

THE PROPHECIES IN EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT VOL 1

Evidence that Demands a Verdict Volume One by Josh McDowell is devoted to defending the credibility of Christianity.

It devotes its chapter 11 to proving that the Bible was able to predict the future. The fact that this bigoted book accepts the evil Law of Moses as the word of God despite the fact that only one copy of it existed in Ezra's time according to the Bible itself and they had to find a prophet to tell them if the Book was real word of God or not shows that it is not worth much. A scripture that reports stupendous miracles and cruel laws needs better evidence than that.

Page 269 takes note of the difficulty expressed in 1 Kings 22, Jeremiah 28 and 1 Kings 13 that Israel had in distinguishing between a false prophet and a true one – Deuteronomy 18 said a prophet could foretell lots of miraculous things and still be proven to be one who is not working for God simply by getting one prediction or revelation wrong which makes it difficult for the fake could engineer things so that the failure will be covered up. For Deuteronomy 18 to make any sense, God would have to promise and work to make sure the blunder won't be hidden. One wonders then what books like Lamentations or Songs are doing in the Bible when there is no miraculous evidence of inspiration. Then the same page contends that prophets who were paid for their prophesying were okay and admits that the accepted prophets Amos and Nathan and Samuel earned a living from their predicting and speaking for God! If it could be denied the Bible believers would be delighted to do. If paid prophets were in anybody else's scripture they would be quoting it as evidence that the prophets were frauds for God would not give a gift from which money could be made. These professional prophets completely contradict the book of Acts which says that Simon Magus was almost devoured by St Peter for merely offering money for a supernatural gift and that was by no means as bad as what Amos and co were doing.

Ezekiel 26 is claimed to have been a fulfilled prophecy about the destruction of the great seaside city of Tyre and the way would be destroyed. But this prophecy failed for it said Nebuchadnezzar who is named in the prophecy would do all the things to the city and Christians have to pretend that Alexander the Great finished it all off though no hint is given that he was said to have been involved. The prophecy says that Tyre will never be rebuilt which is untrue - it existed in the time of Christ. It said it would be lost never to be found. False.

Page 280 makes a big deal out of the three predictions about Sidon in Ezekiel 28. The first prediction is that no prediction made of its destruction so it is amazing proof according to McDowell that God knew the city would survive. This is laughable. Now the Christians are insisting that the verses saying nothing about destruction proves that they predicted it would not be destroyed. It would not be hard to pass yourself off as a prophet with a standard like that! The other two just prophesy blood in the streets and swords in every direction. It is said to be one of the bloodiest cities ever and that the prophecy said this (page 281). But the prophecy never said it would be. Any city could fulfil the prophecy.

Page 284 says that Amos 1:8 predicts the extinction of the Philistines. This is taking advantage of the fact that they did become extinct and tries to read this into the prophecy. It is like forcing the prophecy to predict what it never predicted because even the Amplified Bible recognises that it was only the Philistines who were in a certain region denoted by the context who were meant. The Philistines were too inhuman to be tolerated so their destruction and absorption into other nations and loss of identity was inevitable. And as for extinction their DNA has turned up.

Page 286 makes a miracle out of the predictions of Ezekiel (25:4) and Jeremiah (48:47 and 49:6) that Moab will be conquered by people from the east who will eat its fruits and build palaces and that its fortunes along with Ammon will be revived one day.

Why could the prophets not tell us who would conquer? The nations had to be attacked and beaten by easterners some time. That was where most of the attackers came from. And of course they would build palaces – though the crafty McDowell tells us the prophecies mention palaces though they do not - and eat the fruits so how dare McDowell say that is a prophecy. It does not even deserve to be called an educated guess for that would be giving it a status it does not have. And Moab is supposed to be reviving today. But this revival is not involving the restoration of the state of Moab. So it is not fulfilling the prophecy. Jeremiah despite condemning plagiarism (23:30) and the fact that a man who uses the words of a true prophet and reworks them to pose as a prophet himself is an anti-god stole his prophecies about Moab from Isaiah (Steven Carr, Critique of Josh McDowell's Non-Messianic Prophecies).

Page 288. This is about a number of prophecies about Edom and its capital Petra. It says that Edom will be destroyed and unpopulated and conquered by pagans and by Israel and there will be no trade and people will be astonished. But despite all that doom and gloom the worst thing that ever happened to the people of Edom was that they were scattered and absorbed

into other nations – hardly a terrible fate! (All Prophets Were False!).

The only things that count in this is that the place will be unpopulated and will be conquered by Israel. Pagans fought Israel all the time so they would have to be conquered by them some time. As for the trade ceasing and the astonishment they were natural assumptions and would have happened anyway when war broke out. And we have no proof that anybody was astonished but what is that to McDowell? The prophecy that Israel would conquer Edom was just what any believer in Judaism would say anyway because it was believed that God would back Israel some day when it went to one of its many wars against Edom. Page 291 admits that Petra is a scary place and full of lions and leopards and monster scorpions and then it expects us to be surprised that some old crank from BC was able to predict that it would be abandoned some day! We must remember too that Petra was full of paganism and Israel believed that when it conquered it would make it inhabitable which was the command of the Jewish Law. The prophecies can be explained by Jewish prejudice rather than precognition.

It is always dishonest to pick out verses about Edom or any place from different prophets and say they all foreseen its future. One or more of the prophets could have been guessing. For example, Jeremiah could have copied Isaiah in saying that Edom would be destroyed and worked out that if this happened people would naturally be astonished and made a prophecy of this astonishment without having any ability to see the future. Perhaps the first prophet who prophesied was copied or expanded on by the others. This is similar to what fortune-tellers do. They ponder the information they have got out of you and they make clever guesses about you on the basis of that information. For example, if you have a car and they know it there is a lot they can tell you that seems to be supernatural knowledge but they know that having a car means other things are true for you and they can tell you what they are. The Bible has no business picking on fortune-tellers when it has ones of its own.

However, the real truth about Petra is that it is inhabited and people live in the tombs which McDowell knows fine well for he read the Encyclopedia Britannica about the city and ignored that bit.

Page 293 replies to the objection that the prophecy that nobody would pass through Edom forever for it would be a wasteland full of fire and smoke forever in which the soil would be brimstone (Isaiah 34:10) was not literally fulfilled for people still pass through it (All Prophets Were False!). The book says there are no caravans going there to trade and that is the literal fulfilment. But when the context of the prophecy says about the dangerous animals and snakes that will be there it is obvious that nobody will go there because they won't survive. That is what the prophecy is predicting and it is wrong. Say the prophecy was fulfilled. The prophet admits that he knows the region so that would mean he knew why nobody would want to settle there to any great extent if the place was ever devastated by war. Yet the Christians would say it was supernatural knowledge.

Page 294: The destruction of the idols of Memphis in Egypt and the burning of Thebes and the great loss of life there and that there will be no longer any Egyptian princes is supposedly predicted in Ezekiel 30. No mention is made of Ezekiel 29 which naively prophesied that Egypt would be the worst off of kingdoms in the sense that it would be diminished to almost nothing (page 212, The Truth of Christianity). The reason is that there are kingdoms even today that are worse off and Egypt has regained an incredible amount of lost territory thus confuting the prophecy.

The Bible was always promising that its God would destroy all idols. Thebes had to be destroyed sometime. But the chronology of the book forces fundies to assume that Thebes becoming a collection of many villages and towns is the destruction – strange destruction! Page 295 says that the destruction of the Memphis idols predicts the destruction of Memphis. Not necessarily. The dishonesty of this Evidence that Demands a Verdict is appalling. And there are preserved Temples and idols from Memphis that can still be viewed (Steven Carr, Critique of Josh McDowell's Non-Messianic Prophecies). After 350 BC there were indeed no princes who had any power in Egypt. It was run by foreigners since that time. But the prophecy was written about 570 BC and there is no proof that somebody could not have put in the bit about the princes in 525 BC when the Persians conquered Egypt. The prophecy appeared in the midst of a number of prophecies of temporary destruction so it could mean that there would be no prince temporarily. Of course, McDowell does not tell us that.

The prophecy of Ezekiel that nobody would dwell in Egypt which God would reduce to an “utter waste” for 40 years has failed (chapter 29). McDowell does not draw our attention to that. Never was Ezekiel's forecast that there would be no man or beast in Egypt and all the cities would be in ruins fulfilled. Because the prophecy failed the Christians lie about the prophecy being symbolic. That is another way to dodge the truth and it is a disgrace for there is nothing indicatory of symbolism in the damn prophecy.

Page 296, takes verses from Nahum predicting that the drunken Nineveh would be destroyed in a flood and burned. Dishonestly, the words, “You shall never recover from your wound”, are taken to mean that the city will cease to exist. Again, this is reading future events back into the prophecy. The prophecies are terribly vague. How and when these things will happen and at whose hands we are not told. On page 302, McDowell admits for a change that the fulfilment he

proposes is merely assumed. But as Steven Carr notes the only person who said the flood happened was a man who lived five hundred years after the event and whose writings are so fragmented that it is impossible to be sure he meant Nineveh was flooded (Critique of Josh McDowell's Non-Messianic Prophecies).

McDowell claims that he honestly assumes that the prophecy was fulfilled. Liar.

Nahum might have been able to guess that if Nineveh was built on rivers that floods would happen and perhaps enemies would deliberately flood the city. It is admitted that he thought it was easy for enemies to flood the place (page 301). Would it have been any wonder if Nahum had guessed that Nineveh would not be rebuilt after the destruction when it was a sitting duck and had got such a severe deal at the hands of its enemies thanks to its watery location? Nahum knew that Nineveh had many rivers passing through it so that explains his prophecy as guesswork. Nineveh was told by God to stockpile water when Nahum God's mouthpiece forgot that it wouldn't need to do that if rivers flowed through it.

Page 311 says that one day Jerusalem will be rebuilt and will be bigger than ever and gives a few details of where the city will spread to. This has been fulfilled but is not impressive because the prophets all believed that the holy city would be exalted by God one day over all nations and be ruled by a righteous Messiah who gathers the lost sons of Israel back to their land. They were not even lucky for commonsense told them that when their religion was a major one and Jerusalem was a holy city it would have to be rebuilt and expanded some day. It was no more miraculous than somebody saying the Vatican will be destroyed which it will be some day and will be rebuilt.

Page 315 spells out a number of miraculous revelations from Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 36:33-36 about the future of Palestine, that cities will be laid waste, holy places will be empty, enemies will rule it and Israel will be scattered and it will be revived by Jews and farmed. Leviticus 26 is only general threats rather than prophecies. As for Ezekiel, it only says cities will be rebuilt and the land will be farmed. It is so vague that it does not deserve to be called a prophecy. And what else does McDowell think the Jews were going to do with the land? Look at it?

Page 309 strangely admits that a fulfilled New Testament prophecy is a rarity and holds Jesus' assertions about Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum and that they would come to bad ends were fulfilled. The New Testament not being able to contain original prophecy to any substantial degree would fare badly for its alleged divine inspiration. Steven Carr shows that McDowell's claim that when Capernaum was destroyed in 400 AD that the other two cities came to the same end is doubtful (Critique of Josh McDowell's Non-Messianic Prophecies). For the prophecy to be fulfilled it would have had to have happened soon after Jesus spoke for it was the people who were living in those towns then that he had the problem with. I would have preferred to leave the prophecy out if I were McDowell because it does not specify what kind of disaster was to befall these cities. For example, it may have been plague or a mixture of things which would have happened anyway. Claiming that the disaster of 400 AD is the fulfilment, is an excuse for saying the prophecy was not fulfilled in the first century and so must have been written within the time the people Jesus was railing at were alive for the gossellers would have thought the disaster was for that generation. But it does not work. Jesus knew some people in those towns were misled and so he would have had to understand their difficulty and prophesy punishment on the others who did know. The deaths of people in and from these towns in 70 AD could have been thought to be the fulfilment.

