

## PROPHECY ARGUMENTS IN APOSTOLIC AND CONTEMPORARY TIMES

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***Abstract:** Prophecy arguments are prominent in the Old and New Testaments. Regrettably, however, their influence has waned recently, in part because of challenges from anti-supernatural and atheistic worldviews. This article argues that prophecy arguments can be made relevant and powerful for contemporary audiences by (1) documenting fulfilled Bible prophecies that meet strict criteria for public evidence, and (2) analyzing prophecy data with a statistical method that accounts not only for luck but also for potential objections about biased data. A strong case for fulfilled Bible prophecy is an asset for Christian theology and witness because of its immediate implications for God's existence, the case for miracles, the authority of Scripture, and human dignity and destiny.*

***Key words:** apologetics, atheism, Bethlehem, bias, miracles, prophecy, revelation, statistical analysis*

Prophecy arguments are important in the Bible. Foremost is the argument that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah. Also important is the argument that Bible prophecies are miraculously and uniformly accurate because of revelation from God, who alone knows the end from the beginning.

The plausibility and influence of prophecy arguments has waxed and waned over the centuries and across nations or cultures, but recently it has waned. A major problem is atheistic and anti-supernatural worldviews that are common currently, especially in academia. Another problem is amateurish and embarrassing arguments that have been popularized by some prophecy enthusiasts.

For the benefit of the church and the world, the time is right to restore prophecy arguments to the prominence that they have in the biblical testimony. Two decades ago, we published an article in this journal on fulfilled Bible prophecy.<sup>1</sup> The present article builds on that article and on important scholarly advances since then in order to greatly strengthen prophecy arguments.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert C. Newman, John A. Bloom, and Hugh G. Gauch Jr., "Public Theology and Prophecy Data: Factual Evidence that Counts for the Biblical World View," *JETS* 46.1 (2003): 79–110.