

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study

The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2

I. The Nature of Biblical Prophecy

A. Definitions.

1. Prophecy:
 - a) Prophecy (per Merriam-Webster): Prediction of the future under the influence of divine guidance; act or practice of a prophet; Any prediction; Something prophesied or predicted, specifically, the divinely inspired utterance or utterances of a prophet; A book of prophecies.
 - b) Prophecy (per Easton's): or prediction, was one of the functions of the prophet. It has been defined as a "miracle of knowledge, a declaration or description or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to foresee, discern, or conjecture."
 - c) Prophecy (NT usage per Vine's): Signifies the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. Though much of OT prophecy was purely predictive, prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, fore-telling. It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means, it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future.
2. Prophet:
 - a) Prophet (per Merriam-Webster): One who utters divinely inspired revelations: such as the writer of one of the prophetic books of the Bible; One regarded by a group of followers as the final authoritative revealer of God's will; one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight; One who foretells future events.
 - b) Prophet (OT usage per Vine's): Whether a true or false prophet; True prophets were mouthpieces of the true God; equal to one who speaks for another, or his mouth.
 - c) Prophet (NT usage per Vine's): One who speaks forth or openly; a proclaimer of a divine message; one who had immediate intercourse with God; one in whom the message from God springs forth" or "one to whom anything is secretly communicated." Hence, in general, "the prophet" was one upon whom the Spirit of God rested; one, to whom and through whom God speaks.
3. Hermeneutics (per Merriam-Webster): The study of the methodological principles of interpretation (as of the Bible); A method or principle of interpretation.
4. Exegesis (per Merriam-Webster): Exposition; Explanation; Especially: an explanation or critical interpretation of a text.
5. Eschatology (per Merriam-Webster): A branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of humankind; A belief concerning death, the end of the world, or the ultimate destiny of humankind; Specifically: any of various Christian doctrines concerning the Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, or the Last Judgment

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2

B. Types of Biblical Prophecy

1. Purely Prophetic: fulfillment in a totally futuristic sense with respect to the time of the declaration of the prophecy. (Eze 26)
2. Eschatological: Pertaining to the coming of the Lord and consummation of His kingdom. (Rev 20)
3. Typological-Prophetic: The writer describes his own experience with language that goes beyond that experience and becomes historically true in future fulfillment. (Ps 22)
4. Indirect: Written for a contemporary person or incident; but their ultimate fulfillment occurs in the future. (Is 7:14)

Isa 7:14-15

14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. NASU

5. Typological: An individual or event is in some way a "type" of a future person or occurrence, but other aspects of the passage do not apply. Typology may only be discerned as typological after its fulfillment is known. Once revealed, one may look back and see that certain aspects and symbols have meanings besides the historical experience. The analysis of the historical, contextual, and grammatical meaning of the text take precedence over the future application. (Ex 12:46; Jn 19:33, 36)

Ex 12:46

46 "It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it. NASU

John 19:33 & 36

33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

36 For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN." NASU

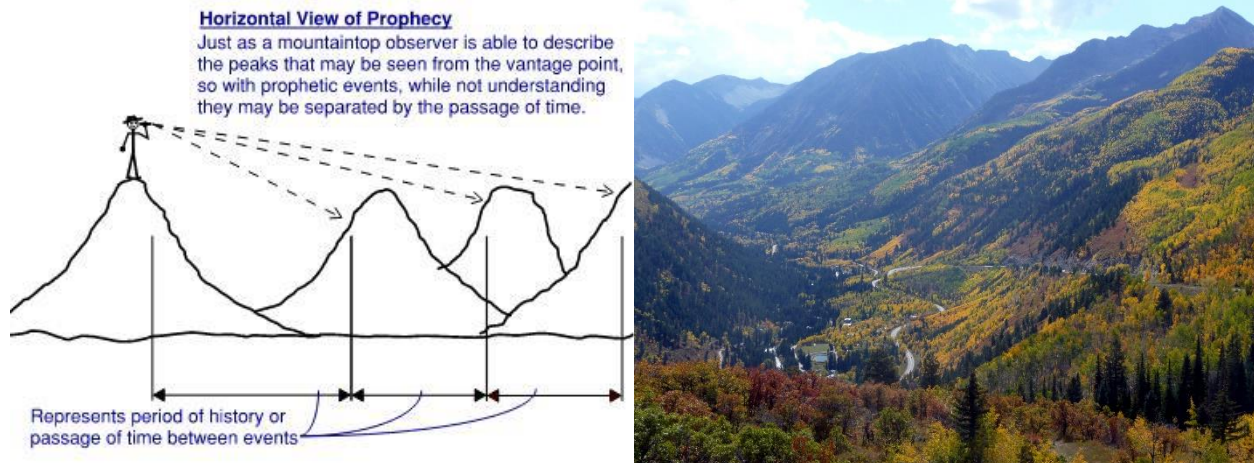
C. Additional Characteristics of Biblical Prophecy.

1. Apocalyptic Literature: Symbolic visionary prophetic literature, composed during oppressive conditions, consisting of visions whose events are recorded exactly as they were seen by the author and explained through a divine interpreter, and whose theological content is primarily eschatological. Additional characteristics of apocalyptic literature are as follows:
 - a) A person who received God's truth in visions recorded what he saw.
 - b) Makes extensive use of symbols or signs.
 - c) Normally gives revelations concerning God's program for the future of His people Israel.
 - d) Prose usually employed rather than poetic style, normally used in most prophetic literature.
 - e) Interpreting visions, symbols, and signs in apocalyptic literature; one is seldom left to his own ingenuity to discover the truth. In most cases, examination of context or comparison with a parallel Biblical passage provides scripture's own interpretation of the visions or symbols used. Therefore, careful comparison of Scripture to Scripture is necessary to arrive at a correct interpretation. Apocalyptic literature of the Bible found in the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation.

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study

The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2

2. Horizontal View of Prophecy: Description of future events as if looking horizontally at distant mountain peaks described in vivid detail with little understanding of vast valleys of time that separated events. So what may appear to be a continuous narrative of a single event, may actually be linked, disconnected events, that may not be discerned until they occur.



3. Wide Variation: Intricately interwoven throughout the Bible by various authors at various times. Some prophecies are general in nature, while some are very specific and detailed. (Recall: Bible written over a 1600 year span; over 60 generations, by 40 plus authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.; in different places; at different times; during different moods; on three continents; in three languages; on hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity).

4. Symbolism: Prophecy is written such that as the actual time of the events approach, the current events of the day will unlock the meaning. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, etc., knew little about prophecy. There has been more written on the subject in this century than in all previous centuries since Apostolic times. Symbols are timeless, once interpreted accurately, their meaning is not locked into a particular time. Also, it is possible that in some instances, the events of a vision were so far removed from the language of the writer's day that the message could not adequately be conveyed, forced to describe things seen centuries in advance with terminology of that day.

5. Geographical References: One must identify areas prophesied about and then determine the countries that occupy those land areas today.

D. Examples of Biblical Prophecy Fulfilled in History:

1. Prophecy by David of the suffering of Christ on the cross: (Ps 22:1, 6-8, 11-18)

Ps 22:1, 6-8, 11-18

1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

6 But I am a worm and not a man,
A reproach of men and despised by the people.

7 All who see me sneer at me;
They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying,

8 " Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him;

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2

Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.

12 Many bulls have surrounded me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.

13 They open wide their mouth at me,
As a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;

My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I can count all my bones.
They look, they stare at me;

18 They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots. NASU

Not only do these verses so accurately describe the scene around Golgotha but also detail the physical and emotional condition of the One who cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" David was obviously in distress when he wrote this Psalm. However, the language goes beyond anything, that we are aware of, that David actually, endured in his lifetime. Whether by vision or some other means, it appears that David was allowed to see through the eyes of his descendant, The Messiah, what He would endure and see while hanging on the cross nearly 1000 years later. Unlike several of David's psalms, there is no confession of sin, no imprecatory prayer against his enemies, only an account of a righteous man being executed at the hands of wicked men.

2. Prophecy against the ancient city of Tyre: Ezekiel 26:1-21

Ezek 26:1-21

1 Now in the eleventh year, on the first of the month, the word of the Lord came to me saying, 2 "Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled, now that she is laid waste,' 3 therefore thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. 4 'They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock. 5 'She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,' declares the Lord God, 'and she will become spoil for the nations. 6 'Also her daughters who are on the mainland will be slain by the sword, and they will know that I am the Lord.'"

7 For thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, chariots, cavalry and a great army. 8 "He will slay your daughters on the mainland with the sword; and he will make siege walls against you, cast up a ramp against you and raise up a large shield against you. 9 "The blow of his battering rams he will direct against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10 "Because of the multitude of his horses, the dust raised by them will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of cavalry and wagons and chariots when he enters your gates as men enter a city that is breached. 11 "With the

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2

hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets. He will slay your people with the sword; and your strong pillars will come down to the ground. 12 "Also they will make a spoil of your riches and a prey of your merchandise, break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses, and throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water. 13 "So I will silence the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps will be heard no more. 14 "I will make you a bare rock; you will be a place for the spreading of nets. You will be built no more, for I the Lord have spoken," declares the Lord God.

15 Thus says the Lord God to Tyre, "Shall not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall when the wounded groan, when the slaughter occurs in your midst? 16 "Then all the princes of the sea will go down from their thrones, remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments. They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble every moment and be appalled at you. 17 "They will take up a lamentation over you and say to you,

' How you have perished, O inhabited one,
From the seas, O renowned city,
Which was mighty on the sea,
She and her inhabitants,
Who imposed her terror
On all her inhabitants!
18 'Now the coastlands will tremble
On the day of your fall;
Yes, the coastlands which are by the sea
Will be terrified at your passing.'"

19 For thus says the Lord God, "When I make you a desolate city, like the cities which are not inhabited, when I bring up the deep over you and the great waters cover you, 20 then I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the lower parts of the earth, like the ancient waste places, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited; but I will set glory in the land of the living. 21 "I will bring terrors on you and you will be no more; though you will be sought, you will never be found again," declares the Lord God. NASU

a) One often major objection to specific fulfillment of OT prophecies is the claim that the accounts were already historical events and were written at a later date to appear to be predictive prophecy. It is sometimes inferred that someone other than the original author of a particular book added the text in an attempt to make it seem like predictive prophecy. This prophecy against the ancient city of Tyre is an account that silences the critics.

b) At first glance, one may not realize that this narrative describes several separate events, not just one epic judgment. Ezekiel delivered this prophecy in the 11th year of Jehoiakim's exile (587-586 B.C.). In verses 3-6, we see God's judgment, with the following specific consequences stated.

- (1) I am against you, O Tyre; God was against Tyre because of her pride and rejoicing at the fall of Jerusalem.
- (2) I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves; ultimately this included Babylon, Greece, Moslems and Crusaders came against Tyre.
- (3) They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; initiated by Nebuchadnezzar and then finished by Alexander the Great
- (4) I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock; by Alexander the Great

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study

The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2

- (5) She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; permanent state of the site of the mainland city
- (6) she will become spoil for the nations; after Babylon and Greece, she never regained her prominence
- (7) her daughters who are on the mainland will be slain by the sword; occurred in the siege by Nebuchadnezzar
- (8) they will know that I am the Lord; completely fulfilled as only God could do.
- (9) Verses 7-11 relate to the siege of Nebuchadnezzar with the personal pronoun “he”
- (10) Verses 12-14 describe the work of Alexander the Great and the other nations, switching to the pronoun, “they”
- (11) verses 15-18 shows the response of the surrounding peoples
- (12) Verses 19-21 declare her ultimate demise, down to the grave.

c) Specific fulfillment in history:

- (1) Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the mainland city of Tyre (26:8).

Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to the mainland city three years after the prophecy was proclaimed. After a 13 year long siege (585-573 B.C.), Nebuchadnezzar broke the gates down and found the city almost empty. Most of the inhabitants had moved by ship to the island about one-half mile off the coast. The fortified city on the island remained for several hundred years.

- (2) Make her a bare rock; flat like the top of a rock (26:4).

When Alexander the Great came to Tyre in 332 B.C. the island fortress, with its walls rising from the edge of the sea, refused to surrender. With no navy, Alexander devised a plan to reach the fortress by land. He built a causeway from the mainland out to the Alcatraz-like island fortress. For materials he demolished what was left of the ruins of the mainland city, literally scraping the surface clear to construct the 200 foot wide causeway. To defend against attacking raids from the inhabitants of Tyre, Alexander had two towers built near the end of the causeway and eventually pressed conquered nations into providing ships for defense. After a seven-month long siege, the island fortress was captured.

- (3) Fishermen will spread nets over the site (26:5).

Even in recent history, people have witnessed the site of the once great mainland city and described how fisherman still frequent the spot to spread their nets to dry on the bare rock.

- (4) Throw the debris into the water (26:12).

This was accomplished during the siege by Alexander the Great.

- (5) Never be rebuilt (26:1).

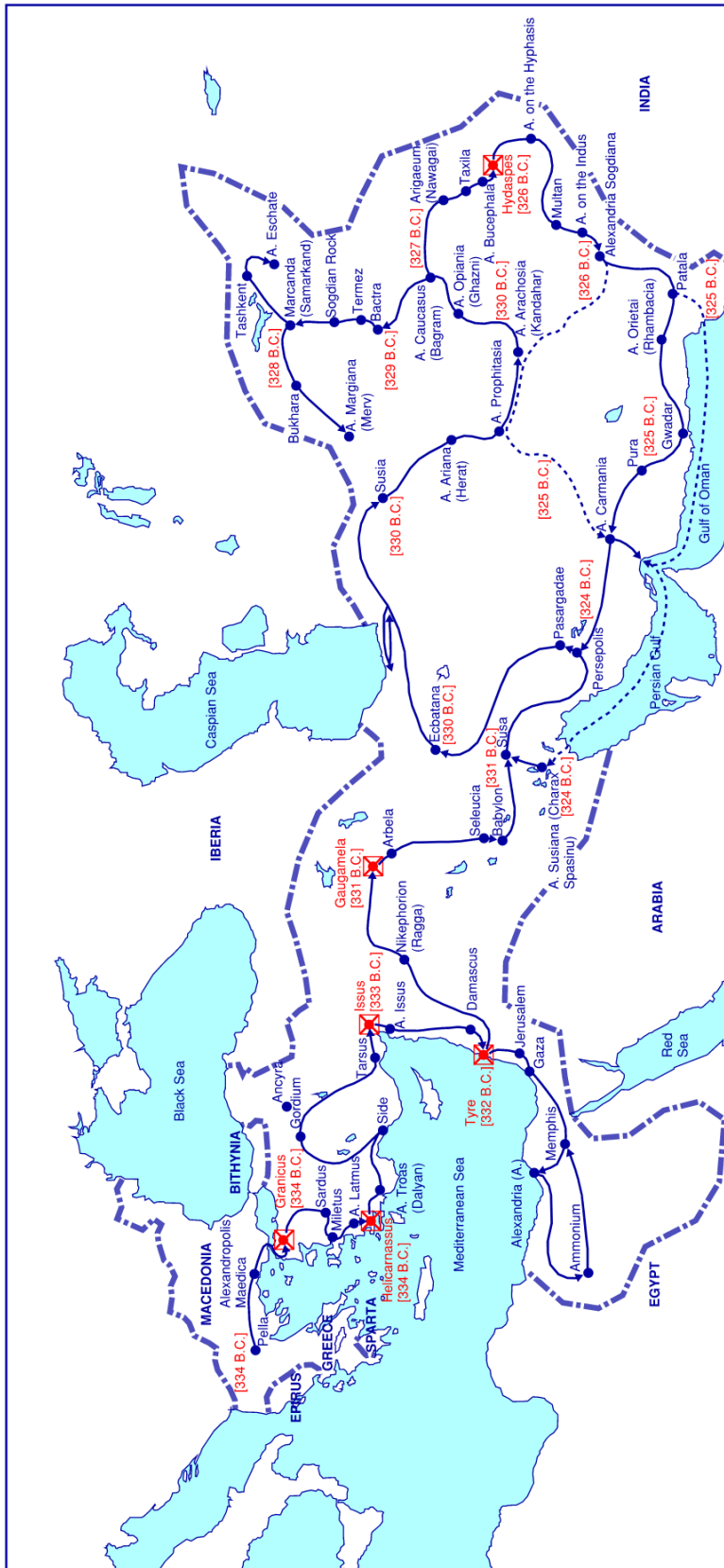
The island city was rebuilt to a degree after the defeat by Alexander the Great. Later, the Moslems took control of the city. The city was conquered again and became useful as a base during the Crusades. The island fortress was recaptured by the Moslems in A.D. 1321 and was completely destroyed.

- (6) Never to be found again (26:21).

The great city was never rebuilt. Today, small fishing village occupies the space, nothing resembling the once powerful, rich seaport. After all, where else would fishing nets come from?

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study

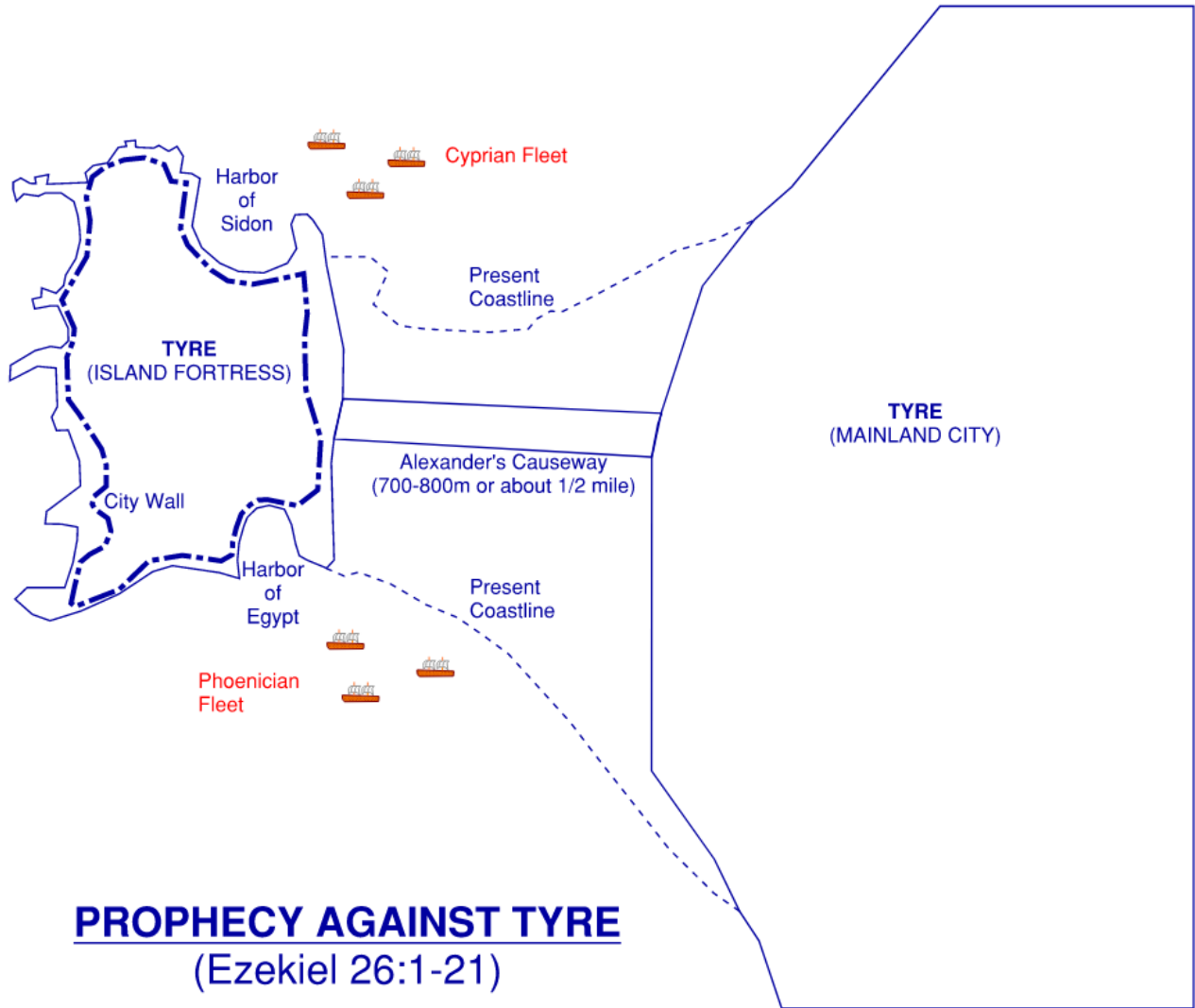
The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2



THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT (334 - 323 B.C.)

- Boundary of Alexander's Empire [323 B.C.]
- Conquest route taken by Alexander
- ⊠ Major battle of the Persian Campaign
- Name
- City conquered or settled by Alexander (Name)

End-Time Prophecy Bible Study
The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2



End-Time Prophecy Bible Study
The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2



End-Time Prophecy Bible Study

The Nature of Biblical Prophecy – 1 of 2

3. Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ during His First Advent:

Prophecy:	Fulfillment:
Born of a virgin (Isa 7:14)	Mt 1:18,24,25; Lk 1:26-35
Son of God (Ps 2:7)	Mt 3:17
Seed of Abraham, son of Isaac, son of Jacob (Ge 12:2,3; 21:12; 22:18; 35:10-12; Nu 24:17)	Mt 1:1,2; Lk 1:33;3:23,34; Gal 3:16
Tribe of Judah (Ge 49:10; Mic 5:2)	Mt 1:2; Lk 3:23,33; Heb 7:14
Line of Jesse (Isa 11:1,10)	Mt 1:6;Lk 3:23,32
House of David (2 Sa 7:12-16; Ps 132:11; Jer 23:5)	Mt 1:1; 9:27; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9,15; 22:41-46; Mk 9:10; 10:47-48; Lk 3:23-31; 18:38,39; Ac 3:22,23; Rev22:16
Born at Bethlehem (Mic 5:2)	Mt 2:1;2:4-8;Lk 2:4-7;Jn 7:42
His pre-existence (Isa 9:6,7; Mic 5:2)	Jn 1:1,2;8:58;17:5,24; Col 1:17;Rev 1:17:2:8;22:13
He shall be called Lord (Ps 110:1, Jer 23:6)	Lk 2:11;20:41-44
Shall be Immanuel (Isa 7:14)	Mt 1:23;Lk 7:16
Shall be a Prophet (Dt 18:18)	Mt 21:11; Lk 7:16; Jn 4:19; 6:14;7:40
Priest (Ps 110:4)	Heb 3:1; 5:5,6
Preceded by messenger (Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1)	Mt 3:1,2;3:3;11:1 Lk 1:17; Jn 1:23
"Stone of Stumbling" to Jews (Ps 118:22; Isa 8:14; 28:16)	Ro 9:32,33;1 Pe 2:7
Resurrection (Ps 16:10)	Mt 28:6; Mk 16:6; Lk 24:46; Ac 2:31; 13:33
Seated at the Right Hand of God (Ps 110:1)	Mt 16:19; Ac 2:34,35; Heb1:3
Sold for 30 pieces of silver, money to be thrown in God's house, price given for Potter's Field (Zech 11:12,13)	Mt 26:15; 27:3,5,7
Forsaken by His disciples (Zech 13:7)	Mt 26:31; Mk 14:50;14:27
Dumb before accusers, wounded, & bruised, crucified with thieves, made intercession for persecutors, rejected by his own people, buried in a rich man's tomb (Isa 53:1-12)	Mt 21:42,43; 27:12-19,26,38,57-60; Mk 15:27,28; Lk 23:34; Jn 1:11; 7:5,48
Smitten & spit upon (Isa 50:6)	Mt 26:67; Lk 22:63
Mocked, hands & feet pierced, stared upon, garments parted & lots cast, His forsaken cry, heart broken (Ps 22:1,7,8,14-18)	Mt 27:31,46; Lk 23:33,35; Jn 19:23,24,34;20:25
People shook their heads (Ps 22:7; 109:25)	Mt 27:39
Suffer thirst, gall & vinegar offered to Him (Ps 22:15, 69:21)	Jn 19:28
Bones not broken (Ps 34:20)	Jn 19:33
His side pierced (Zech 12:10)	Jn 19:34