

(6) God's people would receive encouragement in particular situations through the predictions of eventual triumph or through predictions of temporary victories of evil, knowledge of which would keep them from despairing when all seemed hopeless otherwise.

These purposes of prediction can be summarized again as follows.

(1) Authentication of the message of the prophet who gave the prediction, or of the one whom the prophet declared to be the one whom God would send.

(2) Conditional predictions declaring the blessings attendant upon faithfulness to God or the curses attendant upon disobedience. In certain cases these predictions lose their conditional quality when a future blessing is predicted unconditionally as a result of an accomplished faithfulness.

(3) Prediction of the future as a guide to the actions of the prophet's contemporaries or of those who would be living when the things predicted should occur or should appear on the horizon.

(4) Prediction of the eventual outcome of particular situations, in order to encourage those who faced these situations, either by assuring them of eventual triumph, or by causing them not to despair because of the knowledge vouchsafed to them that the hand of God was in the apparent temporary triumph of evil.