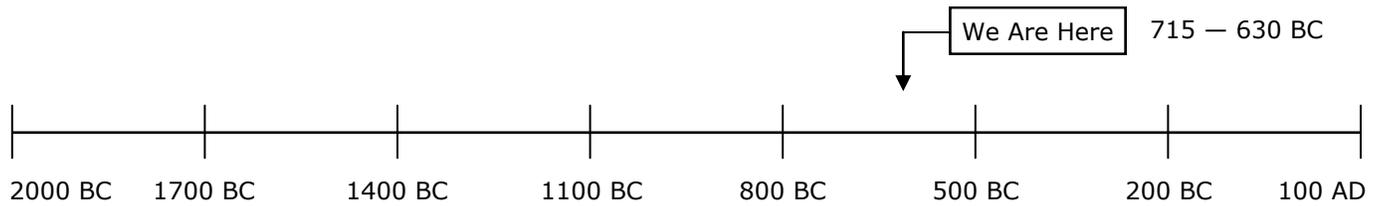


# A Peek at Prophecy

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Week 30: July 23-29 — *2 Kings 20-22; Isaiah 40-66; Jer. 1, 2*

57.2% Complete — 155 Days to Go



## Helpful Resources

Overview of Bible History (p.37), Map of Babylonian Empire (p.113), Kings and Prophets (p.71)

## Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

We read about Manasseh, Ammon, and Josiah, but most of our time was spent in *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*. These two men are major prophets because they wrote more than others. They also recorded for us the fall of Judah (*Isaiah* 150 years before the end, *Jeremiah* during the last five kings). *Jeremiah* witnessed Judah's destruction; and, because of his lamenting, he is referred to as the "Weeping Prophet." *Isaiah*, the "Prince of the Prophets," is unique for several reasons, primarily because he was given the longest glimpse at the coming Messiah, so long that scholars have also dubbed him the "Evangelical Prophet." Here are some examples.

1. The Messiah would come as a child (*9:6*) and be born of a virgin (*7:14*).
2. Christ would revive David's lineage (*11:1*) and would be the chief cornerstone (*28:16*).
3. The Messiah would be preceded by a Messenger (*40:3-5*), who was John the Baptist.
4. The Spirit of God would be upon Him (*42:1*) and His mission (*61:1-3*).
5. Christ would be resolute under persecution (*50:6, 7*) and would not retaliate (*53:7, 8*).
6. Christ would bear our sins (*53:4-6*); He was the Lamb who was sacrificed (*53:7-11*).
7. Christ would be "numbered with the transgressors" (*53:12*), hung on a cross with thieves.
8. The Messiah would be buried in a rich man's tomb (*53:9*).

Some people struggle with *the possibility* of prophecy, while others (the Jews) struggle with *the person* described in it. Let's consider the skeptics' problems with God's revelation to man.

## The Person of Prophecy

As a whole, the Jews missed Jesus despite all of the prophecies about Him. How is that possible? Simple. Jesus did not accomplish all that they believed He should accomplish. They expected Him to come as a conquering warrior, one who would overthrow their enemies and set up an everlasting kingdom. To a degree, the Jews were correct; the Messiah will do these things at some point. However, when Jesus came as a servant to be crucified and not as an earthly king, it surprised the Jews and they wrote Him off as another prophet. In their defense, the prophecies regarding Him are tricky. Many of them have double meanings. While a prophecy referred to an event in the near future, it may also apply to an event in the distant future. Also, while the Jews identified prophecies about the Messiah, those prophecies described two advents at the same time (*Mal. 4:1-3; Joel 2:30, 31; Daniel 9*). These double meanings confused the Jews and turned them off of Christ (*Isaiah 9:6, 7; Jer. 23:5, 6*).

## The Possibility of Prophecy

For many, the mention of miracles and prophecy bring out the words “fiction, myths, legends, even fairy tales.” What is it about prophecy that gives so many in our world difficulty?

1. **The world does not believe prophecy, because the world cannot conceive prophecy.** Miracles and prophecy go beyond the limited abilities of man’s mind and body; therefore, rationalists cannot accept them as true (*2 Cor. 2:12-16*). They don’t want to admit that there is a God who can do things which cannot be explained.
  2. **Prophecy is not proof that the Bible is false; it’s proof that the Bible is true.** If all miracles and prophecies were erased from Scripture, there would be nothing left but what man did; the Bible would be like every other book. Miracles and prophecy are two elements that helped Jesus prove His divinity. These two don’t prove that the Bible is fictional, but that it is of God and that He’s much bigger than man can conceive.
  3. **Rationalists cannot perceive prophecy because it is of divine, not human, origin.** Man himself is incapable of knowing the future. Only God can do that (*2 Peter 1:20, 21*), which is why man cannot accept prophecy as a possibility.
  4. The prophecies of Isaiah are so detailed that **“no human could have predicted them by accident and no imposter could have fulfilled them by cunning”** (J. MacArthur on *Isaiah 53*). One of the amazing things about Christ is that He not only prophesied Himself but that He fulfilled prophecies Himself (over 200). How is that possible unless He was God? It’s not. The repeated fulfillment of divine prophecy is one of the pillars in the case for Christ’s divinity. He was not merely a man who lucked into completing predictions; He was God in the flesh, who simply accomplished what He had purposed.
- Personal Application
    1. **The God of the Bible is still God today.** God is alive and active and still able to do supernatural, unexplainable things. Our faith should not be so small as to doubt His power.
    2. **We can trust the Bible for what it is and what it says.** We need not doubt it because of its supernatural elements. Have confidence that it is what it claims to be.
    3. **God has a plan and He is working to its end, for His glory and our good.** We should take comfort in reading prophecy, for events are happening according to purpose.
    4. **If the prophecies of old were fulfilled, then the prophecies of the future will be fulfilled too.** Enough said. God’s Word can be trusted.
  - Other Prophetic Passages
    1. **Fall of Judah** (*2 Kings 21:10-17*), hastened by the foolish reign of King Manasseh
    2. **Humiliation of Babylon** (*47:1-15*) both in Ancient History and in the end times.
    3. **King Cyrus** (*44:28; 45:1-6; 48:12-22*), the Persian monarch who would capture Babylon and free the Jews from captivity was prophesied by name 150 years before birth.

## The Bottom Line

God is *faithful* to keep His *promises* and to fulfill His *prophecies*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Be honest, have you ever been a skeptic of miracles and prophecy? Why or why not?
2. How should God’s miracles and prophecies impact the way we live?