Prophecy Probability

If the Christian God exists, then He should know what's going to happen in the future. Isaiah 46:9,10 says this. In fact, Isaiah 41:21-23 issues a challenge to everyone. It says, "...declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so that we may know you are gods". In fact Deuteronomy 18:20-22 says that if an Israeli prophet predicts something and it doesn't come tp pass, kill him. WOW! That's serious. I wonder if other religions take it that seriously. Actually, other religions rarely give specific predictions &/or prophecies. The Bible has about 700 prophecies in it, way more than any other religion by a long shot.

There are 3 types of biblical prophecies:

1) short term...when a person consistently predicted things in the very near future and they happened, this established them as a prophet. But one single mistake would not only discredit that 'prophet', it would be grounds for immediate execution. An example of a short term prophecy is from 2nd Samuel 12:7-14.

A modern example: Jeane Dixon predicted that in 1960 a democrat (1) would run for office and die in office (2), thus a 1 in 2 chances. The chance of #1, this could only be a democrat & republican so it's a 1 in 2 chance of a 50% chance of being correct.

The chance of #2 coming true would be about 40% or 4 chances in 10 or 2 chance in 5. This is about a 40% chance of being right. Together, it would be 1/5 x 2/5 = 2/10 or 2chances in 10 or 20% chance of being right. You can see that the more prophecies you add to the mix, the less chance it gets if you don't believe in the biblical God.

But she made other predictions that didn't come true, such as...

- that WWIII would start in 1958
- that Jackie Kennedy would never marry again.
- that there would be a cure for cancer in 1967.
- that there would be peace of Earth in the year 2000.
- that the Vietnam War would end in 1966. It ended in 1975.

If my memory serves me correct (memory alert, memory alert) her percentage of correct predictions were about the same as someone who just 'guessed'.

2) long term...these were usually years or hundreds/thousands of years before being fulfilled. An example of this is the prophecy of the city of Tyre, Lebanon in Ezekiel 26. This prophecy took hundreds of years to fulfill.

3) end times...prophecies related to the end of history as we know it or right before the 2nd Coming of Christ. The problem with this kind of prophecy is that it can't be proven until the end of time. But confidence gained from the short & long term prophecies should give us hope that they will happen.

For prophecy to be reliable, it should contain 3 factors:

1) it should be sufficiently specific that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that it wouldn't happen by chance.

2) it should be authenticated by one source and confirmed by another source that would receive no benefit from the confirmation of the prophecy. This would eliminate contrived prophecies for someone's benefit.

3) Both the original and the confirming one must be reliable sources. This eliminates one person making a few correct predictions while missing many others.

To properly explain prophecy probability, I have to teach you some math. Oh what rapturous joy must be coursing thru your veins right now.

The number 10 can be expressed exponentially as 10^1 or 10 to the 1^{st} power or the number 1 followed by 1 zero.

The number 100 can be expressed as 10 x 10 or $10^1 \times 10^1 = 10^{1+1} = 10^2$ o 10 squared or the number 1 followed by 2 zero's.

The number 1,000 can be expressed by 10 x 10 x 10 or $10^1 \times 10^1 \times 10^1 = 10^{1+1+1} = 10^3$ or 10 cubed or the number 1 followed by 3 zero's.

The number 1,000,000 (one million) can be expressed by 10 x 10 x 10 x 10 x 10 x 10 or $10^1 \times 10^1 \times 10^1 \times 10^1 \times 10^1 \times 10^1 = 10^{1+1+1+1+1+1} = 10^6$ or the number 1 followed by 6 zero's.

The number 1,000,000,000 (one billion) is written as 10^9 or the number 1 followed by 9 zero's.

The number 1,000,000,000,000 (one trillion) is written as 10^{12} or the number 1 followed by 12 zero's (the whole US gov't takes in less than 3 trillion dollars in tax money each year).

So if you have 1 chance in 100 of winning something, you have 1 chance in 10^2.

If you have 1 chance in a million of winning, you have 1 chance in 10^6.

If you have 1 chance in a billion of winning the lottery (which only one lottery has gotten this big before), you have 1 chance in 10^9 of winning.

Great! Now you're an expert in exponents.

Scientists have defined the chance of something NEVER happening as one chance in 10^{53} power (one followed by 53 zeros).

There are 1,817 prophecies in the Bible. Ralph O. Muncaster took 118 of them and assumed a one in 10 chance of each of them happening as predicted. Realistically, it should be more like one chance in 100. But when 118 prophecies happening just as predicted with each one having a one in 10 chance, you multiply 1/10 x 1/10 x 1/10...you do this a total of 118 times and you come up with one chance in 10^{118} power. The chance of this happening is so far beyond zero its not even conceivable. Nobody in their right mind would bet against those odds.

For specific examples, read pages 141-194 of "A Skeptics Search for God" and pages 285-365 of "Examine the Evidence", both by Ralph O. Muncaster.

Now I want to introduce you to two men:
Peter Stoner...M.S. degree, Department chairman of Mathematics & Astronomy at Pasadena City College until 1953 & Chairmen of the Science division of Westmont College from 1953-1957.
Dr. Robert C. Newman...Phd. in Astro-Physics, Cornell University 1967, post-doctoral fellow at the Bartol Research Foundation of the Franklin Institute and assosciate professor in Physics and Mathematics at Shelton College, both from 1968-1971, S.T.M., Biblical School of Theology, 1972; Associate professor of New Testament, Biblical School of Theology, 1971-retirement.

In 1944, Professor Stoner gave 600 of his students the task of finding the chance that one person could fulfill just 8 of the Old Testament prophecies of a coming #messiah. They came up with 1 chance in 10^{17}. That's 1 chance in one hundred quadrillion. To illustrate this, take 10^{17} silver dollars and put them all over Texas. They would fill all of Texas and be 2 feet high. Mark one of them and throw it randomly into the bunch. Blindfold a person and have them pick out one silver dollar. *Would you bet they would pick out the marked one? Not very likely, is it?*

If you don't have 1 chance in 10^{53} of it happening, it'll NEVER happen. Remember 10^{54} is 10 times impossible.

CI For	Sample Statistic	Margin of Error	Use When
Population mean (μ)	$\bar{x}$	$\pm z^* \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$	X is normal, or $n \geq 30$; σ known
Population mean (μ)	$\bar{x}$	$\pm t^*_{n-1} \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$	$n < 30$, and/or σ unknown
Population proportion (p)	$\hat{p}$	$\pm z^* \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}}$	$n\hat{p}$, $n(1-\hat{p}) \geq 10$
Difference of two population means ($\mu_1 - \mu_2$)	$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	$\pm z^* \sqrt{\frac{\sigma_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\sigma_2^2}{n_2}}$	Both normal distributions or $n_1, n_2 \geq 30$, σ_1, σ_2 known
Difference of two population means $\mu_1 - \mu_2$	$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	$\pm t^*_{n_1+n_2-2} \sqrt{\frac{(n_1-1)s_1^2 + (n_2-1)s_2^2}{n_1+n_2-2}}$	$n_1, n_2 < 30$, and/or $\sigma_1 = \sigma_2$ unknown
Difference of two proportions ($p_1 - p_2$)	$\hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2$	$\pm z^* \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}_1(1-\hat{p}_1)}{n_1} + \frac{\hat{p}_2(1-\hat{p}_2)}{n_2}}$	$n\hat{p}$, $n(1-\hat{p}) \geq 10$ for each group

What if we picked 48 Old Testament messianic prophecies? ***The chance of one person fulfilling 48 of these prophecies turns out to be 1 chance in 10^{157}.*** **WOW! This number is incomprehensible. If you could count 250 numbers per minute, it would take you almost 7 TRILLION years to reach this number.**

For more examples, go to this website…http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/

What about all the other prophecies in the Bible. It's been said that there are about 660 total prophecies in the Bible with over 500 of them already being fulfilled. No one that I know of has calculated what the probability of them being fulfilled by chance is but I can bet it's ridiculously past zero.

In the regard of fulfilling prophecies, the Bible in unlike any other book in existence. With this kind of mathematical proof, don't you think you can not only believe in God but trust Him with your life?

For His Kingdom,
Dave Maynard
https://BSSSB-LLC.com