Why the Bible Is the Word of God
Fulfilled Prophecy: Evidence for the Reliability of the Bible

by Dr. Hugh Ross

Unique among all books ever written, the Bible accurately foretells specific events -- in detail -- many years, sometimes centuries, before they occur. Approximately 2500 prophecies appear in the pages of the Bible, about 2000 of which already have been fulfilled to the letter -- no errors. (The remaining 500 or so reach into the future and may be seen unfolding as days go by.) Since the probability for any one of these prophecies having been fulfilled by chance averages less than one in ten (figured very conservatively) and since the prophecies are for the most part independent of one another, the odds for all these prophecies having been fulfilled by chance without error is less than one in 10^{2000} (that is 1 with 2000 zeros written after it)!

God is not the only one, however, who uses forecasts of future events to get people's attention. Satan does too. Through clairvoyants (such as Jeanne Dixon and Edgar Cayce), mediums, spiritists, and others, come remarkable predictions, though rarely with more than about 60 percent accuracy, never with total accuracy. Messages from Satan, furthermore, fail to match the detail of Bible prophecies, nor do they include a call to repentance.

The acid test for identifying a prophet of God is recorded by Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:21-22**. According to this Bible passage (and others), God's prophets, as distinct from Satan's spokesmen, are 100 percent accurate in their predictions. There is *no* room for error.

As economy does not permit an explanation of all Biblical prophecies that have been fulfilled, what follows [is] a discussion of a few that exemplify the high degree of specificity, the range of projection, and/or the "supernature" of the predicted events. Readers are encouraged to select others, as well, and to carefully examine their historicity.

(1) Some time before 500 B.C. the prophet Daniel proclaimed that Israel's long-awaited Messiah would begin his public ministry 483 years after the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem **(Daniel 9:25-26)**. He further predicted that the Messiah would be "cut off," killed, and that this event would take place prior to a second destruction of Jerusalem. Abundant documentation shows that these prophecies were perfectly fulfilled in the life (and crucifixion) of Jesus Christ. The decree regarding the restoration of Jerusalem was issued by Persia's King Artaxerxes to the Hebrew priest Ezra in 458 B.C., 483 years later the ministry of Jesus Christ began in Galilee. (Remember that due to calendar changes, the date for the start of Christ's ministry is set by most historians at about 26 A.D. Also note that from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. is just one year.) Jesus' crucifixion occurred only a few years later, and about four decades later, in 70

A.D. came the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^5.)

* The estimates of probability included herein come from a group of secular research scientists. As an example of their method of estimation, consider their calculations for this first prophecy cited:

> Since the Messiah's ministry could conceivably begin in any one of about 5,000 years, there is, then, one chance in about 5,000 that his ministry could begin in 26 A.D.

> Since the Messiah is God in human form, the possibility of his being killed is considerably low, say less than one chance in 10.

> Relative to the second destruction of Jerusalem, this execution has roughly an even chance of occurring before or after that event, that is, one chance in 2.

> Hence the probability of chance fulfillment for this prophecy is 1 in 5,000 x 10 x 2, which is 1 in 100,000, or 1 in 10^5.

(2) In approximately 700 B.C. the prophet Micah named the tiny village of Bethlehem as the birthplace of Israel's Messiah (Micah 5:2). The fulfillment of this prophecy in the birth of Christ is one of the most widely known and widely celebrated facts in history. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^5.)

(3) In the fifth century B.C. a prophet named Zechariah declared that the Messiah would be betrayed for the price of a slave -- thirty pieces of silver, according to Jewish law -- and also that this money would be used to buy a burial ground for Jerusalem's poor foreigners **(Zechariah 11:12-13)**. Bible writers and secular historians both record thirty pieces of silver as the sum paid to Judas Iscariot for betraying Jesus, and they indicate that the money went to purchase a "potter's field," used -- just as predicted -- for the burial of poor aliens **(Matthew 27:3-10)**. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^{11}.)

(4) Some 400 years before crucifixion was invented, both Israel's King David and the prophet Zechariah described the Messiah's death in words that perfectly depict that mode of execution. Further, they said that the body would be pierced and that none of the bones would be broken, contrary to customary procedure in cases of crucifixion **(Psalm 22** and **34:20**; **Zechariah 12:10)**. Again, historians and New Testament writers confirm the fulfillment: Jesus of Nazareth died on a Roman cross, and his extraordinarily quick death eliminated the need for the usual breaking of bones. A spear was thrust into his side to verify that he was indeed, dead. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^{13}).

(5) The prophet Isaiah foretold that a conqueror named Cyrus would destroy seemingly impregnable Babylon and subdue Egypt along with most of the rest of the known world. This same man, said Isaiah, would decide to let the Jewish exiles in his territory go free without any payment of ransom **(Isaiah 44:28**; **45:1**; and **45:13)**. Isaiah made this prophecy 150 years before Cyrus was born, 180 years before Cyrus performed any of these feats (and he did, eventually, perform them all), and 80 years before the Jews were taken into exile. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^{15}.)

(6) Mighty Babylon, 196 miles square, was enclosed not only by a moat, but also by a double wall 330 feet high, each part 90 feet thick. It was said by unanimous popular opinion to be indestructible, yet two Bible prophets declared its doom. These prophets further claimed that the ruins would be avoided by travelers, that the city would never again be inhabited, and that its stones would not even be moved for use as building material **(Isaiah 13:17-22** and **Jeremiah 51:26,43)**. The description is, in fact, the well-documented history of the famous

citadel. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^9.)

(7) The exact location and construction sequence of Jerusalem's nine suburbs was predicted by Jeremiah about 2,600 years ago. He referred to the time of this building project as "the last days," that is, the time period of Israel's second rebirth as a nation in the land of Palestine **(Jeremiah 31:38-40)**. This rebirth became history in 1948, and the construction of the nine suburbs has gone forward precisely in the locations and in the sequence predicted. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^{18}.)

(8) The prophet Moses foretold (with some additions by Jeremiah and Jesus) that the ancient Jewish nation would be conquered twice and that the people would be carried off as slaves each time, first by the Babylonians (for a period of 70 years), and then by a fourth world kingdom (which we know as Rome). The second conqueror, Moses said, would take the Jews captive in ships, selling them or giving them away as slaves to all parts of the world. Both of these predictions were fulfilled to the letter, the first in 607 B.C. and the second in 70 A.D. God's spokesmen said, further, that the Jews would remain scattered throughout the entire world for many generations, but without becoming assimilated by the peoples or of other nations, and that the Jews would one day return to the land of Palestine to re-establish for a second time their nation **(Deuteronomy 29**; **Isaiah 11:11-13**; **Jeremiah 25:11**; **Hosea 3:4-5** and **Luke 21:23-24)**. This prophetic statement sweeps across 3,500 years of history to its complete fulfillment -- in our lifetime. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^{20}.)

(9) Jeremiah predicted that despite its fertility and despite the accessibility of its water supply, the land of Edom (today a part of Jordan) would become a barren, uninhabited wasteland **(Jeremiah 49:15-20**; **Ezekiel 25:12-14)**. His description accurately tells the history of that now bleak region. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^5.)

(10) Joshua predicted that Jericho would be rebuilt by one man. He also said that the man's eldest son would die when the reconstruction began and that his youngest son would die when the work reached completion **(Joshua 6:26)**. About five centuries later this prophecy found its fulfillment in the life and family of a man named Hiel **(1 Kings 16:33-34)**. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^7.)

(11) The day of Elijah's supernatural departure from Earth was predicted unanimously -- and accurately, according to the eye-witness account -- by a group of fifty prophets **(2 Kings 2:3-11)**. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10.)

(12) Jahaziel prophesied that King Jehoshaphat and a tiny band of men would defeat an enormous, well-equipped, well-trained army without even having to fight. Just as predicted, the King and his troops stood looking on as their foes were supernaturally destroyed to the last man **(2 Chronicles 20)**. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^8.)

(13) One prophet of God (unnamed, but probably Shemiah) said that a future king of Judah, named Josiah, would take the bones of all the occultic priests (priests of the "high places") of Israel's King Jeroboam and burn them on Jeroboam's altar **(1 Kings 13:2** and **2 Kings 23:15-18)**. This event occurred approximately 300 years after it was foretold. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10^{13}.)

Since these thirteen prophecies cover mostly separate and independent events, the probability of chance occurrence for all thirteen is about 1 in 10^{138} (138 equals the sum of all the exponents of 10 in the probability estimates above). For the sake of putting the figure into perspective, this probability can be compared to the statistical chance that the second law of thermodynamics will be reversed in a given situation (for example, that a gasoline engine will refrigerate itself during its combustion cycle or that heat will flow from a cold body to a hot body) -- that chance = 1 in 10^{80}. Stating it simply, based on these thirteen prophecies along, the Bible record may be said

to be vastly more reliable than the second law of thermodynamics. Each reader should feel free to make his own reasonable estimates of probability for the chance fulfillment of the prophecies cited here. In any case, the probabilities deduced still will be absurdly remote.

Given that the Bible proves so reliable a document, there is every reason to expect that the remaining 500 prophecies, those slated for the "time of the end," also will be fulfilled to the last letter (see *Signs of the End*, *Tribulation Dooms*, and *The Rapture Promise*). Who can afford to ignore these coming events, much less miss out on the immeasurable blessings offered to anyone and everyone who submits to the control of the Bible's author, Jesus Christ? Would a reasonable person take lightly God's warning of judgment for those who reject what they know to be true about Jesus Christ and the Bible, or who reject Jesus' claim on their lives?

Now is the day of salvation! Now is the time of God's favor! Please do not let it go by without further consideration.

Original article:

http://www.gospeloutreach.net/bible4.html

http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/prophecy.shtml