**Equip Class – Apologetics and Worldview**

**Fulfilled Prophecy as Evidence of the Divine Inspiration of Scripture**

1. Today’s lessen – we will begin drilling down into more specifics in the subject matter of apologetics/worldview
2. Our topic today – Fulfilled Prophecy (Evidence of Divine Inspiration)
3. This isn’t some dispensational thing (It is the very superstructure of Christianity – everything we look for and hope in as Christians is based upon what God has promised to do in the future – ex. Return of Christ, New Heavens and Earth, etc.)
4. What if you are asked – “give me 1 piece of evidence that the Bible is not merely a book written by men. What evidence is there that God was involved with the Bible?”
5. Flip this question around and ask the inquirer: Can you tell me what will happen to Mebane 100 years from now?
6. The Bible is unique in this way – it does this over and over / Only God can do this (actual fulfilled prophecy / man is incapable)

-----------------------------------------------------------------

1. God cites this to distinguish Himself **(Isaiah 46:9-10 & John 14:29)**
2. Other religions fail in this are of predicting the future (Islam, JWs, even Voltaire)
3. Islamic apologists cite crazy ideas like this as evidence that the Koran has fulfilled prophecy: “**Their skins will bear witness against them as to what they have been doing”**(Surah 41:21). (their claim – this predicts use of fingerprints to catch criminals)
4. Surah 81:4: “**And when the mountains are made to move.”** The Muslim apologist says that “**Centuries before the invention of dynamite, the holy Quran prophesied the blowing up and moving of the mountains**.”
5. Charles T. Russell and the JWs have made prophetic claims (ex. 1914) that proved to be completely wrong and exposed their man-made nature.
6. Voltaire – “Christianity in its twilight” (he wasn’t even close)

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. Only an Omnipotent and Omniscient God can actually predict the future
2. You must **Know all** and **Control all**
3. Mere Man cannot do this (James and Jesus both warn us of boasting about or worrying about the future that we don’t know or control)
4. It is difficult but we can discover the past through historiography (& even understanding what is going on in the present or real time can be quite a challenge to us – think about how the COVID pandemic unfolded – we saw things happening right in front of our eyes but we didn’t know how to interpret what we were hearing or who to believe). But the future – that is completely cut off from us. It is impossible for mere man to know the future – we are clueless. Even something that seems sure (like I will wake up tomorrow) is not certain or guaranteed, much less world events or things to come in decades, centuries or millennia.
5. James’ warning
6. But the Bible is different – it is full of prophecy. Writers in the Bible have no hesitation making bold claims of the future throughout the various books.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. Estimated - One fourth to one quarter of Bible is prophecy
2. Bible not just making guesses on trends (like stocks or weather)
3. Many predictions sound crazy at first
4. Sarah laughs (Gen. 18:12)
5. Flood will destroy the earth and all life (Gen. 6:13, 17). Seriously (all air breathing and land dwelling life?)
6. Food will be cheap in 1 day (II Kings 7:1-2)

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. There are a great variety of prophecies
2. Go fishing – the first fish you catch will have a coin in its mouth
3. Death if fruit is eaten
4. Death of firstborn if a construction project (Jericho) occurs
5. Messianic prophecies
6. The rise and fall of world powers

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

So we want to consider this feature of Scripture that sets it apart

God embraces this as His signature – He tells the end from the beginning

Let’s look at some examples:

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Our outline:

1. Geo-political predictions
2. Messianic predictions
3. Predictions made by Jesus

----------------------------------------------------------------------

So first – a Geo-political example – we’ll look at a prophecy against **Tyre**

There are many of these in Scripture – we’ll just have time for one.

Focusing on Ezekiel 26 even though other Scriptures address

Read Ezekiel 26:3-14 and verses 19-20

Remind how great Tyre was (its fame, trade, wealth, colonies, naval power and exploring)

Joshua’s day at conquest

Hiram in David and Solomon’s day

Remind that the prophecy wasn’t inevitable (recall Ukraine War)

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Reiterate the specifics of the prophecy details in Ezekiel 26

--------------------------------------------------------------------------

Now how did this play out in history? Highlights

1. Tyre was made of 2 parts (mainland) and island .5 mile away
2. About a year or 2 after prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar II launched a siege
3. Josephus says it lasted 13 years (long time)
4. 585-573 BC
5. Finally the supplies were cut off and mainland surrendered.
6. Nebuchadnezzar crushed the place and broke the walls and houses and towers and burned the city
7. But he failed to capture the island city
8. Rubble remained for 250 years and mainland was left vulnerable
9. He didn’t get much spoil (Ezekiel 29) indicates

--------------------------------------------------------------------

1. New Tyre on the Island prospered 250 years
2. It may have looked something like this: (See Powerpoint slide)
3. Eventually became part of Persian Empire
4. The rubble sat there on mainland (so incomplete)
5. The island impregnable like Alcatraz – walls to sea
6. 150’ tall walls / 15’ thick
7. Powerful Navy
8. But there is another world power coming
9. Alexander the Great of Macedonia (24 years old) 33,000 foot soldiers 15,000 calvary
10. He has just defeated Darius III in Battle of Issus in 333 BC
11. He’s moving around Mediterranean to go attack Egypt
12. He wants to eliminate any sea port naval powers with allegiance or control by Persia
13. Gets compliance at Byblos and Sidon but at Tyre he is rejected
14. You don’t say no to Alexander
15. Alexander’s response: “You indeed, relying on your situation, because you live on an island, despise this army of foot-soldiers, but I will soon show you that you are on the mainland. Therefore I want you to know that I will either enter your city or besiege it.”
16. So what does he do? He will build a land causeway (a mole)
17. How? With the rubble of old mainland Tyre

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. Describe how this happened - Fulfills verse 12 of Ezekiel 26
2. He had no intention of helping Ezekiel fulfilling anything but his desire
3. Describe back and forth battles and setbacks for 7 months
4. The fire boat incident
5. Alexander’s realization he needed ships and how he got them
6. Ships from Byblos, Sidon, Rhodes, Cilicia, Macedon, and Cyprus (220 total)
7. Breach on the south / 6000 executed 2000 crucified on beach /30,000 women and children sold as slaves – he was furious at them
8. The result?

-------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. This is today – 13 miles north of Israel (see PowerPoint slide)
2. Now a peninsula like Florida
3. Silt and sand accumulation
4. Alexander left his mark on Tyre for sure

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. This wasn’t the end of Tyre – it recovered and even prospered somewhat during the Roman period
2. Many of the archeological ruins evident today are from the Roman period
3. But there was more devastation – more waves of nations to come and other kinds of waves (tsunami waves and sea level change)
4. Major earthquakes 501 AD and 551 (with tsunami) and sea level change submerged parts of the city; other earthquakes have also destroyed the city
5. Throughout the middle ages there were wars and decline
6. Both Muslims and then crusaders held the city
7. The Muslims finally finished it off in 1291 burning and leveling it so no crusaders could ever use
8. As the prophet said – like waves of the sea, many nations would come against it
9. When visiting the area in the early 19th century visitors described the impoverished and depopulated once great city

Phillip Myers (history textbook) **Philip Myers made an interesting quote here; he is a secular historian (not a theologian) and this is found in a history textbook: "Alexander the Great...reduced it to ruins (332 B.C.). She recovered in a measure from this blow, but never regained the place she had previously held in the world. The larger part of the site of the once great city is now bare as the top of a rock—a place where the fishermen that still frequent the spot spread their nets to dry."**

A traveler visiting Tyre over a century ago made this observation:

“The island, as such, is not more than a mile in length. The part which projects south beyond the isthmus is perhaps a quarter of a mile broad, and is rocky and uneven. It is now unoccupied except by fishermen, as a “place to spread nets on” (Thompson 1969: 190–91).

--------------------------------------------------------------

In 1984 UNESCO designated Tyre a World Heritage Site – to hault development that could damage or destroy the archeological remains.

So, Tyre has more or less become a tourist destination and museum to its devastation. It will never be rebuilt just like Ezekiel said (I’m sure UNESCO had no interest in helping fulfill the Bible’s prophecy). It’s also a designated Palestinian refugee camp area. So, it has gone from a world power to refugee camp.

Encyclopedia Britanica states that fishing remains a major occupation in the area.

And God Himself said that He would make the deep be brought up over her and cover Tyre – he did that with Alexander depositing the mainland into the deep, but also with submerging parts of the city by sea level rise, and by flattening it (earthquakes) and flooding it with tsunami waves.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Well let’s turn to the predictions made about Christ – we are more familiar with these Messianic Prophecies because we see them noted in the NT so often.

Some prophecies are more important than others and these are some of the most important.

After man fell – God announced a coming deliverer or savior.

Mention layered fulfillments – types and shadows also (Joseph, Moses, David)

1. Genesis 3:15 (proto gospel) – seed of woman
2. Then Bible writers began to zero in on the Messiah one after another
3. He would be Abraham and Sarah’s son (Gen 18)
4. He would descend from Judah (Gen 49:10)
5. He would be a King in David’s lineage (Jeremiah 23:5-6)
6. He would be God and man (Isaiah 9:6-7)
7. He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
8. He would be preceded by a messenger and visit the temple (Malachi 3:1)
9. He will be a suffering servant (Isaiah 53)
10. Perhaps the most well known Messianic prophecy is that last one – Isaiah 53. It is often used as a stand alone tract to be given to Jewish people to introduce them to Christ.
11. **Let me read a portion of that passage and you tell me who this is speaking about. Read Isaiah 53:3-5.**
12. Who does that describe? When was that written? **About 700 BC**. (By the way – Dead Sea Scrolls remove the skeptical claim that this portion of Isaiah was added after the life of Christ) Is there any other person in history that fits that description?
13. Barry Leventhal story at UCLA
14. He asked his rabbi after being challenged by Christians about Isaiah 53
15. Rabbi said it sounds like it is describing Jesus of Nazareth to him also but we Jews don’t believe in Jesus so it must not be about him.
16. Barry eventually became a Christian
17. **He said about this encounter with his rabbi – “There are none so deaf as those who don’t want to hear”**

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Well that brings us to our last category for this morning – prophecies made by Jesus Himself

1. These are especially striking when thought about carefully
2. **Matthew 24:35** “Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away.”
3. Jesus never wrote anything that we are told
4. A large part of his society was illiterate and were poor farmers and slaves
5. He was a lowly carpenter in an obscure 1st century Middle East village
6. He was crucified as criminal
7. And yet, 2000 years later, on another continent, in all kinds of different languages, Jesus words are read, memorized, spoken, sung, and repeated on a daily basis. We have Ben and Shanna Wrights devoting their life to ensure more can do this.
8. Heaven and earth are getting older and passing away, His words never will. Astonishing

-----------------------------------

1. **Matthew 26:13** “Wherever this gospel is proclaimed, what this woman has done will be recounted as a memorial to her.”
2. I heard about this at 1st pres. Kannapolis growing up “She did what she could”
3. I’ve heard about it here
4. Think about this small incident – how is it that we could know about it and how did Jesus know we would.
5. It required that the incident be recorded in a book that would be preserved.
6. It required that the gospel message be preserved but also this account of an anointing of Jesus by this woman. How could Jesus ensure that this small token of anointing him with fragrant oil could be preserved and remembered and spoken?
7. It required that the Book’s message go out and transcend cultures, times, circumstances and attempts to stamp it out. It required the Canon of Scripture to be formed.
8. These show that Christ was no mere man – remember, man cannot tell the future. But Christ does
9. One More – **Matthew 20:17-19** Jesus predicts 7 things “we are going up to Jerusalem; the son of man will be arrested by the Jewish leaders, condemned and handed over to the gentiles. They will mock him, flog him, and crucify him. But on the 3rd day he will rise again.” Can you give the details of your death? How are you to fulfill a resurrection? Only God.
10. These vindicate all of Jesus claims and all of His teaching. They show that He was indeed God in the flesh. Jesus said not one jot or tittle will pass from the law till all is fulfilled.
11. These and many many other instances of where God tells us the end from the beginning should encourage and strengthen your faith in His word.
12. There are more to come – He has promised He will return just like he left. He has promised to melt and burn this world and heavens, transforming it into a new heaven and earth.
13. So the question needs to be asked of our unbelieving friends – **How do you explain that the Bible accurately writes history before it takes place?** Even decades or hundreds of years beforehand.
14. If they say it is lies making events already happened look like prophecies – that would be an even greater miracle. That a book with one quarter to one third made up lies has been the impetus for the truth telling through the history of the world. People have been burned alive rather than distort the truth or lie and yet its all based on a canon of lies. Quite an astonishing hypothesis.