

The Prophecies About Jesus
Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6

Today our focus is on the prophecies about Jesus.

I. THE PROPHECIES ABOUT JESUS ARE
BOUNTIFUL

In a special session of Congress on May 25, 1961, Present John F. Kennedy announced a dramatic and ambitious goal that came with a prediction. The US would put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. It was a prediction he made in an effort to beat the Russians to the moon after they had put a man in space on April 12, 1961. His prediction was realized on July 20, 1969 with Neil Armstrong's lunar landing.

Jesus wasn't just some random person pulled out of the masses about whom we know little. These prophecies tell us a great deal about the Messiah. He was revealed to us by the prophets. Peter referred to this in his message to Cornelius. Acts 10:39-43

“All the prophets testify about Him.”

People make all kinds of predictions.

A business analyst will make predictions about the well-being of a company or a particular product. The weatherman will make predictions about the weather.

Wall Street will make predictions about the future of commodities for the purpose of trading.

Vegas will make predictions from college or pro sports to almost anything else.

Sunday sports analysts will make predictions about that days football contests. At the beginning of a season they will predict who has the greatest chance of winning the Super Bowl or the World Series.

Political analysts predict the outcome of elections.

The first thing I would like to suggest about the prophecies concerning Jesus is that the prophets are bountiful. There were a lot of them.

A. The Prophets Are Bountiful

Scripture identifies no less than 40 prophets for us. Some we know a great deal about and some we know very little. About those who wrote in the Old Testament Peter describes them as holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit to write. They weren't just authors who wanted to make a name for themselves by writing some predictions. Peter describes them as holy. They lived a life that pleased God. They loved and obeyed God and were committed to the integrity of truth that was conveyed to them by Him to give to people God wanted to address. It was often a simple but direct message of repentance that came with a warning of judgment if they chose to continue in rebellion. Many of them lived in very difficult times because their message wasn't very popular calling Israel to repent and turn back to God. They were hunted, jailed and beaten. Some were forced to live as exiles in foreign lands.

The Bible has predictions as well. We call them prophecies. Many of the prophecies found in the Old Testament are specifically about the Messiah who is Jesus.

Last week we considered the promise about Jesus. It was a prophecy that a redeemer would come to defeat Satan who was the enemy of God. That promise told us it would be through the seed of the woman. God's promise was also an affirmation to Eve that in spite of her sin of disobedience she was forgiven.

But their message was also one of hope as they looked to the future. At times they spoke of deliverance through the coming Messiah. These prophets were the spokesmen of God. We even

Next week in our Christmas Sunday message we will consider the various proclamations about Jesus. Who said what and what was the response.

read in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 that they referred to the Messiah as a prophet confirmed for us in John 6:14.

About Himself Jesus said He hadn't come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17). They pointed to Him. On the road to Emmaus as He talked with the two disciples He began with Moses, which referred to the Law or first five books of the Bible and then the Prophets everything that concerned Him showing them that everything that had happened that day was foretold in Scripture (Luke 24:27).

When Jesus appeared to the disciples He said in Luke 24:44 "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

A number of passages in the New Testament, especially in Matthew who was writing to Jews, that confirm Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Many Old Testament prophets spoke about the Messiah. They were bountiful.
The prophecies about Jesus are bountiful.

B. The Prophecies Are Bountiful

Jesus said this in John 5:39 "You diligently study the Scriptures (Old Testament) because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me." And He concluded in verse 40 by saying that "you refuse to come to Me to have life." Even though they pointed to Jesus people still refused to believe them. The author of Hebrews writes (4:2) that the Word was preached but many didn't believe it because they didn't have faith in Him.

Paul said that the Jews stumble over Jesus because of the cross. The Old Testament says that anyone

who hangs on a tree is cursed. Since Jesus died by crucifixion on a cross or tree He must not be the promised Messiah foretold in prophecy.

Scholars come up with different numbers as to how many prophecies there are in the Old Testament about Jesus.

J. Benton Payne puts the number at 574.

Old Testament scholar and author Alfred Edersheim who wrote the book *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* says there are 456 prophecies in Scripture.

A.T. Pierson says there are 400 prophecies about Jesus.

Even though he never became a believer, Jewish historian Flavius Josephus said there were 332 prophecies fulfilled by Christ.

Think about the odds of those prophecies being fulfilled in 1 person.

I have used this before but it bears repetition because it substantiates the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the person of Jesus being the Messiah whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.

Someone has estimated the odds of winning the lottery at 259 million to one. So if you happen to play the lottery, your odds aren't very good. You have greater odds of getting struck by lightning, which incidentally is 1 in 1 million or a shark attack at 1 in about 4 million.

Professor Peter Stoner did a mathematical analysis based on principles of probability and presented his work for independent review to the Scientific Affiliation and the Executive Council for accuracy. They confirmed the credibility of his research. The findings ruled out any coincidence that it just happened by chance that Jesus fit all the prophecies.

He took into consideration what would happen if only eight of the hundreds of prophecies were fulfilled. The chance of one person fitting eight prophecies was 1 in 10 to the 17th power. It might be easier to understand if we say that it's one followed by 17 zeros.

He illustrated it using silver dollars. That many coins would cover the entire surface of Texas two feet deep. To illustrate the probability that Jesus met just eight of those prophecies he then suggested that you mark one coin and ask a blind folded person to pick out that coin. That is the probability of just one man fulfilling eight prophecies and yet Jesus did.

Josh McDowell in his book *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* concludes “these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10^{17} of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ. This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10^{17} of being absolute.”

Professor Stoner went on to further illustrate the probability of one man fulfilling 48 prophecies. The conclusion is staggering. The probability is 1 to 10^{157} or a 1 followed by 157 zeros. It would be like taking an electron from an atom and lining them up on a one inch line. If you could count to 250 every minute day and night it would take 19 million years to count just one inch of electrons. That’s the probability of Jesus fulfilling just 48 prophecies.

Now, I’m not a mathematician but that seems incredibly convincing when you look at the Old Testament prophecies and consider their fulfillment in the person of Jesus. We’ll take a look at some of those in just a moment. But let me first mention that Jews at the time of Jesus’ birth and even today deny that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

When the Magi came to Herod asking where the King of the Jews had been born, Herod looked to the religious leaders who knew right away that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. Had they been sincere they would have found the Messiah.

But like now, the Jews then were misguided in their understanding of prophecy believing that the Messiah would bring national revitalization and establish His kingdom right away. Jesus didn’t do that and in fact we read that they wanted to force Him to become King. Jesus later told Pilate that as a king His kingdom wasn’t of this world.

They believe that He didn’t fulfill Old Testament prophecies.

Ezekiel 37:26-28 says the messiah would build a third temple. According to them Jesus didn’t do that.

Isaiah 43:5-6 says the Messiah would bring the Jews back to the land of Israel. According to them Jesus didn’t do that. They were and are still dispersed.

Isaiah 2:4 says the Messiah will usher in a time of world peace ending hatred, oppression, suffering and disease. According to them Jesus didn’t do that.

Zechariah 14:9 says the Messiah would bring unity to the nation of Israel around the knowledge of God. According to them Jesus didn’t do that either.

That’s just some of the prophecies Jews say Jesus didn’t fulfill and the reason they reject Him as the Messiah.

Jews believe all the Old Testament prophecies would happen simultaneously. That’s why the Jews were really disappointed and disillusioned in Jesus because He didn’t bring deliverance from national oppression and usher in His kingdom. Even His disciples thought the same. They had no concept of a second coming.

Picture it like this: a man is standing looking at a mountain. Because of the angle at where he is standing he can only see one mountain when in fact there are two. He can’t see what’s in between. He

sees all prophecy about the Messiah as one event and can't separate the first coming of Christ or His incarnation as a separate event from His second coming even though Daniel's prophecy indicated that He would be cut off.

From our vantage point we have the ability to look back at Old Testament prophecy, the coming of Christ in His incarnation as well as looking forward to His second coming. We understand them to be separate events in time.

Second, the Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah because He didn't embody the qualifications of the Messiah. They believe the Old Testament teaches that He would be the greatest prophet second only to Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-19). They believe that the prophets died with Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Since Jesus arrived 400 years later He couldn't be a prophet.

Next, they believe the Messiah must be a descendant on the father's side from the line of King David. They believe that the rightful lineage was through Nathan, David's son who was the ancestor on Joseph's side not Solomon who was the ancestor on Mary's side. Since the genealogy lists Him as coming from Mary, He couldn't be the Messiah. They also believe Messiah would be born from human parents and have no supernatural powers so would not be deity. That's why the religious leaders had such problems with Jesus saying He came from God or that He forgave sins because only God could do that. The Messiah didn't have that right or power.

Fourth, the Messiah would come and lead Jews in full observance of the Torah. Since Jesus performed work on the Sabbath He defied the Torah. One time on the Sabbath He made mud to put on a blind man's eyes so he could see. They considered that working on the Sabbath in clear violation of the Law.

Jews believe that Isaiah 53 refers to the suffering of the nation of Israel and not a depiction of someone suffering for sin as we believe it says about Christ.

Finally, the Jews consider the term used in Isaiah 7:14 describing the virgin birth as a reference to a young woman who was of marrying age not a woman who would conceive miraculously through the Holy Spirit without the need or seed of a man.

The prophecies about Jesus are bountiful and in spite of objections by Jews and others, the accuracy of their fulfillment in one person – Jesus – born over 2,000 years ago is indisputable. Those who don't see it, choose not to see it.

Not only are the prophecies about Jesus bountiful, they are also believable.

II. THE PROPHECIES ABOUT JESUS ARE BELIEVABLE

We take with a grain of salt predictions made by the weatherman because they aren't always accurate.

We have a hard time believing some of the talking heads when it comes to predictions about the outcome of a sporting contest or about an election. Predictions aren't always right.

Born in the early 16th century, Nostradamus was a French physician and reputed seer. There are those who believe his poems allegedly predicted future events. He wrote a book titled *The Prophecies*. It contains 353 poems quite vague in what they say but some believe many of them have been fulfilled. He also wrote annual almanacs with over 6,000 predictions. Here are some of his poems and what people believe about them.

“The blood of the just will commit a fault at London,
burnt through lighting of twenty threes the six:
The ancient lady will fall from her high place,
several of the same sect will be killed.”

The London fire took place in 1666.

“Lost, found, hidden for so long a time,
the pastor will be honored as a demigod:
Before the Moon finishes its full period
he will be dishonored by other winds.”

They claim this was a prophecy about Louis Pasteur who was born in 1822. He was a French chemist who discovered breakthroughs in medicine for many diseases increasing the mortality rate.

“From the depths of the West of Europe,
A young child will be born of poor people,
He who by his tongue will seduce a great troop;
His fame will increase towards the realm of the East.”

They claim this is a prophecy about Adolf Hitler.

“Near the gates and within the cities
there will be two scourges the like of which was
never seen,
famine within plague, people put out by steel,
crying to the great immortal God for relief.”

This is supposed to be about the two atomic bombs.

One of his poems is suggested as being a prophecy about the fall of the World Trade Centers another on the killing of both John and Bobby Kennedy.

We might just as easily take a poem like Mary had a little lamb and consider it to be prophetic about someone named Mary living on a farm with sheep.

The point is that while he wrote a book titled *The Prophecies* even if some of them did come true not all have or will. He's not 100% accurate. The Old Testament clearly states that if someone came along proclaiming to be a prophet predicting things that didn't come true then he was a false prophet.

When it comes to the prophecies in the Bible and

specifically to the prophecies related to the person of Jesus as the Messiah we can believe them. The proof isn't just in the accuracy of the prophecies all being fulfilled in one person, Jesus. The proof is also in the One who made those predictions and had them written down in His Word, the Bible.

Remember that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write down what God wanted to convey. The Word of God is true and is truth because God is truthful. In His prayer Jesus asked the Father to sanctify believers with the truth and then said that His Word is truth (John 17:17).

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent. Hath He said and shall He not do it or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?”

Hebrews 6:8 “It is impossible for God to lie.”

Titus 1:2 “God cannot lie.”

So when it comes to the prophecies about Jesus, they are believable because they are written for us by God Himself who always speaks the truth in His Word that is without error.

Let me have you turn to just three prophecies that are believable about Jesus because they happened just as the Bible said they would. The first has to do with the prophecies about Jesus because of His blessing.

A. It's Believable Because Of His Blessing –
Genesis 12:1-2

First made to Abraham, this promise was again made to both Isaac and then to Jacob that through them all the nations of the world would be blessed. Abraham would not only be blessed by God for his obedience, but through his descendant, who was the promised Messiah, all the nations would be blessed. This is fulfilled in those who by faith follow Christ and receive the blessing of eternal life. Without the

coming Messiah in His incarnation we are still lost in sin.

Without the coming Messiah there is no blessing.

Without the coming Messiah this promise to Abraham has not been fulfilled.

Paul wrote about this blessing in Ephesians 1:3

“Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”

One author stated it this way “because of our union with Christ through faith by grace we have already become the beneficiaries of every spiritual blessing that belongs to and comes from the heavenly realm.”

This blessing promised to and through Abraham is something we will experience when we get to our eternal home, but is also something Paul says we can experience right now. You might wonder how? It’s in things He has already given us.

We can experience His peace. We pray for it when Jesus said He was giving His peace to us.

We pray for comfort when it’s already ours.

We pray for strength when Christ already strengthens us.

We pray to know His presence when He said He would never leave us.

He has blessed us with everything pertaining to life and godliness.

So sing the doxology “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

The prophecies are believable because of His blessing.

The prophecies are believable because of His being.

B. It’s Believable Because Of His Being – II Samuel 7:11b-13, 16

He would be a king.

The prophecy comes through the seed of the woman promised to Eve. It was passed on from Abraham to Isaac. But Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob,

so through which one would the promise be given? It was passed on to Jacob who had 12 sons. For various reasons, which we won’t go into today, the promise was passed on to Judah. In a blessing of his sons just before he died Jacob indicated that the scepter would not depart from his family. Centuries later we are able to see the promise become clearer. It was made to David. The Messiah would come through David and be an eternal king. When the Magi visited Jerusalem they asked where the king of the Jews was born. Later, Jesus would affirm His being king to Pilate and state that His kingdom was not of this world.

Hebrews 1:3, 8 He is an eternal king.

In Revelation 19:16 we read that on His robe is written His title “King of kings and Lord of Lords.”

In the closing chapter of the Bible Jesus says of Himself “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root of the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning star.” (Revelation 22:16)

And then in Revelation 5:13 the angels announce that He is worthy of praise and honor forever.

Prophecy is believable because of His being.

Prophecy is believable because of His birth.

C. It Is Believable Because Of His Birth – Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6

If other prophecies about the coming Messiah seem to be somewhat ambiguous about the who, there is clarity from these verses as they are revealed in their fulfillment in the New Testament.

Luke 2:4 fulfills the prophecy found in Micah 5:2 that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Mary had been staying with her cousin Elizabeth, most likely to about the time John the Baptist was born, then she returned to her home town of

Nazareth where just a couple months later she would join Joseph on a trek to Bethlehem to register according to the edict by Caesar Augustus.

Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18 fulfill the virgin birth prophecy of Isaiah 7:14.

Both Matthew 1:22 and Luke 2:6-7 fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 that says a son would be born when Luke writes that “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.”

That a child was born and a son was given speaks to both His humanity and His deity. “For God so loved the world that He have His only begotten Son.”

Herbert Lockyer in his book *All the Messianic Prophecies in the Bible* writes “Men must be blind if they cannot see that the identification between the One predicted and the One presented is most positive and complete.”

All the prophecies about Jesus are believable.
All the prophecies about Jesus are beautiful.

III. THE PROPHECIES ABOUT JESUS ARE BEAUTIFUL

They tell us about His coming, His character, His conduct, and His crucifixion. He is our hope, our salvation, our victory, the one who would crush the head of the enemy, the one who would bear our sin.

They speak of His compassion and care of His gentleness and greatness.

They speak of His suffering, sacrifice and salvation as He would bear our sins on Himself.

He is the one through whom we are able to have eternal life.

He is the anointed one.

He is God with us.

He is King.

He is Lord.

The people of Israel were living in dark days when Jesus stepped into time as prophecy said He would. God’s timing is perfect. Galatians 4:4-5 says that it was at just the right time that Jesus was born of a woman to redeem us so that we could have the full rights of sons. Every detail of God’s plan would happen just as it had been prophesied. Christ is the only man in history of whom it could be said that every exact detail was given centuries before He was born and it was done with complete accuracy.

Because these prophecies about Jesus are true and trustworthy, we have every confidence to place our faith in Christ for eternal life and every confidence when it comes to the other promises of Scripture as they relate to us that God will keep His Word.

A couple days ago a friend posted on Facebook this statement: “The weatherman says, ‘a storm is coming’ and everyone panics. The preacher says, ‘Jesus is coming’ and no one cares.”

Prophecies predicted the coming of the Messiah. When He was born few paid attention or gave Him notice. As you ponder the prophecies that came true in His incarnation this Christmas what will be your response?

Many ignored the prophecies about the incarnation of Christ. There are also many prophecies about His coming again. Perhaps the question to close our service today is this: Are you prepared for when He comes again? You can be. He is still the One who will save His people from their sins.

All the prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus.

Behold God is with us.