

River Hellas, and attack the armies of Cyrus, a great empire will be destroyed." Croesus was very happy. To destroy that great empire of Cyrus would give him security for the future. He marched out and attacked the armies of Cyrus. There was a great battle in which Croesus' forces were utterly defeated, and Croesus himself was taken prisoner. A great empire was destroyed, but it was the empire of Croesus, not the empire of Cyrus. The Delphic oracle gave a correct prediction of the future, but whatever happened, the prediction would have been true.

The same is true among the Romans. The Romans had what they called the Sibylline books, and there were men who were the keepers of the Sibylline books, who were supposed to understand these books and be able to give a prediction of what should be done under any given circumstance. One time the emperor of Rome died and it was a question of who should succeed him. A general in Rome named Maxentius declared that he was the true emperor and took over control of the city of Rome. However, up in England at the city of York, there was a large Roman garrison, and the soldiers there said that their general, Constantine, should be the emperor, and so the Roman troops in Britain gathered together behind Constantine and they marched down through France and across the Alps to declare that he was the emperor. Maxentius sent representatives to the keepers of the Sibylline books. He said, "What shall I do? Shall I get behind the strong walls of Rome and hope to be safe, or shall I march out and attack?" The answer was given, "If you attack Constantine the enemy of Rome will perish." Well, that's what Maxentius wanted, to get rid of Constantine, the enemy of Rome. He marched out, attacked Constantine, there was a great battle in which Maxentius was killed, thus proving that Constantine was the true emperor of the Roman Empire and that the enemy of Rome had indeed perished. The prediction was fulfilled, but it would have been equally fulfilled if it had come about the other way.

Now the Bible does not attempt to give us history written in advance. That's not the purpose of the Bible. The purpose of the Bible is not to satisfy our curiosity regarding the future. In fact, we are definitely told about the return of our Lord Jesus Christ that no man knoweth the day nor the hour. We are to be ready because we know not when our Lord will come. There are things that the Lord does not want us to know about the future. But the Bible does give us many definite glimpses of the future, not simply to satisfy curiosity, but usually for the purpose of giving an evidence, giving us something, not that we may necessarily understand it in advance, but when it happens we can see that it is indeed a proof that God is speaking through these men, and that what happened was indeed the Word of God. And so I would like to look with you at just a few of these predictions.

The first of these that I would like to look at with you is in the book of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 51:42 and 43 we read, "The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, and a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby." Now the first of those verses is a verse about which we immediately ask, "Is this literal or is this figurative?" Because the Bible, like everything else that is written, contains certain figures of speech. Here we read, "The sea is come up upon Babylon," and Babylon is hundreds of miles inland. Now God could choose to have a tidal wave come up and hit Babylon, but when we read in the very next verse that it is a dry land, it certainly suggests that one of the two is a figure of speech, and the sea is a figure often used in the Bible for the great heathen nations, the great force of the heathen nations that sweep over the earth. And so it is reasonable to suggest the possibility that verse 42, when it says, "The multitude of the waves thereof," is speaking of the great foreign nations that are to attack this mighty world capital of Babylon. Of course, we know that is what did happen, and there has been no tidal wave there.

But our interest now is in verse 43. The result of this inundation of Babylon by the great hordes that are to attack it, is going to be a situation which is very unusual, "her