

The PLAIN TRUTH

A magazine of understanding

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Did You Ever PROVE whether the Bible is INSPIRED?

Many assume divine revelation without PROOF. Others scoff. Here is a blistering challenge. Here is astonishing PROOF.

by Herbert W. Armstrong

HAVE YOU ever stopped to really *prove* whether or not the Bible is *divinely inspired* by a Creator? Would you be able scientifically to *prove* whether or not this world's best seller and most-read book is an actual *revelation* from the Supreme Creator to mankind?

I am going to give you the *proof*. And I am going to tell the skeptics how to disprove the Bible, if it's *not* inspired, and how to disprove the very existence of God, IF THERE IS NO GOD.

It Dares to Foretell the Future!

Here is a book—The Holy Bible—that dares to write out the future history of this world in advance—that dares to prophesy what is actually going to *happen* within 15 or 20 years to specific nations, including Russia, the British Commonwealth, China, the United States, Italy, Turkey, Ethiopia, and many others—most of the major nations of this world.

But *would you believe it* if I told you what this Book predicts? If I told you what it predicts about *your* nation? Would you believe it?

You know, we have gone away from believing that the Bible means what it says. We may not be ATHEISTS. We may not *ridicule* the Holy Bible. But we are

living now in an age of SKEPTICISM. We are living in an age of doubt.

Very few people have stopped to prove whether or not the Bible is really the inspired Word of God. Very few people TREMBLE before what it says or regard it as having REAL AUTHORITY.

Most highly educated people, and men of science, *assume* that the Bible is *not* the infallible revelation of a Supernatural God, and they *assume* this WITHOUT THE SCIENTIFIC PROOF that they demand on material questions.

Most fundamentalist believers *assume*, on sheer faith, *never having seen proof*, that the Holy Bible is the very Word of God. Christ is quoted in the Bible as saying, "The Scripture cannot be broken."

But *can* it be broken? Did you ever try to break it? Did you ever really put it to the test? Did you ever really prove it? Isn't it about time that we stop and seek out the proofs one way or the other?

How Could You Prove It?

Some people seem to think that Jesus' miracles were recorded to *prove* His divine messiahship. But the skeptics don't believe those miracles ever occurred.

Some people will say, *answered prayer* is the proof of inspiration. But the skeptic has had no prayers *answered*. He doesn't believe that *anybody ELSE* has.

There is, however, one source of *irrefutable* PROOF!

The Bible itself purports to be the infallible, divine revelation of truth, revealed by the very Creator and Divine Ruler of the entire universe. In your Bible, *One is quoted*, claiming that **HE is God**, speaking in the first person, saying that He can make and unmake nations, that He can carry out His judgments over millenniums of time, claiming that He can foretell infallibly the future of cities and empires, but that *no MAN* can.

TAUNTING the Skeptics

WHO IS *this*, quoted as saying, "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, my council shall stand"? One is quoted saying those very words in Isaiah 46:9-10.

Skeptics say the Bible is merely the religious writings of a small ancient Jewish race, groping in the darkness of human ignorance and of superstition trying to develop a concept of God.

But is it?

Who is *this* claiming to foretell the future?—Is it merely some ignorant, ancient *human* with no power to make good his boast, who wrote *this* blistering challenge to the skeptics, recorded in Isaiah 41:21-23, "Now the Eternal cries, 'Bring your case forward.' Now Jacob's king cries, 'State your proofs'."

Yes, *state your PROOFS!* "Let us hear what has happened in the past that we may ponder it, or show me what is *yet to be*, that we may watch how it turns out. Yes, let us hear *what is COMING*, that we may be sure that you are Gods. Come, do something or other that we may marvel at the sight. Why, *you* are things of naught. You can do nothing at all."

There is the taunt of the One *quoted* as being God, and quoted in the first person, taunting to skeptics, saying, "Why, *you're* nothing at all. Come on! Let's hear your *proofs* that we may watch whether it turns out. Predict what is going to happen in the future, and let us watch and see whether *you* can foretell. Have *you* the power to bring it about? Are you a God? Do *you* rule the universe? Can you *make and unmake nations*? Can you pronounce a sentence or a decree on a nation, and *bring it to PASS*?" *That* is the taunt of the GOD of the BIBLE to the doubter.

Prophecy is the PROOF of God

Prophecy is the proof of *divine revelation!* If One, in the Bible, speaking and claiming to be God, can make prophecies and tell what is going to happen in the future to nations, to cities, to empires, then if it actually happens *in every case*, and without a miss, you'll know *that* was a real God speaking.

But, if it were some person writing this, some *human mortal* writing in ignorance, groping in superstition, making great boasts, and claiming that he could foretell what was going to happen to proud cities, to nations, to great empires, and then it never happens, you know that *that* man was merely writing make-believe *out of his own imagination*.

Yes, prophecy is the proof of God, the *proof* of the divine revelation of the Bible. Prophecy is a taunting challenge that the skeptic *dares not accept!*

So here is the challenge to the skeptic. How long has New York City been in existence? About 300 years. About 300 years ago New York City was a little village. Now it has grown to a great city of over 8 million population.

Suppose that some human prognosticator made a prophecy that New York will very soon, inside of 15 years, be totally destroyed, never again to be rebuilt. Would any *human* be able to bring that to pass? Would anybody be-

lieve it if someone would make such a prophecy? *Is there ANY MAN on this earth that could speak with authority*, and make such a prophecy about a great city like New York?—AND BRING IT TO PASS?

The City that CONFOUNDS the Skeptics

Now Notice! Over 2500 years ago, there existed a great city that already, *then*, was more than 1500 years old. That city was the mistress of the seas—of the whole world; it was the commercial center of the world. It was beautiful, rich, and stable. That city was ancient Tyre on the Mediterranean. It was located on the eastern coast of Phoenicia.

In the year of 604 B.C. the nation Judah had been invaded by the Chaldeans under King Nebuchadnezzar, of the Chaldean Empire. The Jews had been conquered and taken captive, in a series of sieges between 604 and 580 B.C. The people of Tyre were looking with greedy eyes on *Judah*; and they were laying plans to go down and take part of the spoil, now that their rival king had invaded, and conquered it.

Can This Decree Be Broken?

We read of Tyre in Ezekiel 26:1-3, the Moffatt translation, in a little plain-English:

"In the 11th year, on the first day of the month"—now this was in 585 B.C.—"This word from the Eternal came to me." Ezekiel was writing this. He is just a human mortal man, one of the prophets who wrote this, but this man who wrote this prophecy said that the very *Word of God* came to Him, and he wrote it down. Now this is what *God* is quoted as saying—One who is quoted in the *first person* as being GOD, the very Creator, and the very Ruler of all the universe. He said:

"Son of man, since Tyre has gloated over Jerusalem, 'AHA! this door into the nations is broken down! It lies open to me. I shall prosper, *now she* is laid waste.' Therefore, the Lord, the Eternal utters this sentence: 'Tyre, I am against you . . . I will bring *many a nation* against you,—as the sea brings *many a wave*.'"

Who was *this* speaking? Was it some ignorant human, or was it *God Almighty* who pronounced this fate on this commercial metropolis, this New York of the ancient world, this great proud, *mighty* city of Tyre, because of its evils, and because it was threatening to take a spoil of this kingdom of *Judah*?

What God Said Would Happen

Let us begin with this third verse from the King James, or the authorized

translation, and read on including the fifth verse.

"Therefore, thus saith the Lord God. Behold, I am against thee, O Tyre. And I will cause *many nations* to come up against thee *as* the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers. I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets (fishers nets) in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Eternal, and it shall become a spoil to the nations."

Here is One quoted in the Bible as saying, "I am God, I have spoken it. This is going to happen to that great city, one of the two greatest cities of the world, as great in the world in that day as *New York* or *London* is today."

I want you to notice these *points*, in what this One who *claims to be God* has said. He said that *many nations* would come up against this Tyre, and attack her. But how were they to come? He said *like the waves of the sea*. Now the waves of the sea come *one after the other*, not all together. These attacking nations would come *one after the other*. He said that they would destroy the walls; they would break down the towers and demolish the buildings of that city. He said then that they would *scrape the stones, the timbers of the demolished buildings and even the top soil into the Mediterranean Sea*. He said that this city would become like the *top of a rock*; it would become a *place to spread nets on*; and it would become a *spoil to the nations*—MORE than one nation—*many nations coming ONE after the OTHER like the waves of the sea*.

For over 1500 years the armed forces of other cities and nations had attacked this proud city of Tyre, but never had any army been able to batter down its walls or actually to invade the city. Now *could* some mere human mortal, just writing in the religious works of the ancient Jewish race—*could* some mortal man pronounce such an astounding fate on so great a city AND BRING IT TO PASS?

But let us read on, beginning with *verse 7* of Ezekiel 26—*verse 7* on through *verse 11*. "For thus saith God Eternal (here is God quoted as speaking directly, and in the *first person*): "Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus NEBUCHADNEZZAR, the king of Babylon."

This becomes quite a *specific* prophecy. It tells distinctly the *name* of the king and of the *nation* that God is going to bring against this city of Tyre, a *king of kings* "(because he was an emperor over a number of nations from the north)" with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and with



DESOLATE RUINS OF OLD TYRE. This city, once the mistress of the seas, dares the skeptic to defy Bible prophecy. Just as prophesied, the dust of old Tyre was cast into the sea leaving the city's rock foundation barren, as you see

above. In the background lie a few pillars giving mute testimony that not even mighty Rome could defy God's decree: "Never shalt thou be rebuilt!" (Ezek. 26:14.)

—Westminster Films Photo

much people. HE shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field . . . HE shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes, he shall break down thy towers . . . HE shall enter into thy gates . . . and with the hoofs of *his* horses shall *he* tread down all thy streets. HE shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground," —or, "your strong pillars" as the margin has it, "shall go down to the ground."

How there it is specifically speaking of *Nebuchadnezzar*, what HE shall do. Notice it was what *he* will do all the way through; but remember God has said that *many nations* shall come, *not just one*, but many nations, one after the other like the waves of the sea.

Notice! *Nebuchadnezzar* was *not* to take *all* of the debris, *all* of the stones, the timber, and the top soil and dump it into the Mediterranean. God has said *many nations* would come.

Tyre's FATE Sealed

Let us read on. Notice how this prophecy becomes even *more specific*, begin-

ning with verse 12 on through verse 14. "And **THEY**," no longer does God say, "and **HE**"; it is speaking of "They."

This would mean **OTHER NATIONS** to follow *Nebuchadnezzar*. "They shall make spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise, and *they* (that means other nations following *Nebuchadnezzar*) shall break down thy walls and destroy thy pleasant houses. *They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust IN THE MIDST OF THE WATER.*" There it is!

God says, "I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard, and *I will make thee like the top of a rock*, and thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon. **THOU SHALT BE BUILT NO MORE; for I, the Eternal, have spoken it, saith the Lord God!**"

THERE is authority! There is One quoted, speaking in the *first person* with *great authority*, pronouncing a dire sentence upon the great city of the world at that time. Was there any God existing about to do it?

Notice this prophecy said *they* would

lay the stones, the timber, the soil in the Mediterranean, and after that, Tyre was to be completely destroyed and **BUILT NO MORE, NEVER AGAIN TO BE BUILT!**

Was this the very *Creator God* passing sentence? Was the *Ruler of the universe* able to bring it to pass, or was this mere **HUMAN conjecture?**

Here is the challenge to tell whether or not this Bible was *inspired*. There is no other book where you can find one speaking, saying, "I AM GOD," and speaking to nations and to cities, and pronouncing sentence in that fashion, and then centuries later *bringing it to pass!*

Notice! This same God is telling what is going to happen to our modern nations today, yes, Russia, Germany, Great Britain, the United States, Australia, Italy, China, all of the great nations of the world, and many of the *minor* nations of the world, pronouncing sentence on *us*—warning of things that are to happen to us in the next 20 years. *Can He do it?* Was He able to do what He said about ancient Tyre?

Is this Bible inspired? Can you *prove* (Please continue on page 9)

Did You Ever PROVE whether the Bible is INSPIRED?

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it? Do Bible prophecies *mean* what they say?

For over 1500 years, this great city, Tyre, had defied all of its enemies. Many had approached it and tried to attack and invade it, but none had ever been able to succeed. Now notice! Could some ignorant *man* write out this decree and CAUSE THIS VERY DECREE TO BE CARRIED OUT?

It Happened as Prophecied!

Very soon after that, there was a 13-year siege by King Nebuchadnezzar ex-

actly as this had been foretold, as the one speaking and saying "I am God," *said* it would happen! Finally, he took the city. It has never happened before. He demolished the city. And *it has never been rebuilt!*

However, the people of the city fled, and built a *new* city on an island only half a mile off shore from OLD TYRE. Now the original Tyre became known *then* as OLD TYRE, and the *new* city of the island became known as NEW TYRE.

Many skeptics may say that that prophecy wasn't written in 585 B.C.

before this happened, but that it was written *after* it happened. How can you prove that Ezekiel wrote it then?

There is *ample proof* of it, but that factor is only the *first link* in the chain of this prophecy. This prophecy had said *many nations* will come like waves of the sea. It foretold many other things to happen. Only part of those things were to be done by Nebuchadnezzar, to be brought about by him. The prophesied events of *New Tyre* were not *completed* until the beginning of the *14th century*.

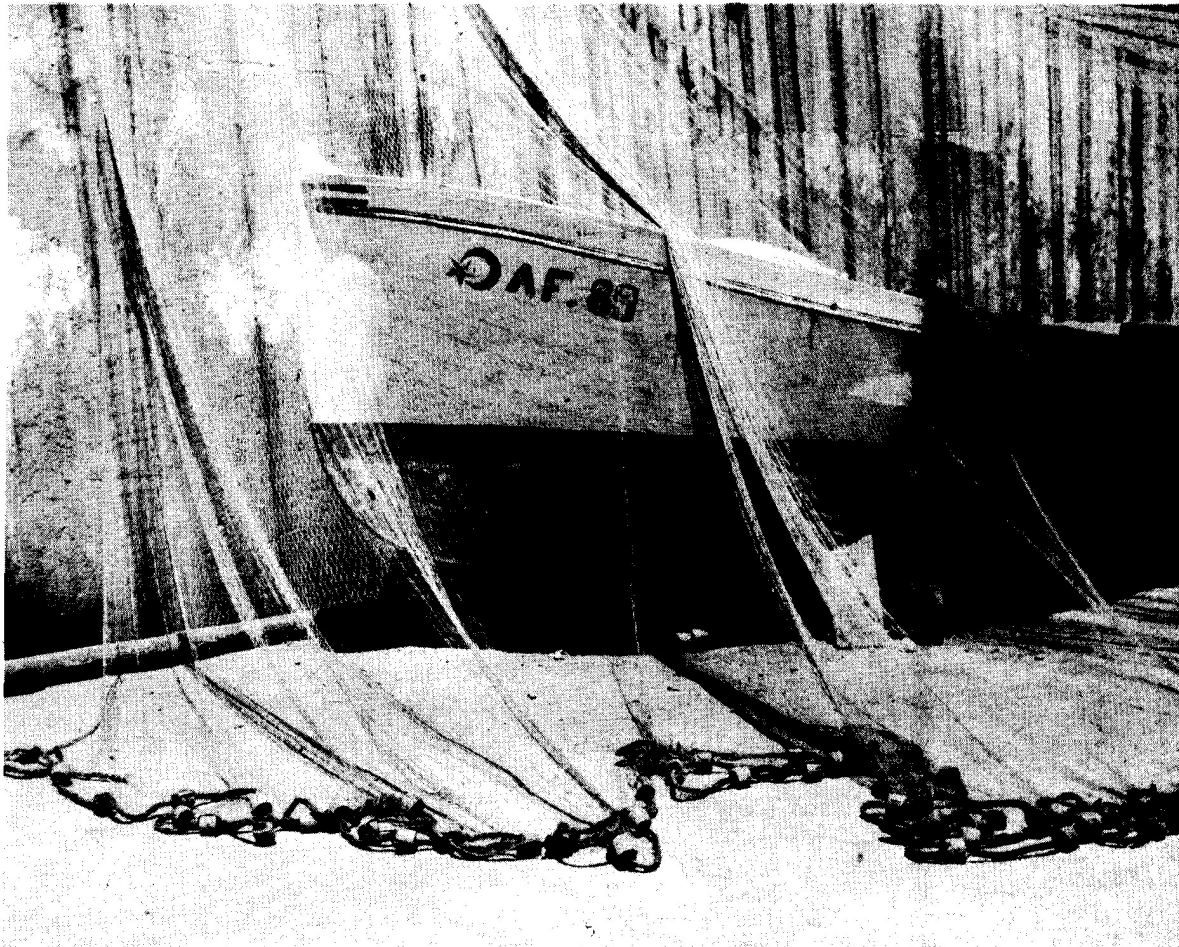
What Historians ADMIT

Let me quote for you a little of the unchallengeable *history* of these events from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, volume 22, the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, under the article
(Please continue on page 12)

A LARGE FISHERMAN'S NET and a fishing vessel near the site of old Tyre. While Tyre was still a mighty commercial metropolis, Ezekiel—under inspiration—prophesied that it would

become "like the top of a rock" and that it would be a "place to spread nets upon" (Ezek. 26:14). In the photo below you see the fulfillment of this very prophecy.

—Westminster Films Photo



God's present power to miraculously intervene and back up His word—whether it be a prophecy or a promise.

For instance, God says in James 5:14-15: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

Why don't people believe and claim that promise today?

Because, as most of you, they have just never been taught that kind of faith in God's Word. Or, perhaps, they have seen God's promise to heal counterfeited or perverted by some group of people who make a religious racket out of this sort of thing.

But this is God's promise. It doesn't require a lot of mental conditioning or emotional gymnastics—only sound-minded, simple, persevering FAITH in

God's Word. If you would like to understand more about this particular promise—of *divine healing*—write today for Mr. Armstrong's free booklet, "Does God Heal Today?"

On the WORLD TOMORROW program, and through the pages of The PLAIN TRUTH, we absolutely prove in a clear, sound-minded, factual manner that God is present RULER of the world—and that He binds himself by His Word, the Bible.

Once you fully grasp this truth, and begin to act on it, you will join hundreds of others who know by personal experience that miracles do happen today. And you will learn to trust and obey God as never before, thereby reaping all the blessings of His divine intervention on your behalf now—and preparing yourself by spiritual growth for the gift of eternal life in the world tomorrow.

the rest of Syria it passed into the hands of the Muslims in the 7th century. The crusaders captured it (1124), and made it one of the chief cities of their kingdom of Jerusalem. After the fall of Acre, the Muslims destroyed it." So New Tyre, finally, was destroyed just some 500 years ago, at the beginning of the 14th century, NEVER TO BE REBUILT.

Today, Old Tyre is like the top of a rock. It had originally, a rocky foundation, and they had imported a vast amount of top soil in order to build the city of Tyre there about 4,000 years ago. All of that top soil and the stones and timbers at Old Tyre had been scraped by Alexander into the sea. Now there is nothing but the rock foundation left. To this day, you can go there and you will find the fishermen's nets spread out upon Old Tyre, precisely as whoever wrote this saying—"I am God" and "there is none beside me"—in Ezekiel 26 SAID it would happen! Old Tyre has never been rebuilt to this day.

Today, Old Tyre is like the top of a rock. There is no top soil, though there is rich soil surrounding it. Ample water is there. You can go there and see the fishermen's nets spread out to dry.

Now today, a small new town, called Sur—in a different location out on the peninsula, and inhabited by fishermen—is erroneously designated as Tyre on some maps; but it is not Tyre. Ancient Tyre has NEVER BEEN REBUILT.

How Skeptics Could Disprove the Bible!

Was the writer of this prophecy a human man, or God Almighty? There is one of hundreds of such prophecies, many of which have already come to pass. Every year, EVERY DAY, yes, EVERY HOUR that site of Old Tyre remains a desolate top of the rock for spreading of fishermen's nets—every hour that it remains uninhabited, and no city is built there, it is SHOUTING the PROOF of divine revelation of the Bible to skeptics.

And now, just a word to the skeptics. Here is how you can disprove the Bible, and the very existence of God—if there is no God, and IF the Bible is not inspired! Just go over and build a small city on the site of Old Tyre. There is rich soil all around it. An ample water supply is available. It has wonderful harbor possibilities with a little dredging. A collection of a dollar each from all of the American skeptics alone would be ample. Whoever inspired Ezekiel 26 dares the skeptics to try to do it.

Now there is nothing to prevent them from building a city there on the site of Old Tyre, except that the Bible they scoff at says they CAN'T!

Here is living, dynamic, PROOF that the Bible is divinely revealed.

Did You Ever PROVE whether the Bible is INSPIRED?

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"Tyre." Here it says: "Tyre, the mistress of the seas, in the 6th Century, B.C., endured a 13 years siege from Nebuchadnezzar." During this siege it was demolished and destroyed.

Nebuchadnezzar, as we read in verses 7 to 11 in Ezekiel 26, did everything that was prophesied for him, as you can read in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* or any other ancient historic authorities. But, he did not move the stones, the timber or the soil into the Mediterranean. For about 250 years after Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Tyre, it seemed improbable that that prophecy ever would be completely fulfilled. About two and one half centuries passed!

Then, after two and one half centuries, Alexander the Great came down in his swift march conquering everything before him.

Now, let me quote for you from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in this same article, "The siege of Tyre by Alexander the Great, 332 B.C." (He had won his battle at Issus, his first great battle in conquering the Persian Empire, in 333 B.C. at Issus.) "New Tyre was built on a small island about half a mile from the main land upon which the old city stood . . . Alexander demolished Old Tyre, and with the debris built a mole 200 feet in breadth across the strait so that he turned that island actually into a peninsula and it became therefore a part of the main land. The reduction of Tyre was not but a matter of time . . . Alex-

ander . . . scaled the city walls. Thus after a siege of seven months the city was taken, 8,000 of the citizens were slaughtered, 2,000 later on were executed, and 30,000 sold into slavery."

What Skeptic's Can't DENY

New Tyre was built right back up again. And later, the Roman Empire at its height of world power attempted to rebuild Old Tyre. But after constructing a costly amphitheater and two or three large buildings, on the site of Old Tyre, on the original main land, THE ROMANS WERE FORCED TO ABANDON THE EFFORT, and the amphitheater and the buildings lie in desolate ruins today—mute testimony to the inspiration of the Bible. NOT EVEN THE MIGHT OF ROME AT ITS HEIGHT OF ANCIENT GLORY, COULD BREAK THE SENTENCE pronounced by whoever inspired the prophecy of Ezekiel 26!

Here, in brief, is the history of New Tyre, from the time of Alexander's siege quoted from the same article *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "However, Tyre, with the marvelous vitality of those early times, recovered in a comparatively short time. The city passed under the sway of the Seleucids (198 B.C.) and the Romans (68 B.C.). Herod the Great endowed it with a temple. St. Paul spent a week there while the ship 'unloaded her burden' on his journey from Ephesus to Jerusalem. By the 2nd century it had become the see of a bishop. With

The Handwriting is on the Wall of America NOW!

This nation is being weighed in the balance and found wanting. Here are the shocking FACTS!

by Herbert W. Armstrong

PEOPLE would be *stunned* if they could really see the startling significance *behind* today's world happenings. It's time you get your eyes opened to the staggering prophecies about the United States, and our Western World—events that are going to happen in the next 10 to 20 years.

The handwriting is on the wall of America, Britain and Europe, now. This nation is being weighed in the balance and found wanting!

The prophecies have not been understood. They've been a deep mystery. Even the prophet Daniel who wrote one of the important books of prophecy in the Bible didn't understand all the prophecies that he wrote.

NOT a Mere Child's Story

For centuries, it has been supposed that the account of Belshazzar's feast was a mere child's Bible story. But actually, IT IS A LAST-MINUTE MESSAGE STRAIGHT FROM GOD TO OUR PEOPLES TODAY, and it's a message and a warning dealing with our national life, with *your home*, your family, the next 15 or 20 years.

THIS IS A PROPHECY, and it's a *warning for us, TODAY!* It's a red-hot *staggering* warning for NOW—FOR OUR TIME!

Do you realize that approximately one-third of your Bible is prophecy? That is the neglected one-third, the one-third that you seldom hear preached, and almost never read. And yet, that's where you actually find tomorrow's NEWS HEADLINES written in advance, and explained—their real meaning brought forth, their true significance revealed.

Do you know that no news analyst can understand world events unless he knows the divine purpose being worked out here below? Unless he understands Bible prophecy? And how many news analysts do you know who really understand the prophecies of the Bible?—who understand God's purpose that is being worked out here below.

Now this prophecy of Belshazzar's feast was *not* a message for that day *only*. Do you realize that even Daniel

didn't understand what he was inspired to write? Notice it in Daniel the 12th chapter, the 8th and the 9th verses:

"And I heard, *but I understood not*. And then I said, 'O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?'" Daniel wrote what an angel had been revealing to him. The angel said, "Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed and sealed *till the time of the end*." Even Daniel didn't understand what he was inspired to write.

A WARNING for Today!

Do you realize that the Jews were already *in captivity* when Daniel wrote? This prophecy of the handwriting on the wall was *not* for them. It came too late to save them. They were in this land of Babylon—slaves, and captives. They weren't having their religious services as they had been accustomed to previously in the land of Palestine.

This strange incident is recorded in the 5th chapter of Daniel's prophecy beginning the first verse, from the Moffatt translation, which is a little plainer English than the Authorized Version:

"King Belshazzar gave a great banquet to a thousand of his lords. He was drinking his wine in front of a thousand of them, and when carried away with the wine, Belshazzar gave orders for the gold and the silver vessels that were removed from the temple of Jerusalem by his father Nebuchadnezzar to be brought in so that the king and his lords, his consorts and his concubines might drink out of them."

Bear in mind, these vessels were sacred to Old Testament worship of the Most High Ruler of this entire universe. Now let's look into the next two verses, the 3rd and the 4th:

"The gold and the silver vessels which had been removed from God's house at Jerusalem were brought, and the king and his lords, his consorts and his concubines drank out of them. They drank their wine, and they praised their gods of gold and of silver, of iron and of wood, of bronze, and of stone."

Just stop and think a moment. *What's WRONG with THAT?* Is God jealous? Is God angry? Does He have injured feel-

ings? Is he mad at them?

WHY God Intervenes

Let's understand! When the Creator first formed man, *He created laws*, not merely visible matter as we understand it. He created force and energy. God created every law that we know, the laws of physics, the laws of chemistry—they were created for our happiness.

Also, God created *man in His image*, in the very shape of God. God put *mind* in man, a mind like God's, and yet, MAN'S MIND IS INCOMPLETE. Man's mind is not perfect like God's. It's incomplete. Man was made to need something that he was not created with—that *you* were not born with. Man was made to need contact with God Almighty, to need the very *Spirit*, the very *nature* of God, implanted, infused within, the material mind of man. The human mind is derived from matter, and it can know only material knowledge.

Do you realize that you know *only* that which is transmitted to the mind through the five senses? Our minds, then, are not perfect. We need—yes, the greatest need of man is—the guidance, the knowledge, the wisdom, the love, and the other attributes that come only with contact from God Almighty—with the Most High Ruler who controls every force, every energy, every law that operates in the entire universe. That's the most important truth in all life. That's the lesson that man has not learned. *And that's the living fact that Belshazzar had known, but had rejected, and had put from his mind.*

Now do you realize that man is incapable of governing himself toward peace, toward happiness, toward universal prosperity? Do you doubt that? Nearly 6000 years of human experience has demonstrated that fact! That's the way the Creator designed it. God made man *insufficient* unto himself. God made the human mind fallible, *imperfect, incomplete*.

Man's Mind Incomplete

The human *mind* was made to need the enlightening of the Spirit of God. God made this contact with Him

available. He freely offered to Adam and to Eve His Holy Spirit, symbolized by the tree of life. But also, God made man a free moral agent, and God *decreed*, as the Supreme Ruler of the entire universe, that *man must CHOOSE WHICH WAY* he is going to go, whether he will obey God, and will, voluntarily, put himself under the government of God, and enjoy the blessings of that government, or whether he will reject it, and go the way that *seems right to his imperfect mind and suffer the consequences!*

God had revealed all of this to Adam. He had revealed this basic truth to His nation Israel. He had revealed it to Nebuchadnezzar and to Belshazzar. He had revealed that God's way of life is for OUR GOOD. But you will notice in Deuteronomy 5:32-33, Moffatt translation:

"Be mindful," says God, "to do what the Eternal your God has ordered you. Always follow the straight road of life which the Eternal your God has laid down before you that you may live, and THAT THINGS MAY GO WELL WITH YOU."

Isn't that what *we ALL want*, that things may go well with us? That's what God's law is *for*. When are we going to wake up?

The first two commandments of God's way of life guard against idolatry, because *idolatry separates man from God*, and man NEEDS God and everything he can receive from God.

Belshazzar and the lords that he had with him were mocking God. They were turning from God. They were turning from *their own good*, from the good of the whole nation they ruled! THAT'S why God was concerned.

How about *you*? How about America, Britain, the peoples in Continental Europe, and in South Africa today? Is God concerned with us?

Notice how the great God of love moved swiftly, even as He had, in the life of Nebuchadnezzar, that men might learn the vital lesson—that *WE might learn, in time TODAY*, before our ways bring destruction on *our* nations.

Why This Warning Was Written!

This warning came TOO LATE to save Belshazzar. This account was written FOR YOU AND FOR ME TODAY! It wasn't written for the Jews of that day. It was written for us today, and WE HAVE TIME TO HEED. We have time to escape the destruction that is now threatening you and me—if we wake up.

Notice how the miracle-working God acted to bring saving knowledge at that time. Notice Daniel 5:5 once again. But let's read right on down to the 23rd verse just skimming over it.

"Now that very hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared, writing on the

plaster of the royal palace opposite the lampstand. The king saw the palm of the hand as it wrote, and the king's fresh color paled. His thoughts alarmed him. The muscles of his thighs relaxed, and his knees struck one against another."

I'd think they WOULD, wouldn't you? What would happen to you if you'd see just a hand, *no body* with it, just a hand writing on your wall in some language you couldn't understand?

"The king cried aloud for the enchanters, the astrologers, to be brought in. But not one of the king's sages could read the writing or explain the meaning of it to the king. At this, king Belshazzar was greatly alarmed. His color paled, and his lords were *at their wits' end!* Then the queen mother came into the banquet hall. The queen mother said, 'O king, live forever. Within your realm is a man wherein is the Spirit of the god's divine.'" They didn't know about the true God. They thought there were many gods. "In the days of your father," she said, "king Nebuchadnezzar made him master of the magicians. Let Daniel be called, and he will explain the meaning of this." Then Daniel was brought into the king's presence. And the king said to Daniel, 'So you are the Daniel belonging to the exiles of Judah whom the king, my father, brought from Judah. I hear that the spirit of the gods themselves is in you, the light of learning and rare wisdom is found in you.'

I think I detect a little bit of sarcasm in that, don't you? Now he said,

"If you can read the writing and let me know the meaning of it, you will wear a purple robe, and wear a chain about your neck, and you will rank third within the realm'."

The REAL MEANING

"Then Daniel made answer to the king, 'Keep your gifts for yourself, and give your rewards to someone else. However, I will read the writing for the king, and let him know the meaning of it. O king, the *Most High God* gave king Nebuchadnezzar, your father, the realm'."

He is showing here once again that *God* is the Most High Ruler. *He* makes and unmakes nations. *God* is the Most High Ruler. *God* is the One who reigns and who rules over the nations of this world, whether we realize it or not.

God has made us free moral agents. Up to a certain extent, God certainly allows us to go our own way; but when God chooses, *He can intervene* in the affairs of nations, and He does cause the rise and fall of nations. He did seat Nebuchadnezzar upon that throne. God seems to have gone away, and we don't realize these things today any more than they seemed to realize them then.

So he said, "The *Most High God*

gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father, the realm with its greatness and glory and majesty, and owing to the greatness that He bestowed upon him'" (that is, the greatness that GOD bestowed upon Nebuchadnezzar) "all races, nations, and folk and tongue, trembled in fear of him. But when his mind became proud, and his spirit became defiant so that he bore himself haughtily, he was deposed from his royal throne and deprived from his glory. He was driven away from human beings. His mind was made like *the mind of an animal* TILL HE LEARNED THAT THE MOST HIGH GOD RULES OVER THE REALM OF MEN, and that He'" (that is, *God*) "'SETS OVER IT ANYONE THAT HE CHOOSES. And yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself. THOUGH YOU KNEW all this, you uplifted yourself *against* the Lord of heaven by having the vessels of His house brought in before you, and from them, you and your lords, your consorts, and your concubines have drunk wine, praising gods of silver, and of gold, and of bronze, iron, wood, and stone which can neither see, nor hear, nor understand."

Don't you see that Daniel is showing that the true God has mind, *perfect* mind, almighty power; who sees, who knows, who directs things, who *MAKES AND UNMAKES NATIONS?*

"*You,*" he said, "*have not glorified the God who HOLDS IN HIS OWN POWER your breath and your life and all your destiny!*"

Do YOU realize that the same God holds YOUR *very* breath and YOUR *very* life in His own power?

Think of it! Here were supposedly intelligent men, rulers over a world-ruling empire, forsaking and rejecting the living God whose help they needed so sorely, foolishly toasting, and praising an *inanimate* object which could not see, could not speak, had no intelligence, a thing made by the hands of man.

Human beings try to *create God*, when actually *God created US*, and we need to realize it.

God Has NOT Gone Away

I want you to realize the *purpose* of this very dramatic incident. God is here shaking man into a realization that the Creator is the SUPER RULER of *almighty, divine power* FOR OUR GOOD. God hasn't gone way off. God Almighty is vitally concerned with YOUR WELFARE!

King Belshazzar had fallen into the illusion that grips most of *you* TODAY. God had become UNREAL! God seemed to be FAR OFF! God seemed like a *myth*. Their minds were turned only to the things that they could see, *material* objects, the things of *materialism*. A material mind only knows material

things, and God *does* seem like a myth, far off.

God ENDED *that world-kingdom!* God makes and unmakes nations and empires. God Almighty *rules* over all government and God *right now*—this very fateful hour—is weighing our Christian-professing world in the *balance*, and *we are being found WANTING.*

Today we are going the way of ancient Babylon. Today, we admire, we adore, we serve *idols of wood* and of *metals* in the FORM of automobiles, new gadgets, labour-saving devices; new forms of entertainment, new, more modern homes—while we think only of God Almighty for about one hour on Sunday. As God prophesied of some of our people, we PROFESS godliness, and Christianity, as you read in Isaiah 48:1. We SWEAR by the name of the Eternal, and we make mention of God in our prayers, but not in truth, not in righteousness.

Our lands everywhere are dotted with churches, and yet, as we read in Isaiah 2:7-8—and this is certainly true of us today: "Their land is full of silver and of gold, neither is there any end of their treasures. . . . Neither is there any end of their chariots. Their land is also full of idols, and they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made."

Think of it. *That fits our Christendom today.* We sanctimoniously practice a form of godliness, but as you read in II Timothy 4:5, we DENY *the power of God.* And it's prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 that we *never* put our *hearts* into our prayers.

Crime is mounting in our land. Juvenile delinquency is running rampant. Homes are broken up in divorce. We are hell-bent on a moral toboggan slide.

Plunging Headlong to Destruction

Are we any better than Belshazzar? Are we any better than ancient Babylon? We are going the way of Babylon, and we are going the way of Rome—to a fall. We are plunging *head-on* to the greatest fall that any nation has ever suffered *and we're not aware of it!*

We are so smug and complacent, we are so well satisfied with ourselves, we fancy that we're good Christians. Yes, we attend church. We sit there and imagine that we're worshipping God while we hear some beautiful music and a 25-minute sermon.

What an *awakening* is going to jolt this nation very soon, if we don't heed God's last warning and come to our senses.

I tell you on the authority of Jesus Christ, we're going to be *catastrophically* punished very soon for our own good unless we wake up.

Notice the prophecy in Isaiah 13:19-20:

"And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

This prophecy was delivered before this happened to Babylon. This was before Judah's captivity. Isaiah was writing it. He said, "It [that is, Babylon] shall *never be inhabited*, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there."

Do you realize *that has ABSOLUTELY happened.* There is nothing but barren waste over there now. A superstition exists among Arabs against pitching a tent there in ancient Babylon. No Arab will do it.

It WILL Happen to US — Unless . . .

Do you know that for centuries the site of ancient Babylon has been TOTALLY DESOLATE? Only ancient *ruins* remain. *God Almighty said in Bible prophecy that Babylon would go down.* It would be destroyed. It would never be rebuilt again.

It happened!

Do you realize that God Almighty said of Egypt when it was the *greatest* power, the *greatest* nation on earth, that it was going to be INVADED and CON-

QUERED—that Egypt would go down to a second rate power and that *never again* would it be ruled by a native-born Egyptian—and THAT HAPPENED!

Egypt is still a second rate power, and from that time on down to now, there has never been a native born Egyptian ruling over Egypt.

Do you realize that God said of *Tyre*, which was the New York of the ancient world, the greatest commercial seaport city of the world at that time, that no man would ever live there, that its rock, its timber, and stone would be thrown into the Mediterranean Sea, and it would become a place for the spreading of *fisher's nets?* THAT HAPPENED. I have shown you pictures on Television of it with the fisher's nets there today.

Of Rome—even before it was *built*—God foretold its doom, its fall. There would be seven resurrections, and today we are waiting for that seventh resurrection—but even worse, *today we are going the way of ancient Rome!*

The handwriting is upon the wall of America, of Christendom, this hour. There is protection for you if you will open your eyes to God's prophecies—if you will study your Bible, if you will surrender your life to your Creator, if you will only come to Him in *obedience* in living faith through Jesus Christ!

The CRUCIFIXION was not on "Good Friday"

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will read this in Josephus' *Antiquities* XVIII, iv, 2.

Since Pilate was in a *great hurry* to reach Rome, he must have left shortly before the death of the Emperor which occurred in March, 37 A.D. Ten years before this is about the beginning of A.D. 27 at which time Pilate began his procuratorship.

Here is what the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says in its article "Pilate": The assumed date for Pilate is usually "from 26 to 36 A.D. . . . Tiberius died on March 16, 37 A.D. Such a delay [in Pilate's journey to Rome] is inconceivable in view of the circumstances; hence . . . the period of his procuratorship [is] 27-27 A.D."

The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* states, under the article "Pilate": "He probably succeeded Gratus 27 A.D. and ended his procuratorship early in 37; it is not likely that Pilate required more than a year for his return journey to Rome . . . and he arrived there after Tiberius' death, which took place Mar. 16, 37."

Now notice. As Pilate did not begin his governorship till about the commencement of 27 A.D. and as Tiberius' 15th year ended about April of that year, *John the Baptist must have begun his ministry in the first few months of 27 A.D.*

Jesus, therefore, could *not* have begun his ministry earlier than the autumn of 27 A.D. Neither could his ministry HAVE BEGUN AFTER THE PASSOVER in the spring of A.D. 28 because the temple was already 46 years in building. Therefore Jesus must have begun to preach in the autumn of A.D. 27. THERE IS NO OTHER DATE THAT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH ALL THE PROVABLE FACTS.

To find the date of the crucifixion, we now need only find how long the ministry of Jesus lasted.

Proof Seven: How Long Was the Ministry?

The prophet Daniel foretold that the length of Christ's ministry *at his first coming*—to confirm the new covenant