

FLYING IN GOD'S TIME MACHINE  
WHY TRUST BIBLICAL PREDICTIONS  
LUKE 24:25-27

LUKE 24:25-27, *He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"*

26 *Did not the Christ **HAVE TO** suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

27 *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

- **Failed predictions:**
  - There is no likelihood man can ever tap the power of the atom—Robert Millikan, Nobel prize winner in physics, 1920
  - Television won't last because people will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night—20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox producer Darryl Zanuck, 1946
  - I think there is a world market for about five computers—Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943
  - There is no reason for any individual to have a compute in their home—Ken Olsen, president of Digital Equipment Corporation, 1977 (Joel Barker, *Future Edge*, 1992, 89 and david Browning, *Deliberate Simplicity*, unpublished mss, 18)
  - 640K ought to be enough memory for anybody—Bill Gates, 1981
- I've got a little problem with the **United States government**. There's something wrong in my Social Security records. For reasons I cannot understand, even after consulting with two professional accountants, they have been over-reporting my income for years. So I need to call and try to get it straightened out. But I have been procrastinating the call because I don't know what's going to happen when I call. I've got some anxiety about the unknown. This is what I am afraid will happen.

*Hello, thank you for calling the Social Security Administration. Please select from one of the following options:*

  - *If you would like to be placed on hold indefinitely, please press 1.*
  - *If you would like to listen to 10 options, none of which remotely apply to your situation, please press 2.*
  - *If you would like to leave a message to be called back by an agent who will do his best to call when you are **not** at home and will **not** leave a direct line for your return call, please press 3.*
  - *If you would like to talk to someone who just got off the boat and barely speaks English, please press 4.*
  - *If you would like to talk with someone who will jeopardize all your future Social Security benefits, please press 5.*
  - *If you would like to take your chances and just see what on earth happens, press 6.*
  - *We're sorry, that was an invalid number. Please hang up and call again.*
  - *We're sorry, our offices are now closed, we'll be on vacation for three weeks, please try again next month.*
- I wish I knew what really will happen.
- So did **Nancy Reagan**. May 16, 1988, **Time magazine** cover-article-exclusive screams, *Astrology in the Whitehouse: Excerpts from Don Regan's explosive memoirs*.
  - *Regan revealed that the First Lady regularly dictated the president's schedule after consulting her personal astrologer. Regan never claimed that astrology influenced executive decisions, but the ensuing frenzy raised questions about who exactly was in control at The White House. In "My Turn," [1989] Nancy attributed her reliance on astrology to her fear that her husband would be shot again. (PBS on-line *American Experience*, People & Events, Nancy Reagan, written by Julie Wolf, 1999-2000 PBS Online / WGBH)*
- Speaking about knowing the future... **Twenty-eight percent of the Bible was prophetic when it was written in 95 AD--Tim LaHaye** tells *The Costco Connection*, "and half of those predictions have since been fulfilled." *The only question about the remaining prophesies, says LaHaye, is "when—not if."* (Tim Buckley, "Left behind," *The Costco Connection*, March 2000, 49)

- No, question—the Bible is big-time into prophetic predictions.

## I. WHY DO I EVEN CARE ABOUT BIBLICAL PROPHECY?

- We've got it so good here—We are the wealthiest, healthiest people ever to live in history. Comparatively, we today inhabit a little bit of heaven, and I happen to believe that the PNW is right next to the Throne Room! It's no wonder we pay so little attention to Bible prophecies.
- **My teen age phone conversation**
- **Contrast the attitude of the Apostle Paul: Philippians 1:21**, *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.*
- There is a **growing attractiveness** of heaven to me. I'm a lot older now so heaven feels a lot closer to me.
  - I know a lot more people who **live there now**. And I miss them.
  - I care a lot more now about what **happens to people who die** without knowing Jesus...
  - **6,000 people a day die in the US.**
  - **164,300 per day worldwide** (Annie Dillard, *For the Time Being*, NY, Alfred Knopf, 1999, 91)
  - *As late as 1929, average age expectancy in the U.S. was not even fifty years—and half a century earlier it had been around thirty-five—(Bob Buford, Half Time, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1994, 2?)*
  - So today it's the mid-70's. But that's a drop in the bucket compared to eternity.
  - Where are they—where am I-- going after we die?
  - February 6, 1998, **Beach Boy, Carl Wilson**, died of cancer at age 51. *At the funeral Carl's brother Brian fell into his wife's arms and cried out, "Carl's gone. He's gone and I don't know where he went."* (Dick Staub, *Too Christian, Too Pagan*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, nd., 85)
  - Good question. Everybody wants to know the answer to that question.
    - *In the monasteries of one order of Trappist monks, the monks dig a grave. Each day the monks go out to stand and look at the grave. When one of their number dies, he's put in the grave, and a new grave is dug. They do it for perspective.* (Haddon Robinson, "The Grim Shepherd," *Christianity Today*, October 23, 2000, 115)
    - *I really like who I am. And I really like aging... If it didn't lead to death, it would be perfect.* --Playwright **Eve Ensler**, at age 51 (*AARP Bulletin*, December 2004, 6)
    - The **Fourth Great Obituary Writers' Conference** convened in Texas in May, 1999, with the Honorable **Jerry Buchmeyer** giving a speech in which he saved his favorite **euphemisms** for "dying": "was ushered to the angels," "passed from this plane to a higher plane," "made his transition," "passed into life's next adventure," "received his final marching orders," "departed this life ion his Harley-Davidson," "graduated to phase two of God's eternal plan," "became a handmaiden of God," "teed up for Golf in the Kingdom," and—my favorite—"went fishing with Christ!! On Friday." (Mark Singer, *Somewhere in America*, NY, Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004, 167)
- Euphemisms aside, I've got a book that gives me the straight scoop! It reassures me that there are promises I can be take-to-the-bank!!!
  - **Isaiah 46:9**, *Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.*
  - **Isaiah 48:3**, *I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.... 5 Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, 'My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.'*
- Biblical prophecy reminds me what I am living here for—assures me of my destiny—gives me a compelling reason to get up in the morning.

- During **Scott's** tragic journey to the South Pole at one point the weather formed a white haze and the party found them selves coming upon their own tracks—they were just wandering in circles. *To solve the problem they began throwing **snowballs** ahead of them in the [compass] direction of true south so that they had something to fix their eyes on.* (Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, 1989, 110). In the New Testament, the snowball is the Kingdom of God, it's the hope of Heaven.
- Biblical prophecy is my snowball in the whiteout...

## II. WHAT IS GOD'S PREDICTIVE TRACK RECORD?

The Old Testament **100% accuracy requirement**

- **Deuteronomy 18:20**, *But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death." 21 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.*

**I Samuel 3:19**, *The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he **let none of his words fall to the ground.** 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD.*

- Sometimes these predictions were **Up-Close-and-Personal**
  - **Isaiah 44:28**, *who says of **Cyrus**, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."*
  - **Isaiah 45:1**, *"This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to **Cyrus**, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:*
  - *At the time of Isaiah's writing, the city of Jerusalem was fully built and the entire temple was standing. Not until more than 100 years later would the city and the temple be destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.*  
*After Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians, it was conquered by the Persians in about 539 B.C. Shortly after that, a Persian king named **Cyrus gave the decree** to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. This was around **160 years after the prophecy of Isaiah!***
    - *Thus Isaiah predicted that a man named Cyrus, who would not be born for about 100 years, would give the command to rebuild the temple which was still standing in Isaiah's day and would not be destroyed for more than 100 years. --Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions*, San Bernardino, Here's Life Publishers, 1989, 35)*
- Sometimes these predictions were **National Scale**:
  - The City of **Tyre**, Phoenicia, on the Mediterranean seacoast...
  - **Ezekiel 26:3-4**, *therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves. 4 They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock.*
    - 7-8, *"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: From the north I am going to bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar {7 Hebrew Nebuchadrezzar, of which Nebuchadnezzar is a variant; here and often in Ezekiel and Jeremiah} king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a great army. 8 He will ravage your settlements on the mainland with the sword; he will set up siege works against you, build a ramp up to your walls and raise his shields against you.*
    - 12, *They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea.*
    - 14 *I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.*

- 21, *I will bring you to a horrible end and you will be no more. You will be sought, but you will never again be found, declares the Sovereign LORD.*"

- **The Predictions of Ezekiel 26**

1. Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the mainland city of Tyre (26:8)
2. Many nations will come against Tyre (26:3)
3. She will be made a bare rock; flat like the top of a rock (26:4)
4. Fishermen will spread nets over the site (26:5)
5. The debris will be thrown into the water (26:12)
6. She will never be rebuilt (26:14)
7. She will never be found again (26:21)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

*Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to the mainland Tyre three years after the prophecy. The Encyclopedia Britannica says: "After a 13-year siege (585-573 B.C.) by Nebuchadnezzar II, Tyre made terms and acknowledges Babylonian superiority."*

*When Nebuchadnezzar broke the gates down, he found the city almost empty. The majority of the people had moved by ship to an island about one-half mile off the coast and fortified a city there. The mainland city was destroyed in 573...but the city of Tyre on the island remained a powerful city for several hundred years.*

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

*The next incident was with Alexander the Great.*

*"In his war on the Persians," writes the Encyclopedia Britannica, "Alexander III, after defeating Darius III at the Battle of Issus (333), marched southward toward Egypt, calling upon the Phoenician cities to open their gates, as it was part of his general plan to deny their use to the a Persian fleet. The citizens of Tyre refused to do so, and Alexander laid siege to the city. Possessing no fleet, he demolished old Tyre, on the mainland, and with the debris built a mole 200 ft.....wide across the straits separating the old and new towns, erecting towers and war engines at the farther end."*

*The Tyrians countered here with a full-scale raid on the whole operation, which was very successful....Alexander realized he needed ships. He began pressuring and mustering conquered subjects to make ships available for this operation....With this now superior naval force at Alexander's disposal, the conquest of Tyre through completion of the land bridge was simply a question of time...finally the causeway was completed, the walls were battered down, and mop-up operations began.*

*"The causeway still remains," writes **Philip Myers**, "uniting the rock with the mainland. When at last the city was taken after a siege of seven months, **eight thousand** of the inhabitants were slain and **thirty thousand** sold into slavery."*

- *Alexander the Great...reduced [Tyre] 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 fisherman that still frequent the spot spread their nets to dry.-- **Philip Myers**, a secular historian*
- ***John C. Beck** keeps the history of the island city of Tyre in the proper perspective: The history of Tyre does not stop after the conquest of Alexander. Men continue to rebuild her and armies continue to besiege her walls until finally, **after sixteen hundred years, she falls never to be rebuilt again.***  
(Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993, 59-61)
- *If Ezekiel had looked at Tyre in his day and had made these seven predictions in human wisdom, these estimates mean that there would have been only one chance in 75,000,000 of their all coming true. They all came true in the minutest detail. --**Peter Stoner** (NOTE from page 63: [Peter] Stoner evaluated the miracle in the following manner)*
- **The Captivities of Israel**—predicted multiple times by God's prophets
  - The Return from Babylon (Jeremiah's 70 years, cf. Daniel's reading and prayer)

- Daniel 9:2, *in the first year of [Darius'] 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.*
- **Jeremiah 25:11**, *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.*
- And it did happen—read the books of **Ezra and Nehemiah!!!**
- **The Return to the Land, 1948**
  - A long time ago God made a huge **real estate promise** to Abraham. **Genesis 13:14**, *The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.*
  - Jews wander the earth for almost **1,900 years**.
  - 6 million Jews were put to death in the concentration camps, WWII—the Holocaust.
  - 1 out of every 3 living Jews were killed in the Holocaust.
  - *For almost **1,900 years**, the Jews wandered about the earth as strangers who were persecuted from every side. This culminated in the holocaust of World War II, where **6 million Jews** were put to death in the concentration camps. [**1 out of every 3 living Jews were killed in the Holocaust**]*
  - *Yet, against all odds, the state of Israel was reborn on May 14, 1948.... and the Jews began to return to their homeland from all points of the compass....Since 1948 they have survived some terrible conflicts, including the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Holy Day War. [100 million against them out of the Arab world.]*  
*Through all this, the nation neither perished nor lost its national identity. History has demonstrated that any people who have lost their homeland will, after about five generations, lose their national identity by being absorbed into the new culture, but the Jews remained a distinct entity.-- Josh McDowell*  
*Not only have they survived, but the nations that persecuted them—Moab, Ammon, Edom, Philistia, and many others—have either been destroyed or completely lost their national identity.*  
*Have you ever heard of a Swedish Moabite? A Russian Philistine? A German Edomite? An American Ammonite? No! These people have been totally absorbed into other cultures and races.*  
*However, have you ever heard of a Swedish Jew? A Russian Jew? An American Jew? Yes! As prophesied, they have not lost their identity. (Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions*, San Bernardino, Here's Life Publishers, 1989, 32-33)*
- **Messianic Predictions:**
  - Time of Birth: Daniel had it nailed. **Denial 9:25**, *"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble*
  - Place of Birth: Micah got it, (**Micah 5:2**)
  - His ancestry: Way back in the **Penteteuch**, **Genesis 49:10**, *The **scepter** will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs {10 Or until Shiloh comes; or until he comes to whom tribute belongs} and the obedience of the nations is his..*

When it comes to accurate predictions, nobody else even comes close.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boston Post, 1865, <i>Well-informed people know it is impossible to transmit the voice over wires and that were it possible to do so, the thing would be of no practical value.</i></li> <li>• Lord Kelvin, British Royal Society, 1890's: <i>Heavier than air flying machines are impossible.</i></li> </ul> |
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### III. WHAT IS GOD WAITING FOR?

- Apostolic expectations
  - **James 5:9**, *Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing **at the door!***
  - **Romans 13:11**, *And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*
    - **NIV Study Bible note:** *A clear example of the NT teaching of the "nearness" of the end times....These texts do not mean that the early Christians believed that Jesus would return within a few years (and thus were mistaken). Rather, they regarded the death and resurrection of Christ as the crucial events of history that began the last days. Since the next great event in God's redemptive plan is the second coming of Jesus Christ, "the night," no matter how long chronologically it may last, is "nearly over."*
  - Cf. Hebrews 10:25, *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as **you see the Day approaching.***
  - Cf. I Peter 4:7, **The end of all things is near.** *Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray*
  - Cf. Revelation 22:20, *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus*
  - Cf. I Corinthians 7:29, *What I mean, brothers, is that **the time is short.***
  - Cf. Philippians 4:5, *Let your gentleness be evident to all. **The Lord is near.***
  - Cf. I John 2:18, *Dear children, **this is the last hour;** and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.*
  - **II Peter 3:1**, *Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 2 I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. 3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

**II Peter 3:8**, *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*

- **Second Coming of Christ=300 times in the New Testament.**
- **Repentance=70 times**
- **Baptism= 20 times** *The Bible speaks extensively about the Second Coming of Christ, mentioning it more than 300 times in the New Testament. By comparison, repentance, which is so very important and essential for our salvation, is mentioned about 70 times, and baptism...about 20 times. (Billy Graham, "The End of the World,; Decision, January 2004, 3)*

- *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* keeps a “Doomsday Clock” that measures the extent of the nuclear peril we face. At this writing the clock stands at seven minutes to midnight—two minutes closer to potential destruction than the clock read in 1998 and seven minutes closer than it did in 1995. Almost everyone would agree that the end of the world as we know it is a possibility scientifically. (Billy Graham, continued)
- The Doomsday Clock
  - 1995 time: fourteen minutes to midnight
  - 1998 time: nine minutes to midnight
  - Current Time: The Doomsday Clock was last moved on February 27, 2002 and currently stands at seven minutes to midnight.
- *But while we may speculate about possibilities, the Word of God speaks about certainties....* (Billy Graham, continued)
- Here’s what **one prominent Christian leader** said, *God will not be able to bear this wicked world much longer, but will come, with the dreadful day, and chastise the scorers of his Word.*

*I [will not] permit anyone to deny me the right to believe that the last day is near at hand.*

*It is my firm belief that the angels are getting ready, putting on their armor and girding their swords about them, for the last day is already breaking.*

*As things are beginning to go, the last day is at the door, and I believe that the world will not endure a hundred years.*

—Guess who said that??? **Martin Luther**, four centuries ago.
- Nobody else even comes close:
 

- New York Times, 1936: *A rocket will never be able to leave the earth’s atmosphere.*
  - H. M. Warner of Warner Brothers, 1927, during the period of silent movies: *Who wants to hear actors talk?*
  - American Road Congress, 1913: *It is an idle dream to imagine that automobiles will take the place of railways in the long-distance movement of passengers.*

#### CONCLUSION:

- **Captain Ray Steele** unstrapped from his seat in the 747 cockpit to take a stroll thru the plane high over the Atlantic, bound for Heathrow. *As he opened the cockpit door, [the senior flight attendant] nearly bowled him over....[She] pulled him into the galleyway....Her fingers felt like talons on his forearm, and her body shuddered in the darkness.*

*“People are missing,” she managed in a whisper....*

*He took her shoulders and tried to push her back, but she fought to stay close. “What do you m--?”*

*She was sobbing now, her body out of control. “A whole bunch of people, just gone!”*

*“Hattie, this is a big plane. They’ve wandered to the lavs or---“*

*She pulled his head down so she could speak directly in his ear....”I’ve been everywhere. I’m telling you, dozens of people are missing....Ray! Their shoes, their socks, their clothes, everything was left behind. These people are gone!”*

*Hattie slipped from his grasp and knelt whimpering in the corner.* (Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Left Behind*, Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House Publishers, 1995, 15-16)
- The back cover: *In one cataclysmic moment, millions around the globe disappear. Vehicles, suddenly unmanned, careen out of control....In the midst of global chaos, airline captain Rayford Steele must search for his family, for answers, for truth.*
- Some Christians have stickers on their glove box lid to clue their passengers: **Warning: In case of rapture, this car will be driverless.**
- The Bible predicts: **I Thessalonians 4:16**, *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*
- **Fact or fiction?** Check out God’s predictive record and then, you be the judge.

Timothy G. Walton  
Snohomish Community Church  
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