

# Nationalistic Prophecies

Series: Prophecy

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February 21, 2021

Thus far we have done a general overview of prophecy in the Bible and a look at Messianic prophecy. Next week we plan to look at End Times Prophecy. However, this message today is critical to Prophetic interpretation. Nationalistic prophecy and its interpretation depends on knowing the following:

- The identity of the prophet
- The time in which the prophet lived
- The people to whom he preached
- The historical circumstances which pertain to the prophecy
- The scope of the prophecy, whether soon to take place or distant
- The nature of the prophecy, whether it is a single-focused prophecy or a double-prophecy, one that has a dual interpretation.
- The use of OT prophecy in the New Testament by inspired writers.

Failure to take these seven things into account leads to gross misinterpretations and spurious applications of prophecies. Our misuse of prophecies can and does lead to conclusions comparable to unsubstantiated conspiracy theories. Purveyors of these myths cherry-pick phrases and events throughout history and the Bible to piece together whatever theory they wish to put forth. This is nothing more than forcing pieces of a puzzle together unnaturally to fit a preconceived narrative. This all depends on who is telling the story.

We would do well to learn this lesson as we interpret events and evidence in our day in trying to determine the truth. To begin with my picture of the puzzle box and then make all the bits and pieces match my picture leads to competing truth claims. A much more serious approach must be found or the result will be that the person with the most power will get to write the story.

Two Examples of Nationalistic Prophecy: (There are many.)

## Jeremiah:

Context: Jer.1:1-3, 1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. 2 The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, 3 and through the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

- Jeremiah was of the priestly tribe of Levi
- He was from Anathoth in the territorial tribe of Benjamin, not far from Jerusalem.
- Jeremiah preached during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah, and his sons Jehoiakim and Zedekiah (the southern kingdom) 627-586 BC. This was during the time leading up to when the Jews went into Babylonian exile.
- The Babylonian empire was taking control of the earth, conquering the Assyrians who had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC. The geopolitical climate was changing.
  - It had been 100 years since Judah (Jerusalem) was seriously threatened.
  - It was a period of peace and prosperity making it harder for the people to believe Jeremiah's prophecy of destruction. They threatened his death: Jeremiah 26:7-9, 7 The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speak these words in the house of the LORD. 8 But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets, and all the people seized him and said, "**You must die!** 9 Why do you prophesy in the LORD's name that this house will be like Shiloh **and this city** will be desolate and deserted?" And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.
  - The 70 year prophecy: Jeremiah 25:1-3 1 The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. 2 So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem: 3 For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the LORD has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. 9 I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," declares the LORD, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. 11 This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 "But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt," declares the LORD, "and will make it desolate forever.
  - Daniel confirms this nationalistic interpretation some 70 years later in Daniel 9:1-3, 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian

kingdom— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. 3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

## Matthew 24

Context: Jesus is speaking in 33 AD on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem to his apostles. They have just come from the temple area where Jesus told them the time was coming with the temple stones will be thrown down. This temple was built by Herod the Great and had been under construction for 46 years. The apostles ask Jesus three questions: 1) When will this happen; 2) What will be the sign of your coming; 3) what will be the sign of the end of the age? Notice three different questions though perhaps one in their minds. Jesus answers them as two questions: the destruction of Jerusalem and the end times. The dividing line between the two is verse 36: “But about that day or hour...”

- Various signs before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
  - Normal occurrences/not signs: Matt.24:4-8, 4 Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.
  - Other things generally that will occur are persecutions that are coming.
  - But, then we have the specific signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem (some):
    - Gospel preached, then the end will come. 24:14, 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (See Col.1:23, “This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.” Written in @62 AD, eight years before the destruction of Jerusalem)
    - 24:15-16, 15 “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (See Daniel 9:24-27, referring to the destruction of the city and the sanctuary.)
    - Sign in the heaven, Matt.24:30, 30 “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of

heaven, with power and great glory. (Josephus “So it was when a star resembling a sword, stood over the city [Jerusalem] and a comet which continued for a year.” [In 66 AD].

- 24:34, “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.” (Spoken in AD 33; generation 30-40 years; D 70)

To confuse this prophecy with the end of the world is poor interpretation. Listen to Jesus in Matt.23:37-39, 37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Why is this important? Because too many are losing the ability to discern truth and are falling prey to wild and speculative messages regarding the end times (which we will talk about next week).