

Background For Studying Bible Prophecy

Before we look at future events predicted in Scripture, it is important that we understand that predictive prophecy is something that the Bible uniquely claims for itself. As we will see, God has pointed to fulfilled prophecy to demonstrate that He exists, that He knows the future, and that He is in control of the future.

We will cite a number of passages and then make some observations about what is claimed.

The Lord Challenges The Pagan gods (Isaiah 41:21-24)

“Present your argument,” says the Lord. “Produce your evidence,” says Jacob’s king. “Let them produce evidence! Let them tell us what will happen! Tell us about your earlier predictive oracles, so we may examine them and see how they were fulfilled. Or decree for us some future events! Predict how future events will turn out, so we might know you are gods. Yes, do something good or bad, so we might be frightened and in awe. Look, you are nothing, and your accomplishments are nonexistent; the one who chooses to worship you is disgusting (Isaiah 41:21-24 NET Bible)

Observations

1. The Lord is challenging the so-called gods to present arguments that they exist.
2. Specifically, tell us what will happen in the future!
3. Let’s see your past record? He wants to know how and when their predictions were fulfilled.
4. Well, how about predicting some future events so we can know you exist.
5. Do something; just don’t stand there! Make us afraid or in awe of you!
6. Conclusion: these gods are non-existent; those who worship them are fools.

In contrast to these non-existent gods . . .

The Claims Of God: Look At His Past Record! (Isaiah 46:9,10)

Remember what I accomplished in antiquity! Truly I am God, I have no peer; I am God, and there is none like me, who announces the end from the beginning and reveals beforehand what has not yet occurred, who says, ‘My plan will be realized, I will accomplish what I desire’ (Isaiah 46:9,10 NET Bible).

Observations

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1. The Lord says that He is only God who exists; He has no rival, no peer. How do we know this?
2. We are told to remember what He has already accomplished.
3. Namely. . . He has told us beforehand of certain things that will take place
4. Result: His plan will be realized; it will come to pass. And these events have come to pass just like He predicted!

Continuing This Thought . . . Isaiah 48:3-6

I announced events beforehand, I issued the decrees and made the predictions; suddenly I acted and they came to pass. I did this because I know how stubborn you are. Your neck muscles are like iron and your forehead like bronze. I announced them to you beforehand; before they happened, I predicted them for you, so you could never say, 'My image did these things, my idol, my cast image, decreed them. You have heard; now look at all the evidence! Will you not admit that what I say is true (Isaiah 48:6 NET Bible)

Observations

1. The Lord has announced events before they took place; He has made decrees, predictions.
2. These predicted events have come to pass!
3. He gave predictive prophecy because Israel was stubborn.
4. Namely, they would give credit to their idols, instead of the Lord (Golden Calf)
5. Punch Line: You have heard, now consider all the evidence! If you do, you will have to admit that what He says is true.

Now To The New Testament . . .

At The First Coming Of Christ: Emmaus Road (Luke 24 On Easter Sunday)

He Himself [Jesus] said to them, "Oh you ignorant people; slow in heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken! It was necessary, was it not, for the Christ to first suffer and then enter into His glory! Then beginning from Moses, and from all the prophets, He explained to them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:25-27).

Observations

1. Like most of the nation, these two disciples were ignorant concerning what the prophets taught.

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2. If they had believed everything the prophets had said, then they should have expected the Messiah to die.
3. They should have known what to look for when the genuine Messiah arrived.
4. Obviously, they did NOT believe everything that the prophets had written.

A Few Days Before Good Friday We Have This Same Thought (Matthew 23:37-39)

Palm Sunday

And as He drew near, when he saw the city, He wept over it, and said. "If you yourselves had known in this day the things that lead toward peace. However, now they are hidden from your eyes (Luke 19:41,42)

Observations

1. Jesus is emotional over their unbelief.
2. They could have known; the Messiah could have brought them peace.
3. But they were not willing to believe in Him.
4. Now they will not see the truth. Judgment will be coming.

A Few Days After Palm Sunday Jesus Said Something Similar (Matthew 23:37-39)

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her. How often I have desired to gather your children in the same manner as a hen gathers her brood underneath her wings. Yet, you were not willing. Behold! Your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me from now until you say, 'Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!' (Matthew 23:37-39)

1. There is emotion here in Jesus' voice
2. Jerusalem is the city that murders all the ones the Lord had previously sent to her.
3. Many times He wanted to gather them and protect them.
4. But the people were not willing! They did not want to hear His message!
5. They could have received God's kingdom at that time; but they were unwilling; willfully ignorant.
6. He then predicted judgment upon the city and the temple (This was literally fulfilled less than 40 years later)
7. However, they WILL see Him again!

Summing It Up: The people in Jesus' day could have known, and should have known, the time of His coming. But they did not!

Some Did Understand The Times

Simeon

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" (Luke 2:25-32 New Living Translation).

Anna

Anna, a prophetess, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-38 NLT).

Mary of Bethany

Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume and poured it over his head. The disciples were indignant when they saw this. "What a waste!" they said. "It could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, replied, "Why criticize this woman for doing such a good thing to me? You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. She has poured this perfume on me to prepare my body for burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed" (Matthew 26:6-13).

We Want To Be Like The People From Issachar!

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From Issachar there were 200 leaders and all their relatives at their command- they understood the times and knew what Israel should do (1 Chronicles 12:32 NET)

This should be our goal; understand the times we are living in and then knowing what we should do.

So Here Is Our Thesis . . . As the Lord unmistakably set the stage the first time He came, He has done the same thing for His Second Coming.

Indeed, here are 14 signs that the Scripture gives concerning what the world will look like when He returns.

1. Jews Have Returned To Their Ancient Homeland (Israel Will Be The World's Spotlight)
2. The Temple Mount Will Be In The Headlines (Preparations To Build A Third Temple)
3. The Nations Mentioned in Ezekiel 38,39 Will Start To Lineup
4. The Other Nations in Ezekiel 38,39 That Are Conspicuous By Their Absence
5. The Continual Decline Of America
6. The Desperate Desire For A World Leader
7. The Exponential Increase Of Technology
8. The World Economic Crisis
9. The Continuing Problems Of Plagues And Pestilence
10. Increase Of Lawlessness
11. Violence Increases
12. Apostasy In The Church
13. Move Toward A One World Religion
14. Israel Abandoned By The World (Anti-Semitism Increases)