***Fulfilled Prophecy - CA-007***

Back in the 1970s, there was a very popular book that had been written in 1967 by a Jewish man who, at one time, had professed to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, but later denied this. His name was Hugh Schonfield, and he wrote an amazing book called The Passover Plot. I say it's an amazing book because he made the most outlandish claim that I've ever heard. That claim was that Jesus decided as a young man that what the Jewish people really needed was for their Messiah to come. It looked like God wasn't going to send a Messiah, so Jesus would just take it on Himself to be the Messiah. He knew enough Scripture to know some prophecies about the Messiah. So He had read Isaiah where Isaiah says that the Messiah will teach in parables. So He went out and started teaching people by means of parables. Then Psalm 69 says that the zeal for the House of God had eaten up the Messiah, so Jesus took a whip and cleaned up the temple, and ran the money changers out of it, and so on.

He even had read Psalm 22 and knew that the Messiah would be crucified. So he purposefully defied the Roman government so that He would be crucified. So the disciples, after Jesus was dead, cooked up the story about the resurrection, because the Messiah had to be resurrected from the dead. So this is the outlandish claim that Hugh Schonfield made in The Passover Plot. I call it outlandish, because if you take this book seriously, then you're going to end up believing that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, because any man who was smart enough and powerful enough to have chosen the city of His birth and to have chosen His ancestors, would have to be God Himself.

**Moses**

So in the last session, we looked at some prophecies about the person and the work of Lord Jesus Christ, and we're going to continue this study. In John 5:46, Jesus made a very interesting statement to the ultra-conservative Jews, the Pharisees, who had been arguing with Him. They had made a statement that they believed in Moses. So Jesus said, "For if you believed in Moses, you would believe in Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you did not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Moses lived several thousand years before Jesus did. So how in the world could Moses have written about Jesus? And if Moses did write about Jesus, then that would be proof beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus was the Son of God.

Some more statements were made about Moses and other Old Testament prophets writing about Jesus. For example, Luke 24:27 is after the resurrection – after Jesus had come back and was spending time with the disciples, teaching them doctrine before He left: "In the Bible class that He was running for the disciples, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself and all the Scripture." Then dropping down to verse 44: "Now He said to them, 'These are my words, which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.'" That covers the whole Old Testament. So Jesus said that the Old Testament had a lot of things to say about Him in advance – predictive prophecy.

So this view was shared by all of the apostles. For example, let's look at several passages in Acts.

**Peter**

In Acts 3:18, Peter preaches his second sermon. His first sermon was on the day of Pentecost. Then in this sermon in verse 18, he says, "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled." This guy, Peter, was an Orthodox Jew, and he knew the Scriptures, especially after Jesus had expounded the Scriptures to him. He said, "Boy, everything that was in the Old Testament, and everything that any prophet ever wrote about the coming Messiah was fulfilled in Jesus.

Then about 10 years later, when Peter preached the first sermon aimed at a gentile audience, he hadn't changed his mind. In Acts 10:43, Peter said of Him (of Jesus), all the prophets bear witness, that through His name, everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." He was speaking to Cornelius and his family, and Cornelius was a Roman in the Roman army – a gentile. He was what they called a God-fearer. He was interested in Judaism; he was going to synagogue; he had contributed money to the synagogue; and, and he had done everything except become a Jewish convert. So Peter says, "Check it out, Cornelius. You know something about the Old Testament. Check it out. The Old Testament prophets speak of Jesus.

**Paul**

Acts 13:29 is another sermon from the apostle Paul: "When they had carried out all that was written concerning him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb." This was after everything had been written in advance, and none of the New Testament had been written at that time. So he had to have been referring to the Old Testament.

Turn over a couple of pages to Acts 17:2: " According to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead in saying, "This Jesus who I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." So he was going to synagogue as a good Jew each Saturday. I can imagine the apostle Paul walking into synagogue, and he might have even worn his Pharisee robes. He would walk in and people would say, "Oh, I see we have a distinguished visitor. Sir, do you have anything you'd like to say?" And that was not a good question to ask the apostle Paul, unless you really wanted to hear what he had to say. He'd say, "Well, yes, I'd like to tell you, we Jews have been looking for centuries for the Messiah. I'd like to tell you the Messiah has already come." He would pull out his scroll and go through the Old Testament. He couldn't do it in one service. It says for three sabbaths, he went through the Old Testament, and explained to them the prophecies about the Messiah and how they had been fulfilled in Jesus.

Acts 26:22 is not just a sermon, but it is Paul's defense sermon and evangelistic sermon that he preached when he was giving his defense before Herod Agrippa. He said, "So having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the prophets and Moses said was going to take place." He says, "Hey, don't get mad at me, if I say something that steps on your toes. I'm just telling you what the Old Testament says. All the prophets, including Moses, said what was going to happen – the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead, He should be the first to proclaim both to the Jewish people and to the gentiles.

I don't want to belabor this, but we need to understand that in the early days of the church, this was the way they gave the gospel. They pulled out a scroll of the Old Testament Scriptures and they went through it step-by-step – all of the prophecies about the Messiah. Then they told them about the life of Jesus and how everything was fulfilled in Christ. This is all written down in the New Testament today. If you can get a Jew to read the New Testament with an open mind, there is a name for Jews who read the New Testament: it's called Christian. I've known several such Jews.

One young man I knew at Dallas Seminary a few years ago had a Jewish background, and he said his parents had told him, "Whatever you do (I know you're going to school with gentiles), just tell them you're a Jew, and you don't read the New Testament. Don't ever read the New Testament, whatever you do." Of course, that made him curious: "What is in the New Testament that I'm not supposed to know?" So he got a New Testament and he used to read it at night under his covers with a flashlight. The result was that he put together what he had been taught in synagogue about the Old Testament Scriptures, and what the New Testament says about Jesus. He became a Christian. I've heard that similar testimony from a number of Jewish believers.

Romans 1:2 is talking about the gospel, "Which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David, according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness." That pretty well covers it, doesn't it? Jesus was predicted throughout the Old Testament.

**The First Prophecy of Jesus Christ**

I guess the very first prophecy that we have about the Lord Jesus Christ is in Genesis 3:14, after Adam and Eve had sinned, and God was going over with them the consequences of their disobedience in verse 15. He said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed (or your descendants) and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head (the descendant of the woman would give Satan a mortal blow), and you shall bruise Him on the heel" – a blow that is hurtful, but not mortal. So that's the first prophecy of the coming Messiah – the seed of the woman.

Then we looked last week at Genesis 49, the prophecy of Shiloh, the coming king from the tribe of Judah.

**The Jewish Feasts**

But the next one we're going to look at here are the Jewish feasts in Leviticus. So turn to Leviticus 23 where the feasts of the Jewish people are summarized. In Leviticus 23:1, the Lord spoke again to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The Lord's appointed times, which you shall proclaim as holy convocations. My appointed times are these.'" Then the first one is the weekly sabbath: "For six days, work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It is the sabbath to the Lord in all your dwellings." So the day of rest, the very first Jewish holiday, the Sabbath day, foreshadowed who and what Jesus was and what He would do to us. We can enter into His Sabbath rest. We don't have to work for our salvation. No one ever did. But we understand now that to the Jewish people in the Old Testament, this was a visual aid.

You can imagine. They didn't have PowerPoint, TV, projectors, or illustrated books. So they learned through their daily lives through very simple things like meals and having a day of rest. They didn't understand a lot of the information that we have today, but they knew that somehow this symbolized God's dealing with the sin problem, and we could rest perfectly because God had taken care of that problem. That was the weekly Sabbath.

Then we have the Lord's Passover. You know about how the lamb was slain and the blood was placed on the doorstep. This represented the coming Messiah and the blood that He would shed on the cross for us. 1 Corinthians 5:7: "Clean out the old leaven." Leaven, incidentally, was symbolic of sin because it spreads. You don't use a lot of yeast in baking because just a little bit is all you need. "Clean out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact, unleavened. For Christ, our Passover, also has been sacrificed."

So Christ is the real Passover. The ritual that the Jews went through each year that we just read about was symbolic. It was a picture of what the Messiah would do.

Then in verse 4, we have the feast of unleavened bread. Of course, leaven means yeast, and it involves fermentation. This doesn't sound like a big deal to us because we go to the grocery store, and we buy our bread already baked and sliced and packaged. But people lived on bread back then. That was the main staple. You hadn't had a meal unless you had had bread. You might have something else. You might have fish or a little meat or fruit, or you might not. But if you had a meal, you did have bread. The women spent a good deal of their time baking bread. So the two kinds of bread they had were regular bread (leavened bread) similar to what we eat that has risen because of the yeast, or unleavened bread. Sometimes they needed bread in a hurry to fix a meal, and they didn't have time to wait for it to rise. So they would prepare unleavened bread, which was like a tortilla, or pizza crust, or Afghan bread.

So they would have flat unleavened bread or they would have regular leavened bread. God said there is a certain time of the year that I want you to have nothing but unleavened flat bread. Verse 4: "These are the appointed terms of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. In the first month on the 14th day of the month at twilight."

Then there was the feast of the unleavened bread that we just talked about. 1 Corinthians 5:8: "Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." So the feast of unleavened bread represented a holy life, walking in fellowship with God, with all known sins confessed.

Then there was the feast of the firstfruits in Leviticus 23:9: "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you enter the land, which I'm going to give you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath, the priest shall wave it. Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb, one-year-old, without defect for a burnt offering to the Lord."

And then he goes on to give them instructions about the sacrifice. This was the feast of the firstfruits, and it signifies the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have this explained to us in 1 Corinthians 15:23: "But each in his own order." This is the resurrection. "Christ, the firstfruits." He is the first one to be resurrected from the dead. "Afterwards, those who are Christ, at His coming." Then comes the end when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father.

So the feast of the firstfruits was symbolic of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our resurrection to follow.

Then let's go back to the feast of Pentecost in Leviticus 23:15. You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering. There shall be seven complete Sabbaths. So seven sabbaths would be 49 days. "You shall count 50 days to the day after the seventh day. Then you shall present a new grain offering to the Lord. So this was the feast of Pentecost, and it always came 50 days after the feast of the firstfruits. Isn't it interesting? When did the Holy Spirit come down? When did God give the Holy Spirit to the church? 50 days after Passover. 50 days after the resurrection.

Then the feast of trumpets is in verse 23: "Again the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, in the seventh month, on the first of the month, you shall have a rest, a reminder by the blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord.'" This was the feast of trumpets, and it symbolized Israel, having been scattered, as being brought back together and regathered.

Isaiah 18:3: "All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, as soon as the standard is raised on the mountains, you will see it. And as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear it." So the Lord has predicted that scattered Israel will be regathered in the land.

Matthew 24:31: "And He shall send forth His angels with a greater trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

Then the next feast was the Day of Atonement. This was a very solemn occasion, and it represented the Jewish people's sorrow and repentance of having rejected their Messiah. Leviticus 23:26: "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'On exactly the tenth day of the seventh month is the day of atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the Lord. Neither shall you do any work on this same day. For it is a day of atonement to make atonement on your behalf before the Lord your God." This was the cleansing of the nation of Israel (the spiritual cleansing) and the forgiveness for having rejected their Messiah.

Romans 11:26: "Thus, all Israel will be saved, just as it is written. The deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." This is the cleansing (the atonement) of the nation of Israel.

Then we have the feast of tabernacles. Verse 42: "You shall live in booths (or tabernacles) for seven days. All the native born in Israel shall live in tents, so that your generation may know that I had the sons of Israel to live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God." One of the significances of the feast of tabernacles was to remember that, as a people, they had been brought out of Egypt supernaturally, and they lived in tabernacles or tents for 40 years.

Another significance of this is their conversion – their redemption from rejection of their Messiah. Zachariah 14:16: "Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go from year to year to worship the king." This is during the millennium. "The Lord of Hosts, and to celebrate the feast of booths." It will be celebrated as a time of rest and reunion of the Jewish people in honor of His having brought them out of Egypt originally, and of having restored their land, and forgiven them for the rejection of their Messiah and for their spiritual conversion.

These were visual aids, and the Jewish people in the Old Testament would have liked to have known a lot more about this. They understood that it had to do with God's dealing with them as a people, and dealing with the whole earth, including the gentiles. But these were shadows. These were visual aids meant to give them a little bit of understanding.

Hebrews 4:7-8 has an interesting statement about the sabbath. It says, "He again fixes a certain day, today saying through David, after so long a time, just as has been said before. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken of another day after that. There remains therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God." I thought the sabbath was just for the Jews and that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Sabbath, but here it says in the New Testament that there remains a sabbath. I'll tell you that Seventh Day Adventist people love this. They'll turn to it and tell you, "See, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God."

But then verse 10 says, "For the one who has entered his rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. So on the seventh day, God rested. Why did He rest? Had He gotten tired? No, He rested because there was nothing else to do. He had already done it all. He had created everything that He had planned to create. This implies that whatever problems you may face, God already has the solution for them because He had already done it all. He rested. Your biggest problem and my biggest problem has been the sin problem. How can I get right with God? What do I have to do to be saved? Nothing. Just accept what God has already done through Christ. When you stop your work, and you quit trying to impress God with your work, you realize that Christ is the fulfillment, and He's already done it all. You enter into Sabbath rest, as God rested.

So you can tell your Seventh Day Adventist friend, "You bet. There is a sabbath rest for God's people. Let me tell you about it." Then show them Colossians 2:16: "Therefore, let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink, or in respect to a festival, or a new moon, or a sabbath day." We don't have to celebrate those things. These were for the Jewish people in the Old Testament. So if some Christian tells you that you should be celebrating the Passover, and you should be honoring the Sabbath day, and so on, don't let him judge you on it. Here's why – verse 17: "These things are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." All those rituals and those feasts that we just read about in Leviticus 23 are a shadow. You can look at a shadow, and you can make some conclusions about the person who cast the shadow. You can tell a little bit about the person's shape, and size, and so on. But just look at the person, and you can learn a lot more about them by looking at the shadow. Colossians 2:17 says that these things are shadows, but the substance belongs to Christ, the one who cast the shadow. We don't even have to look at these anymore except to see how they fulfill prophecy, because the real thing (the substance) is Christ.

So did Moses write about Christ? Who wrote the book in Leviticus? Moses. Where do you find out about all the Jewish feasts beginning with the sabbath and so on? In the book of Leviticus that Moses wrote. Moses wrote about the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah**

In Isaiah 53:12, we read about the Messiah: "Therefore I will allot Him a portion with the Great, and He will divide the booty with the strong, because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors. Yet, He Himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors." Here Isaiah is using the past tense for something that hasn't even happened yet. That's called the prophetic tense in the Bible. When God says something is going to happen, it's just as good as having already happened. So Isaiah said, "He Himself, the Messiah, bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors." Jesus interceded for the people who nailed Him to the cross. Luke 23:34: "But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'"

He's still interceding for transgressors. Hebrews 9:24: "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us on our behalf."

Then 1 John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. I hope you don't sin, but if you do, we have an advocate, a defense lawyer with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." So Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be an intercessor for transgressors. He was an intercessor for transgressors, and He still is now.

Every year about this time, there's an article in one of the papers (the Wall Street Journal or The Dallas Morning News). You'll probably see something like this if you haven't already. They've interviewed a Jewish rabbi. It happens just about every year, so don't wonder about it when it happens. They will interview some Jewish rabbi, some Bible scholar who's Jewish, and they'll say, "Well, what do you think about Christians running around using the Old Testament and saying that it predicted Jesus?" The rabbi will say, "Well, actually, these prophecies, particularly in the book of Isaiah, were not referring to a man, but to the nation of Israel – the suffering Jewish people who have been persecuted all throughout history. But yet, they've given the world the Bible, and they just keep on praying for people and interceding for them, even though they've been persecuted and kicked around by most of the nations in the world."

Well, they only came up with this during this century when Christians began to evangelize the Jews. I mean, up until then, the Jewish people said, "These passages are referring to the coming Messiah." They rejected Jesus, but they said a messiah was yet to come who would fulfill all these passages. They only rejected Jesus because they hadn't read the New Testament with an open mind. Then with the onslaught of serious Jewish evangelism, and more and more Jews becoming Christians, the rabbis suddenly changed their mind. They said, "Oh, no, these Old Testament Scriptures don't refer to a man. They refer to the Jewish people."

So when you read these interviews, or maybe you'll see it on TV – some Jew trying to tell us that, just remember that this is a really new innovation that rejecters of Jesus have come up with. But historically, it was not so.

We looked at a number of prophecies about the Lord Jesus Christ last time. Let's just look at a couple more before we close.

**David**

In Psalm 38:11, David, as a prophet, is writing: "My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, and my kinsmen stand afar off. Those who seek my life lay snares for me, and those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction, and they devise treachery all day long."

Let's look at Luke 23:49 at the crucifixion: "All His acquaintances and the women who accompanied him from Galilee were standing at a distance seeing these things." Does that remind you of Psalm 38:11?

Psalm 109:22: David writes, "I am afflicted and needy. My heart is wounded within me. I'm passing like a shadow when it lengthens. I'm shaken off like the locust. My knees are weak from fasting, and my flesh has grown lean without fatness. I also have become a reproach to them. When they see me, they wag their heads." Compare that with Matthew 27:39: "Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, 'You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." This fits very well also with Psalm 22:7 that we looked at last time: "All who see Me sneer at Me. They separate with the lip. They wag the head, saying, 'Commit yourself to the Lord. Let Him deliver Him. Let Him rescue Him because He delights in Him.'"

So the Lord Jesus Christ is in the Old Testament. Moses wrote about Him; David wrote about Him; and, all of the other prophets wrote about Him. They very clearly predicted what was fulfilled in Jesus. And we have not the shadow, but the real thing. What would you rather have? A silhouette of someone that you love, or a photograph of them? And we've got even better than the photograph. We've got the photograph from the New Testament, and the real thing in heaven.

**Other Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled**

Let's look at a few more prophecies, not necessarily about the person and the work of the Messiah, but Old Testament prophecies that have been very explicitly fulfilled.

In Isaiah 44:28, Isaiah prophesies that, "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he will perform all my desire, and he declares of Jerusalem she will be built, and of the temple your foundation will be laid." This is an interesting prophecy because, I mean, who wants to build Jerusalem? Jerusalem had already been built, and it was a thriving city when Isaiah wrote it. But Isaiah was saying, "In the future, the city of Jerusalem is going is going to be destroyed. A few hundred years from now, God is going to choose a man named Cyrus to be responsible for Jerusalem beginning to be rebuilt." You can read about this in Ezra.

This just drives liberals crazy. They say, "Well, Isaiah had to have been written a lot later than we thought. This is really not prophecy. This is history." But isn't it interesting that the Dead Sea Scrolls (all of the scrolls that they discover about Isaiah) say that they were written during the time when Isaiah the prophet was supposed to have lived? There is not any hint anywhere that they were written afterwards as history. It's interesting, too, that Jesus referred to Isaiah, and He didn't call him Isaiah the historian. He referred to him as Isaiah the prophet. So here's where an Old Testament prophet predicts a man will come who will give permission for Jerusalem to be rebuilt after Jerusalem has been destroyed (it hadn't even been destroyed yet). And he even tells us what the name of the man is going to be. It also prophesied Josiah, by name, years before Josiah was even born.

Let's look at another one. Ezekiel 44 is interesting: "Then He (God) brought me back by way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces the east, and it was shut." This is what was called the Eastern Gate or the Golden Gate of Jerusalem. It was there for many years, but Ezekiel says, "The Lord said to me, 'This gate shall be shut. It shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it. Therefore, it shall be shut.'" So hundreds of years passed, and the gate was still open. I'm sure people thought, "Well, Isaiah was a good guy, and he was right about a lot of things, but boy, he missed it on this one, because the Golden Gate is not going to be shut." Well, guess what gate Jesus rode into Jerusalem through at the time of the triumphal entry? Through the Golden Gate. It hadn't been closed yet. Well, in the year 1543, a Muslim dictator, Sultan Suleiman, ordered that the Golden Gate, the Eastern Gate be closed. You know what? It hasn't been opened yet. According to Bible prophecy, it will not be opened until the Messiah returns and goes through that gate. So when the Lord Jesus Christ returns for the millennium, and He goes to Jerusalem, that will be the gate that He enters.

Ezekiel 26:3 is a familiar one. We've heard a lot of teaching about this at Berean. This is a prophecy on the city of Tyre. You need to remember that back then, Tyre was one of the thriving cities of the world. It would be as though someone said today, "It's not going to be too many years until the city of San Francisco is going to be a bare rock. There's not going to be any sign of civilization there. It's just going to be a bare rock." Well, this is something like what the city of Tyre was. Centuries passed, and Nebuchadnezzar invaded Tyre and actually destroyed the city. But he left it in ruins. So people probably said, "Well, Ezekiel was right. Nebuchadnezzar did destroy the city, and it's not here anymore. But I guess the part about it being scraped just like a rock was just figurative, because the ruins are still here." Well, when Alexander the Great attacked the new city of Tyre, which had been rebuilt on an island, he had his soldiers gather up the ruins of old Tyre and throw them in the water and make a walkway so they could march over and conquer new Tyre on the island. And guess what they left the ruins of Tyre looking like? A bare rock that had been scraped. This is prophecy fulfilled literally.

Ezekiel 36:33: "Thus says the Lord God. On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt, and the desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation to the side of everyone who passes by." So I think we've seen a picture of this in Israel today. It used to be a barren desert land, and since Israel became a nation in 1948, they've started using modern techniques of irrigation. The desert is literally blooming, and many parts of it are not deserts anymore. I believe that when God brings back the Jewish people in fulfillment of prophecy, what we've seen so far will just be a picture of it.

Time doesn't permit us to go through the prophecies of Daniel. Daniel outlined from his time forward the basic history of the world, and the empires that would rule the world. You can check this out in Daniel, and you can see that it goes right down the line: Nebuchadnezzar; the Medes and the Persians; Alexander the Great; and the Roman Empire. This is another thing that just drives the liberals up the wall – predictive prophecy that has been fulfilled. They just don't know how to handle it.

This is a great proof that the Bible is the Word of God because nobody could predict things like this in detail unless he were the One who was going to see to it that it happened. This is a great argument to use. By "argument," I don't mean to argue with people. But it is a great argument in the sense of a legal defense of Christianity. Just show people the predictive prophecies that have been fulfilled about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah, and about the other things: the history of the world from Daniel; and the city of Tyre. We didn't look at a lot of them. God made a tremendous prophecy about the Edomites. Have you ever known an Edomite? Most people have known Arabs and Jews, but I have never known an Edomite, and that's because they don't exist anymore. God prophesied that Edom would be wiped out and not built up. And it happened. The city of Petra that is in the walls of the mountains was a place that was thought to be impenetrable by armies. Those people were totally wiped out. Nobody lives there anymore. This is a great argument to use with unbelievers.

**Neotheism**

Also, today, we've got a new school of theology that is called neotheism or open theism. These people claim to be believers, but they say we actually got our Christian concept of God not so much from the Bible, but from the Greek philosophers. They say, "God is really not like what we thought He was. God is a being just like we are. He's not infinite. He's finite like we are. He's learning, and growing, and becoming, and learning to do things better, and probably taking some self-improvement classes." But they would tell us that God doesn't know how things are going to work out, and that He's kind of sitting there on His throne, right on the edge, looking down, really excited to see if things are going to go like He wants them to or if the devil's is going to gain control.

Well, if this were true, we couldn't trust any of the promises of the Bible. If this were true, how in the world would you explain all this prophecy that has been fulfilled down to the very letter? I mean, in the case of Jesus, it was fulfilled down to the manner of death; the place of birth; and, His ancestors. Predictive prophecy could only be made by an infinite all-knowing God. It's a great apologetic tool.

Leon Adkins, 2003

[**Back to the Advanced Bible Doctrine (Philippians) index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/philippiansdanish.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)