

## LESSON FOUR

### Fulfilled Prophecies Verifying Scripture and God's Promises

#### I Nineveh, Zephaniah 2:13-15 (630 B.C.); Nahum 3:19 (630 B.C.)

##### A. Predictions:

1. Become a desolate wilderness for beasts to lie down in.
2. Totally destroyed and never rebuilt (wound incurable, Nahum 3:19).

B. Background on Nineveh: Nineveh, of course, was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire. At the time of the prophecy the empire was in the peak of its power and its defenses were very impressive. Nineveh was unequalled in size of all the ancient cities. The city itself was at least seven miles in circumference with a fortification of three walls separated by two deep ditches making the entire fortification almost a half mile wide. The inner wall was 100 feet tall, 50 feet thick with 200 feet high towers, 150 foot wide moat and an outer wall of some 200 feet thick.

##### C. Fulfillment:

1. Even though Nineveh and the Assyrians reached their peak in 663 B.C. in just 51 years she would fall and never be heard from again. In 614 B.C. a coalition the Babylonians and the Medes began to seek destruction of the city. They conquered a number of cities round about Nineveh but were completely unable to make a dent in the mighty fortress of Nineveh. In 612 B.C. this coalition again laid siege to the city. There were battles fought outside the walls but conquering the city still looked impossible. Inside the city the king and his subjects were completely confident and gave themselves to drinking and feasting. There was a prophecy in the land believed by the king that no enemy would ever take the city unless the river would first become the cities enemy. The king felt this would never be and therefore felt secure. However in the spring of 612 heavy rains caused the Tigris River to swell wide and break down a portion of the city walls and flood part of the city. The king, thinking that the afore mentioned prophecy had been completed sealed off his palace and burned the whole thing down. In the meantime those sieging the city, learning of the break in the wall, attacked at this point and took over the city. Further discoveries indicate that they set the city on fire and burned it down.
2. Up until the nineteenth century the desolation of Nineveh had been so complete that the only records of its existence could be found in the scriptures. Many scientists had come to doubt even its existence. It was finally discovered by excavating some 30-45 feet of debris before the Assyrian strata could be discovered. Excavation shows the remains of an intense fire in the soot still

permeating the air.

II. **Babylon**, Isaiah 13: 19-22 (740 B.C.); Jeremiah 51:26, 43 (600 B.C.)

A. **Predictions:**

1. To be like Sodom and Gomorrah
2. Never inhabited again
3. Arabs will not pitch tent there
4. Sheepfolds will not be there
5. Desert creatures will infest the area
6. Stones will not be removed for other construction
7. It will not be a place where men visit
8. Covered with swamps of water

B. Background on Babylon: The city of Babylon gained its greatest power and fame in the late seventh and early sixth centuries under Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar. The city was divided by the Euphrates river, the western part of the city being surrounded by marshes which prevented all access to it. To this day the Euphrates has a tendency to change its course and loose itself in the marshes. The size and the defenses of Babylon are tremendous. Babylon covered 196 square miles, 56 miles in circumference, with 14 mile sides. The city was surrounded by a 30 foot wide moat and double walls. The outer wall was 311 feet high with 411 foot high towers numbering 250. The wall was 87 feet wide containing 100 gates of solid brass.

C. **Fulfillment:**

1. When the Persians laid siege to the city in 539 B.C. they realized immediately that it would be impossible to storm the massive walls of Babylon. The Babylonians from within the walls were laughing and mocking their seemingly helpless enemy. They were so unconcerned that they began carousing at an annual feast to their gods. But at that very moment the Persians were building canals and diverting the waters of the Euphrates River. Once diverted, Cyrus led his army in the river bed under the walls of Babylon and took the drunken city virtually without a fight. From that time on the decay of the city began. Later Xerxes plundered. Then Alexander the Great thought to restore but died suddenly in the city. During the period of Alexander's successors the area decayed rapidly and soon became desert. Under the reign of the Seleucids, Babylon was dealt its final blow. Realizing the cost of rebuilding Babylon was too great, The Seleucids constructed the city of Seleucia forty miles north of Babylon on the Tigres River and one by one all commercial interest moved out of Babylon to Seleucia.

2. The historical record of the desolation of Babylon is as follows: During the reign of Augustus Caesar (27B.C.-14 A.D.) the site was described as having become a desert. In 116 A.D. Trajan described it as mounds and legends of mounds. In 363 A.D. Emperor Julian destroyed the walls of Babylon which had been partially restored by the Persians who used the area as a hunting preserve.
3. Today the site of Babylon is a naked hideous waste, overrun by desert creatures. The lack of vegetation prevents the area from being suitable for pasturing flocks, various superstitions along with the waste of the land prevent the Arabs from pitching their tents there. A large part of the old city still lies buried under the swamps created by the Euphrates. In fact, the Babylon of Hammuribi's day now lies beneath the water table. A great part of the country below Babylon has now been, for centuries, one great swamp. Concerning the stones the city was built on, we find that bricks and building material of many kinds have been salvaged from the ruins for cities roundabout but the foundation stones that were imported to Babylon at such great cost have never been moved. The chances of these prophecies to have been fulfilled by chance is one in five Billion.
4. Final note: It is interesting that the defenses of Babylon and Nineveh were of such magnitude that even during World War 1 such defenses would have stopped an army cold. The conclusion is this. There is not one wall high enough or thick enough, and no moat deep enough and no defense strong enough to keep out the judgment of God.

### III. **Tyre**, Ezekiel 26:3-14, 21 (593 B.C.)

#### A. **Predictions:**

1. Many nations would come against Tyre, verse 3
2. She would be made a bare rock, like the top of a rock, verse 4
3. Fishermen would spread their nets there, verse 5
4. Her stones, dust and timbers would be thrown in the water, verse 12
5. Never be rebuilt, verse 14
6. Never be found again, verse 21

#### B. **Fulfillment:**

1. Nebuchadnezzar sieged the mainland city in 585 B.C. and continued the siege for 13 years, the city being destroyed in 573 B. C. When Nebuchadnezzar finally entered the city, most of the people had moved to an island one half mile off the coast and fortified a new city there. The city remained a powerful city for several hundred years.
2. Alexander the Great laid siege to the city about 332 B.C. when they would not cooperate with him in his plans to conquer the Persians. Since Alexander possessed no fleet, he demolished the mainland

city and with the debris built a 200 foot wide causeway to the new city.

3. The history of Tyre was not complete after Alexander's conquest. The island city was rebuilt then destroyed again, some 18 years after Alexander's destruction, by Antigonus. Many other countries fought against Tyre until the Moslems laid it ruins in 1291 A.D.
4. At the present the causeway still exists with the site of the mainland city being a bare rock.

Occupied by fishermen. One can still look down into the water and view the granite columns and stone block that once stood on the mainland. A final point of interest needs comment concerning the prophecy. The prophecy seems to be contradictory. On the one hand it says the city would never be found again, but on the other hand it says that it would be a place for the spreading of nets. The answer to this is that the wealthy merchant city of Tyre never has been found again. Instead, rising up from the same site is a fishing village which uses the bare rock of the mainland city site to dry their nets. Thus the prophecy is fulfilled in a most unique way.

#### IV. **Jerusalem and the Cities of Israel**, Deuteronomy 28:49-57 (1500 BC)

A. **Predictions:** Sieges against Jerusalem and the cities of Judah would result in the Jews eating their own children.

B. **Fulfillment:** This prophecy was fulfilled in two specific occasions, when Jerusalem fell in 586 BC and in 70 AD. In the latter siege by the Romans, Josephus (a Jewish historian who sat outside the walls of Jerusalem and wrote of the Roman siege) records for us some horrifying stories. When the Romans came to destroy Jerusalem they were not interested in killing anyone in the city. Everyone was ordered out of the city, but the Jews locked the city up tight, determined to save the city at all costs. The Romans waited, and after a number of months the people began to starve because of lack of food. Josephus tells of a woman who was a princess from another city who got caught in the city in the siege. After three months she gave birth to a son. And after three more months, because of her hunger, she roasted that same son and ate half of him. The Jewish soldiers in the city, upon smelling the cooking of the food, came in demanding whatever food she had. When she served them her half eaten son they went out of the house wretching. And thus God's prophecy of 1500 years before was fulfilled in a most unique way.