

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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The Confirmation of Biblical Prophecy in History

by Dan Trygg

“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’; ¹¹ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.” Isaiah 46:9-11

“And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” 2 Peter 1:19-21

We have been talking about the historical nature of the Bible. It is not a compilation of stories, or myths, made up by people over the years. **It is a record of God's dealings with people in various locations, over centuries of time. In a very real sense, it is God writing His own story.** He declared ahead of time what the overview of that story would be, and gave hints and clues as to what would happen, and then He intervened in the lives of individuals and nations to bring about the outworking of His plan. **Biblical history is His story, and the Spirit of prophecy points to Jesus** (Rev. 19:10). From the earliest chapters of Genesis, throughout all the centuries of biblical history, God was revealing more and more details, and working out His purposes through the people and circumstances of His choosing. **Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the outworking of biblical prophecy. He spoke things in advance, and they were fulfilled in later history, often in incredible detail.** Because the Bible, and the biblical faith, are based in history, we have many of these original declarations, and we can see them fulfilled in later centuries.

We have discussed the credible testimony of the scriptures, in that (1.) they are a chronicle of actual events recorded by people who lived at the time those events occurred; (2.) we can clearly demonstrate the reliability of the transmission of the biblical documents; and (3.) archaeology has repeatedly confirmed the amazing historical accuracy of the biblical record. We have seen that (4.) the scriptures we have in our Bibles meet these standards to a measure that is far beyond any other historical writings. **No other documents from history can “measure up” to the canon (“measuring stick”) exemplified by the 39 books of our OT scriptures and the 27 books of our NT writings.** The scriptures have passed these significant tests, so that we can have a very high degree of confidence that what they record is what actually took place.

Today, we are going to introduce a new line of evidence that supports both the divine initiative of God behind biblical declarations, and the amazing confirmation of these statements in history. **There is another whole line of evidence that is sprinkled throughout the Old and New Testaments which further sets them apart as uniquely inspired by God. No other religious tradition has anything like the clearly demonstrable examples of prophecy that we find in our Bibles. None!** This is clearly presented by God Himself as a clear test of His authorship. The apostle Peter pointed out that no prophesy of scripture was produced by human will. Those who prophesied were moved or “carried” by the Holy Spirit. Their words were uniquely inspired by God Himself. In a number of passages in Isaiah, **God made a clear point to differentiate Himself from other so-called “gods” by this very fact: No one else has been able to declare the future, centuries before those events would take place** (Isa. 41:22-23; 44:7; 45:21; 46:9-11). Only Yahweh is able to declare the end from the beginning, to speak of things in the ancient past that came to pass in the future. Only God could declare His purpose in the past, and bring it to pass centuries later. **Because God Himself identified this as a unique “litmus test” of His handiwork, it is valuable to survey some of these amazing prophecies.**

(1.) **The first example is Genesis 3:15, “the seed of the woman will crush the head of the seed of the serpent, but he will strike him (the seed of the woman) on his heel”.** In the context, the serpent (later identified as Satan – Rev. 12:9) had succeeded in luring our first parents into sin, which also introduced death into the world. Humankind forfeited their majesty and authority, and became slaves of sin and victims of death. Sin and death have been passed down through every generation since that time. The serpent used the lure of sin and the fear of death to control and dominate people throughout the centuries. The prophecy speaks of the defeat of the serpent, and his demise. The implication is that this will also result in the deliverance of humanity from his power. Both of the actions expressed in this prophecy describe a fatal strike, ...a head-crushing blow to the serpent, and a poisonous strike to the seed of the woman. **In all of history, there has only been One who has been uniquely born of a virgin, ...Jesus..., whose mission in life was “to save His people from their sin”** (Matt. 1:21). **There has only been One who has made the claim to have defeated the Serpent by His own death, ...and lived again to tell about it!** This prophecy was fulfilled in history by the

crushing blow of Jesus' death on the cross for humanity, where He paid for the sin of humankind. **The serpent (Satan) succeeded in bringing Jesus to death, but in so doing he unwittingly set up his own demise. Jesus rose again, and Satan lost his authority over all who are in Christ, including even the power of death itself** (Lk. 1:26-35; Heb. 2:14-17).

(2.) **A second example from Genesis is found in God's promise to Abram in 12:1-3.** Yahweh called Abram to leave his country, his relatives, his family of origin and go where He would show him. **He promised Abram, "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** Abram was no one special. He had done nothing outstanding to set him apart from all other people. Yet, Yahweh took the initiative to extend this offer to him. Over the following chapters, Yahweh gave more information: Abram would have descendants like the stars in the sky, or as the sand on the seashore. He would become the father of *many nations*. It would be through his "seed" that all the families of the earth would be blessed, and that "seed" will "possess the gate of His enemies" (Gen. 15:5; 17:5; 22:17-19).

Today, the name of Abraham (God changed it from Abram to Abraham [Gen. 17:9]) **is one of the most famous and revered names in human history. Literally billions of people look to him as an example and hero of faith.** His physical descendants have literally become innumerable, in the millions, ...but his *spiritual descendants* number many times more. **His "seed", prefigured in the ram provided as a substitute for Isaac on Mount Moriah, was Jesus.** Through Him, the "blessing" of salvation would come to those who trust in God's provision through the Lamb that was slain for the sins of the world, ...people both from the physical descendants of Abraham, and also from other nations, who embrace the faith of Abraham in God's promise. Many, many blessings have come to the world through the ingenuity and creativeness of his descendants. God fulfilled His promise to give them the land of Abraham's sojourn three times in history, and his descendants live there at this present time. More importantly, however, the "seed" defeated His enemy and the "gates" of Hades will not be able to stand against His people, gathered from the nations, the church (Matt. 16:18). **Is there any other personage, lineage, or nation that has had such a plain declaration of an expansive, worldwide destiny that has spanned the centuries, is clearly traceable, and is still being openly fulfilled and worked out right before our eyes? What had Abraham done?** Was he a great general, a conqueror, a powerful political ruler, a wealthy and powerful businessman? No. **Abraham believed God, and God fulfilled His prophetic word!**

(3.) **A third example is the prophecy that God would give the land of Canaan to Abram's descendants in Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7-21; 17:8.** This is an amazing prophecy, fulfilled in history, *repeatedly!* On three separate occasions, God brought the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, back into the land of Canaan: (a.) through the conquering of the land by Joshua after the Exodus in 1400 BC; (b.) by the regathering of the exiled remnant to the land after their 70 year stay in Babylon in 538 BC, and, (c.) in the return of the Jews from all around the world, and the reestablishing of the state of Israel in 1948. Moreover, in the Messianic age to come, it appears that people from other nations will inherit land among the descendants of Abraham (Ezk. 47:22,23). **What other nation has a history like this? What other nation has been removed from their ancestral home, lived for hundreds, even thousands of years in other lands, only to be restored to their ancestral homeland, and come to form again their own independent country? There is no other similar story!**

Moses wrote the Pentateuch before 1400 BC. That early date has been confirmed by archaeology. There is no way Moses would have known the significance of the declaration about the "seed of the woman", or even how great the name and significance of Abraham would be! The story of the "seed of the woman" was merely a curiosity. A prophetic hope. It was something that God had spoken of, but which had no visible manifestation that they could see. You either believed it, and looked and prayed for that day, ...or you did not.

Abraham was the name of the forefather of his own nation, but at the time Moses wrote, virtually no one else would have even heard of him. His name had not become associated with renown or recognition, and his descendants had not done much to bless the other nations of the earth. They were viewed as runaway slaves, people without a country. **And, as far as the people of Israel coming to possess the land of Canaan, that had not happened yet, either.** In fact, the first time the congregation prepared to go into the land, they refused, and had to spend the next 40 years wandering in the desert, until that entire generation had perished.

When you look at the setting of Moses' life, it is amazing that he recorded what he did. But that is precisely the point! These prophetic claims, these grandiose dreams, were *not* from the imagination of the man, Moses, or any of the people involved in the historical record. **They were claims, declarations and promises made by God Himself.** Moses was just the recorder and reporter. **God was declaring the end from the beginning.** He was telling these people, who were everyday people like you and me, what He was intending to do in the future, ...with *them*, or with *their descendants*. **He was sharing these promises and prophecies because He was looking for those who would believe Him, and follow Him. This has always been His purpose, to find those who would trust in Him and obey Him.**