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## *Stormy Seas*



I remember taking a boat trip across the Sea of Galilee some years ago. When we began the voyage on a calm and sunny day, the sea was as smooth as a mirror. Halfway across and everything changed. A fierce wind whipped up the waves, and the boat heaved to and fro. Progress was slow. Faces became tense. No one escaped the sea spray and biting wind. There was immense relief to finally get safely to the other side.

I suppose we favour the good times, with good friends, uninterrupted health and generous prosperity – all without disappointment and difficulties. But sometimes storms do come our way, and its during those testing times that we grow stronger in faith and character.

The "storms of life", of course, have the potential to also "ship wreck" us. We can, however, find safe harbour by learning from other peoples'

stormy experiences.

The most dramatic storm we know of occurred thousands of years ago. Noah found favour with God in a world marked by wickedness and violence, and so God told Noah to prepare for a massive storm when the entire world would be flooded. (Genesis 6 : 9 - 22)

Noah listened to God and followed His instructions by building a large wooden ship that would then take 120 years to complete. During those years, as the ship slowly took shape, it must have been an object of immense curiosity – a talking point Noah capitalised on. We read later in scripture where Noah is referred to as "a herald of righteousness" – imagine this graphic sermon lasting some 120 years. The saddening part is that no one really listened. The ship was eventually finished, the flood came and raged for 40 days, and only Noah and his family were saved. (Genesis 8 : 1 - 19)

Thankfully, God always gives sinners plenty of warning to change. The same was true when God commissioned the prophet Jonah to visit the wicked city of Nineveh with an urgent message calling for change. Now the irony from Jonah's perspective was that he didn't particularly like the Ninevites (given his understanding of their part in bringing his own people to justice), and so Jonah decided to run away from God's call. (Jonah 1 : 1 - 3)

He boarded a ship, and while at sea became embroiled in a storm. When it became apparent that the storm was linked to Jonah, he was cast into the sea, but instead of drowning, was swallowed by a great fish. As the gastric juices took effect in the three days Jonah was in the fish, Jonah prayed

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peoples lives through the  
uncompromised word of God.*

to God and the great fish spewed him ashore. (Jonah 1 : 4 - 17; 2 : 1 - 10)

Still reluctant, Jonah preached a message of repentance to the citizens of Nineveh. Despite this and quite unlike the people of Noah's time, the entire city expressed deep remorse, and the disaster was averted. (Jonah 3 : 5 - 10)

I suppose few of us have ever experienced being tossed about in a stormy sea, fearing for our very lives. So it's hard to perhaps imagine just how fearsome the sea can become, even to seasoned fishermen. Such was the case in Jesus' day.

On this occasion, Jesus was asleep in the boat, and his disciples woke him, saying, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus got up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet, be still." Then the wind died down, and it was completely calm. (Mark 4:35-41)

Imagine the terrified looks among the disciples as they pondered, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

On another occasion at night, when the sea was choppy, Jesus walked across the water to his fishermen friends out on the sea. Now hardy fishermen have lots of sea tales to tell, but none as alarming as when they cried out in fear as this perceived apparition approached them. (Matthew 14 : 24-32)

"Don't be afraid. I AM. [It's me]."

Peter, one of the more outspoken fishermen, shouted, "Lord if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," said Jesus, and Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus.

But Peter's humanity came through at the wrong time. From seeing Jesus, he turned his focus to the stormy, wind-driven seas, and he began to sink.



- (3) Don't be tempted to "run away" or "jump ship".
- (4) Don't think God is asleep, and unaware of your troubles.
- (5) Keep your eyes on Jesus, and you won't sink.
- (6) Allow Jesus to navigate the "storms" in your life - He is Lord.
- (7) And, as you're able, help someone else through their storms.

When bad things happen, don't assume there is no silver lining. Sometimes the storms of life can make us feel vulnerable and alone, when the opposite is in fact true. While difficulties can seem life threatening, and life's circumstances unforgiving, God is closer and more involved than we can sometimes immediately know.

Written by John Klassek, *Message Week, Perth, Western Australia.*

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"Lord save me," he cried out.

As He pulled Peter out, Jesus asked: "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

So what can we learn from Noah's, Jonah's and the disciples' stormy sea experiences? Are there any tips that may help us navigate our own storms?

- (1) Don't be afraid.
- (2) Listen to God, even if 120 years seems like a long, long time to believe.



*If Jesus were born one thousand times in Bethlehem and not in me, then I would still be lost.*

Corrie Ten Boom

# Ancient Bible Prophecies

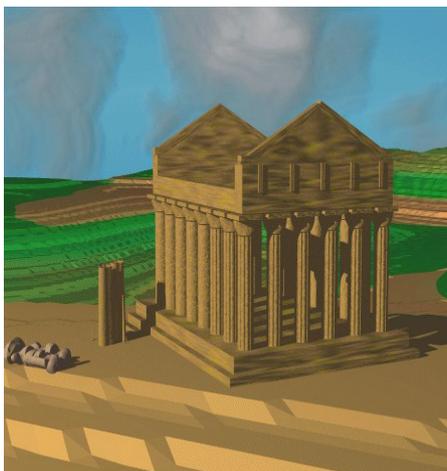
This article aims to provide some food for faith.

## Nineveh

Nineveh, the ancient capital of the great Assyrian empire, for centuries and centuries was only known because of what was said about it in the Bible. The biblical accounts of it are quite spectacular. In the Old Testament book of Jonah we read that Nineveh was an exceedingly great city. As great as it was, however, until relatively recently there was no archeological evidence to support its existence, so you can just imagine the skeptics having a field day.

However, in the late nineteenth century it was first excavated or unearthed by Sir Austen Layard and other archeologists who began looking very closely at its ruins. Encyclopedia Britannica states that it was the oldest and most populous city of the ancient Assyrian Empire and that it sat on the east bank of the Tigris. Britannica also says that its total area was about 700 hectares and that it had a wall that was about 12 km long and 45 m wide in some parts. Three chariots could have ridden side by side along it.

Many temples and a most impressive palace were found there. The extensive library of King Ashurbanipal containing 20,000 tablets or fragments of tablets on many subjects including mathematics, religion, botany, chemistry and literature



were found there. From the remains of the city the existence of several biblical characters including Sennacherib, Shalmaneser and Tilgath-Pilneser was confirmed. So the skeptics of the Bible really had to eat some serious humble pie, as they have many, many times before, when Nineveh's existence was so spectacularly proved.

## Nahum & Nineveh's fall

World Book Encyclopedia and Britannica also say that in 612 BC a combined army of Babylon and Medo Persia captured and destroyed the city. The prophetic book of Nahum, found in the minor prophets of the Bible, contains an interesting prophecy about Nineveh's destruction. Assyria had been cruelly oppressing the northern kingdom of Israel for about a century when Nahum, a prophet in Israel, pronounced God's word that Nineveh would soon fall as follows:

"The burden against Nineveh ... God is jealous and the Lord

avenges; the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; the Lord is *slow to anger* (my emphasis) and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked".

## Fire

The prophet Nahum forecasted in some detail how Nineveh would fall. He prophesied:

"For while tangled like thorns, and while drunken like drunkards, they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried (1:10) ...

I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword will devour your young lions (2:13) ...

Fire shall devour the bars of your gates" (3:13).

Brittanica, relying on Diodorus of Sicily II, confirms the relevance of fire to Nineveh's destruction saying that extensive traces of ash, representing the sack or destruction of the city by the Babylonians, Scythians and Medes in 612, have been found in many parts of the Acropolis, or high fortified walls of the city.

## Rapid fall

Nahum also so poetically forecasted the great speed of Nineveh's fall, writing:

"[T]hey shall be devoured like stubble fully dried (1:10) ...

All your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs ... If they are

shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater ... The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies (3:12-13)".

Brittanica says that the city was besieged in 612 and it ceased to be important after 612. This suggests a siege of less than one year. George Meisinger in his Master's thesis wrote: "When one considers that Psammetichus besieged Ashdod for 29 years, a city of considerably smaller dimensions than Nineveh, it is amazing that Nineveh fell in just 3 months. However the prophet Nahum prophesied that as a ripe fig falls off a tree when shaken, so Nineveh will fall". He further writes, suggesting that it was only God's might that brought Nineveh down so quickly that "overwhelming military might cannot satisfy the requirements of Nahum's picture. Allowing that the coalition had all the most advanced techniques, military know how, and the weapons of its era, it still would not be able to penetrate Nineveh's walls with ease. Walls that are 100 ft high, with towers manned by a veteran army, plus a 150 foot wide moat do not come down easily within three months".

### Utter destruction

Nahum also forecasted the devastation and finality of Nineveh's destruction, writing: "But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place ... He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time (1:8-9) ... Thus says the Lord: 'though

they are safe and likewise many, yet in this manner they will be cut down when he passes through ... Your name shall be perpetuated no longer' (1:12-14)."

Merrill Unger confirming this utter destruction wrote: "In 612 BC the ancient splendid city and capital of the Assyrian empire was so completely obliterated, according to its prophesied decimation by a Hebrew Prophet that it became like a myth until its discovery by Sir Austen Layard and others in the nineteenth century."

Joseph P. Free wrote: "A century ago such familiar Biblical cities as Nineveh ... and many others were shapeless mounds the very identity of which in some cases had been forgotten."

### The Bible's accuracy

The book of Nahum in many ways certainly proves to be historically accurate. In fact, the Bible, which we base our faith in God on, has proved itself over and over again to be very, very accurate historically. More than simply being reliable as history though, Nahum tells us of a remarkable downfall which surely speaks the hand of God.



Not only that though, what really gives us cause to ponder is that Nahum does not claim to be writing a history. His writings are predictions – prophecy – indeed a bold prophecy about the quick fall of a heavily defenced city by fire and flood, not to rise up a second time and to be forgotten.

### Historian or Prophet?

Is it possible today to prove one way or the other, however, whether Nahum wrote before or after the downfall of Nineveh? Let me suggest to you that it is more reasonable to accept at face value that Nahum indeed wrote before the fall of Nineveh rather than after. This is so because his book has already been given the great honour and respect of being chosen to sit alongside the other highly esteemed books of the Bible and to be placed in there as prophecy. Please think with me to understand why this is a reasonable suggestion.

Imagine if I had written about September 11, 2001 two days after the terrible events of that day and I detailed exactly how they happened, the number of planes involved, the time of day and the number of casualties etc. And then imagine if I then claimed I wrote it before September 11. People would then want me to offer some kind of proof for this amazing claim. If I could not prove it to a wide enough audience, then my claim would be ignored and quickly forgotten about. Even if I had written it two days before I would still have to prove I

did. The fact is that Nahum's prophecy has not been ignored or forgotten about. It found its way into the most holy collection of prophetic books in the Old Testament even to sit alongside the spectacular prophecies of Christ's first coming written by the God-inspired prophet Isaiah. Men as skeptical and careful as those who arranged the canon of the Bible were convinced that Nahum was a true prophet of his time. He must have proved he was a true prophet to his contemporaries. The onus of proof should therefore be on those who say he did not write before the downfall of Nineveh. Incidentally, a similar line of reasoning could apply to Isaiah, Daniel and Jeremiah etc. Considering all of this, one may stand in awe of the pedigree of Old Testament prophecy and declare the prophet's God (Yahweh) to be the only true God.

### Our strongholds

Some important applications from this story arise for us. Nineveh was very strong. The city's strongholds seemed invincible, but in fact they were like ripened figs ready to fall just by a light shaking. Why was it so easy for their strongholds to fall? The reason was because God was not on their side. That is the same for anyone today who is not in Christ. Eternal disaster can come upon us quickly at any time. Our lives are so fragile. They can be lost at any moment, by a simple mistake behind the wheel or by a heart attack. If we are not in Christ, and hence do not have God on our side, then this will mean an utter end for us, just like Nineveh's end.

On the other hand, more positively, if we are putting up strongholds or defenses against God coming fully into our lives these can also come down remarkably quickly and easily, as Nineveh's did. If we are open to God's Holy Spirit we can be brought to surrender even today. Jesus would like that because He says He is coming, and that His coming will be as a thief in the night, when we may not be prepared. So we need to watch that we are ready at all times. If we are ready, our name will be perpetuated for all time.

As Nahum wrote "the Lord is slow to anger and great in power and will not at all acquit the wicked", so let us be righteous in Christ alone, according to His standards and not our own, and walk in righteousness now and forever.

*By David Kidd*

(NKJV relied on throughout)

(For further reading on this subject see Josh McDowell's 'Evidence that demands a verdict - Historical evidences for the Christian faith *Chapter 11*. I have relied heavily on this work, which also provides footnotes to the authors quoted in the article above)

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*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.*

Mark 10:14



Jesus, You have made my life more exciting than a bestseller.

The pages run the gamut of emotion - from joy to sorrow.

Yet in spite of circumstances, I have been at peace in every chapter of my life with You, for You are always there. . . .

to enjoy the good ones with me, to tape the torn ones with hope, to dry the tear-stained ones with encouragement, to bind together with Your love those that come unraveled, and to fill the empty ones with promises of Your never-ending faithfulness.

But the most exciting page of my life will be the last one, when we meet face to face.

Frances Gregory Pasch

## 2007 International Ministerial Congress Report

I was privileged to attend the 2007 International Ministerial Congress of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Overland Park, Kansas hosted by the US/Canadian Conference last month. About 100 IMC delegates and observers from 26 nations came together to report on the gospel work for the past five years.

The nations which attended the congress were, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bahamas, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Nicaragua, Philippines, Portugal, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, Uruguay, United States and Zambia. (A total of 39 member nations make up the International Ministerial Congress)

Each nation reported on their gospel work, church growth and future aims in their country. The reports ranged from a medical

mission in Guatemala, treating 1840 people to 90 houses being rebuilt for our church brethren in Mexico, because of religious persecution by the Catholics.

The first official church since 1959 has been established in Cuba by the efforts of the IMC

In El Salvador the brethren have constructed two radio stations "The Voice of God" and the third is in its planning stage. When the third radio station is operating, all of Central America will be covered.

The church in Kenya reported a large movement of people accepting the Lord as their Saviour. They have 65 congregations (4500 members) and 45 of the 65 congregations were only established in the last year.

It truly was a blessing to hear how the Lord Jesus is working through so many different nations and nationalities to the glory of His Father.

The agenda also included the consideration of amendments to the By-laws, so we could reorganise the IMC structure to meet the needs of our growing and diversified global community. After much deliberation a new framework for the Executive committee (nine members) and "One Nation, One Vote" was accepted and passed. Elder Ramon Ruiz Garza from Mexico was re-elected as President.

It was the most uplifting International Ministerial Congress that I have ever attended. I am truly convinced that God's Holy Spirit was at work amongst the delegates. The unity and fellowship was unmistakable.

*By Pastor Phil Kordahi*



# The Youth Section



## Bible Word Search : Men of the Old Testament

H I H H S M A H A R B A U H T  
 C S E H A B A K K U K H T E S  
 A A Z S H J O N A H T E P A J  
 H I E E S J I S A A H S I L E  
 S A K S P E E N N S A M U E L  
 E H I O M H J R O B S J E J O  
 M A A M J O A B E D N E G O B  
 E I H D E S I N D H A R H N A  
 Z M A E R H J L I E O O H A D  
 E E D L P A E O G A B B C T I  
 K R A E M P C N B A H O O H A  
 I E M I B H O H E L K A N A H  
 E J N N I A C E D R O M E N M  
 L E B A H T H N O M O L O S H  
 T O L D M O L A S B A A R O N

Aaron, Abednego, Abel, Abraham, Absalom, Adam, Adonijah,  
 Ahab, Benjamin, Daniel, Elisha, Elkanah, Enoch, Esau, Ezekiel,  
 Gideon, Habakkuk, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Japeth, Jehoshaphat,  
 Jeremiah, Jeroboam, Jesse, Joab, Job, Jonah, Jonathan,  
 Lot, Manasseh, Mephibosheth, Meshach, Noah, Obadiah,  
 Obed, Rehoboam, Samuel, Seth, Shadrach, Solomon, Zephaniah.

## Insights From the Past

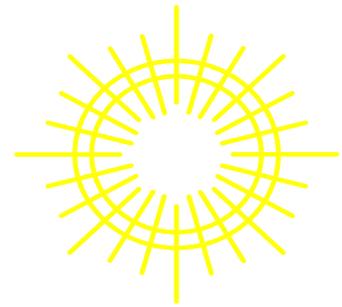
### IS THE BIBLE TRUE?



This is a question we frequently hear asked and commented upon at the present time. It is feared that many who do not properly consider the subject will give it a doubtful answer. There is but one way we have of answering this question correctly, and this is by comparing the prophecies the Bible contains with the history written by man. In God's prophecies He has foretold the beginning of nations, named the empires which should exist, foretold their end, limited the time of their human rulers, designated what the order of succession should be, and what should follow after these human governments had passed away. Now these prophetic utterances, made long before the historical events transpired, were not mere guesses, but statements of what would be even to the farthest bounds of time. Laying our Bible aside and turning to history, we find that man has unwittingly done as the prophets foretold and has in ignorance of the declaration of the Bible followed exactly the index finger of prophecy. God gave His history of the future, then after centuries had elapsed, the events came up to fill the mold which prophecy had prepared for them. This certainly proves beyond a doubt that the Bible is true, that it came from the infallible hand of God. With these facts in view, we cannot help from knowing that God makes good what He has spoken and that the future events will just as certainly transpire as those of the past have been fulfilled.

*“Then may this book go forth to be  
Instruction to the seeking soul,  
That all may by its teaching see  
How onward time's vast ages roll.  
God grant His blessings on the book,  
On all who on its pages look,  
And so may grace all readers bring  
Into the presence of the King.”*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The above article appeared in the November 22, 1910 issue of *The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*. This article was written by Andrew N Dugger who was a leading minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the first half of the last century.



## *The Second Coming of Christ*

The awe-inspiring phenomena of streams and arches of brilliant coloured lights shooting up into the night sky are characteristic of the auroras borealis and australis. Observed in the northern and southern polar regions of the earth, they can easily light up the night sky, making artificial lights unnecessary. But as bright and breathtaking as the auroras are, they will be paled by the display of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. See what the Scriptures say about the glorious appearing of Jesus.

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