

# Inerrancy of the Major Prophets

by Mike Stallard

This article continues the series on inerrancy by examining the Old Testament books Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. When the original articles that came to be called *The Fundamentals* were published, one of the articles written by Arno C. Gaebelin was dedicated to the support which fulfilled prophecy gave to the idea of divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

God alone can declare the end from the beginning. The dumb idols of the heathen know nothing concerning the future, and man himself is powerless to find out things to come. However, the Lord, who made this challenge, has demonstrated his power to predict. None of the “sacred books” of the nations contains predictions of the future. If the authors of these writings had attempted to foretell the future, they would have furnished the strongest evidence of their deception. But the Bible is pre-eminently a book of prophecy. These predictions are declared to be the utterances of the Lord; they show that the Bible is a supernatural book, the revelation of God.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Major Prophets with their many predictions become significant sources in the discussion of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. The issue is not a minor one.

God’s written revelation came in inerrant form, free from discrepancies or contradictions, and this inerrancy contributes to its achieving its saving purpose. If there were genuine mistakes of any sort in the original manuscripts, it would mean, obviously, that the Bible contains error along with truth. As such it would become subject to human judgment, just like any other religious document. The validity of such judgment, of course, depends upon the judge’s own knowledge and wisdom. If he rejects the truth of the scriptural record simply because it seems to him to be unlikely or improbable, then he is in danger of eternal loss. The charge of scriptural self-contradiction or factual error is to be taken quite seriously; it cannot be brushed off as a matter of minor consequence. At stake is the credibility and reliability of the Bible as authentic revelation from God.<sup>2</sup>

The presentation of inerrancy as formulated by evangelicals has generally been grounded upon several lines of argumentation. **The first one is to show deductively that inerrancy flows quite naturally from the character of God.** Since God cannot lie (Rom. 3:4) and the Bible has its source in God (2 Tim. 3:16), then the Scriptures cannot have errors. This line of arguing may not convince someone who does not accept the particular statements used from the Bible as reliable.<sup>3</sup> However, it does demonstrate that it is impossible to accept the complete biblical view of God and reject inerrancy simultaneously. For the sake of discussion about the Major Prophets, this deductive argument is assumed in this article.

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<sup>1</sup> Arno C. Gaebelin, “Fulfilled Prophecy a Potent Argument for the Bible” in *The Fundamentals* edited R. A. Torrey (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 205.

<sup>2</sup> Gleason L. Archer, “Alleged Errors and Discrepancies in the Original Manuscripts of the Bible” in *Inerrancy* edited by Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 59.

<sup>3</sup> The Old Testament scholar Eugene Merrill is correct when he notes that while this way of arguing has value, it is inadequate for a complete presentation of inerrancy and should not stand alone. See Eugene Merrill, “Internal Evidence for the Inerrancy of the Pentateuch,” *The Conservative Theological Journal* 2 (June 1998): 102-103.

The second way of reasoning one's way to the doctrine of inerrancy is to show the **self-attestation of Scripture**.<sup>4</sup> A proponent of inerrancy will often marshal the internal evidence in a portion of Scripture that suggests its divine origin.<sup>5</sup> The end result is a catalog of internal information showing such things as authorial claims to divine inspiration, compositional formulas asserting divine origin, and various special occurrences such as predictive language that can be verified as directly fulfilled.<sup>6</sup>

With respect to this article, two areas of internal evidence will be singled out as special cases. One is the **occurrence of prophecy** while the second is the **harmony of Scripture**. The harmony of Scripture can be dealt with at several levels such as the unity of the book in question or across historical and authorial boundaries in the canon. The focus of this article in this particular area will be upon alleged discrepancies that have been asserted about the book under consideration.

A final way that the doctrine of inerrancy is strengthened is by **an appeal to the witness of the rest of Scripture to the divine origin of the text being studied**. This line of reasoning in light of the progress of revelation solidifies the nature of self-attestation. This is especially true since, from a human perspective, the Bible is a collection of writings by forty or so authors spanning around sixteen centuries. This fact and all of those from the lines of evidence suggested above provide a cumulative case for an incontrovertible doctrine of inerrancy.

## **The Book of Isaiah**

The marvelous intertwining of historical narrative and prophecy that is the book of Isaiah has been the center of controversy on several fronts. It is of special interest since it may be the most quoted book in the New Testament. The discussion below will review the book's picture of itself, a sampling of fulfilled prophecies, a sampling of alleged discrepancies in the book, and other biblical references to Isaiah.

### **Self-attestation of the Book of Isaiah**

Eleven times in Isaiah the word *oracle* (נְבִיאִי) is used to describe words given in the book (13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1; 30:6). The word comes from the Hebrew verb that means "to be carried." The prophet was carried along as the message was given from the Lord. This concept is analogous to the teaching of Peter in 2 Pet. 1:19-21 concerning the giving of Scripture as holy men were "moved" or "borne along" by the Holy Spirit. The word is commonly used in the Old Testament prophets

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<sup>4</sup> See Paul Helm, "Faith, Evidence, and the Scriptures" in *Scripture and Truth* edited by D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 299-320.

<sup>5</sup> That is Merrill's main approach in the note cited above. See also the excellent summary given in Wayne Grudem, "Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," in *Scripture and Truth* edited by D. A. Carson and John Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 19-59.

<sup>6</sup> Merrill seems to include the occurrences of prophecies that can be verified as part of Scripture's self-attestation (119-120).

(see Jer. 23:33-38; Eze. 12:10; Nahum 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; 12:1; Mal. 1:1) but appears to be used most frequently by Isaiah.

The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea (Is. 21:1-10) especially helps the reader to see Isaiah's understanding of the divine origin of the words that he gives. The historical context is the time when Babylon rebels against Assyria who is the dominant power in the eight century B. C.<sup>7</sup> Israel pulls for Babylon so that the growing Assyrian dominance and threat could be thwarted. God tells Isaiah to station a sentry to await news of the outcome ("thus the Lord says to me" -- v. 6). The crushing news comes that Babylon has been defeated by the Assyrians. Lest anyone doubt the news, Isaiah comments that "What I have heard from the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, I make known to you" (v. 10).

Isaiah 41:21-24 also provides insight into how the book of Isaiah views its words. The particular words of the section are indeed the words that "the LORD says" (v. 21). In this section, God challenges the heathen gods to predict the future, something only God himself can do: "Declare the things that are going to come afterward, That we may know that you are gods" (v. 23). The wording is strong as Leupold suggests: "It must be said at the outset that there is more involved here than just ability to foretell the future. The Lord can indeed do that. But at the same time he also has control of all the issues that the future may bring."<sup>8</sup> The ready deduction from this and similar passages in the book is that the book itself claims divine origin for its words.

### **Fulfilled Prophecies in the Book of Isaiah**

Among the clearest fulfillments of prior predictions in Holy Writ are the pronouncements based upon Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the account of the suffering servant. Notice the table below:<sup>9</sup>

<b>Isaiah Passage</b>	<b>New Testament Passage Showing Fulfillment</b>	<b>Nature of the Fulfillment</b>
Isaiah 53:1	John 12:37-38	Jesus was rejected by many in spite of his miracles.
Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11; Luke 23:18	Jesus is rejected by his own people, the Jews.
Isaiah 53:5	Romans 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:21	Jesus became our vicarious sacrifice on the cross.
Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5	Jesus was silent to His accusers.

<sup>7</sup> See John A. Martin, "Isaiah" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1067-68. This particular rebellion would be an earlier attempt by Babylon to overthrow Assyria and not the final victory of their ascendancy in the seventh century. Edward J. Young takes the contrary and more long term position that relates the passage to the coming of the Medes to destroy Babylon near the end of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews (*The Book of Isaiah* Vol. 2 [reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 61-62).

<sup>8</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah* Vol. 2 (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 52.

<sup>9</sup> I am indebted in part for this table to W. A. Criswell, ed., *Criswell Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1979), 1504-09.

Isaiah 53:9	Matt. 27:57-60	Jesus was buried with the rich.
Isaiah 53:12	Mark 15:27-28	Jesus was crucified with two thieves.

An honest reader must observe that these kinds of correlations are compelling evidence that Jesus was indeed the fulfillment of predictions in Isaiah. This supernatural character of the book reinforces the concept of inerrancy as applied to it.

A second example passage is the section introduced by the first oracle statement (Isa. 13:1-14:27). It is momentous because it introduces a divine prediction concerning the future destruction of Babylon.

This section (13:1-14:27) is ascribed to Isaiah son of Amoz . . . This is significant in view of the fact that it is clearly prophecy spoken *before* the fall of Babylon. This is important for many believe that Isaiah 40-66 could not have been written by Isaiah son of Amoz because he could not have prophesied about something yet future. The passage in 13:1-14:27 shows that Isaiah's writing about events *before* they happened *was* possible.<sup>10</sup>

The most controversial passage in Isaiah has been 7:14, the famous virgin birth passage. Conservative, as well as liberal, scholars have been divided on how Matthew 1:23 uses the Isaiah statement. John Willis cites at least nine different logical ways that Matthew's use of Isaiah can be explained.<sup>11</sup> It is out of scope for this article to deal with the intricacies of the entire debate. A few comments will suffice. Young appeals to the mystery character of prophecy and distinguishes the direct prediction of Isa. 7:14 (which is directly fulfilled in Christ's virgin birth) from the following verses which appear to localize the prophecy's fulfillment to Isaiah's time.<sup>12</sup> Many conservative interpreters prefer to see a near and far fulfillment usually expressed in terms of typology.<sup>13</sup> The localized account of a child becomes a type of the Christ-child to come in the future and there is a legitimate expansion of the language to allow for a miraculous virgin birth. Regardless of how one views the fulfillment, there appears to be adequate reason to see the Isaiah passage as opening up the world of supernatural prediction at some level. This can only enhance one's understanding of the character of the book itself.

### **A Sampling of Alleged Discrepancies in the Book of Isaiah**

Critics have suggested several discrepancies that, in their minds, can be pinpointed in the book of Isaiah. Many times a shallow reading of the text creates the alleged contradiction. For example, the Bible says in Isa. 1:11 that God does not desire sacrifices and burnt offerings. This supposedly contradicts many passages such as Lev.

<sup>10</sup> Martin, 1059.

<sup>11</sup> John T. Willis, "The Meaning of Isaiah 7:14 and Its Application in Matthew 1:23," *Restoration Quarterly* 21 (1978): 1-18.

<sup>12</sup> Young, 1:283-94. See also J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1930), 287-94.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 266-68.

1:9 where the Lord *does* desire sacrifices and offerings. After all, they are commanded throughout the Old Testament. Could the writer of the book of Isaiah miss such a clear point and plainly contradict it? The answer is given in the context. The issue under consideration is not whether God desires a sacrifice. The issue is whether the worshiper brings a *meaningful* sacrifice. Verse 13 commands, "Stop bringing meaningless offerings!" (NIV) As one writer notes concerning Isaiah's statements in this section, "He [Isaiah] merely expresses the great additional truth that sacrificial worship, if not proceeding from a believing heart, is offensive in His (God's) sight."<sup>14</sup>

A second example of a supposed discrepancy is the declaration of the coming Messiah as the Prince of Peace from Isa. 9:6. This appears to be at odds with Jesus' warning in Matt. 10:34: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." In what way, then, can Isaiah call Jesus the Prince of Peace? It is important to note that in the Gospel account Jesus goes on to warn that families will be divided because of Him. This points out that there is no war waging in the conventional sense but the lack of harmony. This may have been intended to suggest the trouble that believers, especially the disciples, were to endure.<sup>15</sup> However, the interpreter can also point out that the Isaiah passage is dealing with the coming eschatological age associated with the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>16</sup> In Isa. 9:7 the future time of peace during the Messiah's government or coming kingdom is predicted. The Matthew passage is dealing with the First Advent so there is no contradiction.

The final and perhaps most significant area to discuss is the statement by Yahweh in Isaiah 45:7, "I make peace, and I create evil." If evil is taken in a moral sense, then there is a theological contradiction between this passage and the many passages that affirm God's holiness, that is, His separateness from sin. The Hebrew word for *evil* is עָרָא which is the general word for evil in a moral context throughout the Old Testament. Young takes the word to mean precisely that in this passage, but tries to assert on the basis of systematic theology that this is an example of a great mystery (like the sovereignty of God versus human responsibility issue) which humans cannot harmonize completely.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it is a divine paradox and not actually a theological contradiction. A better way to approach the question may be to understand that the word, in context, can easily mean "disaster" (NIV) or "calamity" (NKJV) which refers to the coming of judgment. G. W. Grogan comments: "So the God who created the darkness that is not itself evil—though it is sometimes used to symbolize it—and who brings disaster as a punishment for sin, is supreme over all."<sup>18</sup> One should view God as the Lord over life who puts structure to man's actions rather than as the author of sin.<sup>19</sup>

### **Other Biblical References to Isaiah**

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<sup>14</sup> W. Arndt, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?* (reprint ed., St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 114.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>16</sup> Martin, 1053.

<sup>17</sup> Young, 3:199-201.

<sup>18</sup> G. W. Grogan, "Isaiah" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* edited by Frank Gaebelin, Vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 271.

<sup>19</sup> Other passages in the Bible could be discussed with respect to this alleged problem. See Arndt, 120-22.

References to the name *Isaiah* in the Old Testament outside of the book itself are confined to the historical books 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. In all of these cases Isaiah is a person in view. He is referred to as the son of Amoz at least six times (2 Kings 19:2, 20; 20:1; 2 Chron. 26:22; 32:20, 32). He is called a prophet at least four times in these historical works (2 Ki. 19:2; 20:14; 2 Chron. 26:22; 32:32). In addition, he *acts* like a prophet. He pronounces “thus says the Lord” to the fearful people (2 Kings 19:6). On another occasion, the text says that “the word of the Lord came to him, saying” (2 Kings 20:4). Isaiah makes the rather brash presumption that the Lord will give Hezekiah a sign by moving the shadows backwards in a miraculous show of power (2 Kings 20:9). King Hezekiah even recognized that Isaiah’s words were God’s words when he announces that “good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken” (2 Kings 20:19).

Perhaps the most enlightening Old Testament verses for our purposes are 2 Chron. 26:22 and 2 Chron. 32:32. In both of these passages, Isaiah is called a writer, not just a speaker. In 26:22 Isaiah is simply the chronicler of all of the acts of the King. In 32:32 the text reveals that “the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.” Again, Isaiah is a writer who records his vision or message from God. This is also compared to the other chronicles found in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel which relate to the information found in 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles. Thus, the non-Isaiah Old Testament references to the name *Isaiah* also demonstrate an awareness of his writings which are taken as prophetic writings within the orbit of the canon. The attitudes of the average Jew would be to accept them at face value.

The New Testament refers to the name *Isaiah* at least twenty-two times in the Gospels, Acts, and Romans.<sup>20</sup> In every case, it is the Old Testament book of Isaiah that is in mind although most of the time the language of Isaiah “speaking” is used to introduce that book. In addition, Isaiah is almost always introduced as the “prophet” and assumed to be the author of the book that bears his name. All four Gospels quote from Isaiah in general and cite in particular the quotation from Isa. 40:3 while identifying John the Baptist as the fulfillment of the prophecy about the one preparing the way (Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:2; Lk. 3:4; Jn. 1:23).

Beyond these facts, three specific New Testament examples stand out. First, the consequential passage found in Luke 4:17-21 shows the attitude of Jesus Christ to the scroll of Isaiah. Jesus was handed the scroll of Isaiah (4:17) who is called a prophet. Verses 18-19 quote from Isa. 61:1-2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor . . .” What is fascinating is Christ’s comment when he finishes reading. He remarks, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk. 4:21). By the term *Scripture*, Jesus means more than simply a writing. He clearly means that the scroll of Isaiah is a divine document. Furthermore, this document makes predictions about the future which come true. Jesus saw the fulfillment of one of the passages in Himself on that occasion. For those who accept the authority of Christ, this is a conclusive use of Isaiah. It is especially telling that the passage in Isaiah comes

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<sup>20</sup> There are some instances when the book of Isaiah is quoted but not referenced as such. See Rom. 10:15 where the verse itself does not reference Isaiah although the context does.

from the so-called Deutero-Isaiah or second part of Isaiah (chapters 40-66) whose genuineness has often been challenged.<sup>21</sup>

A second example demonstrates the understanding of the nature of Isaiah as understood in the book of Acts. In the story of Philip witnessing to the searching Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40), the eunuch can be found in his chariot reading from the book of Isaiah (v. 28). What he is reading in particular is Isa. 53:7-8 which is referred to as “in the Scripture” (v. 32). Philip assists him in his understanding by beginning at “this Scripture” (v. 35) with his explanation that Jesus is the Messiah the eunuch has been reading about. The implication of this wording is the acceptance by Luke, the author of Acts, (and by the eunuch and Philip) of the truth of Isaiah as part of a supernatural Bible which predicted the future whose fulfillment can be measured in Jesus Christ. With respect to this passage’s use of Isaiah, F. F. Bruce makes the intriguing comment that

There is no evidence that between the time of the prophet and the time of Christ anyone had identified the Suffering Servant of Isa. 53 with the Davidic Messiah of Isa. 11 or with the “one like unto a son of man” of Dan. 7:13. But Jesus identified them and fulfills them in his own person and by His own act, thus confirming the identification.<sup>22</sup>

A third significant example is the standard Pauline affirmation of the divine origin of the book of Isaiah. This is especially clear in Romans. Paul quotes from Isa. 10:22-23 (Rom. 9:27) and from Isa. 1:9 (Rom. 9:29) while indicating that these are the words of Isaiah (“Isaiah also cries out;” “as Isaiah said”). These two quotes are part of a string of Old Testament references in the chapter. The previous quote is from Hosea and is prefaced with the words “As He says also in Hosea” (Rom. 9:25). The “He” is God (see v. 23-24). Consequently, Paul’s thought is that Isaiah’s words are God’s words. In the next chapter, Paul goes on to introduce Isa. 28:16 as Scripture (Rom. 10:11) and to precede Isa. 52:7 with the formulaic words “as it is written” (Rom. 10:15). In addition, later in the chapter, Isaiah is put in the same company with Moses. Moses says (Rom. 10:19), but Isaiah “is very bold and says” (Rom. 10:20). The end result of this survey of Paul’s use of Isaiah shows that he has an extremely high view of the written words of the book and considers it of divine origin and something that can be trusted.

## **The Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations<sup>23</sup>**

The discussion below will give a brief overview of the witness of the book of Jeremiah to itself, a condensed statement about fulfilled prophecy in the book, a review of

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<sup>21</sup> For a concise review of this debate see Grogan, 6-11.

<sup>22</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 188.

<sup>23</sup> Lamentations is not really dealt with in this article other than as a kind of appendix to Jeremiah. H. L. Ellison notes that “There is no evidence that the canonicity of Lamentations was ever challenged. If the suggestion about its purpose (a funeral dirge over Judah’s past) . . . is correct, Lamentations would have become part of Israel’s sacred writings in the same way the Psalms did” (“Lamentations” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* edited by Frank E. Gaebelin Vol. 6 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 699).

two alleged discrepancies found in Jeremiah, and a survey of the attitudes of other biblical authors to Jeremiah.

### **Self-attestation of the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations**

In the book of Jeremiah, a pattern is set which shall be seen again in Ezekiel. The name *Jeremiah* occurs 131 times. The phrase “the word of the LORD came to me (or to Jeremiah)” occurs 21 times (e.g., 1:2, 4; 13:3; 18:5; 35:12). The introductory formula “thus says the LORD” occurs 150 times. The word “oracle” (like Isaiah) is used nine times to emphasize the divine origin of Jeremiah’s words. In addition, there are variations on all of the above phrases. Eight times Jeremiah is said to be “prophesying” and the word “prophesy” is used fourteen times. In a practical way, the entire book is covered with these terms of self-attestation which show its internal witness to its divine origin.

### **Fulfilled Prophecies in the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations**

The most famous fulfilled prophecy in Jeremiah is the prediction that Judah would be taken captive by the Babylonians for seventy years (Jer. 25:11; cp. Dan. 9:2). That Jeremiah could predict the future is clearly shown by all of the detailed oracles he gives concerning the detailed history of his time.

The times of Jeremiah are among the most important in OT history; thus details are essential. Because of their great significance, they are the best-documented times in all of Israel’s history. The Book of Jeremiah is so filled with historical, biographical, and autobiographical material that his life can be synchronized with dates and known events to a degree unparalleled in the writings of the other prophets.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, the book shows so much awareness of the historical times it proclaims to be part of, it is virtually impossible to relegate it to after the facts. Consequently, predictions such as the seventy years of captivity and others throughout the book add to the supernatural understanding of its writings. This enhances the ideas of inspiration and inerrancy for the book of Jeremiah.

### **A Sampling of Alleged Discrepancies in Jeremiah and Lamentations**

One alleged discrepancy in the book of Jeremiah is found in Jeremiah 36:30. There Jehoiakam, due to his sin of rejecting the prophecies of Jeremiah (even burning the scroll with them on it), is judged by the declaration that he would not have a son to sit on the throne of David. This, on the surface, seems to contradict the historical records (e.g., 2 Chron. 36:9) which show that his son Jehoiachin took his place on the throne of David. Is this not a contradiction? Archer remarks that the point of the Jeremiah passage “was that he (Jehoiakim) would have no dynasty to succeed him.”<sup>25</sup> In fact, in the historical

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<sup>24</sup> Charles Feinberg, “Jeremiah” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* edited by Frank E. Gaebelin Vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 364.

<sup>25</sup> Archer, *Bible Difficulties*, 275.



account, his son, Jehoiachin, was only in charge of Jerusalem for three months during the siege of the Babylonians. After the Babylonians took the city, Jehoiachin was removed and none of his descendants ever had kingship status over Israel in specific fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah.<sup>26</sup>

A second supposed disparity in the biblical record of Jeremiah is the statement of God given in Jeremiah 7:22-23: “For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people . . .” On the face of it, some have seen a contradiction between this and the Exodus account. As Archer notes, “Liberal scholars invariably point to the Jeremiah passage as proving that the sacrificial regulations of the Mosaic Code were unknown in the seventh century B.C. as having any sanction from God or from Moses himself.”<sup>27</sup> However, there is no contradiction whatsoever. The Jeremiah passage precisely echoes Exodus 19:5 and illustrates the spirit with which sacrifices should be undertaken (see the discussion of Isa. 1:11 above). Archer correctly concludes, “It should be carefully observed that the whole thrust of Jeremiah 7 is to the effect that for sacrificial worship to be acceptable to God, worshipers must come to the altar with yielded and believing hearts, with a sincere purpose to do God’s will.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Other Biblical References to the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations**

The name *Jeremiah* occurs sixteen times in the Old Testament outside of the book of Jeremiah. About ten of those times Jeremiah is just a name in a list or references someone other than the prophet with that name. The other six times are revealing in how Jeremiah is pictured. In 2 Chron. 35:25, he chants a lament at the death of Josiah. In 2 Chron. 36:12, the young king Zedekiah is as one who “did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the LORD.” Jeremiah should be respected and listened to because his words come from God. A similar attitude is shown in the two passages 2 Chron. 36:21-22 and Ezra 1:1. Three times in these passages the text uses the words “in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah.” The teaching in view is the length of the captivity so the land can rest and the proclamation by Cyrus to permit a return to the land and the building of the Jewish temple.

Perhaps one of the most significant uses of Jeremiah is found in Daniel 9:2. There Daniel is praying during the Babylonian captivity and discovers the length of the captivity based upon the prophecy of Jeremiah (given in Jer. 25:11). The text says that Daniel was looking in the “books” or scrolls and asserts that revelation was given as “the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet.” In this way, Daniel confirms that the words of Jeremiah are the words of the Lord. Consequently, the passages in the Old Testament outside of Jeremiah which speak of him, lead one to conclude they had a high view of Jeremiah’s written prophecies and considered them true to reality in every respect.

In the New Testament, two Matthean passages quote from Jeremiah (Mt. 2:17; 27:9). Both introduce the citation with the words “that which was spoken through

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled.” In the first passage, there appears to be analogous fulfillment in the weeping of Rachel over the death of the children in Bethlehem. The second passage, however, shows direct fulfillment as Judas betrays Jesus for thirty pieces of silver but has a conflated citation using Zechariah.<sup>29</sup> A final Matthean passage (16:14) reveals the high regard the Jews held for Jeremiah as a prophet. He along with Elijah and John the Baptist are viewed as possible identifications for Jesus. Finally, the writer to the Hebrews quotes from the New Covenant passage in Jer. 31:31-34 (Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16-17) in his argument to show that Jesus is superior to the Old Covenant since it is done away.

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<sup>29</sup> See the discussion by Arndt concerning the use of Zechariah’s prophecy in connection with Jeremiah (51-53).

## **The Book of Ezekiel**

The review below will begin with the book of Ezekiel's self-understanding, continue with a discussion of fulfilled prophecies given in the book, proceed with a review of one alleged discrepancy often cited in the book, and finish with an extremely brief overview of the use of Ezekiel in other parts of the Bible. On this last score, it must be admitted that there is scanty material.

### **Self-attestation of the Book of Ezekiel**

The phrase "thus says the Lord" occurs in the book of Ezekiel 126 times. In this way the book highlights the belief that these words were from God. Nearly the entire book of Ezekiel is introduced in this fashion. Thirty-one times the verb *prophecy* is used, most often in the context of a command from God to Ezekiel (e.g., Eze. 4:7, 6:2, 11:4). Forty-six times the phrase "the word of the Lord came to me" is used (e.g., Eze. 21:18, 28:20, 29:1, 30:1, 34:1). This phrase is reminiscent of the oracles of Isaiah since it frequently introduces a specific section giving a future prophecy of judgment against certain cities or peoples. Since Ezekiel just recounts the words that God gives, the book of Ezekiel testifies to its divine origin. Two times the Spirit of Yahweh is mentioned as the agent producing the vision. In 11:5, the Spirit of the Lord falls upon Ezekiel so he can give the words of God. In 37:1, the Spirit actually transports Ezekiel in his vision to the valley of dry bones so that he can witness what God wants him to see and record. The summary of this induction from the text leads to the testimony that Ezekiel believed that the words he recorded in the book come from a divine, supernatural source. This internal evidence reinforces the conclusion of inerrancy.

### **Fulfilled Prophecies in the Book of Ezekiel**

Most of the key prophecies in the book of Ezekiel are yet to be fulfilled according to evangelical premillennialists. There is the battle of Gog and Magog from Eze. 38-39 as well as the millennial predictions including the building of a Jewish temple and the parceling out of the land in fulfillment of God's previous promises to the nation of Israel (Eze. 40-48). There is also the question of whether the formation of the modern state of Israel beginning in 1948 is a fulfillment of the coming to life of the nation cited in Eze. 37. In addition, debate exists over the promises of a new heart to the Jews (Eze. 36) and whether this finds any fulfillment in the Church today.<sup>30</sup>

However, one clear example of past fulfillment, not without its controversies, is Ezekiel's prediction that the city of Tyre would be completely destroyed (Eze. 26:1-21). Ezekiel foretells a number of dire predictions which begin with Nebuchadnezzar's siege of the mainland part of Tyre (v. 7ff). It is not until two centuries later, with Alexander the Great, the taking of the island part of the city fulfills verses 13-14. Archer comments:

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<sup>30</sup> The debate over the New Covenant is definitely beyond the scope of this paper. However, it must be said that the New Covenant as promised to Israel has not been fulfilled. It awaits fulfillment at the Second Coming and the restoration of all things.

History tells us that after Alexander's naval forces proved incapable of storming the island (due to the determined resistance of the superior Tyrian fleet), he resorted to an ambitious engineering effort, consisting of a mile-long mole built out from shore to the east wall of the island. In order to get material for this causeway, the Greek invaders used every movable piece of rock or stone to cast into the sea, until after several months of strenuous endeavor the wall was reached, broken through, and the city sacked. Exasperated by the long delay in his invasion schedule, Alexander resolved to make a fearsome example of Tyre; so he had the island city totally destroyed so that it should never be rebuilt (v. 14).<sup>31</sup>

In this way, Ezekiel's prophecy demonstrates supernatural ability to predict the future, a trait which once again reinforces the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy.

### **A Sampling of Alleged Discrepancies in the Book of Ezekiel**

One example of a supposed problem in the book of Ezekiel begins with the statement in 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. ***The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.***" This rather individualistic emphasis is seen to be at odds with the corporate sense of sin taught elsewhere in the Bible. For example, why do some Bible characters pray for forgiveness of the sins of others as if they were responsible (Dan. 9)? This concept seems related to the Hebrew idea of extended personality.<sup>32</sup> More striking is the statement from the Ten Commandments associated with the commandment to avoid idolatry: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD am a jealous God, ***visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments***" (Ex. 20:5-6). Both of these passages highlighted above do not seem, on the surface at least, to be compatible.

However, one must not perform just a casual reading of the text. The Exodus passage cites a general principle without specifying how descendants will bear the iniquity of their fathers. It also does not address the possibility or the impossibility of a son breaking the sequence, so to speak, by a righteous response to God. Keil remarks that "the words neither affirm that sinning fathers remain unpunished, nor that the sins of fathers are punished in their children and grandchildren without any fault of their own."<sup>33</sup> The Ezekiel passage is more specific. It deals in context with the situation of a young son who sees the sins of his father and refuses to repeat them (Eze. 18:14-20). The son's rewards are his own which is also true of the father's punishments. There really is no contradiction. The Ezekiel account in the progress of revelation simply adds more details to how the general principle of Ex. 20:5-6 might be worked out in real life.

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<sup>31</sup> Archer, *Bible Difficulties*, 276.

<sup>32</sup> See Millard Erickson, *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 163-66.

<sup>33</sup> F. Delitsch and C. F. Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1:2 (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 117.

## **Other Biblical References to Ezekiel**

There are not any specific references to Ezekiel the prophet outside of the book itself. Allusions to various events or imagery can be found. In I Cor. 6:16, the Apostle Paul appears to quote from Eze. 37:27 when he teaches the Corinthians, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” It is true that similar statements occur elsewhere in the text (Ex. 29:45; Lev. 26:12). However, Paul’s quote most completely follows the verse from Ezekiel. The introduction of this verse from Ezekiel with the words “as God hath said” demonstrates Paul’s belief that the book of Ezekiel had been supernaturally given by God. Ezekiel’s words are in fact God’s words.<sup>34</sup>

A second example can be found in Rev. 6:8. The account of the fourth seal which is being unleashed upon the earth reveals a pale horse (KJV) upon whom sat Death and Hell (Hades). The statement follows that “power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” This language comes from Ezekiel 5:12, 17 and 14:21. The section from Revelation serves as a kind of fulfillment of at least the latter passage from Ezekiel.<sup>35</sup>

## **The Book of Daniel**

Perhaps no other book in the Bible other than Genesis has been criticized more than the book of Daniel. The reason for such carping is that the precise prophecies in the book challenge the presuppositions of anti-supernaturalists. Daniel’s prophecies are not of the vague variety. They give much historical detail which can be verified. If it can be shown that the book was written before the fulfillment of many of the prophecies, then belief in the supernatural character of the book is bolstered. It would be a small step, in that case, to affirm the inerrancy of the text of Daniel. As Merrill notes,

One of the most ancient and potent weapons in the armory of biblical polemics is that of fulfilled prophecy. If it can be demonstrated conclusively that a biblical prediction has come to pass in the time and manner intended by its author, such a correspondence carries ipso facto evidence of something beyond natural happenstance; indeed, it is an argument for Divine revelation, inspiration, and inerrancy.<sup>36</sup>

The book was generally written over a seventy year period in the sixth century B.C. and contains historical material and prophecies dating from the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s first victory over Jerusalem in 605 B.C. until the third year of Cyrus the Persian king in 535 B.C. The discussion of the book below will follow several tracks

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<sup>34</sup> Of course, strictly speaking one can only argue logically concerning what is quoted. However, the overall tenor of the Bible and the attitudes among both Jews and Christians about canon allows the extrapolation.

<sup>35</sup> This quotation from Ezekiel highlights the fact that the fourth seal is indeed the wrath of God. This undermines the pre-wrath view of the rapture and much midtribulationism since these views argue that Rev. 6 shows the wrath of man, not the wrath of God. On a side note, one can also see images from Eze. 1 in Rev. 4 where the throne of God is described.

<sup>36</sup> Merrill, 119.

including the dating of the book, the past fulfillment of prophecies, and the authority of Christ.<sup>37</sup>

### **Prophecy and the Date of the Book of Daniel**

Two main options have been given by scholars for the date of the book of Daniel. The first of these is the traditional view which sees Daniel as written during the sixth century B. C. most likely by Daniel himself as an eyewitness of historical events and seer of the many prophecies pronounced. The second view is called the Maccabean thesis. This view understands that the book of Daniel was written in the second century B. C. most likely by a Hasidic Jew. This would place a number of the prophecies after the fact rather than as predictive oracles. In the process of deciding which view is correct, it is hard to underestimate the influence of one's presuppositions about supernaturalism. The conservative Miller comments:

For almost 1,800 years the traditional view went virtually unchallenged within both Judaism and Christianity. Porphyry (ca. A.D. 232-303) was an exception. Eissfeldt explains: "The Neo-Platonist Porphyry . . . in the twelfth book of his polemical work 'Against the Christians' indicated the second century B.C. as the actual date of the book's composition and described the greater part of its 'prophecies' as *vaticinia ex eventu*," that is, prophecies or predictions made after the event. His polemic "Against the Christians" has been lost, but its argument is preserved in Jerome's commentary on Daniel. Porphyry reasoned "from the *a priori* assumption that there could be no predictive element in prophecy." According to Jerome, Porphyry "claims that the person who composed the book under the name of Daniel made it all up in order to revive the hopes of his countrymen. Not that he was able to foreknow all of future history, but rather he records events that had already taken place.

Porphyry's work was condemned by the church, and B. Croke relates that "the ultimate condemnation of the notorious Arian heretics was for them to be officially referred to as 'Porphyrians.'" In spite of its origins, the Maccabean thesis has become popular today.<sup>38</sup>

Although it is necessary to avoid a kind of historical root fallacy argument (the late date is wrong simply because enemies of Christianity originated it long ago), believers should note the origin of the view and place the modern historical debate in proper perspective. At least, this information forces one to reexamine presuppositions that are held. Neither the faith of the faithful nor the rationalism of unbelievers validates or falsifies the various positions. Miller further summarizes the issue:

One's overall view of Scripture generally and prophecy in particular will dramatically affect the decision concerning the late date of the book. Porphyry denied predictive prophecy, and so for him it was not possible for a Daniel of the sixth century B.C. to have written events four hundred years later in the Maccabean period. Those concurring with Porphyry's antisupernatural presuppositions will of course accept the Maccabean thesis. Some scholars who support the late

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<sup>37</sup> This outline is somewhat different than that followed for the previous books. However, the issue of the date of Daniel is so significant that this approach was deemed best.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, Vol. 18 The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 23-24. In general, Miller gives one of the best recent summaries of the higher critical issues with legitimate conservative responses.

date while not rejecting the possibility of miraculous prediction nevertheless argue that “it is not the nature of biblical prophecy to give a literal account of events before they take place.”<sup>39</sup>

Which presupposition is warranted by the evidence? There are several significant indications that the early date for Daniel is correct:

- There is the surprising lack of any mention of the main figures of the Maccabean period (e.g., Judas Maccabeus). This would be unlikely for a writer who is writing after the Jewish victory.<sup>40</sup>
- Persian words in Daniel (which mostly give government terms) fit the time of the sixth century B. C. better than the second century B. C.<sup>41</sup>
- Greek loan words are scarce in the Aramaic portions of Daniel. In fact, only three can be found<sup>42</sup> and one of the three goes back to the time of Homer.<sup>43</sup> This sparse number would be highly unlikely if the book had been written during the Greek period.
- The Aramaic of Daniel (2:4-7:28) has more affinities with sixth century B.C. Aramaic than with second century B. C. Aramaic.<sup>44</sup>
- The Hebrew of Daniel fits the Hebrew style of Ezekiel more than the later Qumran texts.<sup>45</sup>
- First Maccabees cites history from the book of Daniel in such a way as to give indication that it occurred in the distant past.<sup>46</sup> Since this apocryphal book is considered relatively good historical material by both liberals and conservatives (in spite of its non-canonical status), a late date for Daniel would entail a major criticism of one of the mainstay historical works for the Maccabean period.
- The presence of Daniel in the LXX makes it difficult to hold to the late date since more time may have been necessary for the book to circulate and be recognized as canonical by the Jewish community. As one author noted, traditions take time to develop.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the LXX translation shows evidence that the translators did not have access to the meanings of some Persian words. This would be a strange occurrence if the translators were translating a relatively recent document.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 33. Here Miller refers to (among others) the words of J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Bible Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1989), 305. Goldingay is an example of many scholars today who claim some kind of evangelical devotion to supernaturalism but still appeal to the late date of Daniel. One wonders if this is because of a sense of supposed embarrassment over the issue of supernaturalism. Later discussions will show that any embarrassment is unwarranted.

<sup>40</sup> Miller, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>42</sup> In actuality, only two words are certain. These words are from the list of musical instruments given in chapter three. See the classic work by Sir Robert Anderson entitled *The Coming Prince* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1957), xxxiv-xxxv. In this present writer’s judgment, the argument about Greek words has not advanced much since Anderson’s day.

<sup>43</sup> Miller, 29.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>46</sup> Harry Bultema, *Commentary on Daniel* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), 17-18.

<sup>47</sup> Bultema, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Miller, 28.

- The circulation problem for the book of Daniel which is cited above for the LXX can be repeated for the collection of canonical books at Qumran. In fact, Daniel's circulation and inclusion in the canon would have occurred within fifty years of the original writing if the late date is held. Such an occurrence is a possible but unlikely event.<sup>49</sup> The fact that the Qumran community may not represent mainstream Judaism complicates the discussion of this problem for those who hold a late date. Walvoord made the interesting observation almost thirty years ago that "Strangely, liberal critics have been slow to publish and comment upon the Qumran fragments of Daniel which seem to indicate a pre-Maccabean authorship."<sup>50</sup>

Whitcomb summarizes some of the problems with the late date the following way:

... Jews living in the intertestamental period, especially in Palestine, would never have accepted as canonical a book "hot off the press" that claimed to be over 350 years old and that was supposedly filled with historical blunders. Jewish scholars of that period had access to numerous historical records of the Neo-Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Hellenistic periods (e.g., the writings of Herodotus, Ctesias, Xenophon, Megasthenes, Berossus, Alexander Polyhistor, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, and at least thirty other historians referred to by Josephus, most of whose books are now lost to us). Even more important, intertestamental Jews were keenly aware of the identity and boundary lines of their own sacred canon of Scripture and thus did not hesitate to exclude from their canon such books as Tobit, Judith, and even First Maccabees.

Would Jews who were dying for their God-given faith and their God-given Scriptures have looked for encouragement to fictional characters and events in a pseudograph?<sup>51</sup>

### **The Past Fulfillment of Prophecies**

Perhaps the most incredible prophecy in the entire Bible is the prophecy of Daniel's 70 Weeks (9:24-27). While futurist premillennialists see the 70<sup>th</sup> week as still to be fulfilled in the coming seven-year tribulation period, there is general agreement that the first 69 weeks (weeks of 7 years) found fulfillment in the First Advent. Sir Robert Anderson formulated in detail the mathematical calculations.<sup>52</sup> Daniel's prophecy gives a starting point which is the going forth to rebuild Jerusalem. It also gives an ending point which is "Messiah the prince." Anderson used the date of March 14, 445 B.C. as the beginning point based upon a tedious study of the chronological options given in the Bible. Then using the Jewish reckoning for 360-day years (lunar years) and making the appropriate calculations, he saw that the 69 weeks of years would take 173,880 days. According to Anderson's studies, this takes the prophecy up to the triumphal entry on April 6, 32 A. D. Although not every evangelical is going to accept this exact chronology, it is fascinating that the prophecy is in the ballpark for the ministry of Christ in His first coming. With knowledge of our own lack of certainty of calendars and chronology, we could never disprove the general aim of the prophecy. Furthermore, in

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<sup>49</sup> Certainly some of the New Testament books were recognized and circulated as inspired documents even within the lifetime of the author. See 2 Peter 3:15-16 and 1 Timothy 5:18.

<sup>50</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 21.

<sup>51</sup> John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Everyman's Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 11.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, 119-29.



light of these very particular calculations, the detailed fulfillment of the prophecy is more than likely.

A second area of fulfillment seen in Daniel is especially troublesome to those who reject inerrancy. The prophecies in Daniel 2 and 7 both relate the four world kingdoms in relation to Israel which will outline biblical and world history. These prophecies are given of course during the Babylonian captivity. In chapter two, the four world kingdoms are seen through the image of a statue. Chapter seven reviews the same predicted history with images of animals for each of the kingdoms. This flow of history occurred so precisely as laid out that anti-supernaturalists must date the text after the fact. The table below shows the kingdoms:

<b>KINGDOMS</b>	<b>DANIEL 2 -- Statue</b>	<b>DANIEL 7 -- Animals</b>
Babylon	Head of Gold	Lion with wings of an eagle
Medo-Persia	Chest and arms of Silver	Bear
Greece	Belly and Thighs of Bronze	Leopard with four wings and four heads
Rome	Legs of iron; feet of iron and clay	Dreadful beast with large iron teeth

Other details could be pointed out as well. Chapter 8 and its prediction of Antiochus Epiphanes gives details corroborated in later history related to the Maccabean period. Chapter 11 predicts details from the Persian period down through the Greek period. Any standard handbook or commentary on Daniel can show the correlation. In the end, if the early date for Daniel is correct, the book supernaturally predicts detailed historical accounts. This leads easily to the conclusion that the book was supernaturally inspired and inerrant in its presentation.

### **Other Biblical References to Daniel**

From a conservative point of view, the fact that the name *Daniel* is used for two sons among post-exilic Jews (Ezra 8:2, Neh. 10:6) may point to the hero status of Daniel among them.<sup>53</sup> It certainly does nothing to detract from the book of Daniel as a genuine exilic work. In addition, the references to Daniel in the exilic book Ezekiel provide insight into the heroic standing of Daniel when he is listed with Noah and Job (Eze. 14:14, 20). Ezekiel 28:3 furthermore highlights the king of Tyre's prideful attempt to know more than Daniel. These references from Ezra, Nehemiah, and Ezekiel speak more of the person of Daniel rather than the writing that bears his name. One could easily question, however, how the high reverence that is seen could exist apart from an exilic belief in the legitimacy of the historical events, including the supernatural revelatory abilities of Daniel, which are recorded in the book.

### **The Authority of Christ**

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<sup>53</sup> The only other time a person is named *Daniel* other than the character from the book of Daniel is the second son of David born in Hebron (see 1 Chron. 3:1).

Most disturbing of all for the genuine evangelical is the critic's discounting of the prophecies in the book of Daniel in spite of the teachings of Jesus Christ on the matter. The Olivet Discourse gives the words of Jesus that appeal to the book of Daniel as prophetically accurate:

<sup>15</sup>When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) <sup>16</sup>Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: <sup>17</sup>Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: <sup>18</sup> Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. <sup>19</sup>And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! <sup>20</sup>But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: <sup>21</sup>For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matt. 24:15-21; cp. Mark 13).

In this section in context, Jesus emphasizes several things: (1) Daniel is a genuine prophet whose words should be heeded; (2) the book of Daniel is a Jewish canonical writing which should be read and understood; (3) the specific event of the abomination of desolation from Dan. 9:27; 12:11 is cited as a future event that will happen just like the book of Daniel outlines; (4) there is a coming time of horrible tribulation (v. 21) which is described in the language of Daniel 12:1. The fact that Jesus views these events from the book of Daniel as pointing to the future precludes any belief in the Maccabean thesis which sees all of the events (such as the abomination of desolation) as fulfilled in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B. C. In other words, Jesus accepts the book of Daniel as true at face value. Therefore, if a critic denies the inerrancy of the book of Daniel, he is simultaneously denying the teaching of Christ. In this way, the inerrancy of Daniel including its prophetic portions is wrapped up with a denial of the Gospel accounts and the authority of Christ.<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

The discussions above only serve to highlight some of the issues involved in the inerrancy debate in the Major Prophets and are certainly not exhaustive. However, each book of the Major Prophets was shown to possess internal evidence which reinforced the idea of inspiration and inerrancy. In most cases, the book's self-understanding was that of divine origin.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, other books in the collection of the canon supported that testimony concerning the book. The special cases of past fulfilled prophecy throughout may be the strongest evidence of the supernatural nature of the books. In the case of Daniel, the evidence is so precise and correct historically that the dating of the book becomes the most important issue to discuss. Finally, the fact that rational explanations exist for the cited samples of alleged discrepancies help to show that the books are in harmony with themselves, with the rest of Scripture, and with reality. In the end, there is

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<sup>54</sup> See also John Wenham, "Christ's View of Scripture" in *Inerrancy* edited by Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 3-36.

<sup>55</sup> This article did not explore this possibility for the book of Daniel, but the same self-attestation found in the other Major Prophets also exists in Daniel.

no adequate reason to reject the inspiration and inerrancy of the Major Prophets. They have been given to us by the One, True, and Living God.