

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Prewritten History, Part 1**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1349

Tonight we come to the area of fulfilled prophecy. We titled it "Prewritten History," because that's precisely what the Bible contains. One of the great marks of divine revelation is the fact that God has written down in this Book events in history, people and places, and the conflux of both with such absolute accuracy that there is no way that the human mind could have ever known these things. Only the divine mind of God could have foreseen them, and then one of the great proofs of Scripture, one of the great products of its revelation is just that. That there is in the Bible...prediction that came to pass years afterward with such amazing accuracy, that was humanly impossible, that it must be authored by God. This is essentially, if you will, the argument from omniscience...Since the Bible knows everything, it must be the product of a Being who knows everything, and that Being is none other than God. This, then, is God's Book. There is no way that human beings with limited capacities, both in terms of intellect and observation, could ever know the future. There is no way that man can predict the future. Only God can give us detail by detail...history before it happens. That is precisely what the Bible does.

McIlvaine gives us a helpful definition, and I'll give it to you. He says, "Prophecy is a declaration of future events such as no human wisdom or forecast is sufficient to make. Depending on the knowledge of the innumerable contingencies of human affairs which belongs exclusively to the omniscience of God, so that from its very nature, prophecy must be divine revelation." Prophecy is not just a good guess. Prophecy is not just conjecture. It is the statement of historical fact that is unpredictable and contingent and unknowable and future, and only God can do that. Now, we can probe into the past by the means of the science of historiography. We can probe into space by the means of the science of astronomy, but we have no faculty of pre-knowledge, and that is why probably the most interesting subject to the human mind is the subject of the future, because it is the one area where he has absolutely no knowledge. Oh, it's true that we may be able by observing certain things that are going on, be able to...to predict a trend in business, or we may be able to predict a movement in politics, or we may be able to forecast the weather somewhat due to current circumstances, but there is no way that we can in the future pinpoint people and places by name and actual historical data that shall take place. This kind of prediction, with this kind of fulfillment constitutes one of the claims of Scripture to its uniqueness as being the revelation of God.

Listen to Isaiah 46:9 and 10. "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." God says, "I am God. I can tell you at the beginning what the end will be, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.

None like Me." He alone is omniscient. Man admits he is not omniscient. Man admits he doesn't know everything. He doesn't know the future, but the Bible predicts with amazing accuracy the future. Now somebody immediately is saying, "Well, wait a minute. You're talking about predicting the future, and you say only God can do it. What about Nostradamus, or what about Mother Shipton, or what about Edgar Cayce, or what about Jeane Dixon, or whoever else, Jane Roberts or any of the rest of 'em, what about them?" Well, if you study their predictions, you'll find that their predictions are, for the most part, rather general, rather nebulous, rather capable of various and sundry meanings. Generally, they don't come to pass. The exception is when they do. A few are fulfilled in a general sense, and I hasten to add this. Many of the predictions that these people have made and are making are made demonically...and the demons will predict something is going to pass when they, in fact, have the control to make that thing happen, and there are some things that demons can't affect. There are some things that they can do, that the kingdom of Satan can bring to pass, and demons, knowing that that is their strategy, can then predict that it will happen, and that's really what hooks people.

You say, "What about horoscopes?" Horoscopes don't predict anything. They just tell you what you're...what you're like, and you keep listening to 'em long enough until you become like that...No man or no demon can predict specific events or persons by name who will appear scores or hundreds of years in the future.

Give you an interesting statement. I read this week at least two different historians who said there is no religion extant in the world with one viable, believable, verifiable prophecy except Christianity. There is not one. You study all the religions of the past. None of them have predictive prophecy. None of those things that they said were pinpoint prophecies that ever came to pass. They didn't even fool with that. That would've been to discredit them, wouldn't it... because they could've shot themselves down by making future predictions that never came to pass so they avoided it. Satan isn't stupid. He knows what he's doing, but you know something? The Bible didn't avoid making prophecies. It makes prophecies over and over and over and over and over. A. T. Pierson says there are at least a thousand separate prophecies...and all of them that were to come to pass have come to pass with absolute accuracy.

Now watch. You say, "Well, fulfilled prophecy doesn't prove the Bible is the Word of God." Listen to this. Listen. If prophecy doesn't prove the Bible is the Word of God, it could sure prove that it isn't the Word of God really fast, couldn't it? By just being wrong a few times, but it isn't wrong. It's never wrong. Now what is the divine standard? What is the divine standard in Deuteronomy 18:20? Says this, "But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall...what?...die." God doesn't tolerate false prophets. "And if thou say in thine heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?' How do we know when the guy says the truth and when he doesn't? How do we know he's a legitimate prophet? "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...what?...not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him." He doesn't really know the scoop.

Now, notice, the standard...the standard for God's prophets was absolute accuracy. I submit to you that if you say the Bible cannot prove to be the Word of God prophetically, I tell you this. If you will find one prophecy in the Bible that did not come to pass as the Bible says, you can throw away your Bible, and I'll join you in it, because God said there must be absolute accuracy.

Lemme show you another passage. Turn to Isaiah 41, Isaiah 41:21. Here you have a definition of prophecy. He says, "'Produce your cause'...Isaiah writes...says the Lord; 'Bring forth your strong reasons,' says the King of Jacob." You've got the answers, let them bring them forth and show us what will happen. You want...you know how to tell a true prophet? The Old Testament type? He can tell you what will happen. "Let them show the former things which they are, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us...what?...things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods." Now you see what the test is? True prophet predicts the future with 100 percent accuracy, putting those Scriptures together - 100 percent accuracy, and there are many other Scriptures, incidentally, on the prophetic theme.

One other one just comes to mind in Jeremiah 28:9. I'll read it to you. "The prophet who prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known that the Lord hath truly send him." Jeremiah 28:9. You could tell a true prophet, because what he says comes to pass, absolute accuracy. Now mark this. The Scripture over and over and over and over and over appeals to this unanswerable proof of the divine nature of the Scripture. In my mind, folks, the single greatest proof of the truthfulness of this Book is fulfilled prophecy. It is absolutely staggering in its amount. It is extra-Biblical in its verification. It is unanswerable as an argument for the validity of Scripture.

You know, the first Christian sermon that was ever preached was preached on the Day of Pentecost, and it was based on prophecy? Peter stood up and said, "God had determined that Christ would die." They had killed Christ; and, immediately, he launched into the prophecies of the Book of Psalms on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and showed how they came to pass, didn't he? And the rest of the preaching of the apostles and the preaching of the early church had prophetic themes in it. Prophecy has always been an unanswerable proof of the divine origin of Christianity. It all began with Genesis 3:15, where you have the first prophecy. Where it's prophesied that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. No woman ever had a seed until Mary conceived Jesus Christ without a human father. The seed was in the woman for the first time in the history of mankind, and Jesus was born of that union. A virgin-born man, Genesis 3:15 predicts; and it goes all the way out till the end of the Book of Revelation; and you've got in the Book of Revelation just loads of prophecy; and you and I are seeing the shadows of some of it coming to pass right before our eyes.

Now, the prophecies of the Bible relate to a lotta things. They relate to history. They relate to eschatology. There are things which have already come to pass, and there are parts of the prophecies that have not yet come to pass. Some of the prophecy relates to people. Some of it relates to people en masse. Some to individuals, some to rulers, some to kings, some to cities, some to nations, and some to the whole world. The Bible is loaded with them. In the Old Testament for a just a brief illustration, there are 20 chapters consecutively in Isaiah of prophecy, 17 in Jeremiah, 9 in Ezekiel, 2 in Amos, and it goes all the way out to the end of the prophetic books. Just more and more and more and more. Doom is predicted for Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Babylon, Tyre, Sidon. On and on and on it goes. In the New Testament, there are prophecies in the Gospels covering the cities in Palestine such as Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin. There is the great book of the prophecy of the Book of Revelation where a prophecy goes on out till the end, till our Lord comes, and even after that; but all prophecies that have been geared to be fulfilled in history up to this time have been fulfilled with such amazing accuracy it's staggering.

I think what is especially interesting in the light of this is to have you look at 1 Peter chapter 1 for a moment - 1 Peter chapter 1 gives us amazing insight, and it is this. The prophets didn't even know what they were writing. The stuff was so futuristic and so prophetic and so out of whack with the current scene that they didn't even understand it. You know, when a prophet predicted that Babylon would be destroyed, that was like predicting that New York would be knocked off by the Boy Scouts. I mean that was just absolutely beyond belief, because it was foreign to the thought of the day; but you come to 1 Peter 1:10, you read this. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what person or manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

Now, to untangle that, it simply means this. They predicted the coming of Christ, and then they read what they wrote to figure out what it meant. That's inspiration, folks. They actually had to read their own prophecies, and they couldn't even understand them. Lemme give you an illustration. Isaiah sat down to write one day under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and he wrote an amazing thing. In Isaiah, and I believe it's the 44th chapter and about verse 28, here's what Isaiah wrote. He wrote about Cyrus. He says, "Who saith of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd and shall perform all My pleasure,' even saying to Jerusalem, 'Thou shalt be built,' to the temple, 'Thy foundation shall be laid.'" Isaiah said, "Folks, there's coming a man who is going to release the Jews from captivity and send them back to build a wall and build a temple. His name is Cyrus."

Now, listen to me, folks. Isaiah said that 150 years before Cyrus was ever born. How did he know that? Say it was a good guess. You don't guess that Cyrus is going to be the king and release Israel. Give you another one. This is really an interesting one. It's very similar - 1 Kings chapter 13 verse 2. This just staggers you. "And he cried against the altar in the Word of the Lord, and said, "O altar,

altar, thus saith the Lord: 'Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David...listen...Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places who burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be turned on thee.'" Now, here he says, "There's coming a man named Josiah, who's going to burn all these false people." You know when he said that? Three hundred years before Josiah was born, he named him and said what he'd do, and he did it. There's no way for a man to know that. That has to be God.

Prophecy might not prove the Bible is the Word of God, but, boy, it sure could fast prove it isn't, right? All it had to do was name the guy something but Josiah. God's absolute test is the accuracy of the Word of God. God says, "Try it. Test it. Put it to the test." Doesn't He? See it. It can stand the scrutiny. It's never wrong. Jesus told the people in Mark 13:23, "One of the reasons you oughta listen to what I say is this - behold, take heed, I have told you all things." He said that in a prophetic context. "You better listen to Me, folks. I'm telling you the future, and that's not something you can do. You oughta recognize who I am."

Now the evidence for fulfillment is overwhelming. Let's go to Ezekiel, and I'll show you some prophecies that came to pass. Ezekiel 26. First one we'll look at is Tyre. Look at chapter 26, and actually the judgment on Tyre goes clear through verse 19 of 28, but we're not gonna endeavor to go into three chapters. Just part of it, 26. Now, as you look at that prophecy, it's a very detailed prophecy. We could probably outline nine or ten different things. Lemme just give you a few.

The prophecy goes like this. No. 1, Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the mainland city of Tyre - verse 7 and 8. Secondly, in verse 3 and 4, many nations will rise against Tyre; and it said, "They'll come like waves of the sea." That means in succession, one, and then later another, and then later another, like waves roll in and go back and roll in again and go back and roll in again. Another thing, Tyre would be made bare like a flat rock. Twice that is stated. Twice it is stated fishermen will dry their nets there. It is stated in verse 12 that all the rubble will be cast into the sea, all that is left of the city will be thrown in the water; and it is stated also in 14 and 21: Tyre will never be rebuilt.

Now, Tyre was a great city. Tyre wasn't just a little fishing village. It was a very great city. The Phoenician people lived there, and it was really the capital of Phoenicia. Phoenician people were the world's greatest colonizers of ancient times. Now, the city of Tyre was the capital of this Phoenician trade center; and, of course, you know the Middle East is in a crucial thing no matter which way you're going - up, down, or back and forth, you wind up in the Middle East; and so they were at a crucial point of trade. From Hiram I, Tyre controlled Phoenicia. It was strongly fortified; and to show you how strongly fortified, it had 150 feet high wall; and the wall was 15 feet thick. In addition to that, and, of course, that surrounded the city on its land side; and on the sea, they had one of the most capable fleets in the world to defend themselves from the sea.

When Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, Tyre was a flourishing city. Hiram I actually began to reign sometime during the reign of David; and when David was going to build the palace - you remember David built the beautiful cedar palace? He got those cedars from Hiram, because Phoenicia and Tyre really was in the territory today that we know as Lebanon. The Cedars of Lebanon, and Hiram loaned David his artisans to craft parts of the great palace. David was succeeded by his son, Solomon. Solomon didn't build a palace. What did he build? He built a temple, and, again, he used Hiram; and Hiram floated down cedars to the shoreline, and they hauled them up to Jerusalem for the building of the great temple. So this was a very, very great city. It was a city that both David and Solomon looked to for aid.

Now, three years after the prophecy was given by Ezekiel, Nebuchadnezzar did exactly what the prophecy said. He threw up a mound against the city, and he began to siege the city. In those days, you know how they conquered a city? They just surrounded it and, sooner or later, the supply was cut off. As soon as they laid siege against a city, the city couldn't come or go. No traffic. No trade. No nothing, and you had to live on what you had and hope that the army starved before you starved; and so Nebuchadnezzar threw a siege. It lasted 13 years, and when Nebuchadnezzar did that, he laid that siege for 13 years. At the end of that time, he stormed the city and smashed the walls. It said he would break down the towers and smash the walls in verse 12, and that's exactly what he did, and when he did that, he fulfilled the prophecy that Tyre would be destroyed. Accurately. Ezekiel even said who would do it. He even said he'd break down the towers when he did it, that he'd smash down the walls; and that wasn't necessarily always done. Sometimes a city would surrender, and you could just go through the gate and take over when they were all dying of starvation; but an amazing thing happened.

Finally, when Nebuchadnezzar stormed that thing and smashed and crushed the walls and hit the city, there weren't any spoils left in the city. All during those 13 years, the people had been removing all of their possessions to an island a half mile offshore. They had been using their fleet to just run the stuff out there; and they now had an island city a half mile offshore. The 29th chapter of Ezekiel, the 17th to the 20th verse, tells us that Nebuchadnezzar gained no plunder.

Now, what happened? They took the mainland city. It was destroyed, but there was a new little island city a half mile offshore, and it flourished for 250 years. Remember, the prophecy was fulfilled. The city of Tyre was destroyed. A new little thing on the island began. For 250 years, that little city flourished out there, and all the stones and all the timbers and all the rubble remained for 250 years, sitting right there on the old site of Tyre. Now notice verse 12 of 26. The end of the verse, "They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water." Now, you notice the walls have been broken down, the towers have been broken down, but let's face it. The prophecy isn't completely fulfilled - 250 years later, all the rubble's still laying on the ground. You'll notice also that the prophet said that the place would be scraped like the top of a rock, verse 4. Would be just scraped clean, like the stop of a rock; and verse 14 says the same thing. That was not fulfilled for

250 years.

Then came a man that the world knows, Alexander the Great, age 24. He came east conquering the world. In fact, it wasn't too long after that that he cried, because he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer." He had 33,000 infantry, 15,000 cavalry, and a few ships sailing along the coast; and he was coming east from Greece. He was gonna go down through the Phoenician's territory into Egypt and take Egypt, 'cause Egypt was loaded with treasure. So he set out to establish his great world empire. He had just defeated the Persians. You remember, there were four great world empires - the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, and the Roman. This is Daniel's image, another very accurate prophecy. The great battle of Issus, I S S U S, took place in 333 BC; and Alexander, at that point, had defeated the Persians under Darius III, and he was now on his march toward Egypt. He came to Tyre, and he called on the Phoenician cities to open their gates to him. So then he'd just sweep through and take over. The citizens of Tyre refused to do it. They were Phoenicians. They felt secure on their little island. They had the best fleet going. They weren't afraid of the minimal kind of fleet that Alexander perhaps could've mustered against them; and so they just said, "Forget it."

Alexander was a very persistent fellow. Since he had no fleet to match theirs, if he had any at all, he decided that he would approach them in a very unique way. He decided to build a causeway from the mainland to the island and just march out and take the island. It was amazing thing. In all, for 250 years, that rubble's been sitting there; and I'm sure somebody was thinking to themselves, "You know, that old prophet once said they were gonna throw this stuff in the water. Anybody ever did that would be outta their mind. Why would anybody come to this mess and start picking up stuff and pitching it into the ocean?" That's exactly what Alexander did. He built a 2,000-foot causeway at least 200 feet wide for one-half mile. You know what he used to build it? Every bit of the debris that was lying around old Tyre. He just started pitching it in the water.

Arrian, a Greek historian, has written in a book called The History of Alexander and Indica, which was published by Harvard Press in 1953, how this was accomplished. This is history. All the historians know how he did this. Tyre was fortified like Alcatraz. It sat out there like a rock, and the walls came down to the edge of the water; and I mean the walls were formidable walls. Alexander knew, says Arrian the historian, the only way to approach the place would be a land peninsula stretching out to the island; and so they began; and they started pitching this stuff into the water and piling it up and leveling it all off so that they could march out on it; but as they got closer and closer to the island, naturally, it got deeper and deeper and deeper, and it became very, very difficult work. When you get out a half a mile or so into the ocean, you know, you're gonna throw a lotta rocks down there before you start seeing 'em under the surface. Especially if it's 200 feet wide, and it became a very, very difficult task. And make things worse, the Tyranians, the people sat on the wall and bombarded them with missiles; and they fired things at 'em all the time. So in order to safeguard the operation, Alexander built mobile protecting shields; and their called tortoises, say Warner Keller in his book, The Bible as History; and they had these movable things over their heads; and as they moved out,

they covered themselves with these shields that would accept all of the missiles, and they'd all bounce around on there; but it was still difficult. The walls of the city out there were very high, and Alexander knew that even when we get to the place, we still gotta look at those walls; and so he built what history called helepolis, 160-foot high towers, nearly 20 stories high on huge, giant moving wheels; and the whole idea was to roll these big lumbering monsters right out on the causeway up against the wall, flop down a drawbridge, and march right across the top of the wall into the city.

Now, these were the largest towers ever used in the history of war. They were high above the city walls, and the bridges would've opened right flat on the wall, but they had a terrible time trying to get this thing coordinated, because they were being raided. Not only were they being raided from the city, but they began to get in boats and raid 'em from the sides; and they were being bombarded incessantly, but Alexander was persistent; but he realized he needed ships, because he couldn't defend his flanks. So he had knocked off a whole pile of cities on his way this far, and so he went back to all the cities that he had conquered and demanded that they make ships available to him; and so he built a fleet. He got a fleet from Sidon. He got, in fact, 80 ships from Byblos, from Rhodes, from Solee, from Malos, from Lasaea, Macedon. Cyprus gave him 120 ships. He built this fleet to protect his flanks. This again is interesting, because you remember that, as I read you the prophecy, the prophecy says in verse 3, "He will cause many nations to come up against Thee." And then it even says as the sea causes its waves to come; and here were these different nations recruited by Alexander, coming at the time that he needed them; and banging up against Tyre to fight against her as he needed them, fulfilling that prophecy as well. Well, finally, the operation succeeded. The walls were conquered. Those great big lumbering things rolled there. The monsters flopped out their drawbridges, and the men fired across the place - 8,000 of the people of Tyre were slain; 7,000 more were executed, 30,000 were sold into slavery, and they took the city in seven months from the time he first arrived, he did it.

You wanna know something interesting? If you go there today, you'll see that causeway. It's still there, and you tell me how prophet Ezekiel knew that. You tell me how he knew, first of all, the city would be conquered; and second of all, the stuff that was lying around, all of it would be pitched in the ocean. That is the only thing. There is no way that a human mind could do it. The only thing that could explain it is the mind of God. Phillip Myers is a historian. He says this: "Alexander the Great reduced Tyre to ruins in 332 BC. She recovered in a measure, but never to the place she previously held in the world." Myers goes on, "The once great city is now as bare as the top of a rock," and he says, "It's a place where fishermen dry their nets." So says Phillip Myers, historian. So said God before it happened. Phillip Myers knows because history tells him. God knows because He makes history...

The island city was later repopulated and later destroyed by the Muslims in 1281 AD; but the mainland city, God said, will never be rebuilt, and it has never been rebuilt, and it will never be rebuilt. Why has it never been rebuilt? Jerusalem's been rebuilt 17 times...Why hasn't Tyre been rebuilt?



Because 25 centuries ago, a Jew in Babylon said, "Thou shalt never be rebuilt," and it won't; and today you can't even find a ruin to mark the spot. It's as flat as a rock. You know what the probability is that this prophecy, all of its features, could come to pass by accident? Peter Stoner, the mathematician, figured it out. One in 75 million chances...Peter Stoner took just this prophecy and two others and said, "The probability of those coming to pass would be like filling the state of Texas 35 feet deep with silver dollars, putting an X on one, and giving a blind man one pick.

The Bible has not just isolated that prophecy, but there are other prophecies about Tyre. In Amos 1:9, "Thus saith the Lord: 'For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I'll not turn away its punishment, because she delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, remembered not the brotherly covenant. I'll send a fire on the wall of Tyre, which shall devour its palaces.'" And Tyre was literally buried by the fiery missiles of Nebuchadnezzar, who shot those fiery missiles and smashed that wall down.

If you don't think that's enough, you just take out your Bible at your leisure and turn to Zechariah. In fact, I'll show you something there that's most interesting without going into detail. Zechariah 9 gives you a description of the approach that Alexander would take before Alexander was ever born. Chapter 9 verses 1 to 8 goes down the whole thing. Alexander will come down there, it says, and this is exactly what he will do. He will come to Phoenicia and Hamath, verse 2, Tyre and Sidon. "Tyre did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver like the dust, and fine gold like the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast her out. He will smite her power in the sea. She shall be devoured with fire. Then Ashkelon shall see it and fear." Gaza's gonna get it. Ekron's gonna get it; and He says, "They're all gonna fall." At the same time, the sequence is all there in Zechariah.

In these verses, friends, is a description of Alexander's invasion of Syria and Palestine in the 4th century BC... Interesting thing about it is Gaza, Ekron, Ashkelon, and Ashdod would all be captured. Sidon would be given a judgment and messed up, but not destroyed; and Gath would be left without being harmed, because it was inland. The Jewish historian, Josephus, recording the history of Alexander says, "That everything that's in Zechariah 9 came to pass - every single detail just the way God said it would."

Turn over in your Bible for a minute to Ezekiel 28. Ezekiel 28:22. Now there was another great city that you know about in that area named Sidon. Verse 22 says, 21, "'Son of man, set your face against Sidon, and prophesy against it and say, 'Thus saith the Lord God: 'Behold, I'm against thee, O Sidon; I'll be glorified in the midst of thee; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have executed judgments in her and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, blood into her streets. The wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the Lord.'"

Now, notice what you have. You have really three separate predictions. Twenty miles north of Tyre and much older than Tyre is the city of Sidon. Sidon was founded by the firstborn child of Canaan in Genesis 10:15. It's a very ancient city. It was the center of idolatry connected with Baal and Astaroth and Tammuz. It's the center of idolatry, as we know it, in Baal worship, and that really is the spawning of many idolatrous religions; but the prophecy says, "There will be blood in the streets, swords everywhere," but it doesn't say Sidon will be ultimately destroyed. Did you notice that? It just says, "There's gonna be blood in the streets, swords everywhere, and you're gonna know that I'm God." There is no statement of ultimate destruction for Sidon.

You wanna know something interesting? Today Sidon exists. Today Sidon exists as the seaport city of Sayda, still there. The prophecy was fulfilled. The prophecy of blood in the streets and swords everything in 351 before Christ. The city was ruled by Persia. It revolted, and the Persian army tried to quell the revolt, and there was a horrible slaughter. The slaughter was so bad in that city that 40,000 of the citizens of Sidon, rather than find the vengeance of the Persians against them, locked themselves in their homes and set their homes on fire, and 40,000 of them perished in the flames they had set themselves because of the horrors of the vengeance of the Persians. Blood flowed, swords were everywhere. It was rebuilt again and again, and always endured battles and more battles and more battles. Floyd Hamilton says, "Blood has flowed in the streets of Sidon again and again, but the city stayed in existence and stands today a monument to fulfilled prophecy." That city was wiped out three times by the Crusaders, three times by the Muslims. In 1840, it was bombarded by the combined fleets of England and France and Turkey; and it still stands.

Beloved, there is no human eye that could look down the corridor of time and know that Tyre would be destroyed, never to rise again; but Sidon would not. God wrote this Book. Randolph Earle said, "No well-accredited prophecy is found in any other book or oral tradition in the world." End quote. There is no other book that gives prophecy. The Bible gives it and fulfills it. All you had to do was mix the two names, and the Bible you can throw away; but God doesn't mix names. It's truth.

Lemme give you a third one. This summer, I had the fascinating opportunity with some of you folks to be in Egypt. Tremendously interesting. I could go there and stay there just absorbing. I mean when I walked into that museum in...in Cairo, and they led us over to this mummy, and I stood there and looked into the face of that mummy, a face that still has skin, if you can believe it, and something that looks like hair and fingernails, and they said to me, "This was the Pharaoh when Moses lived," man, that was hard to handle. I just kept staring at the guy, and history went like this...and I really knew Moses was real. There was his contemporary right there, and I saw in Egypt statues more ancient than Moses. We rode camels out to see those ancient pyramids and found the burial grounds of sacred bulls and all these kind of things, that you know they go wayyyyy back, and, you know, you begin to look at some of these things. Then you begin to study the Bible, and, all of a sudden, everything comes together.

They took us out one day to a place called Memphis, not in Tennessee...Memphis...You know what we saw in Memphis? We saw idols, huge, monstrous, gigantic. One monstrous thing of Ramses, Pharaohs lying on...it was mammoth thing, just...I don't even know how big it was. They had to build a building around it. Huge...and other idols were lying around that they were excavating, all buried and lying flat. None of 'em standing up. They had uncovered them. That's very interesting.

Look at Ezekiel 30 and lemme show you why it's interesting. Ezekiel 30 verse 13, "Thus saith said the Lord God, 'I will also destroy the idols...and I will cause their images to cease from Memphis.'" Your Bible may say what? Nauf? The old indication of seeNauf, N A U F, which was the ancient term for Memphis. "I will cause their images to cease from Memphis; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt; and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. And I will make Pathros desolate, and will make fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No." No is another name for Thebes. You heard of the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes? No is another name. So we have a prophecy here regarding Egypt, particularly Memphis and Thebes. "And I'll pour my fury upon Sin." That is Sin with a capital S, Pelusium, which was the key city to Egypt, "And I will cut off the multitude of Thebes. I'll set fire in Egypt; Sin shall have great pain; No shall be torn asunder; Memphis shall have distress daily."

Now, all of this is prophesied against Egypt. Now, notice, here are the prophecies. The idols of Memphis would be destroyed, verse 13, destroying the idols, causing their images to cease from Memphis. Memphis was a very ancient city. It was the place for the origin of religious worship for Egypt. It was a very, very sacred city and regarded with great sacredness.

Another prophecy was that Thebes would be destroyed, the land called No. The people of Thebes would be cut off, says at the end of verse 15, "Cut off the multitude of Thebes," and notice a fascinating thing. Verse 13, "A prince in the land of Egypt no more." Really have some interesting prophecies. Memphis, to begin with, was the capital of the middle Egypt area, and it was the stronghold of idolatry. God said, "I'll cut off your idols." It happened. Of course the...the conqueror Cambyses came there and Herodotus, the historian, records for us that Cambyses came first to Pelusium, which was like getting to the key of Egypt. If you could knock off that, you could move in. You know how he conquered Pelusium? A most interesting way. He was really a sharp character. The Egyptians revered dogs and cats and felt that they were sacred, so he just piled up dogs and cats in front of his army...and herded 'em right in front of him into the city, and they wouldn't kill the animals, and he took the city...

No Egyptian could ever kill a dog or a cat, because he would be violating his religion, and he took all the idols in that area, including Memphis, and flattened 'em, and the guy told us, and I'll never forget how fascinating it was to listen. One of the things the conquerors of Egypt did, she said, when they came and conquered Memphis and this area, was to knock over all the idols. You know why? It's

obvious, isn't it? To show that they were more powerful than the gods of Egypt, that when they come in and wiped out their idols, and they knocked 'em down, face down into the sand, and nothing ever happened, and their gods never retaliated, why, it was easier to subject the people to the new conqueror. So they destroyed their religion...and they flattened 'em.

Today, the spot where Memphis was is somewhat in doubt. The general area is known. There's nothing there, and the sands just shift and blow, and there's nothing there. Absolutely nothing. Second largest city in Egypt. The only thing they've ever found there are a whole bunch of idols, and you know what was amazing? That they would be cut down, and they showed us these idols, and invariably they had this huge idol of Ramses, and the front part was beautifully preserved. The entire back part was rotted. That was because they cut 'em down face first. They went into the sand and they were preserved at that point, while the tops of them rotted away.

You see, what the Word of God said would happen to Egypt happened to Egypt. The idols were cut down. You can go there and hear the lecture just like I did. It's exciting to hear it, believe you me. Well, to add to the fulfillment of the prophecy, there were to be great judgments on the city of Thebes. Doesn't say anything about the idols of Thebes being broken down. It just says there would be great judgments on Thebes. The idols had to do with Memphis in verse 13. The judgments, the end of verse 14, "Execute judgments on Thebes. Cut off the multitude of Thebes...in verse 15."

Cambyses, the same conqueror invaded Egypt. He was a Persian. He brought on the destruction of Thebes. He burned their temples and destroyed all kinds of things, but Thebes recovered. Memphis didn't. Second blow came in 89 BC. Some people laid a siege against Thebes, and it fell, and it fell into complete oblivion, and it was some city. Somebody said the walls were approximately 66 feet high and 24 feet thick, and they conquered it. Strabo records Thebes in 25 BC, and he claimed that the city was broken up into multiple villages in which form it still remains. Broken up and disunited.

Look at verse 16, "Thebes or No shall be broken up, torn asunder, fragmented." Strabo recorded in 25 BC that that city is broken up. Absolute accuracy. In Thebes, some idols still stand. In Memphis, none stand. All God had to do was get His names mixed up, and you could Chuck your Bible. He didn't get 'em mixed up. Amazing, startling, not so amazing, not if you believe in God...

Lemme give you the last prophecy in regard to this. This is interesting. "There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." Do you know that once Memphis was conquered by Cambyses, there has never been an Egyptian ruler in Egypt since then? You say, "What about Nasser?" Wasn't an Egyptian. "What about Sadat?" He's not an Egyptian, either. Interesting, huh? That's exactly what the Bible said. Now it doesn't say that it has to be that way forever, but it's still that way. Fascinating.

Well, lemme give you one more prophecy. Nineveh, remember Nineveh? You remember Jonah...Turn to the Book of Nahum, Nahum 1:8. The whole thing is the prophecy that Nineveh would be destroyed. Nineveh was really a great city. It was one of the great cities of the ancient world. It was a rival city to Babylon, and the two greatest cities in the ancient world were Babylon and Nineveh, so it was really a great place in terms of the world's ability to build a city. The whole prophecy of Nahum is just spelling out the demise, the destruction, and the doom of Nineveh. Verse 8, "But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place, and darkness shall pursue His enemies. What do you imagine against the Lord? He shall make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time." In other words, God only gonna do it once. Once time and Nineveh's wiped out. "While they are entangled together like thorns, and while they are drunk like drunkards, they shall be devoured like stubble fully dry. While they're having their orgies and their drunken brawls, we're gonna come in and that place is gonna be wiped out on one particular occasion."

Now, notice, it says in verse 8 it would be overrunning...and overrunning flood that would make an end of the place. It would end by a flood. Interesting. Chapter 3 verse 10 tells more about it...It talks about "young children being dashed in pieces at the top of the streets; cast lots for honorable men, and all her great men are bound in chains." It tells various things about what's going to happen when Nineveh is destroyed. Now, just looking at 1 to 8 to 10 and starting at that point, Nineveh was a tremendous city... Sennacherib was the great ruler in the area, and Nineveh did have a problem. It was where a lotta rivers were, and there were three major rivers in the area. They did have some problem with flooding, and so Sennacherib had endeavored to change the situation a little bit by rerouting the river in a moderate fashion and refoundationing the walls and the palace and the temples. He put in mighty slabs of limestone, historians tell us, but Nineveh was strong. It was one of the largest of the ancient cities. It had a 100-foot inner wall, 50 feet thick. It was 100 feet high, 50 feet thick, and the towers went up to 200 feet, and then it had 15 gates. It had 150-foot moat, and the thing was walled for a seven-mile circumference; and there's another startling thing. They had a double wall. An outer wall that was about 2,000 feet from the inner wall, which is nearly half a mile. So you had to get over the outer wall, go a half a mile, cross 150-foot moat, and scale a 100-foot wall with 200-foot towers to take that place...Formidable.

Nineveh was at its high point in history in 663 BC - at its high point. Now, listen. At its high point in 663 BC, 51 years later it was in oblivion - 51 years later, and it has never been heard from again. The Medes absolutely destroyed that city...You know how long the siege took? Three months, that's unheard of. It is incredible that anybody could knock off one of the major cities of the world with a three-month siege. There's no way those people would run out of supplies in three months; and, yet, that's what the prophet Nahum said would happen. Nahum chapter 3 verse 12. "All thy strongholds shall be like fig trees with the first ripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even...what?... fall into the mouth of the eater." He says, "Taking Nineveh is gonna be like going up to a fig tree with ripe figs and open your mouth and shaking the branches." That's just gonna crumble. It's gonna fall with ease. Why, that was an incredible prophecy.

Ah, Nahum said, "It's gonna be just like rattling an overripe fig tree." How's it gonna happen? Hum, chapter 2 verse 6 tells how it's gonna happen. "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." Well, what did it say back in 1:8? It would be with an overrunning what? Flood, and "The gates of the rivers will be opened, and the palace will be dissolved." The whole thing that happened would be that a tremendous flood would come and wash away the river gates. You see, rivers ran through cities in those days, and, of course, they had to put an area in the wall where the river would come through, and then they would put iron gates through the river, and the water would flow through the gates. But in a flood, the gates would wash away. Then there were no gates, and there was no protection...

History tells us that this is exactly what came to pass. The walls of Nineveh were carried away with a great flood, and the Medes just waltzed in the city and took it like nothing. Students of history and geography have determined that it was either the Tigris or the Khosr, which is spelled K H O S R, or the Tebiltu, T E B I L T U. Any of those rivers could've caused that flood. The Babylonian history records that have been found say that the conquering of Nineveh occurred in the month of Ab. The month of Ab is known as the rainy season...

Give you another interesting thing. Archeologists have found on the ancient site of Nineveh, down layers and layers to where they think the real original city was, an entire strata of pebbles and sand that had to have been washed there by water. God said it would perish in a flood. That's what happened. The river gates were carried away, and the army marched right back into the city...and took the city; and chapter 3 verse 19, "There is no healing of thy bruise...thy wound is grievous." In other words, that city will never be rebuilt. You wanna know something? It never has. There is no Nineveh today.

You say, "What does all this mean to me?" All this means to you that this Book is true. You believe that?...And if it's true when it tells me about Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt, and Nineveh, it'll be true when it tells me about Jesus Christ. This is God's Book. The reason we're here, and the reason I do what I do is because I believe this is the revelation of God, and there is no other. I believe you can bank your life on it. It's in that confidence that I live and die, and I know you do, as well, who love the Lord. Let's pray.

Father, we're so thankful for the absolute accuracy of the Word, and we know that if it's accurate historically, it's accurate spiritually. When it speaks to us of salvation and eternal life and heaven, hell, all those areas, it's just as true. Just as the prophecies of the past have come to pass, so will those of the future. Just as You judged people and cities and nations for rejecting You in the past, You will judge men for rejecting You in the future. God, help us to recognize the only thing that even matters in the world is that we know You, and that we obey Your will. Everything else is so temporary. Teach us to concentrate on the things that matter. Spend ourselves for Your glory. Pray

in Christ's name. Amen.

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