

The Bible and the Fulfilment of Prophecy

**The Bible - a dusty old book; experiences of an ancient nation?
Jesus Christ - a revolutionist; a person with big social ideas; nothing more?**

If that is everything which Christianity has to offer - just an idea which has kept people under its spell for nearly two thousand years; an illusion, resulting in civil wars and persecution of the Jews; then it is high time to break with this dangerous and false doctrine.

A false doctrine - or does Christianity really have more to offer?

For example, does the Bible not contain clear prophecies which are proven to have been recorded centuries before they came to pass, which have been fulfilled word for word, and which are still being fulfilled?

These confirm that the Bible is more than just an old book and that Jesus Christ is more than just a great person - i.e. the Bible is God's Word and Christ is the Son of God.

Consequently, the question of whether or not the Bible is true, can ultimately be answered by the credibility of biblical prophecy. Jesus is the centre of many Old Testament prophecies - they often describe all the important periods of His life right down to the smallest detail. Let us begin with His birth place at Bethlehem:

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel..."
(written in 700 B.C.)

MICAH 5:2

Fulfilled in Luke 2:4-7

In Isaiah 35:4-6 and Isaiah 61:1 two different aspects of His works are reported. The first scripture clearly describes the visible works of Jesus, of which we have countless reports in the Gospels. The second scripture in Isaiah shows the other, more important part, which Jesus gave to the people; healing and caring for the soul.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing..."
(written in 700 B.C.)

ISA 35:4-6a

Fulfilled in Matthew 15:30-31

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." ISA 61:1
(written in 700 B.C.)

Fulfilled in Matthew 11:28

Furthermore, there is Jesus' journey into Jerusalem.

"...behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." ZECH 9:9
(written in 500 B.C.)

Fulfilled in Matthew 21:7

Likewise, in Zechariah, we find Judas' despicable act of betrayal, for which he received thirty pieces of silver from the Pharisees, which he later threw at their feet in the temple in an act of despair.

"And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD." ZECH 11:13
(written in 500 B.C.)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:3-7

In the 22nd Psalm we follow up the crucifixion of Christ (written in 1000 B.C.)

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint..." PSA 22:14

One of the most gruesome parts of the crucifixion is the slow stretching of the tendons, causing the bones to come out of their sockets.

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws..." PSA 22:15

We all know Jesus' cry, "I thirst", when He hung on the cross.

"For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet." PSA 22:16

The word "dogs" was used by the Jews as a common, colloquial name for heathens. The Roman legionnaires who crucified Jesus were also known by this term. The most striking thing here is the type of torture described, namely the crucifixion, which was only introduced 800 years later by the Romans.

"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." PSA 22:18

At the foot of the cross, Jesus' clothing was distributed amongst the soldiers.

Fulfilled in John 19:23-24,28

Finally, a word about the burial. The Gospels report that a rich man from Arimathea laid Him in a grave hewn out of stone. See Isaiah 53:9:

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." ISA 53:9

Fulfilled in Luke 23:50-55

In Daniel 9:25-27 we find a fantastic fulfilment of prophecy:

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease..." DAN 9:25-27

In accordance with 2. Peter 3:8, Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, you can take one day to be equivalent to one year. Therefore, 69 (= 62 + 7) weeks are equivalent to 483 days or years.

The most probable date for the time *"from the going forth of the commandment"*, is the edict in the 7th year of Artaxerxes (= 457 B.C.) (see EZRA 7:11-26). Calculating 69 weeks = 483 years ahead from that date, you come to the year 26/27 A.D. This is the year in which Jesus was baptised by John and started His ministry (Remember that Jesus' year of birth is in reality the year 4 B.C.).

For sixty-nine weeks the commandment to restore the temple had been given, often through *"troubulous times"* (as they were under the Law during that time). The Messiah who came after this time was Jesus (LK 4:18). As one can read in Daniel 9:24, He came to put an end to evil and sin, and became the atonement for sin and give everlasting righteousness. He *"confirmed"* (Abraham's) *"covenant with many"*, by becoming a blessing for all nations (ISA 53:11; LK 1:16; 2:34; MK 20:28).

"In the midst of the week" (= after 3½ years) *"he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"*. Jesus was crucified after 3½ years, which occurred in the year 31 A.D. When Jesus died, the veil in the temple was torn; this event showed that sacrifices and oblation were from then on no longer needed, as Jesus had once and for all given His perfect sacrifice.

To the end, a prophecy from Jesus about the 'Last Days': Jesus prophesied that the 'end time' will begin when the fig tree blossoms again. The generation living from this time forth, He continues, will not pass away until all the events of the last days have come to pass and been crowned by His return. Throughout the whole Bible the fig tree is used as a symbol for Israel. It was dead for a long time and was scattered throughout all the nations - which we will look at in closer detail. Then a miracle occurred, which you may well be aware of - a miracle likened to a withered tree, which starts to blossom once again. This parable is stated to show how the prophecies concerning Israel fit into the time scale.

An astonishing fact of history occurred in Palestine on 15.05.1948. A state was founded by a nation who had been driven out of their original homeland over 2000 years before. However, this was not the first time the Jews had returned after being driven out. In 536 B.C. the Persian king, Cyrus, sent them - after seventy years of captivity - back to their homeland. This is very unusual, for there is no parallel in the history of nations where a nation has been allowed to return home to rebuild its cities and temple after such a long period of captivity. Six hundred years later the Jews were scattered again, but this time throughout all the world, as Moses had prophesied:

"And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other..." DEUT 28:64a

At the time of their exile, in the year 70 A.D., a world-wide Jewish persecution began, known as anti-Semitism, which still continues today. Its development is summarised in point form:

In 38 A.D. a mass murder of the Jews in Alexandria took place; a little later another 50,000 lost their lives.

70 A.D.	The Romans killed 1 million Jews.
132-135	Another 500,000.

1095-1270	The Jews suffered one of their most severe persecutions at the hands of the Crusaders.
1096	In the Rhineland, 12,000 Jews were killed.
1298	In Frankonia, Bavaria and Austria alone, another million.
1348	The Jews were given the blame for the "Black Plague" - one million were murdered.
1648-1658	400,000 Polish Jews were killed in the Polish-Swedish war.
1933-1945	6 million Jews were killed under Hitler's regime.
1945-today	Permanent persecution and killing of Jews living in the eastern block countries.

The dispersion of the Jews throughout the world, as the section from Deuteronomy quoted above clearly shows, is continued with the following report on anti-Semitism:

"And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life."
DEUT 28:65-66

The report of Moses, however, does not end here and neither does the history of Israel.

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse ... and shalt obey his voice according to all that I commanded thee this day, thou and thy children ... That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity ... and will return and gather thee from all the nations ... And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed..." Extracts from DEUT 30:1-5

This miracle of history which consummated the people of Israel, is explained by the well-known theologian F. Rienecker in the following striking words: "It is a miracle that Israel is still in existence in spite of all the centuries of scattering and persecution, whereas all the other peoples of antiquity have disappeared. All the nations that lived during the times of the prophets, i.e. the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans no longer exist as nations that have retained their ancient identities. Only the Jews remain as witnesses to the truth of the scriptures."

Until now this synopsis has covered over 2000 years. We will now focus in detail upon the events that have occurred from the turn of the century to the present day. Using the aforementioned quotes from Deuteronomy we can take a chronological look at the development of Israel. In addition, the prophet Ezekiel gives us a parallel view of the Jewish immigration to Palestine from its beginning.

In chapter 37, Ezekiel is led by God in spirit to a valley where he sees in a vision, Israel lying in the form of dry bones.

"...and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them..."

...Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel ... And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD."
Extracts from EZEK 37:7-14

Fulfilled since 1896.

In the same year, T. Herzl wrote the book "The Jewish State", which offended the modern Zionists and caused an ever-increasing immigration to today's Israel: 650,000 Jews alone had immigrated before 1948 - *"...and the bones came together"*.

Through the establishment of the Kibbutz and the rebuilding of the cities, the gradual growth of an infrastructure developed, interlacing the Israelites living there - *"...the sinews came upon them"*.

Connected with the above is the irrigation of the country which converted large parts of the desert into fertile soil - *"...and the flesh came upon them"*.

During the night of the 14th to the 15th of May, 1948, the whole structure gained a strong outer frame - Prime Minister Ben Gurion proclaimed the independent state of Israel - the borders were set - *"...and the skin covered them"*.

However, the development is not finished. The spirit is still missing - the spirit of God - *"...but there was no breath in them"*.

This prophecy, which also lies in our future, forms the conclusion of Ezekiel's spiritual vision *"...I will put my spirit in you"*.

This interpretation was not randomly put together by ourselves, and the following Bible sections show details of the historical development of Israel, which has often occurred in amazing ways:

"But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and a fter will I send for many hunters..."
JER 16:15-16

The *"land of the north"* is mentioned in particular - Russia has the largest number of Jews among its inhabitants, but at the same time is also the country which creates the most problems when handing out visas to Israelites. The scripture also mentions *"Fishers and hunters"*. Let us look especially at this seemingly paradoxical order. History has proven it to be correct: Zionism, being comparable to the 'fishermen', was organised in 1897 at the first Zionist congress in Basel, and the 'hunter', is comparable to modern anti-Semitism, through which the Jews were driven to Palestine, only arose through the Third Reich.

We can see that the main reasons for the Jewish exodus are clearly shown in our section in Jeremiah; another verse also clearly shows how the Jews returned to their country:

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far."
ISA 60:8-9a

"They come flying as doves to their windows"; from the former kingdom of Yemen alone, 40,000 Jews were brought to Israel by plane. *"The ships of Tarshish first"*; the word *"ships of Tarshish"* was in Isaiah's time a common expression for large sea ships, which had to mainly go on long voyages. This part especially shows, like every other Bible verse quoted here, that it is not the return from Babylonian captivity that is being referred to. Back then, planes did not exist and ships were not needed. Likewise this false assumption is weakened by the following clear statement, which we read before in Deuteronomy:

"...He will gather thee from all the nations..."

"And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."
ISA 61:4

Beersheba, which is in the south of the country and had shrunk over the centuries down to a few huts, has over 20,000 inhabitants today. The completely deserted Caesarea has also been restored; Askalon and a string of other places are additional examples for the fulfilment of our Bible passages.

"Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth... I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I

will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: That they may see, and know..." ISA 41:9,18-20

"I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth... I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert... because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert to give drink to my people, my chosen." ISA 43:6,19-20

These parts were also fulfilled: Today Israel is one of the most fertile countries of the world; within the few years of its existence it has become one of the biggest fruit suppliers - e.g. one quarter of all grapefruit come from Israel. It is the world's second largest exporter of oranges.

The question was clearly asked: Is the Bible true, and consequently the Word of God; or is it false, having only ancient value? The question was clearly answered: Prophecies which are so exact, have been found in the Septuaginta and the Qumran scrolls which were written long before the birth of Christ. They cannot just be coincidence, or myths that are based on human consideration and intelligence.

An interesting conclusion? No - a very dangerous assessment!

The dead God suddenly comes alive; this God, whom you didn't want to be involved with, whom you thought was just the obsession of religious fanatics, suddenly develops into an almost embarrassing obstruction.

You may then try to shake this obstruction off, and say: "But there are so many more contradictions in the Bible". You might gradually calm down, and in time all these unpleasant questions will fade and in the end you may smile at your own naivety.

You could also do it differently and take the challenge seriously. Even then, you may still have many questions. At the start, you might see many apparent disharmonies, before you slowly discover, that the fault doesn't lie with the Book, but with you. Many 'open' questions and apparent contradictions similar to those in the Bible, exist in natural science. And nature itself, like the Bible, provides clear evidence that it is not meaningless, but has been established in accordance with natural laws.

With the aid of many clear experiments, the scientist sees the accuracy of these natural laws. He also sees that the fault of some of the misunderstandings and apparent contradictions lies with him, and not with nature. We have the same situation in the Bible; the unfortunate difference is, that a few theologians do not want to comprehend this, and in their self-overestimation, push their own insufficiency upon the Bible. Theologians are not in an enviable position; not only do they have to give account for themselves, but also for the people to whom they "preach" the Bible as if it were oriental wisdom. They are then in a similar situation to the Pharisees, of whom Jesus' words in Matthew 23 can hardly be denied:

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." MATT 23:13

In the end, this is no excuse for you either. The question asked at the beginning is personally put to everyone: Is Christ God's Son or not? The answer to this question is too important to leave up to anyone else.

You may think, "Here we go again", one last emotional attempt to convince me and urge me to get on the right path. Maybe you are right, the danger of getting over-emotional is there, but have you ever really been in love, and then still have been capable of talking or writing objectively about this man or woman? Maybe you find this comparison ridiculous and say that up until now you haven't experienced a lot with this Jesus. Before we have contact with another person we do not

experience a lot with them, so the question is rather: If such a contact were to arise and become close would we then find the fulfilment we were looking for?

We have been occupied with two prophetic subjects, "The life of Jesus" and "The return of the Israelites". Twice we were made to realise that these sayings could not be from man. We have only dealt with the "how", never with the decisive "why", which at the end will give the answer to why Jesus is so important for us. Once again let prophecy speak:

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed." ISA 53:5

Human relationships, even if they are really deep and beautiful at the start, can break up. People are fallible and that is why, in the end, the innermost problem of every single one of us cannot be solved through another person. This is due to the fact that they have the same difficulties and incapacities as we have and cannot jump over their own boundaries. These boundaries, which are set for each one of us, lie in our imperfection, in our mistakes, or let's call it by a name - in our sins. Everyone is afflicted with it, and no-one is able to take it away from the other, except by the one who overcame it - for all of us, on the cross - Jesus Christ.

Quite a few times already in this sheet you have been confronted with the question: Do you want to get to know Jesus closer, or not? A few times we have let this question go unanswered.

This should not remain a question; it is too crucial and much relies upon the answer. The answer can be yes or no, both options are there - but o n l y these two - do you realise?

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