

**Series:** Abide in Me – Part 1 of 12:

**Sub Series:** The Bible Is God's Word of Truth – 1 of 5

# Can Anyone Really Predict the Future?

Prophecy in General

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2012

Sunday, June 24 → 8:00 & 10:45 ♦ Monday, June 25 → 7:00

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ, *as Christians*, we base ♦ what we believe, ♦ how we live, and ♦ where we will spend eternity **on the Bible**; therefore, is the Bible reliable? We will return to that question again and again in the weeks ahead. May God use this sermon, *and those which follow*, to convince us that **the Bible is God's infallible Word!**

**Today's question:** *Can anyone really predict the future?*

1. **Some Prediction Basics:** Anyone can make a right guess; for example, once in a while, *gamblers actually win!* But guessing and prophesying (accurately predicting future events) are much different: guessing is *sometimes right*; true prophesying is *always right!*
  - a. The LORD told us how to identify false prophets: "...when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass... that is a word that the LORD has not spoken..." (Deut. 18:22 ESV)
  - b. The LORD said to Moses about Jesus: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth,

and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” (Deut. 18:18 ESV) Then, *approximately 1400 years later*, Jesus said: “...I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment--what to say and what to speak.” (John 12:49 ESV)

- c. How prophecy works: God declared: “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning...” (Isaiah 46:9-10 ESV) Okay, so God knows the future; then He moved men, *by the Holy Spirit*, to write down what would happen: “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but **men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**” (2 Peter 1:21 ESV)
2. **Many Have Tried and Failed**: By trying they gave this impression: God is speaking through me; *but the failure of their predictions proved the opposite!*
  - a. William Miller (founder of the Adventist movement) predicted that Christ would return in 1843; then, *when his prophecy did not occur*, he predicted October of 1844.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Joseph Smith (founder of the Latter-day Saints, Mormons) predicted in 1832 that the New Jerusalem would be built in the western boundaries of the state of Missouri and be dedicated by him, *but the Mormons were driven out of Jackson County Missouri in 1833.*<sup>2</sup>
  - c. Charles Russell (founder of Jehovah’s Witnesses) predicted that the world would end in 1914.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lutheran Study Bible (Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 307.

<sup>2</sup> <http://carm.org/false-prophecies-of-joseph-smith>

<sup>3</sup> Lutheran Study Bible (Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 307.

- d. Jeane Dixon (psychic) “gained attention when she correctly predicted the assassination of a new president (Kennedy),” but most of her predictions have failed. For example, she predicted “the winner of each of three presidential elections: in 1952, in 1956, and 1960. How well did she do? She missed every winner of every presidential election and she missed every candidate in every party for each of these elections.”<sup>4</sup>
  - e. Hal Lindsey (author) predicted the rapture in 1981 and the end of the world in 1988.<sup>5</sup>
  - f. Harold Camping (radio station owner) predicted the end of the world on October 21, 2011.<sup>6</sup>
3. **Only God Has Succeeded:** *Only God knows the future!*
- a. Dr. Kennedy summarized Biblical prophecies:  
They “deal with almost every nation and scores of cities with which Israel had some dealings. It cannot be said that these prophecies were written after the events for many of the events took place hundreds or even thousands of years after the prophecy was made. Nor can it be said that they are vague and obscure, because they are highly specific in their details. Nor can it be said that they were lucky guesses because there are over 2,000 of them which have infallibly come to pass. Nor can it be said that these were

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<sup>4</sup> D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion, Third Edition (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), 89.

<sup>5</sup> Lutheran Study Bible (Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 307.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bible.ca/pre-date-setters.htm>

things which were likely to take place because they were indeed extremely unlikely events.”<sup>7</sup>

- b. The flood: God said to Noah: “I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth... Everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you...” (Gen. 6:17-18 ESV) God said it; then it happened: “Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.... Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.” (Gen. 7:22-23 ESV) *The flood also points ahead to God’s final judgment!*
- c. Cannibalism: God said through Moses: “...you shall eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters...” (Deut. 28:53 ESV) Then the fulfillment: “The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food...” (Lam. 4:10 ESV)
- d. Salvation: God, *speaking to the devil*, promised that the Savior would destroy him: “...he shall bruise your **head**, and you shall bruise his **heel**.” (Gen. 3:15 ESV) Then, *4,000 years later*, Jesus: “...shared in **our** humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil...” (Heb. 2:14 NIV)

**Conclusion**: *Can anyone really predict the future? Yes, **only God**; so ♦rely on His Word, ♦know His promises are true, and ♦be sure: **your sins are forgiven through Jesus! Amen!***

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<sup>7</sup>Evangelism Explosion, 89.