

Israelites adopted a monarchical form of government and a long series of descendants of Abraham ruled over them. Unless a prediction in plural form uses a definite number, as when Elisha told Joash that God would enable him to smite Syria three times (2 Kings 13:19), one cannot say that it has been fulfilled until the event predicted has occurred at least twice, and the possibility of additional fulfillments can hardly be ruled out.

When a plural form is used it is often difficult to know whether a prediction describes an isolated event with several parts, or a series of events. This is true of Numbers 24:24, Isaiah 52:15, Joel 2:30, Matthew 24:7, and 2 Timothy 3:13.

- 3) There are also predictions of a general nature, like those in Deuteronomy 28, where verses 2-14 describe the wonderful blessings that God will give His people if they are true to Him, while the succeeding verses portray the great misery that He will cause them to suffer if they forsake Him. Some passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah follow a similar pattern.

There are other predictions that belong in this category, though it may not always be immediately apparent. Thus in Deuteronomy 18 Moses discussed the question how the people could know God's will when Moses himself would no longer be with them. Verses 17-18 read: "The LORD said to me: 'What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.'" The need for continued divine leadership after the death of Moses could hardly be met by the coming of one prophet who would live a few years and then die. Obviously the promise looked forward to a whole succession of prophets bringing God's Word at times of need. Later on the Jews came to realize that this promised succession of prophets would reach a climax in One who would be