

## **OLD TESTAMENT: PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST**

**By Mark Paynter THD**

The apostles appealed to two primary areas to establish the identity of Jesus Christ, fulfilled Old Testament prophecy and the resurrection.<sup>1</sup> The Bible affirms that God is the only true God (Num 23:19) and all things are subject to His Divine will (Is.46: 9-10). At the right time God would send His Son into the world to be the Messiah. We humans would be able to identify who the Messiah was by His credentials (Is 48:3-5). Jesus appealed to the Old Testament prophecies to establish his credentials (Luke 24:27, Luke 24:44, John 5:39, Luke 22:37 etc). The New Testament writers appealed to the Old Testament prophecies to establish Jesus' identity after his death and resurrection. (Acts 3:18, Acts 10:43, Acts 17:2-3, 1 Peter 2:5-6).

McDowell argues that Old Testament prophecy is significant because

- 1 It reveals the Divine intelligence behind the Old and New Testaments.
- 2 In doing so establishes the reality of God.
- 3 Reveals the authenticity of Jesus.
- 4 Demonstrates that the Bible is inspired.<sup>2</sup>

The Old Testament contains over three hundred prophecies that refer to the coming of the Messiah. Jesus Christ fulfilled these prophecies that were written at least two hundred and fifty years before his birth.<sup>3</sup>

McDowell groups the prophecies into the following categories.

- 1 Prophecies concerning His birth

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<sup>1</sup> McDowell page 164

<sup>2</sup> McDowell page 167

<sup>3</sup> McDowell page 168

PROPHECY	PROPHECIED	FULFILLED
1 Born of the seed of women	Genesis 3:15	Galatians 4:4
2 Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18,24-25 Luke 1:26-35
3 Son of God	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:17 and others
4 Seed of Abraham	Genesis 22:18	Matthew 1:1
5 Son of Isaac	Genesis 22:12	Luke 3:23-24
6 Son of Jacob	Numbers 24:17	Luke 3:23-24
7 Tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:23-24
8 Family line of Judah	Isaiah 11:1	Luke 3:23-24
9 House of David	Jeremiah 23:5	Luke 3:23,31
10 Born of Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1
11 Presented with Gifts	Psalms 72:10	Matthew 2:1,11
12 Herod kills children	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16

## 2 Prophecies concerning His nature

PROPHECY	PROPHECIED	FULFILLED
13 His Pre-Existence	Micah 5:2	John 17:5
14 He shall be called Lord	Psalms 110:1	Matthew 22:43-45 Luke 2:11
15 Shall be Immanuel	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23
16 Shall be a Prophet	Deuteronomy 18:18	Matthew 21:11
17 Shall be a Priest	Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 3:1
18 Shall be our Judge	Isaiah 33:22	John 5:30
19 Shall be King	Psalms 2:6	Matthew 27:57
20 Special anointing by the Holy Spirit	Isaiah 11:2	Matthew 3:16-17 Luke 4:15-21
21 His zeal for God	Psalms 69:9	John 2:15-16

## 3 Prophecies concerning His ministry

PROPHECY	PROPHESED	FULFILLED
22 Preceded by Messenger	Isaiah 40:3	Matthew 3:1-2
23 Ministry to begin in Galilee	Isaiah 9:1	Matthew 4:12,13,17
24 Ministry of Miracles	Isaiah 35:5-6	Matthew 9:35
25 Teacher of Parables	Psalms 78:2	Matthew 13:34
26 He was to enter the temple	Malachi 3:1	Matthew 21:12
27 He was to enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zechariah 9:9	Luke 19:35-37
28 To be a “stone of stumbling” to the Jews	Psalms 118:22	1 Peter 2:7
29 To be a “light” to the Gentiles	Isaiah 60:3	Acts 13:47-48

4 Prophecies concerning events after His burial

PROPHECY	PROPHESED	FULFILLED
30 Resurrection	Psalms 16:10	Acts 2:31
31 Ascension	Psalms 68:18	Acts 1:9
32 Seated at the right hand of God	Psalms 110:1	Hebrews 3:1

5 Prophecies fulfilled in one day

PROPHECY	PROPHESED	FULFILLED
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33 Betrayed by a friend	Psalms 41:9	Matthew 10:4
34 Sold for thirty pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15
35 Money to be thrown onto God's House	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:5
36 Price given for potters field	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:7
37 Forsaken by his disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Mark 14:50
38 Accused by False witness	Psalms 35:11	Matthew 26:59-60
39 Silent before Accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12
40 Wounded and Bruised	Isaiah 53:5	Matthew 27:26
41 Smitten and spit upon	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
42 Mocked	Psalms 22:7-8	Matthew 27:29
43 Fell under the cross	Psalms 109:24-25	John 19:17
44 Hands and feet pierced	Psalms 22:16	Luke 23:33
45 Crucified with thieves	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38
46 Made intercession for his persecutors	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:34
47 Rejected by his people	Isaiah 53:3	John 7:5,48
48 Hated without a cause	Psalms 69:4	John 15:25
49 Friends from afar	Psalms 38:11	Luke 23:49
50 People shook their heads	Psalms 109:25	Matthew 27:39
51 Stared upon	Psalms 22:17	Luke 23:35
52 Garments parted and	Psalms 22:18	John 19:23-25

lots cast		
53 To Suffer thirst	Psalms 69:21	John 19:28
54 Gall and vinegar offered to Him	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34
55 His forsaken cry	Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46
56 Committed Himself to God	Psalms 31:5	Luke 23:46
57 Bones not broken	Psalms 34:20	John 19:33
58 Heartbroken	Psalms 22:14	John 19:34
59 His side pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
60 Darkness over the land	Amos 8:9	Matthew 27:45
61 Buried in a rich man's tomb	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60

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Since a large portion of the prophecies contained in the Bible have been fulfilled, of those that have been fulfilled every prophecy has been fulfilled 100%, therefore it is logical to assume that the remaining prophecies will also be fulfilled as prophesied.”<sup>5</sup>

There are some people who will argue that the prophecies contained in the Bible were not prophesied when the Bible says they were but written after the events. Pointing out the reasons, as we did earlier in this essay, why we consider the Old Testament to be historically reliable rebuts this argument. In particular the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls disproves this theory.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> McDowell pages 164-201

<sup>5</sup> Ibid and Richard M Reis Christian Apologetics THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY  
[http://www.grmi.org/renewal/Richard\\_Riss/evidences/9proph.html](http://www.grmi.org/renewal/Richard_Riss/evidences/9proph.html) 23 February 2002

<sup>6</sup> Clarifying Christianity Ministries Messianic Prophecies  
[http://www.clarifyingchristianity.com/m\\_prophecies.shtml](http://www.clarifyingchristianity.com/m_prophecies.shtml) 23 February 2002

Another question that non-Christians often ask is “Were these prophecies originally intended to be Messianic prophecies?” The answer to this question is that the prophecies were read as Messianic prophecies before the time of Christ.

“One of the common debates was whether or not “the Messiah” was *actually* two people (or twins) since it seemed impossible to them that one person could accomplish both of the Messiah’s “goals” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

- We now know that Jesus accomplished one goal (preaching the “good news” and becoming the sacrifice that saves us) when He came to Earth, told everyone God’s new plan of salvation, and was crucified.
- He will fulfill the other goal (being our Savior and Lord, ruling at God’s right hand, and taking vengeance on the people who do not follow God) when He comes back to Earth (often called Jesus’ “second coming”).

This required being raised from the dead—a possibility the Jews never considered. When Jesus was raised from the dead, many Jews *then* recognized how the Messiah could be “one man.”

From that time, more than a billion Jews and non-Jews alike have chosen to get right with God and become Christians. Many of them made their decision based on the evidence of these fulfilled Messianic prophecies.”<sup>7</sup>

We can also ask “Could these prophecies not have been fulfilled by someone else?”

The numerical odds against any one person fulfilling all of these prophecies exactly are overwhelmingly against this option. The fact that Christ fulfilled these prophecies to the letter is a historical event proves that their fulfillment is a miracle.

However, other questions arise such as “is it not possible to try to fulfill these prophecies?” or “Yes, Jesus fulfilled these prophecies but why does this make him the Messiah?”

“You will notice that many of the prophecies are not under human control. In other words, if someone tried to fulfil all of them, how would they arrange to be (1) born in Bethlehem (2) with a virgin for a

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

mother? Already they would have a problem—and these are only two prophecies. Even a casual glance through this list reveals that a person could not fulfil them by their own efforts.

There are many people that have claimed to be the Messiah (or a similar title that they gave themselves like “God’s Prophet”). [Some of them founded false religions and cults, and have many followers.](#) Anyone who has read the Bible expected to see them appear. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Himself said there would be many *false* Messiahs and prophets that follow him (Matthew 7:15; Matthew 24:11; Matthew 24:23-25; Mark 13:21-23). Examine these other “prophets” yourself. Was their appearance clearly predicted in the Bible? Did they fulfil all the messianic prophecies? The answer is obvious—none of them even came close.

It is true that the Jews, God’s chosen people, are still waiting for their Messiah. However, *not recognizing their own Messiah is part of God’s plan* (Romans 11:25-27) that allows everyone else to be saved (Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13). The Bible clearly states that “those who are first will be last” (Matthew 19:30 and 20:16, Mark 10:31, and Luke 13:30). The Jews were the first of God’s people, but they are kept unaware of their own Messiah until everyone on the earth hears about Jesus Christ. This is good news, since everyone gets a chance to accept the Messiah as their Saviour and go to heaven. Once that happens, the remaining followers of Judaism will realize that Jesus was the Messiah. At that time, Jesus will return to the earth, bringing those who accept Him as their Saviour to heaven”<sup>8</sup>

## THE PROOF OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY

In the previous section we saw that there is a great deal of evidence both internal and external that supports the trustworthiness and reliability of the Old and New Testaments. However the Bible claims much more than that it is trustworthy and reliable for the Bible claims to be the written word of God. If this is the case then one would expect that contained within the Bible record would be some form of proof that could be used statistically to verify and confirm the Bible’s claim. Muncaster argues that this proof is found within biblical prophecy. This is evidenced by the fact that the prophet Isaiah hints at this very thing when he records the Lord’s instruction to “remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done. (Isaiah 46: 9-10) A God who is capable of creating the universe must of necessity have the ability to know all things past, present and future. It follows that that God would also have the ability to communicate to his creation events that were yet to be fulfilled with complete accuracy. As Muncaster expresses “A perfect God of the universe would be able to perfectly predict the future in any writing or person he inspired, just as the Bible had declared.” Furthermore the apostle Paul in writing to the Thessalonians urged them “not to despise prophecy but to test all things; and hold fast what is good.” (1 Thess.5: 21). Since the Bible claims to be a book of prophecy the authenticity of the Scriptures can be established through statistical analysis. The Bible contains a large number of prophecies that can be counted, their content and significance evaluated and the degree to which the claimed fulfillment fits the prophecy determined.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid

It is crucial to understand that the Israelites regarded prophecy as being of utmost importance because they saw prophecy as criteria through which to test whether something had been communicated through God. Those who spoke false prophecy were to be executed (Deuteronomy 18: 20). While those whose prophecies were fulfilled were to be regarded as prophets through whom God had spoken.

In order to see whether a God who is able to provide 100% accurate prophecies of the future has inspired the Bible one must recognize the relationship between the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament promises a future messiah while the New Testament proclaims that the messiah has come. If God has inspired the Bible then it is reasonable to expect that the Old Testament prophecy concerning the messiah would be literally fulfilled. The New Testament claims that this is precisely what has happened in the person of Christ. The New Testament declares that Jesus was God incarnate who came from heaven in order to put into effect God's plan of redemption and fulfill Old Testament Prophecy. So convinced were the New Testament writers of this fact that their interpretation of the events of Christ's life were grounded in the Old Testament prophetic literature. The Old Testament provided the explanation of the pivotal event in human history that the New Testament writers observed. R C Sproul notes; "into the second century of the church, the primary defense of the faith was made by appealing to predictive Old Testament prophecy."<sup>9</sup> Even today the primary defence of Christianity is grounded in the Scriptures as Sproul observes; "If the Bible's authority is undermined and inspiration denied, then all certainty is destroyed. Without a *sure* word from God, our hope of salvation is merely wish projection."<sup>10</sup>

In order for prophecy to be useful from an apologetic perspective then it must meet certain criteria as Geisler explains

"First, it is more than a vague guess or conjecture. It cannot be a mere reading of the trends. Second, it deals with human contingencies that are normally unpredictable. Scientific predictions are not of the same order, since they deal with projections based on the regularity of nature, for example, the prediction of an eclipse. Third, it is a highly unusual event, not normally expected. Sometimes the miraculous nature of the prophecy is manifest in the length of time in advance the prediction is made, so as to reduce the probability of guessing. At other times it is revealed in the unique fulfillment itself."<sup>11</sup>

Before we examine specifically those prophecies that relate to the Messiah it is important for us to realise that the Bible contains a great number of what could be called "Non Messianic prophecies". Included in the term "Non- Messianic prophecies" are

- 1) The prophecies of the Jewish exile that were made by Moses (Deut 28:49-57). Amos (Amos 3:5-9), Hosea (Hosea (Hosea 1:2-8), Micah (Micah 1:2-3:12) , Isaiah (Isaiah 7:18-25; 9:8-10:4), Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:1-11), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 5: 1-19; 6:1-30; 7:30-34) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 6:1-14; 7:1-27; 8:17-18) Moses who was the first to prophesy of this event foretold the event

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<sup>9</sup>Sproul, R. (2000, c1994). *Vol. 3: Before the face of God: Book three: A daily guide for living from the Old Testament*. Includes indexes. (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; Before the Face of God. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House; Ligonier Ministries. Part One: Foundations for God's revelation.

<sup>10</sup>Sproul, R. (2000, c1994). *Vol. 3: Before the face of God : Book three: A daily guide for living from the Old Testament*. Includes indexes. (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; Before the Face of God. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House; Ligonier Ministries. Part One: Foundations for God's revelation.

<sup>11</sup>Geisler, N. L. (1999) *Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics* Baker reference library (Page 609) Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books.

almost 900 years prior to the exile occurring. When put together these prophecies correctly predict the exile of the northern kingdom at the hands of the Assyrians and the defeat of the southern kingdom and subsequent exile by the Babylonians 130 later.

Furthermore, the prophet Jeremiah, “in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar reign and prior to his defeat of Judah (Jeremiah 25) specifically limited the time of the servitude in exile to seventy years (verse 12).”<sup>12</sup> History records that the exile began in 606 B.C and ended 70 years later in 537 B.C. “Later Jeremiah prophesied a second 70-year period of exile –this time from the total destruction of Jerusalem until the final return was completed –when the temple would be rebuilt (Jeremiah 29:10-14)...History shows that the exile was complete after the exile was complete after the capture of Jerusalem in 587-586 B.C. exactly 70 years later.”<sup>13</sup>

- 2) In Isaiah 44:28-45:3 the prophet Isaiah identified that as a yet an unborn Cyrus King of Persia would issue a decree enabling Israel to return to the land and rebuild the temple. This prophecy was made 150 years before this event occurred.
- 3) In Daniel 2:37-42 Daniels prophesied of a succession of great world kingdoms. Geisler notes; “so precise and accurate is this prophecy that even negative critics agree that Daniel spoke in order of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome”.<sup>14</sup>
- 4) Isaiah (Isaiah 11:11-12) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37:21-22) indicate that the Jews would be exiled a second time and later be permitted to return to their homeland. Geisler observes that history records that

“Israel was sent again into exile in A.D.70 when the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and leveled the temple. For nearly 2000 years the Jewish people remained in exile and the nation did not exist. Then, just as the Bible foretold, they were reestablished after World War II and a bitter struggle with the Arab Palestinians. Millions have returned and rebuilt their country and in the Six-Day War in 1967 Jerusalem again became a united Jewish city. No other nation in history has managed so successfully to keep a culture, identity, and language intact over hundreds of years, let alone against the genocidal hatred repeatedly encountered by the Jews. This Bible prediction is incredible evidence of the supernatural origin of the Scriptures.”<sup>15</sup>

- 5) Ezekiel in Ezekiel 26:3-14 predicted the doom and entire destruction of the city of Tyre centuries in advance of its occurrence. At the time Ezekiel made the prophecy Tyre was an important East Mediterranean sea port and one of the great cities of the ancient world. Ezekiel declared

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves. They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock. Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishing nets. . . . They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea. . . . I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishing nets. You will never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD”

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<sup>12</sup> Muncaster page 143

<sup>13</sup> Muncaster page 143

<sup>14</sup> Geisler, N. L. (1999) *Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics*. Baker reference library (Page 613) Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books.

<sup>15</sup> Geisler, N. L. (1999) *Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics* Baker reference library (Page 613) Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books.

Muncaster observes that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the mainland portion of the city during the Babylonian siege. Later the city was attacked by many other nations until Alexander the Great ordered the rubble of the city to be scraped away into the sea and made into a causeway to capture the island portion of the city. Today the island portion of the city is under the sea and local fishermen speak of the place as a place to spread fishing nets. So the prophecy spoken so long ago by Ezekiel has literally being fulfilled.<sup>16</sup>

6) Ezekiel in Ezekiel 36: 33-35 prophesied

‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable *you* to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt.<sup>34</sup>The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by.<sup>35</sup> So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities *are now* fortified *and* inhabited.’<sup>36</sup> Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places *and* planted what was desolate I, the LORD, have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*.”

Since the return of the Jews in 1948 to the promised – land, this prophecy has literally been fulfilled. “Today roads have been built, the land is being cultivated, and Israel’s agriculture is flourishing. This renovation began before the turn of the twentieth century and continues a century later. Agricultural crops, including a large orange harvest, are part of the restoration—just as Ezekiel had predicted”<sup>17</sup>

7) Daniel in Daniel 12: 4 prophesied that in the last days there would be a tremendous increase in knowledge and communication. The twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented increase in knowledge, transportation and communication. As Geisler observes “Jet aircraft propulsion and computer microcircuit have caused a transportation and information explosion.”<sup>18</sup>

It should be pointed out that what we have looked at above is merely a sample of the prophecies that the bible contains. Altogether Muncaster identified 118 prophecies that have been fulfilled in a remarkable way. Muncaster decided to assign a conservative estimate of probability of 1/10 to each of these prophecies coming true randomly; cumulatively this meant that the chance of all 118 prophecies coming true randomly was 1/10<sup>118</sup>. Science would reject this number as impossible therefore the conclusion Muncaster arrived at was that “a supernatural God must have inspired the prophets and original writings...The God who provided the information in the Old Testament must be the real God.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Derived from Muncaster page 150-151

<sup>17</sup> Geisler, N. L. (1999) *Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics* Baker reference library (Page 614) Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books.

<sup>18</sup>Geisler, N. L. (1999) *Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics* Baker reference library (Page 614) Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books.

<sup>19</sup> Muncaster page 154

