

Repetition in Prophecy, Part 3

Last Things

By Bob Vincent

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Bible Text: Deuteronomy 28:47-57; Isaiah 28:9-13
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Robert Benn Vincent
80 Hickory Hill Drive
Boyce, LA 71409

Website: www.rbvincent.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/rbvincent

Lord, once again there's the potential of something being overly complicated and I pray for supernatural grace so that I may present clearly and compelling and concisely Your truth so simply, so clearly that even a young disciple who is in here might understand it and, Lord, I pray that You would help me because I cannot do this without Your supernatural help. So come, Lord Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit and help me that we all may be helped, that we may hear within the spoken word from Scripture the voice of the Good Shepherd saying to each of us, "Come to Me and rest." For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Now this is a very interesting passage of Scripture. You'll notice that the title of this is "Recapitulation: How Prophecies have Multiple Fulfillment, Part 3." Last Lord's Day we considered the virgin birth of Christ and we know that the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 ultimately is about the Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately, but immediately it's about the wife, the second wife of Isaiah the prophet and it's very apparent if you hold your hand there and go back to a few verses in Isaiah 7 and verse 8. Isaiah 7:8. In other words, Bible prophecies, especially in Isaiah, have an immediate fulfillment and then have a long-term fulfillment. If you look at Isaiah 7:14 on page 1,070, the immediate context is King Ahaz, remember Ahaz sounds like Ahab? Ahab was the ultimate wicked king of the northern kingdom Israel and Ahaz was one of the most wicked kings of the southern kingdom Ahab, Ahaz, bad boys. Anyhow, Isaiah is saying to him, "God's going to protect you. You don't need to worry about going to the Assyrians for help and making a treaty with this foreign empire because God Himself will deliver you from the king of Israel and the king of Syria."

So he says, Isaiah says to him, "Ask for a sign. Ask for anything you want." And he piously says, "I don't want to tempt God. I don't want to tempt God." And so Isaiah in frustration, Holy Spirit wrought frustration, in verse 14 says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey when He knows enough to reject the wrong and right, choose the right. But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste." Notice it has an immediate fulfillment. He's saying, "This threat that you've got out of the Yankees to the north, excuse me, and the British... anyhow this threat you've got out of Israel and out of

Syria is going to be handled. You don't need to go get some superpower to come and help you out." And notice he says because he says in verse 16 before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. So this has an immediate fulfillment and notice what does this virgin call the child. She names him, if you look there in verse 14, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, she's going to be the one who calls him Immanuel. She's going to call him Immanuel.

Now what happens? What's the immediate fulfillment? And the whole of Isaiah is about dealing with the Assyrian Empire and we'll see that really clearly today, I believe. Look at chapter 8. "Then the LORD said to me, 'Take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-shalal-hash-baz. And I will call in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah as reliable witnesses for me.'" Now notice, this is Isaiah talking in verse 3. "Then I went to the prophetess and she conceived and gave birth to a son." This is Isaiah's second son. He may have had more than two but this is Isaiah's second son and he went into the prophetess. She is a virgin, his second wife, and notice here in verse 3, "Then I went to the prophetess and she conceived and gave birth to a son and the Lord said to me, 'Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz.'" That's what Isaiah called him. Then he says in verse 4, "Before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria." And then he goes through and he talks about this and what's going to happen in verse 5, and now look at the conclusion in verse 8. Remember Maher-shalal-hash-baz' name is the name that Isaiah was instructed to give him. Now notice what his mother calls him, she called him Immanuel.

Now look at verse 8 and he's talking about what's going to happen, and look at the last full sentence of verse 8. "Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, O Immanuel." Does your daddy call you one name and your momma another? Some people that's the way it is, you know. I was Robert growing up, I chose the name Bob after I become a Christian and went off to college and that's what everybody knows me as today, old Bob, you know. Oh, I didn't mean to say old Bob but anyhow. But I was always Robert and any living relatives I have, and today is my first cousin's 79th birthday. I'm going to have to call her on the way home. But they know me as Robert. Now my point is that sometimes a parent calls a child by a different name than the mother does. Do you remember that Rachel when she was dying named her second child son of my sorrow, a grief, and her husband Jacob renamed the boy to be son of the right hand, which is hand of strength amongst Hebrews, Benjamin.

So anyhow people have different names. This child of a virgin was named by his mother Immanuel and was named by his father Maher-shalal-hash-baz and notice the immediate context but we're not going to review last week's sermon. If we go to Matthew 1, we see clearly, unambiguously in a way that's unmistakable that this is ultimately not about Isaiah's virgin-born second child but about the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal God who without ceasing to be God in any sense came down into this world and was conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary and was born and that was in

fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. So let's remember then from last week, prophecies have sometimes an immediate and an ultimate fulfillment and that shouldn't disturb us at all.

Now I want you to see a second matter. If you go over there to Isaiah 28, we're going to look at another example of this. What we have here is this, let me give you a quick historical background. In the year 701 BC, Sennacherib the king of Assyria, conquered we know from archaeological records he said this, he conquered 46 cities in Judah. He actually did destroy utterly totally and completely Israel to the north in 722, and he deported the people from Israel and sent them to other places like India and all over the world. So the 10 lost tribes were never really lost, they just were moved to other places and in their place the Assyrians put other people. Why did they deport and import? Because it breaks the ability of a people effectively to resist an empire, because when you're all the same group ethnically, speak the same language, have the same basic religion, you have strength, but the very shrewd, wicked, evil empires deport and import. So they deported the best people of Israel and they imported people from other countries to come in there, and in the process he then headed on to Jerusalem. And he says this, he said, "Forty-six cities of Judah I have conquered and I have King Hezekiah shut up like a bird in a cage." We know this historically. This is actually what happened. So Sennacherib is hellbent, get that right, hellbent, demonically inspired, though never without God's sovereign overrule, he is hellbent on destroying Jerusalem. Hezekiah is inside the city. Hezekiah is a godly man. Hezekiah loved the Lord. Hezekiah was loyal to the Lord and Hezekiah had an adviser by the name of Isaiah, and unlike his daddy, Hezekiah paid attention to what Isaiah said.

So here's the deal and in chapter 28 we have these very weird words and I'm going to say them to you in Hebrew. I had to practice over and over again. I even made poor Sandy listen to me riding up here so I'd get it right. If you look at Isaiah 28 and verse 10, and also in verse 13, they're identical words so let's look since we're on the right page there. The words here sound exactly, they're exactly in Hebrew in verse 10 and in verse 13 so listen to them. He says, "Since y'all don't want to pay any attention to me, I'm talking in baby talk." That's the essence of what he's saying. He said, "Y'all don't want to pay any attention to me so I'm gonna talk to you in baby talk." So I'm now going to read the Hebrew only one time and, remember, I practiced. "Tsav latsav, tsav latsav, kav lakav, kav lakav, ze'er sham, ze'er sham." Do you get it? Do you hear what it sounds like? It sounds like gibberish, like, you know, it's not just momma loves her little baby, it's like coochie coochie coo, you know, the kind of things people say to babies, and you see what's actually going on here is Isaiah is letting the people know how God's going to talk to them. He's going to talk to them, since they're ignoring his clear prophetic word and want to go their own way and do their own will, he's going to talk to them in baby talk. I'll say it one more time since I practiced, "tsav latsav, tsav latsav, kav lakav, kav lakav, ze'er sham, ze'er sham." It's baby talk. It's gibberish.

Now what is the background of this? The background of this is found in three chapters in the Old Testament. It's the exact same story. Do you know it's very rare that historical incidents in the Old Testament are talked about in more than two places? But this incident that I'm about to tell you about is recorded in 2 Kings, it's recorded in 2

Chronicles, and it's recorded in Isaiah. 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and in Isaiah. So let's turn to the right now for a moment and we're going over to chapter 36 and 37 of Isaiah. This event of Jerusalem being surrounded in the year 701 BC by the king of Assyria who wiped out 46 cities and he wants to get Hezekiah to surrender, what happens? What happens is this, it starts in chapter 36 and then Hezekiah sends for Isaiah and they pray and they talk and they wait and this is what happens. Let's see right here. Okay, all right. And what they said, I had it just marked but now I've lost my place.

Listen to what he said, this is chapter 36, page 1,113. Look here at verse 11, Isaiah 36:11. This is very important. "Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the field commander," the field commander is the ambassador, he's a high muckety-muck of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. And listen to what King Hezekiah's representatives went out to talk to the man say. Listen to it, he said to the field commander, look at these words, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall." Got the picture? They're out there, they're having secret negotiations and they're speaking in Aramaic. It's a similar language to Hebrew but Portuguese and Spanish and French are all romance languages but I'm going to guarantee you, French doesn't sound anything like Spanish and there's a significant distinction between Portuguese and Spanish. So they've come out and said, "Please, sir, please, sir, we want to talk to you in Aramaic. We understand it. We don't want the people on the wall to hear it."

Now look at what he says. This is pretty gross. Verse 12, "But the commander replied, 'Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the people sitting on the wall--who, like you, will have to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?'" That's pretty gross, right? Do you know the basic element in all war is psychological? That's why when governments wage war, they engage in propaganda, they don't want their people to know what's really going on. And that's what's going on here. The representatives of King Hezekiah are saying to the representatives of the king of Assyria, "Please, please speak to us in your own language, Aramaic, because we understand it." And then he says, "Huh, no, I wasn't sent here just to talk to you. I'm talking to you guys up on the wall. You're going to eat your own excrement and drink your own urine." Do you think that made them afraid? That's the purpose. Remember, the first thing you've got to do in war is to terrorize your enemy, make your enemy think something.

I remember the first time I ever bet in my life. I bet against an unknown boxer by the name of Cassius Clay. Boy, did I learn my lesson. If you ever watch, and PBS had a special on Mohammad Ali because he changed his name, his whole thing was psychology. He used psychology to try to unnerve his opponent and that's how he won. Plus he was a dancer, amazing footwork.

But anyhow, the whole point is that the king of Assyria is engaging in psychological warfare and terrorism by instilling fear in his enemies saying, "You boys up there, you're gonna lose. I'm gonna take this city. You're gonna end up having to eat your own excrement and drink your own urine." Wow.

Now here is the whole deal. The whole deal is, if you go back now to Deuteronomy 28, I know we're going all over the Bible today, Deuteronomy 28 and let's look at verse 47. Deuteronomy 28 and let's look at verse 47 and that is page 317. Now get the context. This was written in the time of Moses and it's a warning, it's the giving of the law the second time after the earlier generation had died in the wilderness and before they go into the Promised Land, this 28th chapter is given to warn God's people, "If you don't obey Me, these are going to be the things that are going to happen to you." This is what's called a curse or a judgment. It's a result of God's lawsuit or grief against his people who entered into a treaty with him and notice what he says here in verse 47. Are you happy this morning? Look at verse 47, "Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity," you mean God commands me to be happy? Yes, sir. Have you ever dealt with a passive aggressive child? They can smile and be polite but you know deep down inside. And so what he's saying is, "I want heart and not mouth alone." And so he says, "Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the LORD sends against you." Do you want to understand something? God uses pagan nations to chastise his own people. Do you know that? God uses pagan nations to chastise his own people.

Notice who's sending these enemies on God's people: the Lord is. And then he says in the next sentence, "He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you." Look at verse 49 and this is really critical, "The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle." By the way, the word "eagle" in Hebrew, in Latin and in Greek is indistinguishable from their word for buzzard. Is that a buzzard up there? Anyhow, so he's going to send a predatory bird against you, in effect, "like an eagle swooping down," notice the next statement, what does the next statement say, "like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand."

So what does it sound like when you hear somebody speaking in Chinese? I've been in Communist China, I've been in southern China. Northern China, they speak Mandarin, southern China, they speak a different dialect. I've been in Taiwan. I've been in Korea. I've been in North Africa. I've been in the Middle East. What does it sound like listening to somebody who speaks in a language that's not roughly like yours? Spanish you can kind of pick out. My favorite word when you know Spanish and traveled into Mexico with a phrase book along with a friend of mine and my son was "dande espanol?" Anybody speak Spanish? What did I just say, Pat? [unintelligible] That's it. All right. But when somebody's speaking a language you don't understand, they're Indo-European languages, people in India speak Indo-European languages as do we, as do Europe. What happens when they're speaking a language that's very different like Semitic or something else? It sounds like when you're hearing them talk, tsav latsav, tsav latsav, kav lakav, kav lakav, se'er sham, se'er sham, it sounds like gibberish, it sounds like nonsense, it sounds like somebody is saying coochie coo, you're so cute. And do you see how this is part of a curse? God says, "If you rebel against Me, Israel, I'm going to curse you. I'm going to send on you armies that will destroy you."

Let's read on further and we may have to quit. The first time I preached on this, I'm going to send you a link, it was 66 minutes long and don't worry, you'll get out in time to eat. So here you go. Verse 51, "They will devour the young of your livestock and the crops of your land until you are destroyed. They will leave you no grain, new wine or olive oil, nor any calves of your herds or lambs of your flocks until you are ruined. They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down. They will besiege all the cities throughout the land the LORD your God is giving you." Now I want to pause there for a moment. What did Sennacherib say in 701 BC when he sent his messengers to King Hezekiah? "I've taken 46 cities. I've taken them." They had walls, it didn't make any difference. They cut down the wood around those walls and they made siege towers out of them and catapults and other things. Warfare has always been unbelievably harsh and cruel where innocent people die. It's always that way.

So what happens is God promised his people peace and protection from their enemies as long as they were loyal to him, but when they became disloyal, he was going to send foreign armies to whip them, to beat them. And what was the warning? What was the warning that their cities were about to be destroyed? It was when they heard baby talk, tsav latsav, tsave latsav, kav lakav, kav lakav, se'er sham, se'er sham. They'd hear baby talk. That was the warning. What was the warning of what was about to happen? Look down further, verse 55 and we're going to wrap it up with this one because I don't want to over-fatigue yourselves physically because the mind can only absorb what the seat can endure. No 66 minute sermon.

Verse 53, "Because of the suffering," notice the suffering was preceded by hearing people speak in tongues. What does he mean by speaking in tongues? Tsav latsav and so on, gibberish. That's what it sounded like. Before these things happen, the warning was coming and he says, "Because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you. Even the most gentle and sensitive man among you will have no compassion on his own brother or the wife he loves or his surviving children, and he will not give to one of them any of the flesh of his children that he is eating. It will be all he has left because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege of all your cities." Verse 56, "The most gentle and sensitive woman among you--so sensitive and gentle that she would not venture to touch the ground with the sole of her foot--will begrudge the husband she loves and her own son or daughter the afterbirth from her womb and the children she bears. For she intends to eat them secretly during the siege and in the distress that your enemies will inflict on you in your cities."

I want to think about that for a moment with you. There are so many applications of it. Do you know that curse was fulfilled again and again to God's covenant people? It was fulfilled before Sennacherib destroyed Samaria. He didn't destroy it, it was his father. It was before the Assyrian Empire destroyed Samaria. It was fulfilled before and it was fulfilled again when Jerusalem was under siege by the Babylonians, and it was fulfilled again, fulfilling Jesus' precise words that this generation, that's 40 years, this generation will not pass away til they see all these things fulfilled. It happened when Jerusalem was

surrounded by the Roman armies before the city collapsed in 70 AD. First of all, that's the nature of war. When you go to war, you go to win, and a war that's fought according to Christian principles of civilization is very very rare in human history. The wars fought on American soil were basically fought according to Christian tradition and restraint but if you study history at all throughout the extant thousands of years of human experience, this is the way of war. You don't go in there to play mumblety-peg. You go in there to win and in order to win you have to kill people and break things, and you kill the civilian population.

That's the way of war, that's number 1. 2. For the people of God who were in a covenant with God, it was explicitly what God had promised. If the children of Israel had been loyal to the Lord, the God of the covenant, none of these things would ever happen because, why? God would not allow their enemies to invade their land and to hurt them. That's why the psalmist says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh." I heard a politician who was a Christian once quote that and said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord." That's not what the psalmist was saying. He says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh," the covenant God of the Bible. Because most nations who follow some kind of deity, their god was their lord.

So we remember God protected his people from invasion, from war. War is always a sign of the curse of God and it was in particular for the Israelites. Third lesson, don't you sit there in that seat and tell me that there are things you would never do. You haven't a clue in the world nor do I what you would do under extreme circumstances because here's the president of the Rotary Club, I was once a secretary for Rotary, and the president of the Junior League, the cream of the crop, the finest of the finest, and they're killing and eating their own children and they don't share it. And you tell me you'd never do that? I'm going to tell you this as God is my witness, I can only pray, "O Lord, please deliver me from ever being put in a situation and circumstance where I would be tempted to the point of killing my own children and eating them!" Because the depravity that is in every human heart if pushed to the absolute limits knows no limits.

Lastly, the God who is behind this, the Lord God of the Bible, ordained not only curses and judgments for his disobedient people but he saved out of his disobedient people a remnant and God is still in the business of saving his remnant today. God is calling people in the Ukraine, in Russia, and all over the world, he's calling his people to become believers. God's elect are coming to Christ through these horrible circumstances. Should we pray against war? Of course, only a fool delights in war. But we need to realize that God uses extreme circumstances to draw people to himself. Someone once said there are no atheists in foxholes. I think that's essentially true but a really really hard heart can die cursing God.

So where is it with you and me as we wait for part 2 of this next week? Where is it with you and me? Do you know the Lord? Do you love the Lord? Because if you know and love the Lord, you have God's absolute promise of protection. May you rest in that.

In Jesus' name, may we pray.

Lord, would You take this message and use it powerfully in our lives for Your glory and for our good to draw people to Yourself as they listen to it. In Jesus' name. Amen.