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# Is Prophecy History Written In Advance?

*by: Ronald L. Dart*

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This idea that "prophecy is history written in advance" is highly problematic and it is important that we know that. Implicit in this idea are some assumptions that many people make about prophecy-assumptions that have led us to make some flagrant mistakes and undermine our credibility when we speak about prophecy. They make these errors because their fundamental philosophy, their fundamental idea about prophecy is wrong.

If God wrote history in advance, then God wrote Hitler, Auschwitz, Birkenau, the Nazis, and the SS into the plan. He wrote the Holocaust into history ahead of time if prophecy is history written in advance. How could a loving God write a history like the one we are living?

So, let's see if we can get something straight. The idea that "prophecy is history written in advance" is an assumption. It is a hypothesis. It is a theory. It is not the truth and it is a theory that we can test, that we can check out. The future is being created moment by moment by the decisions you make and more importantly by the decisions that God makes. And a lot of the decisions that God makes are based upon the decisions that you make. Tomorrow will be determined by the decisions and the choices that are made by all of us today. It doesn't exist otherwise. Tomorrow will be different if you choose differently on the things that you are going to do today. The future does not exist. The future is predictable, but it is not knowable and that is something you are going to have to wrestle with. The future grows out of the decisions that we and God are making today.

Here is proof.

## **The Prophet Jonah**

The proof of what I am saying, lies in an obscure Old Testament book, the book of the prophet Jonah. We know how Jonah was given a message by God for some reason that is not really explained. Jonah said, "I don't want to do this," and he took off in the opposite direction. There were great storms on the sea and the ship was about to sink. Jonah warned them, "Well, I was fleeing from God," and it scared them all to death. So, he told them finally, "Throw me over the side and God will make the seas calm and you will survive."

They didn't really want to do that, but when they saw they couldn't make it, they threw him over the side. And God had prepared a great fish that ate him up and carried him away. He prayed to God from the fish's belly and repented of his attitude. Finally, the fish vomited him up on the shore and Jonah went to Nineveh.

This is a story that all of us find so fascinating. But the real story of Jonah only begins now "The word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time saying, "Get up. Go to Nineveh, that great city and you preach unto it the preaching that I tell you" (Jonah 3:1).

So, Jonah got up and he went to Nineveh according to the Word of the Lord. Nineveh was a great city, about three days journey, and he entered into the city and he cried. You all know the cry, don't you?" "And yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" He takes a few more steps down the street and he says, (yelling) "And yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

I want you to answer a couple of questions for me:

- Is this a prophecy? Yes.
- Did it come from God? Yes.
- Do you think that God would give Jonah a prophecy that was not true? No.
- Was Jonah a false prophet? No.
- Is the prophecy true? Yes.
- Did the prophecy come to pass? No.

Do you see our problem? There is a giant problem in the middle of this. You read Jonah and you kind of know the story. You know what happened. The people of Nineveh actually heard Jonah's prophecy and they repented. The king heard it and said, "Hold it. Everybody fast. Make the animals fast. No food, no water for anybody, no animals, nothing. Put on sackcloth. Oh, by the way; put sackcloth on the cows. Throw dirt on them. Let them cry and moan for water and let us all cry and moan before God because the end of us is right at hand!" And God looked down and said, "Well, look at that. Look at that." Forty days came, and forty days went, and Nineveh was not overthrown.

Now if prophecy is history written in advance, we have a problem because the actual events that played out were these. Jonah came to town saying, "And yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The people of Nineveh repented; God changed his mind and did not destroy the city. The future of Nineveh was still open when Jonah walked out of the city.

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*The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit [RLDEA.com](http://RLDEA.com) where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.*

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### **Discussion Questions**

1. Do you agree or disagree with Mr. Dart that the future doesn't exist yet?
2. What are your reasons on how you answered question one?
3. What are your thoughts about Mr. Dart's proof to back up his idea?
4. Is it probable that God actually knows all different possible outcomes?