainly sneer down from its walls and fortresses at the Babylonians. But Tyre's hour had come, although none of its citizenry knew it.

- First, THE CAMPAIGN STARTS! Nebuchadnezzar's armies took the daughter cities of Tyre on the mainland as foretold; then, in 585 B.C., he brought the full weight of arms to bear on the main prize itself. For months he battered away at the city's defenses until at last he broke through, sacked the town, burned the city to the ground, and left it a heap of rubble littering the landscape. The people of Tyre, however, escaped to an island lying half a mile offshore, and from there they continued to defy the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar had neither the fleet nor the resources for an amphibious assault on the new Tyre. He continued his siege for another thirteen years and then gave up. Both sides acknowledged that the situation was a stalemate, and they signed a truce in 572 B.C.
- Tyre had won a moral victory over Nebuchadnezzar, but part of Ezekiel's prophecy had been fulfilled. The Tyre known by the prophet was no more, and its ruins testified to the partial fulfillment of prophecy. But it seemed it must remain just a partial fulfillment, for Nebuchadnezzar had more important matters on his mind than tossing the rubble of Tyre into the sea merely to fulfill the oracles of a Hebrew prophet whose name he likely did not even know. Meanwhile, the people of the new island Tyre set about fortifying their city against further would-be invaders. They built mighty walls 150 feet high all around the coastline of their city. They mined the channel to the mainland with underwater obstacles to sink unwary enemy ships, and they built a first-class navy. For two and a half centuries they rested in a false security while Ezekiel's prophecies slumbered in the womb of time.
- Then, in 332 B.C., Alexander the Great came hammering at their walls, and Alexander was a far more brilliant tactician than Nebuchadnezzar.
- The Macedonians had just won a tremendous victory over the Persian army in 333 B.C. Flushed with victory, they were marching south to take Egypt. Alexander had no intention of leaving a powerful city-state like Tyre standing astride his lines of communication, and since his navy was no match for Tyre's, he decided to build a causeway from the mainland to the island. To get the materials he needed for that mammoth project he used the rubble of old Tyre, left behind centuries before by Nebuchadnezzar. Before the causeway was finished, his engineers and sappers had scraped up the very dust of the old ruins and thrown it into the sea.
- The people of the island fought back desperately to halt the building of that causeway of doom, but God's clock had struck the hour. Nothing now could prevent Tyre's full and final fall. Alexander's men made giant shields for shelter from the arrows and missiles of the foe as the mole they were building crept relentlessly on. Then his engineers built mobile towers, twenty stories high, with an upper platform that towered 160 feet above the ground. These towers were dragged along the causeway and from them Alexander's troops could look right down into stricken Tyre. Drawbridges on the front of the towers enabled the Macedonians to leap at last over the massive walls and take the city.
- So Tyre fell and Alexander had unwittingly fulfilled Ezekiel's ancient prophecy. As the centuries came and went, drifting sand from the sea converted Alexander's causeway into a peninsula on which fishermen now spread their nets.

Peter Stoner, a mathematician, once applied the law of compound probabilities to seven Biblical prophecies concerning Tyre. He assigned conservative estimates of probability to each of the seven statements to see if Ezekiel's prophecy could have been fulfilled by chance. He concluded that Ezekiel's chances of writing this prophecy and having it come true by luck amounted to one chance in seventy-five thousand.

Yet everything came true to the minutest detail.

If this were the only such prophecy in the Bible one could concede that a fortuitous series of coincidences might have brought about the fulfillment. But there are scores of other such prophecies in the Old Testament dealing with the fate of cities and nations.

- Following the same ground rules, Dr. Stoner applied the law of probabilities to Biblical prophecies concerning (1) Samaria, (2) Gaza and Ashkelon, (3) Jericho, (4) the golden gate in Jerusalem, (5) the plowing of Zion, (6) the enlargement of Jerusalem, (7) Palestine, (8) Moab and Ammon, (9) Edom, and (10) Babylon.
- He worked out the probabilities for the various prophecies connected with those places and came to the astonishing conclusion that the chances of the accumulated predictions all coming true were one in 5.76×10^{59} that is, one chance in 5.76 multiplied by 10 and followed by 59 zeros.
- Such a figure is beyond our power to comprehend when thus stated; it is astronomical. Dr. Stoner, therefore, illustrated what such a figure means. He suggested we make 5.76×10 to the 59th power silver dollars. That many silver dollars, he said, would be sufficient for us to make 10 to the 28th power solid silver balls each the size of our sun. Or, to put it another way, from our pile of silver dollars we could make the equivalent of all the stars in all the galaxies of space two million times over. Now let us suppose that one of those 5.76×10 to the 59th silver dollars was marked. The chance that these accumulated prophecies could all come true would be the same chance of a blind man finding that marked silver dollar the first time he tried.

The Bible contains far more than the eleven groupings of prophecy treated by Dr. Stoner. In each of them the words ring out from [Isaiah 42:21-23](#) The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make [it] honorable. 22 But this [is] a people robbed and plundered; All of them are snared in holes, And they are hidden in prison houses; They are for prey, and no one delivers; For plunder, and no one says, "Restore!" 23 Who among you will give ear to this? [who] will listen and hear for the time to come? (NKJV)

3. THE DOWNFALL OF EGYPT

- THE PROPHECY: [Jeremiah 46:25-26](#) The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings: even Pharaoh, and [all] them that trust in him: 26 And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD. (KJV) the year is 605BC, an unknown Hebrew prophet named Jeremiah speaks about one of the greatest nations on earth - EGYPT.
- THE TIME FRAME: Pyramids 2600 BC; Moses and the Exodus 1446 BC; Jeremiah's time 605 BC Egypt is powerful and great as a world power. In his prophesy God says that the capital city under the New Kingdom (1567-1085 BC) will be destroyed.
- GOD'S AMAZING DETAILS: He says that the great Egypt will be struck by a king named Nebuchadnezzar. If you were to go to the greatest treasure house of biblical archaeology today the British museum in London you would find the following recorded in the Chaldean/ Babylonian Rooms. In 568 BC after 18 years spent capturing Israel's southern kingdom (Judah), Nebuchadnezzar marched the length of the Nile, all the way to the 1st cataract at Aswan. He destroyed the capital city of No (Thebes) and left it a heap of rubble. We stood in silent, worshipful awe on that hot, dusty heap a few years ago. It has not been rebuilt to this day! What a chilling reminder it was that God is in control. ...

4. THE DOWNFALL OF BABYLON:

- THE PROPHECY : It is the year 740 BC and the prophet Isaiah is writing under the control of the Holy Spirit the words of [Isaiah 13:6](#) Howl ye; for the day of the LORD [is] at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. (KJV)
- THE TIME FRAME: Babylon does not come on the world scene for 135 years. but God sees them and tells us about their coming desolation. The city of Babylon with its million inhabitants. a city of gold, the richest kingdom of the ancient world would be destroyed.
- GOD'S AMAZING DETAILS: Yes, as a quiet Hebrew prophet sat down to his writing table, the Spirit of the cosmos hovered over him and breathed out through his pen the events that would alter the direction of human history.
- Now turn to [Daniel 5:28](#) PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. (KJV) This "handwriting on the wall" event took place 135 years after God told Isaiah to write it down!
- Daniel is summoned hastily to the banqueting hall. Old and stooped down he shuffles in having served nearly 70 years in the Babylonian empire. Looking up at the 70' high palace walls, past the first 50' of royal blue at the top in the plaster a horribly large hand suspended, finger outstretched is scribing the wall with a terse four word eviction notice. Impending judgment foretold and now due! Herodotus the Roman historian.
- On that night Cyrus waded through the shallow waters of the diverted canal of Babylon to conquer and fulfill God's promised fall. The city fades never to return, occupied only by wild animals.
- What did Isaiah say, the MEDES? They were so unknown, distant and little at the time he wrote that prophesy down it would be like saying that Monaco would conquer America. ONLY GOD WRITES DOWN HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS!

5. THE JUDGMENT UPON JERUSALEM: [spoken in AD 30 = 40 years before it happened] This prophesy was made by none other than Jesus Himself who predicted the horrible future awaiting the city after His crucifixion. As he wept over the city He said [Luke 19:43-44](#) "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." (NKJV). Again He said [Luke 21:24](#) "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (NKJV)

- Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha and the Empty Grave were about the year AD 30. Forty years (the number of testing) pass.
- In AD 70 it happened. An eyewitness by the name of Josephus gives the grisly details as a news reporter at the scene of this carnage where 600,000 Jews were slain and many more thousands were taken away into captivity.
- Again they rebel in AD 134 and this time Hadrian ruthlessly smashes them, destroys

the city, levels, plows up the foundations and rebuilds a pagan city Aeia Capitolina. All Jews are banished and scattered.

- Yes, again the Bible is true and without error. It is God alone who knows and can reveal the future.

6. CONCLUSION: The Bible is powerful, so there are seven reasons to study God's Word. They are because it is a (JB):

- **REVEALER** -- It discovers and convicts us of sin in our lives.

John 16:7-10 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; (KJV)

- **REMOVER** -- Through it God's Spirit cleanses us from sin

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. **Hebrews 9:14** How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (KJV)

- **RESTORER** -- It imparts strength to our spiritual man

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. (KJV)

- **REMINDER** -- It instructs us in going God's way

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (KJV)

- **RESISTOR** -- It provides us a sword for victory over sin and temptations

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (KJV)

- **REFINER** -- It shapes us into a life that glorifies Him

1 Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: **2 Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (KJV)

- **REVIVER** -- It drives us to prayerful dependence

Psalm 119:25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. (KJV)

John 15:7-8 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (KJV)

1. Scroggie says that the Gospels total 3,779 verses. The words of Christ total 1,934 of them. Jesus quotes the Old Testament 180x so just under 10% of His recorded words are Old Testament quotes!

2. San Diego Union-Tribune, 11/5/93.

3. MacArthur, John F., The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

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