

3

## The world's most prophetic book

The evidence you never heard



WHY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE CHRISTIANITY TO BE TRUE



## BOOKLET 3

# The world's most prophetic book

The evidence you never heard

## Why Christians believe Christianity to be true

A simple and authentic explanation of things you might not otherwise hear

A Shining Lights Trust (NZ) resource

By Dave Mann ©2023

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DAVE MANN, AUTHOR



# Something new under the sun

Hope is a powerful thing. It's the reason we get out of bed in the morning. We all need hope.

Christianity is a religion that offers unparalleled hope, promising a future of perfected Creation with no wrongdoing or suffering. The question is: is this promised hope true?



We've looked at why so many people believe a Creator exists — but the evidence of design cannot prove whether the Creator is good or capable of defeating evil one day.



Next, we looked at the reliability of the Bible as a book of history — because the book claims to be a record of a God revealing himself to us through history. This gives us a starting basis for believing the idea of a good God — despite the evils of this world. But more investigation is needed.



In this third booklet, we're going to look at prophecies (predictions) within the Bible — because this can tell us if there is a Divine hand (from God) behind the book!

## Why are so many interested in the future?

From ancient times, humans have had an interest in prophecy. There's always been a place for prophets, seers, and holy men and women who claim to know something about our future. Knowing the future could remove some unpredictability. It could reveal a larger purpose or plan for our lives.

About 25% of Americans believe in astrology (horoscopes). Three out of four believe in the paranormal.<sup>1</sup> For comparison, 67% of the British believe in astrology<sup>2</sup> — and the same number (67%) believe in the power of psychics.<sup>3</sup> That's a lot of faith in supernatural things, including from some considerably secularised nations!

Nostradamus (AD 1503-1566) is one of the more well-known non-Biblical names connected to predicting the future. We'll look at him briefly later to compare his predictions with Biblical prophecy.

## The Bible is the world's most predictive book!



Scholar J. Barton Payne<sup>4</sup> calculated that of the Bible's 31,124 verses, an astounding 8,352 contain predictive material of some kind.<sup>5</sup> These predictions span the events of about 5,000 years of our history. It's a lot of predicting, and also gives plenty of material to test its accuracy!

Not all accept what is found though. Some sceptics disregard the whole idea of a miraculously-fulfilled prediction. However, it means nothing that they have to reject all claims of miracles because their prior beliefs exclude the possibility of miracles!

It remains that many millions have investigated the Bible's predictions and have been more than a little surprised!



## Why is this important?

As we discovered in booklet 2, the Bible has been shown to be an accurate book of history. However, the Bible claims more than this. It claims God is its primary author. It explains itself this way:

*“no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:20-21.*

The predictions are therefore a gift to us, giving us a way of testing what the Bible claims about itself. Is this book just the most amazing book ever — or is it more than that?

Also, are the predictions Divine revelations or vague generalisations? Have the Bible’s predictions been fulfilled — or not?

## We will consider:

1. Why Biblical prophecy matters.
2. How to figure out if a prophecy is real or fake.
3. Examples of fulfilled prophecies.
4. A statistical analysis, including a comparison to Nostradamus, modern-day psychics, and astrologers.
5. What it all means.



# 1. WHY BIBLICAL PROPHECY MATTERS

The predictions found in the Bible give us a way to test its authority, and serve as proof of God's promises, his sovereign control, and his message of hope.

## The plan — summarised

From the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Bible onwards (Genesis 12), we read about God's plan to fix the mess humans made through our choice to sin (selfishness/wrong). From this point on, God began to work with the intent of 'repairing' the earth.

God started to intervene in specific ways — as if with a plan. He first intervened by choosing a man (Abraham). Through Abraham, God promised to bless all people on earth. Next, He chose a nation (Israel) — and then came Jesus. Despite the enormous mess that humans had made, the message is that God has a plan — and he's promising it will work!

If there's evidence that the Bible's predictions have been miraculously fulfilled, there's a basis for trusting in God's plan and many promises.





## 2. HOW TO FIGURE OUT IF A PROPHECY IS REAL OR FAKE

A genuine prophecy is simply one that hasn't been faked. There are two questions we could ask to discover if a prophecy has been made-up. Did someone change the words in an old text to make it look like something that happened later? Or two, did they change the account of what recently happened to make it look like a prediction written hundreds of years ago? Let's start by asking these two questions about the Bible's ancient prophecies on the coming 'Messiah and Saviour of Israel' — who Christians believe was Jesus.

### Could the Bible's texts have been changed?

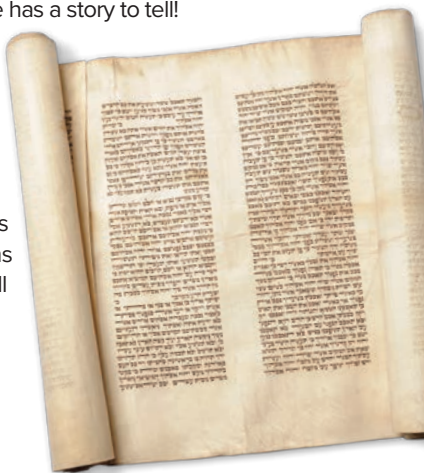
Time and time again, sceptics have suggested that the fulfilled predictions in the Bible have been changed or falsified. But with decades of academic research behind us since then, the evidence has a story to tell!

The Dead Sea Scrolls found in a cave in 1947/1948 were a key discovery.

The Scrolls included many ancient Hebrew manuscripts and copies of Old Testament Biblical texts that were sometimes 1,000 years older than those previously found. This means we have clear proof of the predictions of a coming 'Messiah' for Israel — dating well before Jesus' time.

By the way, this discovery also strongly validates how accurately the Old Testament Scriptures had been preserved over the centuries.

Another vital piece of evidence is the existence of a Greek translation of the Old Testament made in 250 BC. Called the Septuagint, there are over 2,000 ancient copies still in the hands of people and libraries today — proving again that the various predictions were written exactly when they were claimed to have been written, well before Jesus' time.



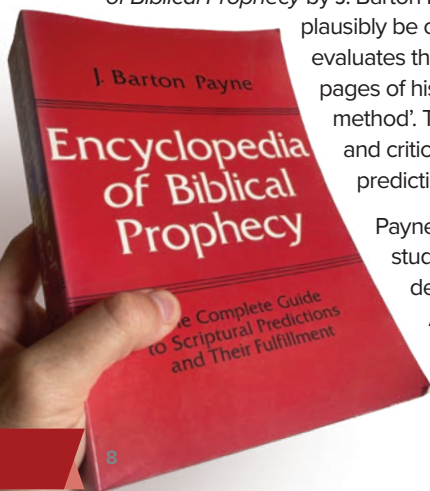


If the Bible's original predictions are reliable, the next logical question is: were later fulfillments of the prediction somehow faked to make a later event look like a fulfillment?

### 3. EXAMPLES OF FULFILLED PROPHECIES

One of the most remarkable works on Biblical prophecy is the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* by J. Barton Payne. In it, he lists every verse that might plausibly be considered a prophecy and critically evaluates them one by one. Payne takes the first 140 pages of his 750-page book just to explain his 'critical method'. The author's approach is conservative and critical. The whole point is to find legitimate predictions.

Payne's study is also unique. No one has ever studied the Bible's predictions in as much detail, and he devoted decades to this work. As a result, he established clear criteria for assessing what is — and what's not — a valid prediction.



His study ruled out many prophecies that others might say are valid. He established, for example, that there are **737 verifiable predicted matters**. Many would say there are many more predictions than this. To be clear, Payne is not saying these many other predictions are invalid. His point is more that they can't be proven as valid. His study is about what he can prove!

For example, many prophecies in the Old Testament focus on a coming 'Messiah' or 'Saviour'. Many Christians would say there are about 300 of these prophecies fulfilled in the life of Jesus. Payne's method leaves just 127<sup>6</sup> of these standing. (In case of misunderstanding, this is not to say the other predictions were invalid. Many were clearly fulfilled. These were removed from the study because the original prediction did not fit Payne's academically motivated criteria. Again, his study was about what he could prove. See the endnote for a few more details on this).<sup>7</sup>

As we shall see later, 127 is a massive number for predictions!

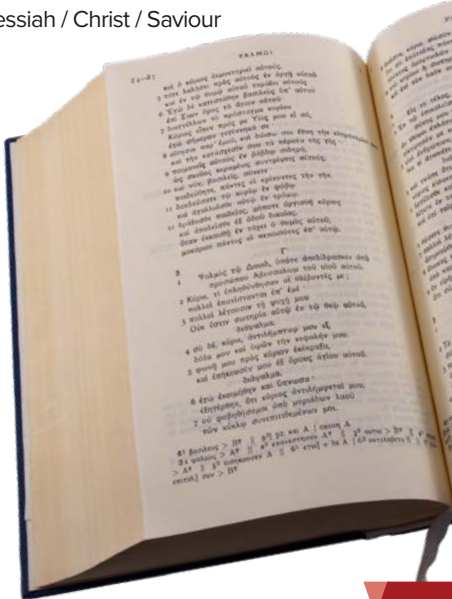
Let's look at predictions from just two chapters of the Bible relating to:

- a) The 'history of nations' before the time of Christ
- b) The life and purpose of the Messiah / Christ / Saviour

### a) The history of nations

In Daniel chapter eleven, the prophet Daniel predicts the historical details of well over 30 events that will happen over the next few hundred years. All the details Daniel predicted came true after his death. The details are simply outstanding.

Regarding the purpose of these predictions, they were probably to reassure the Jewish people that they would survive the next few hundred years, even though it was going to be a very messy period politically. There would be wars and power shifts



# The Book of Daniel

## CHAPTER 1

the third year of the reign of Je-  
oi'-a-kim king of Judah came  
-chad-nez'-zar king of Babylon  
Jerusalem, and besieged it.  
and the Lord gave Je-ho-  
Judah into his hand.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart  
that he would not defile himself with  
the portion of the king's banquet  
with the wine which was  
for the banquet.

between nations and empires — but at the end of that time (during which the Jewish Temple would be treated with great disrespect by the ruler), they would be found standing firm in their faith as a people. The predictions were given to them to evidence that God really was still in control — despite the hardships. (For more on the wider purpose of this chapter see a truly intriguing summary in the endnote).<sup>8</sup>

Daniel's prediction spans 33 verses in the Bible. We will look at only a dozen verses, to illustrate the nature of what exists.

(We will also skip past the first 9 verses of the prediction to remove any possibility of doubt regarding the original, because their fulfillments happened before 250 BC when the Greek translation of the Scriptures was written.)

### Examples:

**Verse 11:** *Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated.*

- » With the context of the prior eleven verses defining the year we are up to, this prediction was fulfilled when Ptolemy IV Philopator (238-205 BC) of Egypt battled Antiochus III, and defeated him at Raphia in 217 BC.

**Verse 12:** *When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet will not remain triumphant.*

- » The historian Polybius records that Ptolemy killed nearly 10,000 of Antiochus' soldiers at Raphia at that time.

**Verse 13:** *For the king of the north will muster an army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped*

- » Which Antiochus III did in 202 BC.

**Verse 14:** *In those times many will rise against the king of the South. The violent men among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success.*

- » This is written to the Jewish people / Israelites, so the word 'your' refers to them. Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181 BC) of Egypt battled Jews who joined the forces of Antiochus but crushed the rebellion in 200 BC.

Even a political marriage is predicted.



Daniel is most famous for the account of God's miracle in which he was untouched when thrown to the lions

**Verse 16-18:** *“The invader...”* (Antiochus, as above) will *“...make an alliance with the king of the South...”* (Ptolemy, as above) *“...And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him. He will then turn his attention to the coastlands”*

- » Antiochus gave his daughter Cleopatra I in marriage to Ptolemy V in 194 BC.
- » The prediction then turns toward its endpoint,<sup>9</sup> painting a picture of ‘moderate hope’.

**Verses 29-32:** These verses predict that the king of the North will plunder the Temple in Jerusalem, and then return a second time to *“desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation”*

- » In 168 BC an altar to the pagan god Zeus Olympius was erected in the Jerusalem Temple.

**Verse 33:** A resistance movement is predicted: *“but the people who know their God will firmly resist him”*

- » This was fulfilled in the Hasidim, who stood against Antiochus.

**Verse 34-35:** Finally, it predicts that this movement would grow in number, even though it would suffer greatly in the process.

- » In 168 BC, a guerrilla uprising started in Modein, 17 miles northwest of Jerusalem under the leadership of a man named Mattathias, who had a son named Judas Maccabeus.<sup>10</sup> As a result, in December of 165 BC, the altar of the Temple was rededicated (blessed, and then returned to use). Judas Maccabeus went on to lead the revolt against Antiochus, resulting in a 24-year war (166-142 BC) and the eventual independence of Judah<sup>11</sup> (until 63 BC when the Romans took control of the whole region).

## ***Too good to be true?***

Predictions like these leave sceptics of the Bible in a difficult position.

As J. Barton Payne put it so well, *“the so-called unjustifiable accident is one which has refused to be silenced”*<sup>12</sup>

Regarding this prediction by the Prophet Daniel, some have suggested he was writing about events that happened in his own time — which he wrote down afterwards while claiming to have written them beforehand — to fake a miracle in his own time. There is, however, no detail of any history matching this in his own time — while there very clearly is history matching the predictions across the centuries that follow. What's more, this kind of deceitfulness does not match what's known of Daniel, who was respected in history specifically because he was a man of great integrity.

**AMAZING**

For the dating of this text, the 'Book of Daniel' was completed around 530 BC, shortly after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BC. Quite apart from the many Greek copies (evidencing authorship prior to 250 BC), a copy was also among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Getting a few details correct would be good luck.

To write a long list of predictions related to political and power shifts, spanning a few hundred years, and in order, would take a miracle!



A cave in which the Qumran Scrolls were found



## b) The coming of the Messiah

In this section we will look at some examples of predictions around the Messiah (or ‘Christ’ or ‘Saviour of Israel’) — focusing also on just one chapter of the Bible to keep this booklet short and sweet.

Then we’ll give a quick list of some other predictions of the Messiah.

The chapter we will look at is Isaiah 53, which is a prophetic poem about a coming ‘suffering servant’.

Because we’re looking at a prediction that seems to have a clear fulfilment in Jesus, let’s get straight to the important questions.

### ***Check 1: Could the prediction be a later-written fake?***

Isaiah’s book was completed shortly after 701 BC.<sup>13</sup> The earliest copies of Isaiah are those found among the Qumran Scrolls, dating to the second century BC.<sup>14</sup> This evidences that there is no way this was written after the events.

Regarding the fulfilment of the predictions in Jesus, quite obviously we have the four historical accounts of Jesus’ life in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These accounts of Jesus’ life are trusted.

However, there is another check we can do here. Jewish people — if they are religious Jews — do not accept Jesus was their promised Messiah. As these predictions seem to be clearly fulfilled in Jesus, an important question to ask is how religious Jews have interpreted Isaiah 53 since the time of Jesus.





## Check 2: How do religious Jews interpret Isaiah 53?

It turns out that, while there are numerous exceptions since the time of Jesus, there is a long and strong history of Jewish interpretation both before and after Jesus that affirms that Isaiah 53 is indeed a prediction about the Messiah.

The Babylonian Talmud, compiled in the third to fifth centuries AD<sup>15</sup>, says, *“The Messiah—what is his name?...The Rabbis say, the leprous one; those of the house of Rabbi say, the sick one, as it is said, “Surely he hath borne our sicknesses.”*<sup>16</sup> The closing quote is from Isaiah 53, confirming that they believed the chapter to be a prediction about the Messiah. (This is to say that even though they agree that Isaiah 53 predicts a coming Messiah, they also do not believe Jesus was that Messiah.)

Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh, who was the Rabbi of Safed in the late 16th century, said regarding Isaiah 53, *“I may remark, then, that our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah.”*<sup>17</sup>

Even the more recently revised Jewish *Prayer Book for the Day of Atonement* (printed in 1931 and 1937) recognises Isaiah 53 as Messianic in intent (about the Messiah).<sup>18</sup>

So, while some Jewish teachers (Rabbi) today say they do not accept Isaiah 53 as Messianic, there is a strong history of religious Jews believing otherwise.<sup>19</sup>

Why is this significant? Because the predictions match the life and experiences of Jesus so precisely!



## Seven examples from the prediction in Isaiah 52:13 — 53:12

I would love to include the whole chapter, but it would make this booklet too long. You can find the above chapter in any Bible, and if you've read the accounts of Jesus' life, you'll quickly see how it connects.

**Verse 2:** *He grew up before him like a tender shoot... He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him...*

- » 'grew up' infers the Messiah grew up like any other human — and without physical or social advantage (not born into earthly royalty or wealth).
- » Jesus' beginnings were remarkably humble. For example, he was born in a stable (animal shelter).

**Verse 3:** *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering... he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

- » While some loved Jesus, he was loathed by others, and ultimately rejected and killed — which is a strange thing to predict if he was to be 'God's man' on earth!

**Verse 4:** *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God...*

- » "He took up our infirmities" — this speaks of the purpose of the Messiah, who would die for our sins, like a 'substitute'.
- » 'Stricken' — in Deuteronomy 21:23 it says that anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse. Culturally to a Jew, the fact that Jesus died by being hung on a cross indicated that he was cursed ('stricken') by God.

**Verse 5-6:** *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities (sins); the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed... the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

- » This verse directly explains the purpose that Christians believe Jesus to have come for.
- » The term 'pierced' is worth pointing out, because Jesus died from being pierced, firstly by nails on a cross, and secondly by a soldier's spear in his side.



*The evidence you never heard*

- » Interestingly, another prediction that Jesus would be ‘pierced’ is found in Psalm 22 — this chapter is also accepted by many religious Jews as a Messianic prophecy — and all prior to the time of Roman crucifixion.

**Verse 7:** *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before her shearers is silent so he did not open his mouth.*

- » Those who know the accounts will quickly see the connection here to Jesus, who remained silent before his accusers at his trials, except when directly challenged at the end of it all. It’s recorded how Pilate was ‘greatly amazed’ at Jesus’ silence.<sup>20</sup>

**Verse 8-9:** *For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was deceit in his mouth.*

- » We already know Jesus died. Remarkably, he died between two thieves (Luke 23:32-34) but was then buried in a brand-new tomb made by a wealthy man named Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50f). He was both ‘assigned a grave with the wicked’, and ‘with the rich in his death’.

**Verse 10-11:** *and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering... After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied.*

- » The idea of a dead man rising was not expected — even by Jesus’ disciples, despite Jesus telling them they would see him again. The picture created here certainly fits with the account of the resurrection of Jesus.

## ***How many predictions need fulfilling to prove someone is the Messiah?***

What matters about the predictions of the Messiah is that the Messiah must fulfill all of them — not just some.

For example, if we identified 20 predictions — and Jesus clearly fulfilled half, but clearly not the other half (with no reasonable explanation<sup>7</sup>), he wouldn’t be the Messiah!

The details of Isaiah 53 paint a picture that matches Jesus so clearly that you would think it was written after Jesus' life — if you didn't know differently.

As a reminder, a full copy of the book of Isaiah was among the many texts of the Qumran Scrolls, dating well before the time of Christ.

## Other predictions which Jesus fulfilled

You'll find Bible references in the endnotes.<sup>21</sup>

- » The 'seed' (descendant) of Abraham, as well as of Isaac and Jacob
- » And from the tribe of Judah (one of the 12 tribes)
- » And from the family line of Jesse (King David's father), and the descendant of King David
- » And a descendant who would be called the Lord
- » And to be born specifically in the small town of Bethlehem Ephrathah
- » And presented with gifts (By the 'wise men')
- » And preceded by a specific messenger (John the Baptist)
- » And though born in Bethlehem (above), his ministry would begin in Galilee
- » And known for having a ministry of miracles
- » And entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey
- » And entering the temple at Jerusalem
- » And to be (1) betrayed, (2) by a friend, (3) for thirty pieces (4) of silver, (5) which are thrown down (not placed), (6) in the house of the Lord, (7) this money being given to the potter<sup>22</sup>
- » And forsaken even by his disciples
- » And accused by false witnesses
- » And spat upon and mocked
- » And with his clothing then divided and lots cast for them
- » And then resurrected from the dead.

All these events were predicted before Jesus' time. Jesus' life fulfilled them all.

How does that happen — and what does that say?



## 4. STATS AND COMPARISONS

### a) Statistically, the chance of all prophecies coming true in one person is highly unlikely

Professor Peter Stoner (1888-1980) in his book, *Science Speaks*, wrote of how he had his students calculate the probability of a few predictive prophecies coming about by chance.<sup>23</sup> They selected just eight specific prophecies regarding the Promised Messiah<sup>24</sup> (which Jesus fulfilled) and concluded that the chance that any man might have lived to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies was 1 in  $10^{17}$  (1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000).<sup>25</sup>

If this number of silver dollar coins were laid across the face of Texas, they would cover the entire state 61cm (two feet) deep.

If we did the same to New Zealand<sup>26</sup> the coins would be about 1.6 meters deep.

Stoner then calculated the probability of 48 specific prophecies being fulfilled as 1 in  $10^{157}$ . For a comparison, there are only about  $10^{78}$  to  $10^{82}$  atoms in the known universe — while J. Barton Payne's conservative study suggested 127 accurately fulfilled predictions — and that's only the ones regarding Jesus!



### b) Could Jesus have faked the fulfilments?

H. J. Schonfield claims just that in his book, *The Passover Plot*.

When we think about it, there are a handful of predictions any human could control, like the prediction that the Messiah would ride a donkey into Jerusalem. You or I could do that!

However, most of the predictions relate to things that were entirely beyond Jesus' ability to control. For example, Jesus could not have controlled where he was born (Bethlehem), his family line (direct descendant of David), how he would be betrayed (30 silver coins), how he would die (pierced), what they'd do with his clothes while he lay dying (throw lots/gamble for them),

or where he would be buried (a grave with the wicked/with the rich in his death).

About riding a donkey into Jerusalem, a study of the circumstances reveals that Jesus did this intentionally because of the message it sent. For a comparison, imagine a seat that only the king could sit on, and then someone goes and sits in that seat. They would be claiming to be the king.

Until that point in time, Jesus had avoided directly answering the question about whether he was the promised Messiah. On that day, Jesus finally spoke — but not with words. He rode that donkey as a declaration — and that is why the city erupted with celebration, remembered to this day as ‘Palm Sunday’. The crowds knew what he was saying!

### **c) Could Jesus’ disciples have lied about the fulfilments?**

The question about whether the disciples lied in their accounts, to make it look like Jesus fulfilled the predictions, was covered in booklet 2.

You’ll remember that a person has never been known to willingly die for something they knew wasn’t true — and church history records that all but one of Jesus’ remaining disciples died for what they claimed. So, the idea that they were lying doesn’t match the evidence.

The disciples also couldn’t control most of the details, like where Jesus was born or who he was descended from.



The evidence, therefore, overwhelmingly maintains that the New Testament texts are reliable, honest, and accurate accounts of Jesus' life.

We are looking at genuinely fulfilled predictions. These are a miracle!

## (d) Are there comparisons to the accuracy of these predictions?

### i. Nostradamus

One of the most well known non-Biblical 'prophets' is Nostradamus. Michel de Nostredame was born in December, 1503. His most famous book, *Les Prophéties*, has rarely been out of print since his death in 1566. His predictions are mostly of coming disasters, and some see fulfillments in the likes of the Fire of London, the rise of Napoleon and Adolf Hitler, and in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the World Trade Center.



However, to this day, there is no evidence anyone has ever interpreted any of Nostradamus' predictions specifically enough to allow a clear identification of the event *in advance*.<sup>27</sup>

What's more, even if he were to get a couple of predictions right, Nostradamus was proven wrong in many predictions<sup>28</sup> — something that was unacceptable for a Biblical prophet.

Biblical prophets gained their reputation by making both short and long-term predictions. False prophets were supposed to be executed<sup>29</sup> — though it seems these consequences were rarely followed through. The accuracy of their short-term predictions gave credibility to their long-term ones. The predictions that survived in Scripture came only from those with a trustworthy track record.

Nostradamus predicted that by 1792 Venice, Italy, would become a great power and influence in the world — but Venice is still waiting for this to happen. He predicted the downfall of the Catholic clergy in AD 1609 — which did not come about. He predicted that astrologers would be



persecuted in AD 1607 — but it never happened. He predicted that by AD 1700 China ‘would subdue the whole northern section’ of the world.<sup>30</sup>

The style of Nostradamus’ predictions is significantly vague, so much so that their interpretation is said to be ‘in the eye of the beholder’. As a result, while some claim various predictions have been fulfilled, it’s difficult to verify that any actual foreknowledge has existed.

## ii. Modern Psychics

A study of predictions made by psychics in 1975 and observed until 1981 showed that of the 72 predictions, only six were fulfilled in any way. Two of these were vague and two others were not overly surprising — the United States and Russia would remain leading powers and there would be no world wars.<sup>31</sup>

*The People’s Almanac* (1976) did a study of the predictions of 25 top psychics. Of the total 72 predictions, 92% were totally wrong. It is suggested that an accuracy rate of around 8 percent could be explained by chance and general knowledge of circumstances.<sup>32</sup>

In 1993, the psychics missed every major unexpected news story, including Michael Jordan’s retirement, the Midwest flooding, and the Israel-PLO peace treaty. Among their false prophecies was the prediction that the Queen of England would become a nun, and that Kathy Lee Gifford would replace Jay Leno as host of *The Tonight Show*.<sup>33</sup>

Author Josh McDowell notes that, while contemporary critics of Biblical prophecy suggest psychics predictions stand as equals to Biblical predictions, there is a “...quantum leap...” between them.<sup>34</sup>

## iii. Astrology

Astrology is the belief that people can use the positions of stars and planets to predict (and some suggest even cause) earthly events in our lives, our personalities, and natural occurrences. It has a long history, and, as cited in the introduction, 31% of Americans and 67% of the British express some belief in it.

However, studies have repeatedly failed to demonstrate that a relationship exists between predictions and outcomes.<sup>35</sup> The average accuracy of astrological predictions has been no greater than what would be expected by chance. There remain, however, many believers, and a consistent cultural interest in it.

#### iv. Other major religions

Some people say, 'all the religious books have their prophecies', or similar. This is not the case.

Our culture possibly assumes this because we're a little familiar with the Bible, so we assume other religious books (and teachings) are no different.



*“Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the [Hindu] Veda. But none of those books contains predictive prophecy.”<sup>36</sup>*

— Norman Geisler and W Nix

This comment is not a criticism of these books. There's nothing to say religious books must have predictions in them! The point is simply that these religious books are not about prediction.

Predictions across time are, by contrast, a big thing in the Bible. From all that I have ever seen in investigating this matter, the accuracy with which many predictions have been fulfilled is also entirely unique.

## d) Why then do some still not accept what we can see?

Some people don't want to believe in miracles — full stop.

They therefore reject all evidence on this matter before even looking at it because (to them) 'miracles can't happen!'

To quote from J. Barton Payne, on the topic:

*"The school of modern critical scholars... opposes the whole concept of a supernatural, verbalized prediction"<sup>37</sup> Though from their secular way of thinking, fulfilled predictions could occasionally "intervene as an accident"<sup>38</sup>*

*"There is no question that if miracles are... impossible, then prediction is impossible; and those passages which have been accounted predictive, must be explained away as being vague, as applying only to something in the writer's lifetime, or on some other hypothesis. This is only saying that belief in prediction is not compatible with the theory of atheism"<sup>39</sup>*



To put that differently, even if something looks, smells, and tastes like a miracle, if you don't believe in miracles, it obviously can't be a miracle, 'because miracles don't happen!'

The problem is, this 'accident' has happened — and many hundreds of times, from one book!

As Payne said, "*the so-called unjustifiable accident is one which has refused to be silenced*"<sup>40</sup>

# A final example:

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## When will the Messiah come?

Predicting an event *will* happen at some point in the future is far easier than predicting *when* that specific thing would happen. Predictions that include dates are therefore very rare!

There is an incredible prediction in Daniel 9:24-27 that tells us when ‘the Anointed One’ would come and then be ‘cut off’ (die).

What if, out of the thousands of years of history that have gone before us, a prediction about when the Anointed One (Jewish Messiah) would come existed — which took us straight to Jesus?

### Context:

Remember, the book of Daniel was written around 530 BC. There are copies of the text that pre-dated Jesus, so it cannot have been written after Jesus lived.

Nor could Jesus fabricate a fulfilment that related to the timing of his own life within history.

### The prediction:

**Verse 24:** *“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.”*

- This introduces the prediction. It says a set amount of time now remains for God’s current plans for Israel to be completed. If we consider the details, it says that many things related to God’s purposes for the nation of Israel are going to be completed within the coming predicted timeframe.

- An overarching point is that the time left for accomplishing God's purposes for Israel is limited. It's not going to be forever.

**Verse 25-26a:** *Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens'. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary"*

This is the specific prediction. The 'side details', all by themselves, are amazing.

- These include that the city [Jerusalem] would be rebuilt with streets and a trench in times of trouble (which happened),
- That there would be a Jewish Temple (noting it had been destroyed — so they needed political freedom to rebuild it, and then to actually do so)
- And these things would be in place *before* the Anointed one would both come and be cut off (Jesus died about AD 30).
- It then predicts that, after this time, both the city of Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed (which happened in AD 70).<sup>41</sup>

All of those are remarkable predictions in themselves.

However, what's most amazing is the fact that this prophecy also predicts when this would happen.

It says that the number of years would be seven sevens, and sixty-two sevens. (The numbers are years). If we do the math, this equates to 483 years.

The numbers are stated in a poetic way. In their culture, they would sometimes use numbers to communicate an extra message — the number 7 in this case, meaning 'completeness' (see the footnote for more details).<sup>42</sup>

## Let's look at the details.

The starting date for counting the years would be whenever the decree was given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. The date this happened is known — but with two options. However, the two options are only 6 to 7 years apart, so it doesn't make much of a difference. The most likely is 444 BC, when King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah (a Jewish servant of the King of Persia) permission to return to Jerusalem *to rebuild the city*, as recorded in Nehemiah 1. The other is a similar instruction to Ezra just prior in 458 BC.<sup>43</sup>

The amazing fact is that, with thousands of years to choose from, this prediction takes you across a span of almost 500 years, from a starting date that was almost 100 years after Daniel's time, *specifically to Jesus!*

## An anomaly, for integrity

To avoid any accusation of misleading you, there is another way this could be calculated — while noting that it doesn't change the outcome.

A year in prophecy is often calculated as 360 days, rather than as 365.25 days. Revelation 11:2-3 is an example, equating 3½ years to 1260 days. (Revelation 12:6 does the same. See footnotes for details.)<sup>44</sup> With two possible starting dates, the widest possible scope of this prediction is therefore AD 20 at the earliest (just prior to Jesus' ministry), or AD 38 at the latest (5 to 8 years after Jesus' crucifixion). Alternatively, these predictions take us directly to AD 26 — which is recognised as the most likely starting date for Jesus' ministry! For context, the crucifixion is most commonly believed to be AD 30, though some suggest it could have been as late as AD 33.

I note this anomaly to you only because I see no way of proving one method to you over another — with comparative time predictions in the Bible also considered (see the footnote).<sup>45</sup> However, you will note that this doesn't affect the outcome if the point of the prediction is the focus — that being to identify the Messiah. In all cases we are looking directly at Jesus!

This begs a question: Why do so many of the predictions keep pointing us to Jesus?

Might it be that, out of the thousands of years of history that have gone before us, there is something we are supposed to notice here?

Who is Jesus, really?

## Michael's story

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Dr Michael Rydelnik is the son of Holocaust survivors, raised in an Orthodox Jewish home in Brooklyn, New York.

As a Jewish young man, Michael refused to even consider Jesus' claim to be the promised Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures. But then his own mother, a Holocaust survivor, revealed that she now believed in Jesus. It divided their family!

Michael began to study the Messianic prophecies found in the Hebrew Bible (which we call the Old Testament of the Bible). His efforts took him in an unexpected direction.

He tells of a friend who typed words out from Isaiah 53 and showed it to his colleagues — and every single person — whether Jew or not, said, *'It's obviously Jesus of Nazareth, and it's from the New Testament of the Bible.'*

The excited reply of his friend was, *'No. It's from the Hebrew Bible, and was written eight centuries before Jesus.'*

Michael's journey led him to that same conclusion. *"If you read this passage without any kind of presuppositions or bias, you will read it, and it will be really clear, that this is the life of Yeshua [Jesus]."*<sup>46</sup>

In 1994 Dr Michael became Professor of Jewish Studies at the Moody Bible Institute, specialising in the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish people and land, and Biblical prophecy. He has written various books and articles on Messianic prophecy, and tells his full story in his book, *My Search for Messiah*.

He didn't expect or want the predictions to point him to Jesus — but they did.

## What does it mean?

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If predictions exist that have no comparison in statistics, astrology, religion or otherwise, what does that say or prove?

Firstly they validate the authority and trustworthiness of the Bible.

They also give us a basis for trusting that God is outside of time. This adds credibility to his promises, like when he tells us there will be good in the future for those who follow his ways, and who choose to do right.

It is, however, difficult to miss that a great many of the predictions seem to have pointed to Jesus.

### **Why do they focus so much towards Jesus? What is it that we're supposed to notice?**

Our next booklet will therefore be the first of two, which consider this question: Who then is Jesus? Why is he so significant?

Thanks for engaging with this brief investigation into why Christians believe Christianity to be true.





*“...no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

*— 2 Peter 1:20-21.*

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Page 4, 25	J. Barton Payne – Author

## Endnotes

- 1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrology> citing a 2005 Gallup Poll, and a 2009 Pew Research Centre report.
- 2 From an article at <http://www.eauk.org>
- 3 From an article on 'orthodox and unorthodox belief' at <http://www.eauk.org>
- 4 J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Prophecy* (Baker House Books, 1991), p13.
- 5 The Bible has two parts — the 'Old Testament' (written before Jesus) and the 'New Testament' (written after Jesus). Of the Old Testament's 23,210 verses 6,641 contain predictive material (28.5 percent), while out of the New Testament's 7,914 verses, 1,711 contain predictive material (21.5 percent).
- 6 Payne, p645-650.
- 7 Three comments. (1) One dynamic of his tests was need for evidence that a prediction (we will consider Messianic predictions so we have an example to illustrate with), be recognised as being a prediction prior to the time of Christ — or alternatively that they be validated as a Messianic prediction by someone in our own times who doesn't believe Jesus was the Messiah. This is about having independent verification of the intent of a prediction as a prediction. So, as an example, Jews before Jesus' time — as also many Jews since Jesus' time (who do not believe Jesus was the Messiah), validate that Isaiah 53 does indeed speak of the Messiah. This therefore validates the intent of this prediction as a prediction. In calculating fulfilled predictions, Payne therefore removed predictions from his list that might be recognised by many others as legitimately fulfilled predictions because they do not meet his various specific academic criteria. For clarity, his study was not therefore one of God's intent in the Bible — but instead an academic study, regarding what he can prove. In case of misunderstanding, he wasn't therefore saying these other instances of potentially fulfilled predictions weren't predictions. (2) As a separate matter, there are numerous predictions of the Messiah that Christians believe relate to the future. This is why they are listed as 'unfulfilled predictions'. Jesus talked about this also. Payne notes 61 examples that fit this criteria. This would include Jesus' predictions about himself when he comes back. The point is that it's not a failed prediction if Jesus hasn't yet done something he said he would do in the future. These therefore sit amongst a few hundred predictions in the Bible that yet relate to our future. (3) A key distinctive to understand is that the Old Testament paints two pictures of the Messiah. One is the 'Suffering Servant' who dies for our sins (for example Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53). The other is the 'Conquering King' returning to overthrow evil and establish God's Kingdom on earth ('heaven'), bringing an end to all evil, suffering and injustice. Christians see Jesus as having fulfilled the 'Suffering Servant' predictions, but not yet the 'Conquering King' predictions. Religious Jews differ in that these two pictures are still merged together for them. For the religious Jew today, whether or not Jesus fulfilled the 'Suffering Servant' predictions is not considered — because he didn't concurrently fulfil the 'Conquering King' predictions. Their view is also 'nationalistic', believing the Messiah's to be the saviour of their nation (Israel) from oppression, more-so than the saviour of the world from sin. This explains the rationalisation behind their continued rejection of Jesus despite the many fulfilled predictions — as contrasted with the Christian viewpoint.

- 8 In the wider picture of Daniel 11, the first 19 verses of the prediction serve to help the reader track through history to identify a specific man at a specific point in history. That man was Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The chapter then gives a remarkable 12 verses (verses 21-33) of predictions about that one man! His importance? He is a prototype of the 'man of lawlessness', who leads people into war against nations, with a heart firmly set against the God of all creation. Antiochus went on — just as predicted, to desecrate the Jewish Temple. The relevance then finds a whole new layer in what is written next — with a poetry that is common to Biblical prophecy. The chapter does a time jump to the time of the end (in our future) to introduce another similar 'man of lawlessness' — who was (poetically) just like the prior. This latter 'man of lawlessness' (also referenced in Daniel 9:27) has an equally remarkable 9 verses given describing him. He would likewise have power over nations, going out to create war, while having no regard for God. Some of the nations involved are listed — while it notes a nation in that latter time that will be spared involvement even while surrounded (modern-day Jordan). That end-times ruler will then do exactly what Antiochus did (the poetry) — yet again desecrating the Jewish Temple (which isn't yet built in our present time), before meeting his end. The overarching message of the chapter as a whole is therefore that God knows beginning from end so much so that he can even pull poetic parallels out from the history — like showing us ruthless leaders who make war who then also specifically desecrate the Jewish Temple! Enough details are then given in the body of Scripture to identify these men when their predicted time comes. The overarching point is, despite all the evil we see on earth, God really is still in control! Other predictive texts tell more details this 'end-times man, including the geo-political environment of the time, along with identifiable details. An easy starting point for reading future predictions is in Jesus' predictions regarding the future in Luke 17, Luke 21 and Matthew 24. Then consider the disciple John's predictive book which concludes the Bible, titled, 'Revelation'.
- 9 Recognising that end-point as verse 35, because v36 turns to discuss a king arising from that geography in a more distant future.
- 10 Details of the Maccabean revolt can be found in the book of 1 Maccabees, referred to in Payne's Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, p390. Easy access to this information — including details of the history that fulfilled each element in the full prediction, is available in most Study Bibles.
- 11 'The Time between the Testaments' — notes in the NIV Study Bible (Zondervan, 1985).
- 12 Payne, p11
- 13 Isaiah lived until at least 681B.C. See Isaiah 37:38. It is possible chapters 40-66 were written in the later years of his life, but in all cases, this is more than 600 years before Jesus came, which is our point of interest here.
- 14 The Qumran Scrolls are a discovery of 972 ancient texts found in a collection of caves near the Dead Sea (Israel) from 1947 onwards, preserved by the Qumran Community. Scrolls date to the third century B.C. The Qumran community existed from the second century B.C. until being abandoned about 68A.D., two years before the destruction by the Romans of Jewish self-Government and the Jerusalem Temple.
- 15 Wikipedia supplies easily accessible information on this.
- 16 Sanhedrin 98b
- 17 Driver, S.R. and Neubauer, A. The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters, Ktav Publishing House, New York.
- 18 For a few sources to validate this point: Th. Philips, Machzor Leyom Kippur / Prayer Book for the Day of Atonement with English Translation; Revised and Enlarged Edition (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1931), p. 239. Also the 1937 edition. Also, Driver and Neubauer (prior footnote), p399.
- 19 Various quotations of Rabbis to validate this can be found in articles on the topic, like at [jewsforjesus.org/answers/prophecy/isaiah53chart](http://jewsforjesus.org/answers/prophecy/isaiah53chart) or [bethaderech.com/isaiah-53-behold-the-mashiach/](http://bethaderech.com/isaiah-53-behold-the-mashiach/) Investigation is needed because many religious Jews today do not interpret Isaiah 53 as Messianic, instead seeing it as referring to Israel. The chapter was, however, considered Messianic before Jesus' time, and that tradition has continued in many places since.
- 20 Matthew 27:14.

- 21 Bible references for predictions and accounts of their fulfillment:  
 SOG Prediction: e.g. Psalm 2:7. Fulfillment: Jesus' clear claim (Luke 22:70), as well as being spoke on of him by others (e.g. Matthew 3:17; Matthew 16:16; Luke 9:35; John 1:34, etc.). Virgin Prediction: Isaiah 7:14, Fulfillment: See e.g. Matthew 1:18, 24, 25. Abraham... Prediction: Genesis 22:18. Fulfillment: e.g. Matthew 1:1 A descendant also of Isaac and Jacob. Predictions: e.g. Genesis 21:12; Gemesos 35:10-12; Numbers 24:17. Fulfillment: e.g. Luke 3:23, 34. Judah Prediction: Genesis 49:10. Fulfillment: Luke 3:23, 33. Jesse David Predictions: Isaiah 1:1, Isaiah 1:10, Jeremiah 23:5. Fulfillment: Luke 3:23, 31. Lord Prediction: Psalm 110:1. Jeremiah 23:6. Fulfillment: Luke 2:11, Matthew 22:43-45. Bethlehem Prediction: Micah 5:2. Fulfillment: Matthew 2:1, Matthew 2:6, etc. Gifts Prediction: Psalm 72:10. Fulfillment: Matthew 2:1, 11. Pre-existence Prediction: e.g. Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6. Fulfillment: Colossians 1:17; John 17:5; Revelation 1:1, 2, 17 etc. Messenger Prediction: Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1. Fulfillment: Matthew 3:1-2; 3:3; 11:10; John 1:23, etc. Galilee Prediction: Isaiah 9:1. Fulfillment: Matthew 4:12, 13, 17. Miracles. Prediction: Isaiah 35:5, Isaiah 32:3-4. Fulfillment: Matthew 9:35, Mark 7:33-35, John 5:5-9, among many. Donkey. Prediction: Zechariah 9:9. Fulfillment: Matthew 21:5. Temple Prediction: Malachi 3:1. Fulfillment: Zechariah 9:9. Betrayal Prediction: Zechariah 11:12-13. Fulfillment: Matthew 26:15; 27:3, 5, 7. Forsaken Prediction: Zechariah 13:7. Fulfillment: Mark 14:50; Matthew 26:31, etc. False witnesses Prediction: e.g. Psalm 35:11. Fulfillment: Matthew 26:59, 60. Spit etc. Prediction: Isaiah 50:6. Fulfillment: Matthew 26:67; Luke 22:63. Prediction: Psalm 22:7-8. Fulfillment: Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27-28. Garments Prediction: Psalm 22:18. Fulfillment: Luke 23:35. Resurrected Prediction: Psalm 16:10. Fulfillment: Acts 2:31, Matthew 28:6, Mark 16:6 etc.
- 22 This detailed prophecy found remarkable fulfillment in Judas' betrayal, including the strange description, 'given to the potter'. Regretting his betrayal of Jesus, Judas returned the money, throwing it into the Temple. Jewish leaders used it to purchase the 'Potter's field' (a field that belonged to a potter) as a burial place for foreigners with the money.
- 23 His study was reviewed by a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation, and by the Executive Council of the same group and "...was found, in general, to be dependable and accurate in regard to scientific material presented....being based upon principles of probability which are thoroughly sound..." (H. Harold Hartzler of the American Scientific Affiliation, as found in the introduction of Peter Stoner's book, *Science Speaks*).
- 24 The eight predictions were 1. Born in Bethlehem, 2. Preceded by a messenger, 3. Entering Jerusalem on a donkey, 4. Betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver, 5. Hands and feet pierced, 6. Judas' money thrown into the Temple and being used to buy the potter's field, 7. That he would be silent before his accusers, and 8. that he would be crucified with thieves. Josh McDowell, *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), p193.
- 25 Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*, as quoted in *Ibid*, p193 — 194.
- 26 Texas is 696,200 sq kms in size, while New Zealand only 268,680 sq kms.
- 27 Peter Lemesurier, *The Unknown Nostradamus*, 2003, as quoted at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nostradamus>
- 28 Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopaedia of Christian Apologetics*, (Grand Rapids: Maker, 1998), p615.
- 29 Deuteronomy 18:20-22.
- 30 Various examples from Robert A. Morey, *Horoscopes and the Christian*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1981, p20-21.
- 31 Josh McDowell, *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), p194.
- 32 McDowell, p194 — including reference to Andre Kole and Al Janssen, *Miracles or Magic?* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1984), p69.
- 33 Charlotte Observer 12/30/93.
- 34 McDowell, p194.
- 35 'Activities With Astrology.' *Astronomical Society of the Pacific*. Also Shawn Carlson *A Double-blind Test of Astrology*, *Nature Magazine*, 1985 as cited in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrology>
- 36 N Geisler and W Nix, *A General introduction to the Bible*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1096), p196 as quoted in McDowell, p12.
- 37 Payne, p11
- 38 Payne quotes from R. H. Charles, *Critical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, p xxvi.
- 39 In this paragraph, His point was that, across an extended timeframe to the present, the debate has not progressed because some were reaching a conclusion before ever considering the evidence.

- 40 Payne, p11
- 41 As a point of interest, because religious Jews in our time do not accept Jesus was the Messiah, they therefore believe the Temple will be rebuilt again in our times — so the Messiah can come. Some Christians also believe the Temple will be rebuilt — but instead so that a different prediction can be fulfilled in which 'the man of sin' (representing an attempt at global Government in a coming period of global unrest) defiles the Temple by setting himself up there (Thessalonians 2:4).
- 42 The Bible treats numbers like poetry. The number 40 means a perfect generation or determined period (sometimes a time of testing) — while 70 is a generation of life (we're given 70 years to live). Six means sin or something negative, seven completeness, eight a new beginning, and the number ten is the number for law/order — while 12 is the number for perfected Government. So to say 40 years — or 400 years, is to reference a divinely ordered amount of time in a plan. In the example we are looking at, to say '62 plus 7 lots of 7 years' (instead of just saying 483 years), is to say "almost 70 lots of 7 years". To put that differently — this is "a divinely ordered amount of time, but one that still won't quite have accomplished everything that God has purposed, even though it is getting very close."
- 43 Regarding two suggestions for the starting date, one is this decree to Nehemiah, which I noted in the booklet text because it is the clearer fulfilment of the prediction in my view, because Nehemiah is sent to literally rebuild the city. The other option, which Payne (amongst others) uses, is when the same King Artaxerxes issues a decree telling Ezra the priest to return to Jerusalem with many of the exiles as recorded in Ezra 7, the date being B.C.458. Many reputable scholars see reason to agree with Payne — so it's possible (this short footnote cannot cover the details). The other factor is the length of a year. Regarding the 360-day year in Biblical prophecy, Payne notes that, although they did see a year as 360 days, in practice they added 5 or 6 days to the end of each year so as to keep their calendar in synch with the lunar and agricultural year (Payne, p 386). McDowell disagrees with using this for Daniel's prediction — see next footnote. The 360 days per year calculation takes us to A.D.26 — which is the start of Jesus' ministry / his baptism (Payne, p383), specific to the words of Daniel 9:24. This is thus potentially an entirely accurate fulfilment — but if we use the later starting date and a 365.25-day year, we'd end up in A.D.38. (Jesus' ministry was likely A.D.26-30, while the traditional view was A.D.30-33) — which is still taking us to Jesus with poetry in numbers considered (see prior footnote, and then the following footnote for examples).
- 44 Noting the prior footnote, while a year to us is 365.25 days, McDowell [P199] cites the following to demonstrate the use of 360 days in Bible prophecies: Compare Genesis 7:11 with Genesis 8:4, and the two of these compare with Genesis 7:24 and Genesis 8:3. Many scriptures referring to the great tribulation also recognise a 360 day year — for example see and compare Daniel 7:25's 3.5 years, Revelation 13:4-7s forty-two months, Revelation 12:13-14's 3.5 half years, and Revelation 12:6's 1260 days. 360 days x 3.5 years = 1260. This prediction could therefore be entirely accurate — or half a dozen years out, while still taking us to Jesus in all cases, with thousands of years in view, and poetry in the numbers.
- 45 To note comparisons in Biblical prophecy — which explains why I do not try to prove one option over the other here: Another truly miraculously fulfilled time prediction was made by Abraham regarding his descendants, predicting that they would spend 400 years in Egypt (how could he have known?). This was miraculously fulfilled — but was three years out in the length predicted. The prophet Jeremiah similarly made a prediction regarding a later 70 years of Exile — which was miraculously fulfilled, but about seven years out in terms of what happened in history. I suggest we are therefore looking at valid predictions — but in poetry and within a culture that understood this.
- 46 Quote taken from Lee Strobel, *A Case for Christ* (DVD) (La Mirada Films, 2007). See also [michaelydelnik.com](http://michaelydelnik.com).





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— Rev. Dr. J Barton Payne,  
Old Testament Professor,  
Covenant Theological Seminary



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A simple and authentic explanation of things  
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