

My reading on fulfilled prophecy in the book, *The Wonders of Prophecy*, by John Urquhart has a chapter where the author talks about the difficulty of predicting anything. He gives several examples from his time (18th century), but most of these would be obscure to us. But consider many shocking events that almost no one anticipated even ten years before they occurred:

- World War I
- World War II
- Assassination of JFK
- COVID-19

We could list many more. Urquhart concludes his second chapter with this:

“‘It is,’ as a veteran statesman once said, ‘the unexpected that happens.’ The anticipations of the most far-seeing, and the precautions of the wisest are mocked again and again by the bitter irony of events. We might as soon think to pluck the stars from heaven as to wrest its secrets from the future. The king, when he bade the advancing waves retire, was not more powerless than we, when we command the approaching days to appear and tell what things they bring. We cannot foresee even dimly the events of tomorrow, or of the next hour. We stand before a wall of impenetrable darkness. We have hopes and fears, but no certainties. Thoughts rise up within our bosom, but from the future there comes neither voice nor sign. If, then, this feat, which we rightly declare is impossible for man to perform, has been achieved — if the future *has* been read, and, not only years, but centuries have yielded up their secrets — if we produce a book in which predictions, so numerous, and varied, and minute as to preclude all possibility of chance, were

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the events occurred in which they were startlingly fulfilled — will it be any longer possible to doubt that God is, and that this is His word to us? If evidence of this kind can really be produced, doubt will be an impossibility. And whether our evidence be of this kind the reader will now be able to judge.”¹

This sets his thesis, that the Bible is such a book, with definitely fulfilled prophecies. The first one he looks at is Ezekiel’s prophecy against Tyer, which

¹ John Urquhart, *The Wonders of Prophecy: Or, What Are We to Believe?* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.).

spreads across three chapters, Ezek 26-28. We will carefully consider some of the details.

What is the date of the prophecy? (26.1)

The eleventh year and the first day of the month — compare Ezek 33.21, when Ezekiel hears of the fall of Jerusalem. Cooper in the NAC says the date would likely be Feb 13, 586 BC or Mar 15, 586 BC.

Why does Ezekiel speak against Tyre? (26.2-3)

Because Tyre rejoiced in the coming fall of Jerusalem

List the things God says will happen to Tyre: (3-6)

1. (3) God will bring many nations against Tyre
2. (4a) They will destroy the walls and break the towers
3. (4b) God will scrape her debris and make her a bare rock
4. (5) Tyre will be reduced to a fishing village
5. (6) Her daughters on the mainland will be slain

Tyre was a Phoenician city, a people known for two things: prosperity through sea trade and an alphabet, the precursor to our own alphabet.

Consider vv. 7-11, what do these verses prophesy for Tyre?

Babylonian conquest and destruction

Now, how difficult would vv. 7-11 be to predict, given that Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem at this time and generally waging campaigns in the region? Answer: not very difficult!

Notice a key change of person from vv. 7-11 and v. 12. What is this change?

From “he” to “they”

Look back to vv. 3-4. Does this suggest something about this change of person?

Yes, “many nations” would come against Tyre

What prophecy is repeated in v. 14? What earlier verse in the chapter does this reference?

The Lord says he will make Tyre a bare rock, make her merely a fishing village, and she will be built no more. This refers to vv. 4-5

Nebuchadnezzar left Tyre in ruins. The people of Tyre decided to provide more security for their city.

Urquhart: “Previous to the fall of their ancient city, the Tyrians had removed the bulk of their treasure to an island in their possession, half a mile from the shore. Taught now by bitter experience, they resolved to trust themselves no more within walls, which had not round them the defence of a watery girdle. Tyre was mistress of the sea, and could defend herself there. The old city was therefore deserted, and no attempt was made to rebuild it after the Babylonian army had retired. So far the prophecy had been fulfilled, but only so far. Tyre was overthrown and spoiled; the noise of her songs had ceased; the sound of her harps was no more heard (verse 13); the great and joyous city was abased and desolate. But the ruins still stood.”²

Over 250 years passed, with the Persian Empire replacing the Babylonian. Then came the swift rise of Alexander’s Greek empire. In his fight against the Persians, he came towards Tyre.

- The Tyrians sent embassies to Alexander seeking peace
- Alexander expressed a desire to worship the god Heracles in their city
- The Tyrians refused, knowing that if Alexander arrived, the “worshippers would remain as masters”³
- The women and children were sent to Carthage (the great Phoenician city in North Africa)
- The Phoenicians possessed a strong fleet, and Alexander’s fleet wasn’t available

“As Alexander could not attack the city from the sea, he built a kilometre-long two hundred foot-wide causeway.”⁴

How did he build this causeway?

“The walls, and the towers, and the ruined houses, and palaces, and temples, of the ancient city were pulled down, and the stones and the timber of Tyre were laid “in the midst of the water.” Her mounds of ruins were cleared away; and so great was the demand

² Urquhart, 16.

³ Urquhart, 17.

⁴ “Siege of Tyre (332 BC),” in *Wikipedia*, March 2, 2024,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Siege_of_Tyre_\(332_BC\)&oldid=1211344112](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Siege_of_Tyre_(332_BC)&oldid=1211344112).

for material in this vast undertaking, that the very dust seems to have been scraped from the site and laid in the sea. Though centuries had passed after the word was spoken, and had seen no fulfilment, it was not forgotten; and the event declared that it was His word whose judgments, though they may linger long, come surely, and fall at last with resistless might.”⁵

“The bare ground where Tyre once stood is testimony to the literal fulfillment of this prophecy. Tyre never regained power after this attack.”⁶

“The site remains to-day without even a mound to mark it, and has to be determined solely by the notices in ancient writers which give its distance from the island Tyre.”⁷

⁵ Urquhart, *Wonders of Prophecy*, 17.

⁶ John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible: Clear Explanations for Uncertain Times*, 3rd ed (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2011), 170.

⁷ Urquhart, *Wonders of Prophecy*, 19.