

The Old Testament and Fulfilled Prophecy

Why were certain Old Testament individuals thought to be prophets of God, a status that led to the acceptance of their writings as spiritually significant?

In some cases, it has to do with the acts performed by the individual at the time. Among other things, Moses struck a rock with his staff and water came out (Exodus 17:6), Elijah called down fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:20-39), Daniel revealed and interpreted a king's dream (Daniel 2:1-47). Other acts by Old Testament individuals could be cited.

Beyond that, though, there were two tests that a true prophet must pass. The first was this:

When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. Deuteronomy 18:22 ESV

Predictions a person makes must come about. However, just because something foretold happens doesn't mean that the person is a prophet of God. A second test is this:

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. Deuteronomy 13:1-4 ESV

This is an important test to apply since, from the beginning, the teaching of God's people is that there is only ONE God; no others. So if one were to correctly predict a future event or perform some other miracle and then attribute that to a god other than the God of the Bible, that person would not be a true prophet because the teaching about God is not consistent with the teaching present from the beginning.

Is there fulfilled prophecy contained in the Bible? Here are some that Bible scholars have suggested.

- Destruction of the city of Tyre. Ezekiel 26:1-14.
- Destruction of the city of Samaria. Micah 1:6-7.
- Nation of Israel would be conquered and subjected to Babylonian rule. Jeremiah 25:8-11.
- Jerusalem would be conquered by the Babylonians. Jeremiah 32:1-5, 26-35.
- Babylon would be attacked by the Medes. Isaiah 13:17-19.
- The destruction of Babylon. Isaiah 13:19-22.
- Jewish people would return to Israel after they were conquered and taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Jeremiah 32:36-37.
- Jewish people would return to Israel after 70 years in Babylon. Jeremiah 29:10.
- The destruction of Nineveh. Nahum 2:8-13.
- The series of 4 great empires: Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman. Daniel 2:37-40. Daniel 8:16-24.

For information on the fulfillment of these and other prophecies, see:

- From Reliable to Divine: Fulfilled Prophecy in the Old Testament. <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/from-reliable-to-divine-fulfilled-prophecy-in-the-old-testament/>
- Fulfilled Prophecy: Seven Compelling Evidences. <https://answersingenesis.org/is-the-bible-true/4-fulfilled-prophecy/>
- Fulfilled Bible Prophecies and End Time Prophecies. <http://www.100prophecies.org/>
- The Old Testament is Filled with Fulfilled Prophecy. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/the-old-testament-is-filled-with-fulfilled-prophecy-11652232.html>

In addition to the above prophecies, there are those of the future Messiah fulfilled by Jesus.

- Born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:21-23, Luke 1:31-35
- Born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-6
- Lived in Egypt. Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:13-15
- Arrived in Jerusalem on a donkey. Zechariah 9:9 and John 12:12-15, Matthew 21:1-7
- Rejected. Isaiah 53:3 and Matthew 27:16-26
- Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. Zechariah 11:12-13 and Matthew 26:14-15, Matthew 27:3, 9-10
- Lots cast for His clothing. Psalm 22:18 and John 19:23-24
- His bones were unbroken. Psalm 34:20 and John 19:31-37
- His body was pierced. Zechariah 12:10 and John 19:31-37
- He was mocked. Psalm 22:7-8 and Matthew 27:39-44
- His hands and feet were pierced. Psalm 22:16 and John 20:25-28
- He would be buried in a rich man's tomb. Isaiah 53:9 and Matthew 27:57-60
- His resurrection from the dead. Psalm 16:10 and Matthew 28:6

For more information regarding prophecies fulfilled by Jesus, see:

- Top 40 Most Helpful Messianic Prophecies. <https://jewsforjesus.org/answers/top-40-most-helpful-messianic-prophecies/>
- Old Testament Prophecy and Fulfillment. http://www.seeking4truth.com/nt_fulfillment.htm

In some of the above cases, we have the advantage of the passing of time – time that has allowed us to see the fulfillment of the prophecies.

For me, there is ample evidence that the writers of much of the Old Testament were indeed prophets of God.

As for the New Testament, fulfilled prophecy does not play a large role in verifying authorship. Instead, the known relationship each individual writer had either with Jesus or with one of Jesus' disciples gave authority to the writer and value to the writing.