

Bible Prophecy

Examining Fulfilled Prophecy – Part I

Introduction

- There are two major divisions in Bible prophecy: fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy.
- By examining *how* the Bible interprets its own fulfilled prophecies we may find how to interpret unfulfilled prophecy.
- In this lesson, we will look at some prophecies found and fulfilled in the Scriptures to discover principles to use in interpreting prophecy.
- The study of interpreting the Scriptures is called *Hermeneutics*.

Genesis 12:2

- Summary – God’s promise to Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation.
- Fulfillment – This promise made around 1921 B.C. before Abraham even had a son. Roughly 430 years later in 1490 B.C. a census is made in Numbers 1 which shows 603,550 men fit for war. David’s census (1020 B.C.) in II Samuel 24:9 showed a total 1,300,000 such men. Population estimates during the 1st Century A.D. range from 2,000,000 to 10,000,000 spread throughout the Roman empire.
- **Principle #1** – *Prophecy should be interpreted literally as much as possible.*
 - In this case, the literal descendants of the literal Abraham became a literal nation of many thousands. It is not allegorical or figurative.
- **Principle #2** – *Some prophecies may linger for long periods of time before seeing fulfillment.*
 - I do not know if you can pinpoint when Israel became a “great nation” but its growth and power is easily verifiable.
 - Another example - Genesis 3:15 was fulfilled by Christ after some 4,000 years.

II Kings 7:1

- Summary – In the midst of the Assyrian siege that people desperate for food (see II Kings 6:24-29)
- Fulfillment – II Kings 7:16,18
- **Principle #3** – *Some prophecies are fulfilled very quickly.*
 - God is free to reveal prophetically things near and far off to us.
 - Another example – Peter’s three denials of Christ in Mark 14:72

Psalm 78:2

- Summary – On the surface this does not even appear to be prophecy.
- Fulfillment – Matthew 13:34-35
- **Principle #4** – *Prophecy may appear in unlikely places and from unlikely sources in Scripture.*
 - We mostly think of prophecy coming from the “Prophets” section of the Old Testament, any portion of Scripture may contain prophecy.
- **Principle #5** – *Scripture may have a primary application that is not prophetic and a secondary application that is.*
 - In context of the Psalm this verse is simply part describing the structure of the following lines. That it is prophecy is only revealed through the revelation of its fulfillment.
 - We must be cautious is applying this principle if Scripture itself does not reveal a secondary Prophetic application.

To be continued...