

Fake Prophecies Versus Real Prophecies

One of the striking things about the prophecies which are found in the Bible is that they're specific, detailed, and clear. This is very different from the prophecies that are found elsewhere. Outside of the Bible you'll find two kinds of prophecies: those that are vague, and those that are wrong.

For example, Nostradamus is widely considered to be a prophet – but his prophecies leave a lot to be desired. Take this one, for example:

*Seven conspirators at the banquet will cause to flash
The iron out of the ship against the three:
One will have the two fleets brought to the great one,
When through the evil the latter shoots him in the forehead.*

(<http://www.sacred-texts.com/nos/cen5eng.htm>)¹

That could mean almost anything! It's impossible to look at that and say “Oh, that means the Emperor of France is going to be assassinated.” This prophecy is utterly useless. You can't use it to figure out what's going to happen in the future. Your only hope is to wait until some major world event takes place and then see if it happens to match some element of something that Nostradamus said.

Another great example of this is the “Prophecy of the Popes” by St. Malachy. He prophesied that there would be a certain number of popes between his day and the last pope, who would supposedly be called Peter the Roman. Malachy gave a description of each person who would hold the papal office between his day and Peter the Roman. However, these descriptions left a great deal to be desired. For example, these are his descriptions of the four popes who would precede the last one:

¹ The quotes in this paper were captured back in 2013.

Pope #108: Flower of Flowers
Pope #109: Of the half moon
Pope #110: From the labor of the sun
Pope #111: Glory of the olive

Does that prophecy convey any useful information? Not really. I've seen some people examine the entire life of a pope to see if there's anything in his background that might possibly be a fit. Did Pope #111 work with olives? Did his family own olives? Did he like olives? Were there olives in his family crest?

The Malachy prophecy is useless. It doesn't give you any useful advance knowledge about Pope #111. That defeats the entire point of prophecy, which is to *tell you what's going to happen before it happens*.

Biblical prophecies are radically different: they're specific and easy to understand. For example, when God refers to people who haven't been born He doesn't give us a vague “flower of flowers” prophecy. Instead God calls them *by name*:

1 Kings 13:2: “And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.”

Notice the incredible detail! God didn't just say that *someone* would come along and burn the priests' bones on the altar; He said that *Josiah* would do it. God added that Josiah wasn't some random person but would be of the house of David. Centuries later, King Josiah did exactly what God foretold. God actually *named names* – which is something Malachy avoided doing.

Or take this prophecy, for example:

Ezekiel 29:9-15: “And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the Lord: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it. Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. Yet thus saith the Lord God; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.”

This prophecy (which hasn't been fulfilled yet) is very specific. You can easily tell *what* is going to happen, *where* it's going to happen, and what the *results* are going to be. It's rich in detail – as are other Biblical prophecies. This passage conveys a great deal of useful information.

There's a *huge* difference between Nostradamus vaguely saying “someone, somewhere, will do something” and God saying “Egypt will be abandoned for 40 years”. The key characteristic of *real* prophecy is a rich level of specific detail.

Only false prophets need to hide behind vague phrases that could be interpreted in a thousand different ways. People who actually *know* the future can afford to be incredibly precise – and that's exactly what God does.

Don't be fooled by vague prophecies that can mean almost anything. Stick to what's in the Bible.