

## UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES

According to premise (2) of the Argument from the Bible, there are no unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible. Let us look at some counter-examples to that claim, beginning with a type that is more like a biblical contradiction:

1. According to Gen. 2:17, Adam will die the same day that he eats the fruit, but that did not come about, since, according to Gen. 5:5, Adam lived to age 930. [Note that the same Hebrew word for "die" is used as elsewhere in the Old Testament, standing for physical death.]
2. According to Gen. 4:12,14, Cain will be a fugitive and a vagabond, and constantly subject to assassination, but that did not come about, for, according to Gen. 4:16-17, Cain had a wife and family, and lived in the same area all his life, and built a city.
3. According to Josh. 17:17-18, Ephraim and Manasseh will drive out the Canaanites, but according to Jg 1:27-29, they did *not* drive out the Canaanites.
4. Jer. 34:5 prophesied that Zedekiah will die in peace, but according to 2 Ki. 25:7 and Jer. 52:10-11, that did not happen. Instead, he saw his sons killed, was carried off in chains, blinded, and eventually died in prison.
5. Amos 7:17 prophesied that Amaziah's sons will die by the sword, but according to 2 Chron. 26:1,21, Amaziah's son Uzziah died of leprosy.<sup>1</sup>
6. According to Jonah 3:4, Nineveh will be overthrown in 40 days, but then God changed his mind about having Nineveh overthrown. (See Jonah 3:10.)
7. According to Matt. 12:40, Christ will be buried for *three* nights, but he died on a Friday and by Sunday the tomb was empty. Between Friday and Sunday, there are just *two* nights, not three.
8. According to Matt. 19:28 and Luke 22:30, all 12 disciples will sit on 12 thrones as judges. But actually, not all 12 disciples could reign, for Judas, who was one of them, was excluded. (See Matt. 26:24-25.)
9. In Matt. 26:34 and Luke 22:34, it is prophesied that before the cock crows, Peter will deny Jesus three times, but according to Mark 14:66-68, Peter denied Jesus only once before the cock crowed.
10. According to Luke 23:43, the thief will be with Christ in paradise on *that* very day. But Christ's body was buried that day and, according to Acts 2:27,31, his soul went to hell, not to paradise.

Some other examples that are a little more like unfulfilled prophecies are the following.

11. According to Gen. 15:18, 17:3,8, and Deut. 1:7-8, Abraham's descendants will own all the land between the Nile River and the Euphrates River, but it never happened: they never owned all that land. God broke his promise, as conceded in Acts 7:5 and Heb. 11:13.
12. According to Gen. 49:13, the tribe of Zebulun will dwell at a seashore, but, instead, as may be gathered from various later verses as well as extra-Biblical sources, they dwelled inland, not at any seashore.

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13. According to Josh. 8:28, the city of Ai will be destroyed forever. In actuality, Ai did have later inhabitants. (See Ezra 2:1,28 and Neh. 7:32.)

But these still look a little bit like biblical contradictions. I think the very best examples of unfulfilled prophecies are ones like the following.

14. According to Exod. 3:8, the Israelites will live in a large land, flowing with milk and honey, and according to 2 Sam. 7:10, they will not be disturbed anymore, but as a matter of historical fact Israel (and vicinity) has been a relatively small and mostly barren land, and the Israelites have been continually harassed from all sides.

15. Many verses<sup>1</sup> prophesy that the throne of David will endure forever and that there will never be a time without a man upon that throne. But in point of historical fact, the Davidic line of kings ended with Zedekiah. 450 yrs. later, the Maccabeans had a brief reign. But for 2000 years, there has been no Davidic king.

16. According to Isa. 14:23, Babylon will become wet, but that never happened. According to Jer. 51:36, Babylon will become totally dry, but that never happened either. According to other verses (Isa. 13:20; Jer. 50:39-40, 51:26,29,37,43), Babylon will never be inhabited by people again, but in fact Babylon has been continually inhabited by people since that time. [Note 1 Pet. 5:13.] It is now part of Iraq.

17. According to Isa. 17:1, Damascus will be destroyed, but in fact Damascus is one of the few ancient cities that has *never* been destroyed. [The fact that so many were destroyed makes prophecies of the future destruction of ancient cities rather unremarkable.] If Isaiah had predicted that Damascus would never be destroyed, then *that* would have been remarkable.

18. According to Isa. 19:5, Ezek. 30:12, and Zech. 10:11, the Nile River will dry up, and according to Ezek. 29:9-12, Egypt will become desolate for 40 years, with no man or animal passing through it and with all Egyptians dispersed, but as a matter of fact the Nile River has *never* dried up and in the whole history of Egypt no such calamitous events have ever occurred.

19. According to Isa. 19:18, five Egyptian cities will speak the language of Canaan, but linguists and archeologists assure us that no Egyptian cities have ever spoken the language of Canaan.

20. According to Isa. 29:17, Lebanon will become a fruitful field, but that has never happened to Lebanon!

21. According to Isa. 34:9-10, Edom (the land between the Dead Sea and Gulf of Aqaba) will become burning pitch: no one will ever pass through it again. But in truth that has never happened to Edom. People have passed through it for thousands of years.

22. According to Isa. 52:1, the uncircumcised and unclean will never enter Jerusalem, but in fact such people have continually entered Jerusalem for thousands of years.

23. According to Jer. 42:17, Jews who choose to live in Egypt will all die and leave no remnant. But history shows that Jews continued to live there for centuries, later establishing a cultural center at Alexandria.

24. Zeph. 3:13 prophesied that the remnant of Israel will not sin or lie or be afraid, but in truth they were never so moral nor so fearless.

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25. Many verses<sup>2</sup> prophesy that Christ's second coming will occur soon. Some of them specifically say that it will be within his listeners' lifetime, i.e., before *that* generation (there with Jesus) passes away. But in truth more than 19 centuries have elapsed since then and the event still has not occurred. Of all the examples of unfulfilled prophecies, this one strikes me as the one that is clearest and most powerful.

With all these unfulfilled prophecies, it is clear that premise (2) of the Argument from the Bible is false. It might be suggested that the argument dispense with its premise (2), but it serves an important purpose. With unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible, even if there had been some fulfilled ones, they would, in effect, have gotten "canceled out." The law of probabilities would allow some prophecies to come true, just as a matter of coincidence, provided that many of them do not come true. Thus, it is important for the advocate of the Argument from the Bible to insert premise (2). As it turns out, since in fact none of the alleged remarkable fulfilled biblical prophecies really turn out to be that, all of the unfulfilled ones mentioned are a kind of "overkill." They could have been used for "canceling-out" purposes, but are not needed for that after all.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> This alleged unfulfilled prophecy is bogus, because there are two different Amaziahs involved. One of them is a priest (Amos 7:10) and the other is a king (2 Chron. 25:1). See if you can similarly discredit any of the others.

<sup>1</sup> . 2 Sam. 7:13,16; 1 Chron. 17:12,14; Psalms 89:3-4,35-37; Jer. 33:17.

<sup>2</sup> . Matt. 4:17, 10:23, 16:28, 24:34; Mark 9:1,13,30; Luke 9:27, 21:32; John 5:25; 1 Thess. 4:15,17; Rev. 3:11, 22:6,7,10,12,20.