

# Bible Knowledge

*Prophecies, Prophets, and People*



# Class Section 1: Fulfilled Prophecy about Jesus

One very outstanding and undeniably unique aspect of Jesus' life is that literally hundreds of detailed predictions and prophecies were made by ancient prophets and seers, many centuries before He was born—specific details regarding His birth, life, and death—that no mere mortal man could possibly have fulfilled.

In the first books of the Bible, known as the Old Testament, over 300 such predictions about the “Messiah” or “Savior” can be found. Here is a small sampling of these specific predictions:

## \* Born of a virgin

Nearly 750 years before Christ's birth, the Old Testament prophet Isaiah prophesied:

*Isaiah 7:14—Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

Fulfillment: Mary was a virgin engaged to be married to Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, when the angel Gabriel appeared to her.



*Luke 1:26-35 (excerpts) - God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "...You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High."*

*Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."*

*The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."*

Immanuel means "God with us," and that's who Jesus is when we receive Him; God is with us!

### **\* Born in Bethlehem**

Micah, prophesying in the eighth century B.C., predicted:

*Micah 5:2—But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.*

Fulfillment: The Gospel says Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.



*Matthew 2:1—Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king.*

## \* **Triumphal entry into Jerusalem**

Around 450 B.C., the prophet Zechariah commanded the people by the Spirit of the Lord to:

*Zechariah 9:9—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Fulfillment: Five days before his crucifixion, Jesus returned to Jerusalem and told His disciples,

*Matthew 21:2-10—"Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me." So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"*

## \* **His betrayal**

In 450 B.C., Zechariah also prophesied:

*Zechariah 11:12-13—Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"— that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.*

Fulfillment:

*Matthew 26:14-15—Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.*

*Matthew 27:3-7—Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.*

### \* His crucifixion

About 1000 B.C., King David prophesied:



*Psalm 22:16-18—For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.*

Fulfillment: That was written by King David, who died a natural death (recorded in 1

Kings Chapter 1), so he wasn't talking about himself. But being a prophet, he predicted the type of death that Christ would die! It says in the New Testament:

*John 19:23-24—Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus [pierced His hands and feet], took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be."*

Crucifixion was not practiced by the Jews of David's time (they used stoning), but David predicted this type of death for the Messiah, a method of execution unknown to the Jews of his time— foretold 1000 years before it happened!

### **\* His burial**

*Isaiah 53:9—And they made His grave with the wicked— but with the rich at His death.*

Fulfillment: Jesus died as a criminal ("with the wicked") in the eyes of the world, as there were

*Matthew 27:38—Two robbers were crucified with Him.*

And after His death—

*Matthew 27:57-60—A rich man named Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ...When Joseph had taken the body, he ... laid it in his new tomb.*

—a grave with the rich!



## \* His resurrection

*Psalm 16:10—For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

The Hebrew word here sheol is sometimes translated "hell" (the place of eternal punishment) and other times "grave" or the "unseen state." King David, who gave the prophecy, died and was buried and his flesh saw corruption, but Jesus was raised from the grave and Hell three days after His death.

*Acts 2:31—His soul was not left in Hades [the underworld of the dead], nor did His flesh see corruption.*

As the angel said to the mourners who came to Jesus' tomb,

*Luke 24:6,5—He is not here, but is risen! ... Why do you seek the living among the dead?*

Now, of course, one of the arguments used against these prophecies is, "Well, the Church had almost total control of the old manuscripts from which the Bible is translated and they just doctored up the Old Testament prophecies so that they'd look like Jesus fulfilled them." This argument fell apart in 1947, when an Arab shepherd boy in Palestine stumbled across a cave containing ancient scrolls of the Old Testament, all dated before 68 A.D., and some as early as 200 B.C.! The scrolls agreed in almost every respect with the traditional Hebrew texts used in the translation of our Bible, containing the same prophecies word for word.

## \* Destruction of Jerusalem after His coming

*Daniel 9:26—And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city [of Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [the temple].*

This prophecy given in 540 B.C. shows that after the Messiah's death the city of Jerusalem and the Jews' temple would be destroyed.

Fulfillment: After Jesus was cut off [crucified] in 30 A.D., not for Himself, but for the sins of the world, do you know what happened to Jerusalem and to the Jews' temple? In 70 A.D., the Roman legions marched in and burnt Jerusalem to the ground.

## Class Section 2: Heroes with Clay Feet

### \* The people God uses!

*Acts 14:15— We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them."*

God's Word portrays its heroes as they really were! It doesn't depict them as men who were perfect and never made a mistake and supernatural and all that sort of thing, but they were just ordinary men like you and me.

In fact, one of the proofs that the Bible is a supernatural, miraculous book of God and not man, is that when man writes history, much of the time he covers up the failings and mistakes of his heroes, whereas God lays them out wide open there, the mistakes that they made and their sins!— And yet they repented and God forgave them and they were restored and they were still useful in spite of it all.

Let's look at a few examples.

## \* Moses

Moses lived around 1400 B.C. He led the Israelites out of their bondage as slaves in Egypt. Through Him, God gave the Israelites the first five books of the Bible that contained the Law, a mixture of both civil and religious ordinances, by which they were to be governed.

### Striking the rock

The Children of Israel had left Egypt and were passing through the wilderness. The Lord had already done miracles to supply them with water and food. On this occasion, again there was no water and the people began to murmur. God directed Moses through to bring forth water out of the rock by speaking to it.



*Numbers 20:8—Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.*

But instead Moses shouted angrily at the people,

*Numbers 20:10-11— "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.*

The Lord was angry with Moses for having behaved in this very wrathful and impatient

fashion before the people in this display of a fit of anger and impatience with them. He punished Moses by telling him,

*Numbers 27:14—You rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes. (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)*

*Numbers 20:12—Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.*

Because he wasn't a better example of God's own patience with the people, therefore Moses was only allowed to see the Promised Land from afar, from the top of a mountain, before he died.



### **\* King David**

David was the greatest king of ancient Israel and lived around 1000 B.C. He wrote many of the songs of praise that constitute the largest book of the Bible, the Book of Psalms.

David fell in love with Bathsheba, a beautiful woman, who lived within the shadow of the walls of the palace. Her husband Uriah, a heroic general, was battling in David's army. So he arranged with his top general Joab to have Uriah placed in the frontline of the battle and then have his escort withdraw, so he would be killed—which he was! He sent Uriah to his death!

The incident of David's sin brought Nathan the prophet to David's side. The prophet

poured out upon him such a scathing denunciation that David cried out: "I have sinned against the Lord!" (2 Samuel 12:13.) And so he had!

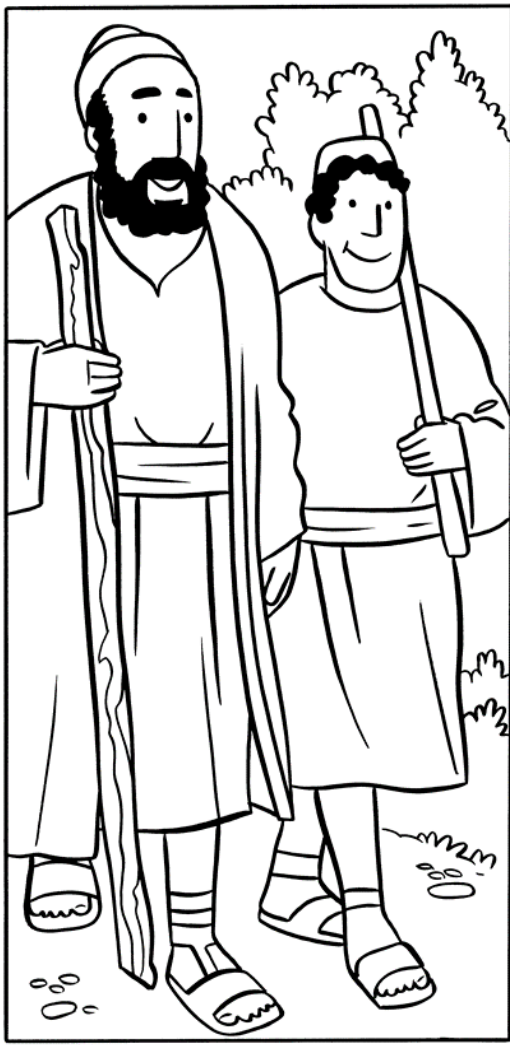
David greatly repented. However, the Lord pronounced certain judgments upon him that would happen, even in spite of his repentance: Their first child would die, the sword would never depart from his house, the kingdom would be taken from his heirs, and it would be divided!

Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance on this occasion.

*Psalm 51: 1-2, 16-17 - Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*

## **\* Paul**

Paul was the greatest evangelist and teacher of the early Christians. He was not one of those who personally followed Jesus while He was on earth, but was, in fact, a persecutor of the early Christians after Jesus' ascension. That changed when, while on a mission to arrest some Christians, he was temporarily blinded by a brilliant light out of which Jesus spoke to him. After being blind for three days, his sight was restored after a Christian prayed for him, and from that point on Paul became the dynamic leader of the early Christians. Aside from tirelessly traveling to preach the Gospel and establishing Christian communities in many cities in the eastern areas of the Roman empire, he also wrote many letters of



instruction, 14 of which were incorporated into the New Testament over 150 years later.

The Apostle Paul did not consider himself to have "attained."

*Philippians 3:13-14—I don't mean to say that I have already reached perfection. ... But I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

### **\* Within reach!**

Some people make characters in the Bible sound so far above and beyond us that they seem unrelatable to our present existence.—But the Lord wants us to realize how human they were and how much like us they were. If those in the Bible could serve the Lord, despite their weaknesses and character flaws and mistakes, so can we!

- **The Lord has shown us that anyone who accepts Him, and wants to serve Him, He accepts.**

Jesus walked those dusty roads and talked to the simple fishermen and the tax collectors, prostitutes and drunks, as well as the influential and the educated, in order to show them that God loved them all and they could all love God, they could all love each other and serve each other and serve the world with the Gospel.

He came to try to make it as easy as He could! —And that's why the religious leaders of His day wanted to crucify Him, because they taught the people that you couldn't get close to God without them and without following all of their religious laws.

But that's not what Jesus preached! He said:

*Matthew 22:37-40 - You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.*

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## **Prayer and Praise: "Thank You for Holding on to Me!"**

Jesus, thank You for always holding on to me. All my life long, every day, You've been right there, holding my hand, and I love You for that. It's such a secure feeling to know You're there.

Sometimes I know I've let go. I've walked away and I've walked alone, and I'm sorry for that. But I love how You come after me and You take my hand and You keep holding on. You never let go. You never leave me.

And You not only hold my hand, but You speak to me and You love me and guide me. I love You for that. Thank You for sticking close, Jesus. Thank You for reminding me not to fear, because You are always right there beside me, watching out for me. I love You. Keep holding on to me, Jesus!