Biblical Inspiration Validated By Prophecy, Part 2
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 90-329

Wow, thank you, Ross and Jessie and the other gentleman there, that was really...if you can't smile when you're listening to that, something's wrong with you. You just...you just can't wipe the smile off your face, can you? It's just...just so beautiful and so unusual. I think that's the first time I've ever heard a steel drum played here in this church, but we've got to do more of that, right? That was really good. Thank you. (Applause) So many wonderful ways in which we can praise the Lord musically, and what a great heritage we have in music and what a great blessing to have so many talented people who can serve us all in our expressions of praise that way.

We have been looking at a series on the inspiration of the Bible which is, of course, foundational to us, critical to us since the Word of God is the authority. Everything that we believe comes out of the pages of the Bible. Everything that is spiritual that is related to God and our understanding of Him and His will comes from the pages of Scripture. It is critical that we understand and believe with all our hearts in the truthfulness of the Word of God. And so we have been looking at the marks of divine revelation, how we know the Bible is written by God. One of those marks is prophecy...prophecy. And by that I mean the ability to predict, the ability to write history before it happens, to determine what will happen before it happens with specificity, precision and exactness. And the seal of divine omniscience on the pages of the Bible is predictive prophecy, prewritten history.

It becomes apparent to any careful, thoughtful, diligent student of the Bible that the prophets of the Bible were told by God what would happen and it did happen. They were told things that it is impossible for any human mind to know. The only conclusion is that God revealed these things. Only God knows the end from the beginning and the future before it happens. The Bible then has to be the work of God. All prewritten history, all the prophecies with the record of perfect fulfillment mark the Bible as authored by God. And by the way the Bible is full of prophecy, full of prophecy which has already been fulfilled, much of it fulfilled in scriptural times so that you have the prophecy in the Bible and you have the record of its fulfillment also recorded in the Bible. It is sort of an internal apologetic, an internal defense of Scripture and God uses prophecy to convince people of the divinity of Scripture. It is truly the record of His doing because there is no way to explain what it predicts, coming to pass with such perfect precision, other than that it is authored by God. And I think we overlook many of the basic prophecies of the Bible that should draw us to a careful study and catch our attention.

For example, you go back in to the twelfth chapter of Genesis and the fifteenth chapter of Genesis and you have a promise that God gives to Abram, later named Abraham, and part of that promise is that he is going to have an heir. In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis the Lord reminds Abraham that He is capable of fulfilling the promise to give to Abraham a seed. "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you. Your reward should be very great. I will fulfill everything I have promised to you." And Abram said, "O Lord God, what will Thou give me since I am childless?" Verse 3, "Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." It was his servant, the only heir he had. "The Word of the Lord came to him in verse 4, 'This man will not be your heir but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.'" Here's the promise of God that Abraham is going to have a child, a son.

Now remember, Sarah is 90 and Abraham is 100. And God has promised to them in their barrenness and in their old age a son. In fact, the promise of God is reiterated again in the eighteenth chapter verse 11, "Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age. Sarah was past childbearing. Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' And the Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, saying shall I indeed bear a child when I am so old? Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time, I will return to you at this time next year and Sarah shall have a son.'" Now that is unmistakably a prophecy. That is God saying in one year Sarah will have a son. One year later, chapter 21 records, "Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived, and bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him." It was not just a promise of a son, it was a promise of a son in precisely a year from the time God had spoken.

Sarah, you remember, laughed in her doubt and as if to rebuke her unbelief, Abraham named the child Laughter, which is what Isaac means. This fulfillment gives strong assurance to Abraham that God is in control of the future and that God's word is true. This is an apologetic to Abraham. This is God affirming to Abraham that when He speaks He speaks the truth, and when He says something will come to pass, it will come to pass. Abraham now knows that to be true.

Turn to the third chapter of Exodus. Another great name in the Old Testament is the name Moses, but Moses had a rather inauspicious beginning. Moses was weak, lacking courage, lacking faith even in God. Moses said to God in the third chapter of Exodus in verse 11, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt? Who am I? I don't have the ability to do that." In chapter 4 he reiterates his lack of confidence, verse 1, and says, "What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? For they may say, the Lord has not appeared to you." In verse 10, Moses again said to the Lord, even after the Lord did a miracle in his presence in the intervening verses. The Lord said...Moses said to the Lord, "Please, Lord, I've never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

Here's this weak and vacillating Moses. He has been told to do a great work in the power of God, lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. He has no confidence in himself. God tells him, however, that the very place on which he then stood would later become the place where the Israelites would worship God. For all of this took place...go back to chapter 3 and verse 12...in a place called Horeb and in verse 12 God says, "Certainly I will be with you and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain." The very mountain where God met Moses in a burning bush, the very mountain where called Horeb in verse 1 of chapter 3 where he was tending the flock of Jethro, that very mountain is Mount Sinai and it was to that very mountain that they returned and there met God and God displayed His power in that mountain, revealed His commandments in that mountain, and Moses went up and got the Law and came down, and you know the whole story. It's told from the nineteenth chapter of Exodus through the fortieth chapter of Exodus.

What was God doing? God was confirming in the mind of Moses that when He said something He meant it, that when He promised something it would come to pass, and when He predicted something that's exactly what would happen. You will return to this very same mountain and you with all your people out of Egypt will worship Me in this very same place. That's exactly what happened. Eventually he went to Egypt, you know the whole entire story, and he led the people out. The history of which is recorded in the early chapters of Exodus.

Just a few other interesting prophecies. In the fourth chapter of the book of Exodus and verse 14, the Lord is having a very irritating time with Moses...very irritating. And in verse 14, "The anger of the Lord is burning against Moses." You really don't want to be in that position but that's where Moses was. "And He said, 'So you don't trust My word, you don't believe My word. All right, is there not your brother Aaron the Levite?'" Don't you have a brother named Aaron who is a Levite? "And I know that he speaks fluently and moreover, behold he is coming out to meet you. When he sees you he will be glad in his heart." This is omniscience on display. You have a brother, I know you have a brother. You have a brother whose name is Aaron. You have a brother named Aaron who is a Levite. Furthermore, I know that he speaks fluently. This is omniscience. Moreover, beyond that, he is coming right now as I speak to meet you and furthermore when he sees you, he's going to be glad to see you.

How does God know all this? Moses hadn't seen Arrow...Moses hadn't seen Aaron for forty years. And the meeting...the meeting would actually occur at the place of the burning bush. In verse 27, "Now the Lord said to Aaron, 'Go meet Moses in the wilderness.' So he went and met him in the mountain of God and he kissed him." It was a joyful meeting, just like God said it would be. God knows the future because God writes the future just as He writes the present and the past.

And then there were all those plagues. God said to Moses, "When you go to Egypt, you're going to pronounce judgment and you're going to tell those Egyptians to let My people go." Go to chapter 3

verse 17. "I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt..." Well actually verse 16, "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared to me saying I am indeed concerned about you what has been done to you in Egypt. Go tell everybody in Egypt, all the leaders, that God knows and God is very concerned. So I said I would bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" This is a prophecy. God's going to do this. They will pay heed to what you say because God's going to determine that they pay heed to what He says. Again God is not only telling us what will happen, He makes it happen. "And you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him...this is to Pharaoh...the Lord, the God of the Hebrews has met with us. So now, please let us go, a three-day's journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go." God knows what the reaction of the Pharaoh will be because He knows the future. "Except under compulsion, so I know they're going to have to be some very compelling reasons for which this Pharaoh will finally let you go. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it and after that he will let you go. And I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians and it shall be that when you go you will not go empty handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house articles of silver, articles of gold and clothing, you will put them under your...you will put them on your sons and daughters, thus you will plunder the Egyptians." You're going...you're going after the compelling miracles force Pharaoh to let you go and you're going with plenty of plunder.

Well, when Moses and Aaron finally did stand before Pharaoh, they told Pharaoh to let the people go. Pharaoh wouldn't let the people go. So, for example, chapter 7 verse 17, "Thus says the Lord, by this you shall know that I am the Lord. Behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in My hand and it shall be turned to blood." That's a prophecy. I'm going to strike the water, it's going to be turned to blood. This is a message from the Lord. "And the fish in the Nile will die and the Nile will become foul and the Egyptians will find difficulty in finding drinking water from the Nile."

That's exactly what happened. The Lord said to Moses, say to Aaron, "Take your staff, stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, the rivers, the streams, the pools, the reservoirs of water that they may become blood and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and vessels of stone. That which had already been taken out of these water sources and had been kept in houses would also turn to blood. So Moses and Aaron did even as the Lord had commanded. He lifted up the staff, struck the water that was in the Nile in the sight of Pharaoh and the sight of his servants and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. The fish that were in the Nile died, the Nile became foul, the Egyptians couldn't drink water from the Nile. The blood was through all the land of Egypt." The prophecy that comes to pass immediately.

Turn to the eighth chapter and the first verse, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, Thus says the Lord, let My people go that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let them go I

will smite your whole territory with frogs. And the Nile will swarm with frogs which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the houses of your servants and on your people and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls. So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.'" Again, that is a prophecy. God says it's going to happen, and it happens. "The Lord said to Moses, say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams, over the pools, make frogs come up on the land of Egypt. Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt and the frogs came and covered the land of Egypt.

You have other plagues. All of them, an amazing series of divine manifestations predicted by God and fulfilled, climaxing with the opening of the sea, the people walking through on dry land, arriving eventually where God said they would arrive, right back at Mount Horeb, or Mount Sinai and there to be brought before God to worship Him. All of this was apologetics. All of this was a defense of the veracity of the Word of God. All of this to show Moses and Aaron and everybody else that when God said something, it came to pass. A good summation of this comes at the end of the fourteenth chapter of Exodus, Exodus chapter 14 and verse 30, "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. And when Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord...listen to this...and they believed in the Lord and in His servant, Moses." Yes, this was an apologetic display. This was God defending His veracity. All of that might have happened, all of that could well have happened without ever God saying it would happen. But God would have lost a great opportunity to validate the authority, the authenticity, the accuracy, the precision and the fulfillment of His Word. God said it and it happened exactly the way He said it would happen and the record is written about it. And no wonder the people believed.

If you look to 1 Kings, for a moment, and the seventeenth chapter and there are more but I'm just highlighting some of these kinds of prophecies that we easily overlook that are fulfilled in history. In the seventeenth chapter of 1 Kings we come in to the ministry of Elijah, the prophet. In verse 1 of 1 Kings 17, "Now Elijah the Tishbite who was of the settlers of Giliad said to Ahab, the king, 'As the Lord, the God of Israel lives before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years except by My Word.'" That is a prophecy of a drought. That is a prophecy of a drought. God is putting His Word on the line again. You might say, in one sense, He's sticking His neck out because we're going to find out whether what He says is really true. In James 5:17 we read a New Testament commentary on this text. "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months." God said there was going to be a drought and there certainly was a drought. And that drought lasted in excess of three years. At the end of the drought, go down to chapter 18. "It came about after many days the Word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year," all right, here we are in the third years, "saying, Go show yourself to Ahab and I'll send rain on the face of the earth." It didn't rain for three years.

Elijah went and showed himself to Ahab. We could read the whole chapter, but let's go down to verse 41. "Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go up and eat and drink for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.' Ahab went up to eat and drink but Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel, crouched down on his knees, put his face between his knees...crouched down...I should say...on the earth and put his face between his knees. He said to his servants, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' So he went up and looked and said there's nothing. He said, 'Go back seven times.' And it came about at the seventh time that he said, 'Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea.'" You can imagine for three years and six months they had been looking for clouds. "And he said, 'Go up, say to Ahab, prepare your chariot and go down so that the heavy shower doesn't stop you.'" It's going to get real muddy real fast. Get that chariot moving. "It came about in a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind and there was a heavy shower and Ahab rode and went to Jezreel and the hand of the Lord was on Elijah." Here again is an apologetic for the Word of God. God does exactly what He says He is going to do.

The most extensive usage of fulfilled prophecies or of the role that fulfilled prophecy plays is found in Isaiah. From Isaiah 40 to 53, that is a great section of prophecy. I want to show you a couple of portions of it. Isaiah 41...Isaiah 41, as I said, you can run all the way from chapter 40 through 53, the most extensive use of fulfilled prophecy in the Bible is found in that section. But in Isaiah chapter 41 we can look at the contrast between God and all other deities.

Verse 21 of Isaiah 41, this is a good place to sort of jump in to this great section. "Present your case," the Lord says. "Present your case, you other gods. Bring forward your strong arguments," the king of Jacob says. "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place." You are a god, you are supernatural, you are divine...then tell us the future because that's a valid defense of omniscience. So he says in verse 22, "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place. As for the former events, declare what they were." Tell us what happened in the past, show your omnipotence going....or your omniscience going back and tell us what's going to happen in the future. "That we may consider them and know their outcome." We'll evaluate it. You give us an accurate rendering of history and you write the future for us. "Announce to us...end of verse 22...what is coming. Declare the things that are going to come afterward that we may know that you are gods." Wow...what a test!

Verse 24, "Indeed you're of no account. Your work amounts to nothing. He who chooses you to worship...implied...is an abomination." You can't worship a God who is not omniscient because that's not God. You can't worship a God who cannot tell the future.

A few chapters further, another wonderful text in the forty-sixth chapter, and, believe me, there are several in between. But one of my very favorites is in 46, verses 9 and 10. Verse 9, "Remember the former things long past, for I am god and there is no other. I am God and there is no one like Me." Here's why. "Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not

been done." I will tell you what hasn't happened. I will tell you the end at the beginning, saying, "My purpose will be established and I will accomplish all My good pleasure." I will tell you what's going to happen because I'm in control of it happening. This is not just omniscience, this is also...what?...omnipotence.

So from the earliest times God has established His veracity based upon His ability to predict what is going to happen with precision and accuracy and then to make it happen. And Scripture records the prophecies and the fulfillment, as we have seen in the illustrations that I've already given you.

Let me have you turn to the prophets since we're already there, and see some further indications of the revelation of an omniscient God as the author of Scripture. Turn to Ezekiel 12, Ezekiel 12 and we're going to move through some Scriptures fairly rapidly. But this, I think, to be a fascinating prophecy. Verse 12, "And the prince who is among them will load his baggage on his shoulder in the dark and go out. They will dig a hole through the wall to bring it out. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land with his eyes. I shall also spread My net over him and he will be caught in My snare and I shall bring him to Babylon in the land of the Chaldeans, yet he will not see it though he will die there." How can you go to Babylon and be there and not see it? Who is this prince? It refers to King Zedekiah. King Zedekiah is always referred to in the book of Ezekiel by the word "the prince." Jehoiakim is referred to as king in Judah even though he's in captivity. He is still referred to as king, though he's been taken into the Babylonian captivity along with Ezekiel and others. Zedekiah never really gets the title and so he is called the prince.

So how is it that this prince, Zedekiah, is taken to Babylon and lives there until his death and yet never sees it? Go back to 2 Kings 25 and we read the history connected to this prophecy. This is the history connected to that prophecy. Verse 1, 2 Kings 25, "It came about in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon came, he and all his army against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it." So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. He is referred to as a king in the history although Ezekiel always refers to him as a prince, giving the honor to Jehoiakim in captivity. "So the city was under siege till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah, on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city, there was no food for the people of the land." That's how they conquered. They came in and surrounded the city and cut off all supplies until the people starved to death. "Finally the city was broken into and the people were weak. All the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls beside the King's garden. The soldiers who were left ran for their lives though the Chaldeans were all around the city and they went by way of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, the soldiers are fleeing the place trying to get out with their lives, and they are taking with them their king. They overtook him, the Chaldeans did, and the plains of Jericho which is just east and down the slope. And all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the King Zedekiah, brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah and he passed sentence on him. And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and then put out the eyes of

Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon." How was it that he could go to Babylon and be there till he died and never see it? He was blind because they had torn out his eyes after the last sight he ever saw, the massacre of his sons.

Jeremiah speaks of this. Jeremiah 52:10, "And the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and he also slaughtered all the princes of Judah at Riblah." It was mentioned in the prior passage in 2 Kings. "Then he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah and the king of Babylon bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon and put him in prison until the day of his death."

Just exactly the way Ezekiel said it would happen. So he lived with one indelible vision in his sightless head, the vision of the execution of his sons in a prison cell until he died, never seeing the Babylon to which he had been taken captive.

Speaking of Babylon, turn to Isaiah chapter 13. And here is a very, very important prophecy in Isaiah chapter 13 about Babylon. And I'm trying to give you a condensed view of these so we can cover a number of them, but in the nineteenth verse of Isaiah 13, we read this, "And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." Wow. "It will never be inhabited, or lived in from generation to generation. Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there, but desert creatures will lie down there and their houses will be full of owls, ostriches will also live there and shaggy goats will frolic there. And hyenas will howl in their fortified towers and jackals in their luxury palaces. Her fateful time also will soon come and her days will not be prolonged."

Babylon was richer and more powerful than its arch rival, the city of Nineveh. And Nineveh was a massive city. Some say Babylon was the greatest city of the ancient world, famous for culture, famous for education, famous for architecture, famous for social advancement, famous for trade. This city, Babylon, was the emporium of the ancient world. It was on a stream that flowed to the Indian Ocean, near to the Mediterranean so it was a place accessible, a place where many brought their wares and their goods and it became really the home of what we know to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, The Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The prophecy then is that Babylon will be completely overthrown. And it was. Amazing. Until the nineteenth century the knowledge of Babylon was based only on Old Testament texts and a few Greek writers who referred to it and nobody knew where it was.

In more recent years there have been found in what is believed to be the location of this great city, accounts of stupendous building operations under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. In the seventh and the sixth centuries B.C., it all began to be built by Nabopolassar, again who was a great king and his son Nebuchadnezzar. So it was a formidable sort of multi-generational effort to build this great city. Some ancient...some students of ancient history say that the great city was divided into two parts by the Euphrates and had large swamp areas and marshes in its surrounding area. It was, according to

some accounts, a hundred and ninety-six square miles, fourteen mile sides, fifty-six miles around it. Historians who have dug up the ruins of that place now say it had a 30-foot moat, double walls, the outer wall was as high as 311 feet in some places, 87 feet wide in some places. It had 100 gates they think of solid brass. Two hundred and fifty watchtowers who were at least...which were at least 100 feet higher than the wall, over 400 feet high. And it completely disappeared in the desert. Herodotus, the historian, says the Persians saw that they could not break down the walls. But they observed that the Euphrates River ran under the walls and was deep enough and wide enough to march an army on. Cyrus ordered his troops to dig huge ditches, canals. And by those canals they diverted the river and dried up the riverbed and walked into the city while the Babylonians were feasting in drunkenness and took the city. And you can read about it in the fifth chapter of Daniel. It was 539 B.C. when Babylon fell, never to rise again.

By the time of Alexander the Great, it had become nothing but a desert. By 116 A.D. Trajan, the emperor, describes it as only mounds, humps. It is somewhere around 45 to 50 miles south of Baghdad. There have been buildings built there now. It is now called a ceremonial place, and no one lives there. It is not inhabited. Through history there are interesting records written by historians who talk about the wild animals, the boars, the hyenas, the jackals, the wolves, an occasional lion, mountain lion, owls. There are also historians who have written in the past about how the bedouins didn't like to pitch their tents there because there were long-term superstitions about that place. It wasn't a good place.

The soil throughout history has not been suitable for anything. And so it sits and still sits though ceremonial buildings have been built without inhabitants. One mathematician took the components of this prophecy, put them through mathematical analysis and said, "This would have the chance of coming to pass accidentally that would be about one in five million." Werner Keller writes, "There were in Babylon fifty-three temples, fifty-five chapels of Marduk, 300 chapels for the earthly deities, 180 altars for the goddess Ishtar, 180 for the gods Nargol(?) and Adad(?) and many other different gods." And it all came down because that's what God said would happen.

There will be, by the way, according to the book of Revelation, a restoration of Babel in the future at the time of the day of the Lord and the coming of Christ. Whether or not that is a literal Babylon, or whether it speaks figuratively of the great Babylon as rebellion against the true and living God, we can't be certain. But for now and for human history until the end, it is not an inhabited place.

Another prophecy, Micah chapter 1...Micah chapter 1. As you will remember, the land of Israel basically got split into two kingdoms after Solomon...the southern kingdom Judah, the norther kingdom was called Israel. Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom and Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. But just briefly. In Micah chapter 1 and verse 6, here is a prophecy. "This is the Word of the Lord," it came to and through Micah in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, it is a prophecy regarding both Samaria and Jerusalem, the two capital

cities. And verse 6 says this, "I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country, planting places for a vineyard. I will pour her stones down into the valley and will lay bare her foundations. All her idols will be smashed, all her earnings burned with fire, all her images I will make desolate, for she collected them from a harlot's earnings." That is a spiritual harlot going after false gods rather than the true God, to the earnings of a harlot they will return.

The prophecy is that Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom, will fall. It will fall violently. Vineyards will be planted there. Stones will be poured into the valley. In 722 B.C. that prophecy came to pass. Sargon, the Assyrian, took Samaria. It had been built by Omri, a wicked king, you can read about it in 1 Kings 16. He was succeeded by his son, Ahab, who was even more evil than Omri, and Ahab is famous for his wife who was Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon, she was an idolatress. She killed the prophets. She led the people to worship Baal, the god of Sidon. Because of all of this, God brought this destruction. The city is now gone, wiped out by Sargon and then later on, whatever vestiges were left, destroyed by Alexander the Great in 331 and whatever bits and pieces remained were then finally destroyed in 120 B.C. by John Hiercanis(???). And if you go to the site of Samaria today, you will find olive and fig trees. It is a place of agriculture and probably some vineyards still there. One writer says, "Samaria, a huge heap of stones? Her foundation discovered, her streets plowed up and covered with fields and gardens. Samaria has been destroyed but her rubbish thrown down into the valley below. Her foundation stones lie scattered about on the slopes of the hills." There's no Samaria today.

Turn to Ezekiel chapter 25 and let me add another to this fascinating list of fulfilled prophecies. This one has to do with Moab...Moab. Moab/Ammon referring to the same. "The Word of the Lord came to me," in verse 1, "saying, 'Son of man, set your face against the sons of Ammon and prophesy against them and say to the sons of Ammon, Hear the Word of the Lord God, thus says the Lord God, because you said "Aha" against My sanctuary when it was profaned, treating it lightly, and against the land of Israel when it was made desolate and against the house of Judah when they went into exile, therefore, behold, I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession and they will set their encampment among you and make their dwellings among you. They will eat your fruit and drink your milk." Go down to verse 11, "I will execute judgments on Moab and they will know that I am the Lord." And reiterates in verse 12, "Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance..." and so forth.

What does it say about Moab or Ammon? They're going to be taken by a power from the east were going to come and take over and build palaces...verse 4...make their dwellings among you. This will be conquered but inhabited...conquered but inhabited. Now you've got to understand, these are powerful, well-defended kingdoms. Moab and Ammon are down by the Dead Sea and they are formidable and they are somewhat isolated. But the prophecy came true. Mountains on the west protected them. But the east was vulnerable. Voss writes, "The emir Abdullah of the east, ruler of Trans-Jordania, built his palace there and became director of the Arab Legion and has fought the

Jews...this going back some years." The city of Ammon was conquered. Moab was conquered from the east. But today Ammon Jordan is one of the flourishing cities, a large, growing, prosperous city, I have been there on several occasions, a fascinating Arab city. God said you will be conquered. God did not say you will be uninhabited.

Another one, just briefly, is Edom...Edom. Look at Isaiah 34 and I think with this one I'll stop and we'll do this one more evening, I think, because I've got a few more that I think are helpful. But look at Isaiah 34 and this relates to the familiar place called Edom, familiar to students of the Bible. Verse...let's see, we can pick it up at verse 5, "My sword is satiated in heaven. Behold, it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction." Now it gets pretty detailed. "The sword of the Lord is filled with blood. It is sated with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams, for the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. Wild oxen shall also fall with them and young bulls with strong ones, thus their land shall be soaked with blood." Go down to verse 10, "It shall not be quenched night or day, its smoke shall go up forever from generation to generation it shall be desolate." Down to verse 13, "Thorns shall come up in its fortified cities, nests...nettles and thistles in its fortified cities, it will also be a haunt of jackals and abode of ostriches. The desert creatures shall meet with the wolves, the hairy goat also shall cry to its kind. Yes the night monster shall settle there, shall find herself a resting place. The tree snake shall make its nest, lay eggs there. It will hatch and gather them under its protection. Yes, the hawk shall be gathered to everyone with its kind." The point is, it's going to be uninhabited, there aren't going to be people there. There are just going to be animals there.

Along that same line, Jeremiah makes a prophecy...Jeremiah chapter 49...Jeremiah chapter 49, just three verses in chapter 49, verse 16, "As for the terror of you, the arrogance of your heart has deceived you, O you who live in the clefts of the rock, who occupy the height of the hill, though you make your nest as high as an eagle's, I will bring you down from there, declares the Lord, and Edom will become an object of horror. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss at all its wounds, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah with its neighbors, says the Lord, no one will live there, nor will a son of man reside there."

This powerful kingdom of Idumea descended from Esau would be wiped out and never inhabited again. And verse 16 is a particular note because it was an arrogant place because the people lived in the clefts of the rock and they occupied the height of the hill. And they made their nest as high as an eagle's. Some of you know that, you've been there and you've experienced that. Well the great city that defines Edom is a city called Petra and Petra is a city built into the rock. It's an amazing...one of the great astonishments of my life was, first of all, on horseback to go in through this narrow tiny crack in the high, high cliffs to get inside the city of Petra and then see an entire city carved in the cliffs, virtually impregnable. They were so proud and so arrogant, there was only one way..there is only one way in and that is through this narrow passage that could be guarded, they used to say, by one man. And yet in Obadiah's prophecy in verse 18 he said, "There shall not be any remaining in the

house of Esau for the Lord has spoken it." And it was conquered. It has a bloody, bloody history, does Edom. If you go to Petra today and Edom, no one lives there. There's no civilization there. Edom tried to fight off David, but David slew 18 thousand Edomites at the south end of the Dead Sea, the Valley of Salt. David conquered Edom. Amaziah, later king of Judah, also fought and was victorious over Edom. Later Assyria conquered Edom and even Chaldean hordes swept down and devoured Edom. The Nabotaean Arabians that are noted even in the New Testament took Edom and are probably the children of the east mentioned in Ezekiel 25. And some time in the sixth century they took the great city of Petra.

How did they do it? How could they conquer a city that could be guarded by one man because there was only one slit letting you through? When you ride on a horse through there or you walk on foot, you will notice that there is a channel carved along the entrance and it goes for long, long, long distance. And the channel carved is to run water from outside into the city. All they had to do was cut off the water and the city had to surrender.

The Jews under John Heircannis(???) I mentioned ?? 1:20, they conquered this place as well. And there were many other conquerors.

When it was all said and done, the Edomites are so blotted out...this is fascinating to me...they're so wiped out that the skeptics maintained that they were legendary, they never existed. And Petra wasn't even discovered until the eighteenth century. It is now a wonder of the world.

Petra, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Babylon, all silent testimony to the veracity of the Word of God. Alexander Keith(?) write, "I would that the skeptic could stand as I did among the ruins, among the rocks and there open the sacred book and read the words of the inspired pen man." And we all can do that. God's Word is vindicated. What He says will happen will happen exactly the way He says it will happen. And there are many more.

Maybe I'll just close with this comment. Turn to Matthew 11. Can't make a comment without a passage. Matthew 11, and we'll leave it at this. Verse 21, "Jesus said, 'Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you Bethsaida," and in verse 23, "and you Capernaum will not be exalted to heaven will you? You shall descend to Hades.'" Because Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum had the presence of the Son of God and the miracles and had rejected, God pronounces a curse on these three cities. And what is fascinating to me about this is that these three cities to this very day are uninhabited, utterly uninhabited. The only one that you can even find ruins for is Capernaum. If you look at a map and you look up Bethsaida, there will be a question mark, they don't even know where it was. But it was near Capernaum because that's where Jesus ministered in Galilee. There's some idea of where Bethsaida was. But the only place that you see ruins is Capernaum. And it is really remarkable, no one lives there...no one. It's an amazingly beautiful place, it sits right at the head of the Sea of Galilee, spectacular location. There's nothing there, absolutely nothing. There's a little Catholic

monastery. I remember being there one time and hearing that there was one monk who lived there. And then the people who show you an old church where there is a mosaic of the feeding of the five thousand and who show you the footings of the first church in Capernaum which may have been built on the foundations of Peter's house, that's the city where many of the disciples lived. Fabulous place, spectacular place, but if you want to stay in a hotel or you want something to eat, you have to go around to Tiberius because there's nothing there. They were all wiped out really, they were all wiped out in 400 A.D. in a massive earthquake, never rebuilt...never.

And that's the way it will be. On the shore stands this one city of Tiberius, it's still there two thousand years later, sitting there, testimony to the fact that when God says a city will not be built, it will not be built. God's Word is absolutely accurate...absolutely accurate. And it's a fitting way to conclude our discussion by saying this. If the Bible says Jesus is coming, He's coming.

Peter Stoner, is a very interesting mathematician who wrote a book on the probability of prophetic fulfillment. You can find it in many libraries...Peter Stoner, S-t-o-n-e-r. He took eleven of these prophecies that were fulfilled in history and he did some mathematics which is way beyond me and he said, "The probability of all of these components coming to pass by accident...okay, and it becomes exponential very rapidly, all the details, and I've only given you some, but take eleven of the prophecies, all the details in the prophecies coming to pass by accident..."the probability is one in five-point-seven-six times ten to the fifty-ninth power." Now for some of you, that's meaningless. But for some of you, that's...that's meaningful. Let's make it simple. How many silver dollars, Peter Stoner says, would that be? One in five-point-seventy-six times ten to the fifty-ninth power, how many silver dollars in that? He says, ten to the twenty-eighth power solid silver suns...the sun is a million times the size of the earth. And he says it another way, if there are two trillion galaxies and each have a hundred billion stars, from our silver dollars we could make all the stars in all the galaxies two times ten to the fifth power. That's a mathematics of probability...incredible odds cannot just happen. It happens because God said it would happen and because God sees to it that it happens and His Word is at stake and His integrity.

When you open your Bible, you are reading the true Word of the true and living God. Well that's enough. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank You for the power of the Word. It stands, it stands against all the onslaughts of the critics and the enemies of truth. It stands unequivocally, unmovable, unshaken because it is Your true Word. Our confidence in it is given us by the Spirit of God. We believe it because you have caused us to believe it, but we are confirmed and affirmed and strengthened in that confidence when we take the time to look at the details of this amazing revelation from You. It is true in everything it says and especially concerning the gospel of salvation, that there is no salvation in any other than Jesus Christ, about whom there are so many prophecies, hundreds of which came to pass in His first coming, more yet to come when He returns. Strengthen our confidence in Your Word and enable us

to live by every word that proceeds from You, this is our food, in it we find Your character vindicated and our trust secured. In that trust we go forth to honor and to serve you and proclaim Your truth in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen...so what I'm thinking about doing...not next week but coming up...I may do one more message on the Bible on the subject of canonicity, how do we know that the books we got are really the right ones. But we may do that and something else to kind of wrap up our study when we get through this little holiday period of time.

Our prayer room is open to my right if we can be of any help to you spiritually, if you want to know about joining the church or want to know about baptism, any spiritual need you have, we're here to serve you. If you desire to know the Lord, you're not sure you know Christ at all. Maybe your confidence in the Word of God has been strengthened. The Lord has used this tonight and you now know that this Word is true and it's true when it speaks the gospel that saves, you'd like to talk to somebody, be right over here in the prayer room by the exit sign on my right.

Now, Father, send us away rejoicing that we know You, we know You, the omniscient, omnipotent, eternal God. We thank You for the gift of salvation in Christ in whose name we pray. And everyone said...Amen.

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