

Lesson 7: Jesus Christ—Evidence from Prophecy

1. Estimates place the completion of the books of Law and the Prophets in ~450 years prior to Christ living on Earth. The Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was initiated in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphius, who reigned from 285 to 246 B.C. Thus, there are *at least* 250 years between the completion of the Old Law and Christ's birth. This of course means that apparent prophecies fulfilled by Christ were not a result of doctoring the books of the Old Law. It also means that the books in which the prophecies are written were complete—that is, they weren't still being written in the time of Christ. Predictions from 250-450 years prior to His birth that come true must, by necessity be either coincidence or prophecy. There is *no* middle ground.
2. The sheer number of prophecies—which number around 300 or so—make coincidence statistically impossible. Peter Stoner in his book *Science Speaks* estimates the probability of a mere 8 prophecies being fulfilled on one person as a matter of coincidence as being 1 chance in 10^{17} or 1 million billions! For just 48 prophecies, that probability drops to 1 chance in 10^{157} . That's a really small probability. You're about as likely to win every PowerBall Lottery from now until you die, than for those 48 prophecies to be fulfilled by a random person.
3. We're going to look at only a few of the prophecies fulfilled by Jesus, most of them are familiar to us, some are perhaps not so familiar. But, the review will help focus our faith that Jesus truly is the Messiah!
4. Prophecies concerning Christ's birth and lineage
 - A) Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”
 - a) Immanuel literally means “God with us”
 - b) The Hebrew word used that we translate as virgin is *almah* which literally means a young woman of marriageable age. The other word in Hebrew is *bethulah* which means a virgin maiden, which does not necessarily connote a female at a marriageable age. More compelling evidence for the correct meaning of the passage (that is, confirming that a literal virgin birth is what is meant, not merely a birth by a young woman who is married) comes from the Septuagint. A literal virgin in the ancient Greek is given by the word *parthenos*, which combines the ideas of a young woman of marriageable age and a woman who has not known a man. That is the word used in Isaiah 7:14 in the Septuagint—which was finished prior to Jesus' birth. It is doubtful that Christian apologetics were somehow able to alter those—even then very old—writings to fit some mythical view as purported by modern Jews and liberal “Christians”
 - c) Of course, Luke chapter 1 records Mary as being a literal virgin when she is visited by Gabriel and told that she would conceive a child and that she would name him Jesus. Not only is the word in verse 27 *parthenos*, but

Mary makes it clear with her question 'How can this be, since I do not know a man?'

- B) Genesis 22:18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
 - a) God declares that through Abraham's seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed. Matthew 1 and Luke 3 record Jesus' lineage that includes Abraham.
 - b) Galatians 3:16 reads "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And the seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ." Paul clearly identifies the fulfillment of this scripture.
 - c) This prophecy dictates that the Messiah was to come from the Hebrew race.
- C) Genesis 21:12 "But God said to Abraham, 'Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.'"
 - a) Remember that the promise in Genesis 22:18 is a result of Abraham's willingness to obey God by sacrificing Isaac. The two passages, then, make it clear that the lineage of Isaac is also necessary for the Christ.
 - b) Of course, Matthew 1 and Luke 3 also record Jesus' lineage through Isaac.
 - c) Romans 9:8 states, in part, "...but the children of the promise are counted as the seed" as referenced to Gen 21:12. Christ was the first seed, but we all are seeds because we also are children of the promise.
 - d) This promise eliminates fully half of Abraham's lineage.
- D) Numbers 24:17, a prophecy of Balaam (his fourth) "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob, A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And desotry all the sons of tumult."
 - a) Again, Matthew 1 and Luke 3 record Jesus as being a descendant of Jacob.
 - b) In the time of Hadrian (A.D. 132) the Jews revolted against Rome again, and they called their leader Barkochba "The Son of the Star" because they believed Balaam's oracle was being fulfilled in him and that, through him, God would destroy the Romans.
 - c) This prophecy eliminates half of Isaac's lineage.
- E) Genesis 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people."
 - a) Jesus is recorded to be a descendant of Judah in Matthew and Luke.
 - b) Hebrews 7:14 reads "For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning Priesthood."
 - c) God eliminated 11/12 of the tribes of Israel from which the Messiah would come.
- F) Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a

Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

- a) A Jewish source, the Targum Isaiah says this about the passage: “And a King shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, and an Anointed One (or Messiah) from his son's sons shall grow up. And there shall rest upon him a spirit from before the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.” Clearly even the Jews give the passage Messianic import.
- b) Jesse is in the lineage of Christ recorded in the N.T.
- G) Jeremiah 23:5 “Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A king shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the land.”
 - a) The Messiah as being referred to as the Son of David is scattered throughout the Talmuds.
 - b) We know Jesus descended from David from Matthew 1 and Luke 3, among numerous other places.
 - c) Jesse had at least 8 sons, and the Lord eliminated all but one from the possible line of ascension of Christ.
- H) Micah 5:2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the Thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose going forth are from of old, From everlasting.”
 - a) Matthew 2:1, of course, states that “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah.” (See Matt. 2:4; Luke 2:4-7 and John 7:42 also)
 - b) In Matthew 2:6 the scribes told Herod with great assurance that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.
 - c) God now eliminates all the cities in the world, save for one: lowly little Judah.
 - d) Notice also, though, that this Messiah would be very special: He was One who's “going forth are from old, From everlasting”--the Messiah would be eternal and thus Deity!
- I) Jeremiah 31:15 “Thus says the Lord: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more.’”
 - a) The Holy Spirit Himself, through Matthew, records that this prophecy was fulfilled when Herod commanded that all male children ages two and younger to be killed in Bethlehem and its surroundings. See Matthew 2:16.
- J) Read Psalm 72 in its entirety—it is clearly a Messianic Psalm.
 - a) Verse 15: “And He shall live; And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him...”
 - b) This is a prophecy concerning the wise men from the East (the Magi) that asked Herod “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” After consulting with the scribes and finding out that Bethlehem was the place

they sought, they journeyed there and, upon seeing Jesus, fell down and worshipped Him. They then presented Him with their gifts which, of course, included gold.

- K) Judges 13:5 “ 'For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.’”
 - a) Matthew records this as being fulfilled in Jesus, even though the context of Judges 13 concerns the coming birth of Samson (Matt 2:23)
- L) At this point, a review is in order. Through prophecy, God has said that the Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, and David, and would be born in the city of Bethlehem. Upon His birth, He would be presented with gold and many children would be slaughtered. How many people could possibly fit that description? Jesus is the only One to whom all these prophecies can be ascribed as fulfilled. He was the only son of Mary and Joseph born in Bethlehem—remember they fled to Egypt until Herod was dead and then returned to Israel, and then was warned by God in a dream not to return to Judah, but to go to Nazareth instead—which itself is another prophecy fulfilled.

5. Prophecies concerning Christ's Ministry

- A) The Messiah's ministry would be preceded by a messenger:
 - a) Isaiah 40:3 “A voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”
 - b) Malachi 3:1 “ 'Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' Says the Lord of hosts.’”
 - c) Of course, John the Baptist is that messenger, as Matthew 2:3 (Isaiah fulfillment) and Mark 1:2-3 (Malachi fulfillment) both state.
- B) The Messiah's ministry would include wondrous acts, miracles
 - a) Isaiah 35:5-6 “Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will sing for joy”
 - b) Matthew 9:35 “And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”
 - c) Obviously, there are many other examples of His miracles—we'll study those in the next lesson.
- C) His teaching would include parables
 - a) Psalm 78:2 “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old.”
 - b) Matthew 13:34 “All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them.”

- D) He would enter the temple
 - a) Malachi 3:1 “And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come into His temple”
 - b) Matthew 21:12 “Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple.”
 - E) He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey
 - a) Zechariah 9:9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, humble, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey”
 - b) Read Luke 19:30-38—the Jews of those day clearly saw this as a fulfilled prophecy! Note also that Jesus told his disciples exactly where they'd find the colt and also told them exactly what to say when they were asked why they were untying it!
 - F) He would be a stumbling block to the Jews
 - a) Psalm 118:22 “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”
 - b) 1 Peter 2:7 “Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.' “
 - G) He would be a light to the Gentiles
 - a) Isaiah 60:3 “The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.”
 - b) Acts 13:47-48 “For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord.”
 - H) These prophecies would require a great deal of pre-planning and near perfect execution to “get right” if Jesus were not the Messiah!
6. Prophecies fulfilled in Jesus' last 24 hours before His crucifixion
- A) He would be betrayed by a friend
 - a) Psalm 41:9 'Even my familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.’”
 - b) Matthew 10:4 “Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.”
 - c) Matthew 26:49-50 “Immediately he went up to Jesus and said 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.”
 - d) John 13:18 “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' “
 - e) John 13:25-26 “Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread

when I have dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.”

- B) He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver
 - a) Zechariah 11:12 “Then I said to them, 'If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.' So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.”
 - b) Matthew 26:15 “ 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.”
- C) That silver would be *thrown* into the Temple and ultimately given to a potter
 - a) Zechariah 11:13 “So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter”
 - b) Read Matthew 27:5-10
 - c) Note that it would be impossible for Jesus to conspire with the chief priests and elders to get them to give Judas 30 pieces of silver. There weren't 29 pieces and it was not gold. Judas *threw* the money down in the temple where it was given to a potter. How could Jesus have effected that series of transactions without Him being who He said He was and without those prophecies being true?
- D) He would be forsaken by his disciples
 - a) Zechariah 13:7 “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”
 - b) Mark 14:50 “Then they all forsook Him and fled.”
- E) He would be accused by false witnesses
 - a) Psalm 35:11 “Fierce witnesses rise up; they ask me things I do not know.”
 1. Note the KJV uses “False witnesses...” The Hebrew word there is “chamac” which comes from the root that means “wrong.”
 - b) Matthew 26:59-60 “Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.”
- F) He would be silent before His accusers
 - a) Isaiah 53:7 “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth.”
 - b) Matthew 27:12 “And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.”
- G) He would be wounded and bruised
 - a) Isaiah 53:5 “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”
 - b) Zechariah 13:6 “And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' “ Note that the word “arms” there could be translated “hands.”
- H) He would be smitten and spat upon

- a) Isaiah 50:6 “I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”
- b) Matthew 26:67 “Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands.”
- c) Luke 22:63 “Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him.”
- I) He would be mocked
 - a) Psalm 22:7-8 “All who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted in the Lord; let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!' “
 - b) Matthew 27:29 'When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' “
 - c) Matthew 27:43 “ 'He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him.'”--a near quotation of Psalm 22:8. How did Jesus cause them to say that?
- J) His body would be pierced
 - a) Psalm 22:16 “They pierced My hands and My feet.”
 - b) Zechariah 12:10 “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced.”
 - c) Luke 23:33 “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him.” Nails in the hands and feet were part and parcel of crucifixion.
 - d) John 19:37 “And again another Scripture says 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.' “ This is the piercing of Jesus' side.
- K) He would be crucified with criminals
 - a) Isaiah 53:12 “Because He pured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors.”
 - b) Matthew 27:38 “Then the two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.”
- L) He would make intercession for His persecutors
 - a) Isaiah 53:12 “And He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”
 - b) Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”
- M) His friends would stand afar off
 - a) Psalm 38:11 “My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, and my relatives stand afar off.”
 - b) Luke 23:49 “But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.”
- N) People would wag (shake) their heads in contempt
 - a) Psalm 109:25 “I also have become a reproach to them; When they look at

- Me, they shake their heads”
- b) Matthew 27:39 “And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads.”
- O) He would be stared at
- a) Psalm 22:17 “I can count all My bones. They look and stare at me.”
- b) Luke 23:35 “And the people stood looking on.”
- P) His garments would be parted and lots cast for them
- a) Psalm 22:18 “They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.”
- b) John 19:23-24 “The soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the scripture might be fulfilled which says 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' “
- Q) He would suffer from thirst
- a) Psalm 69:21 “...and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
- b) John 19:28 “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said “I thirst.”
- R) Both gall and vinegar would be offered to Him
- a) Psalm 69:21 “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
- b) John 19:28
- c) Matthew 27:34 “They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.”
- S) He would be forsaken by God
- a) Psalm 22:1 “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”
- b) Matthew 27:46 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?' “
- T) He would commit Himself to God
- a) Psalm 31:5 “Into Your hand I commit My Spirit.”
- b) Luke 23:46 “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.' “
- U) His bones would not be broken
- a) Psalm 34:20 “He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken.”
- b) John 19:33 “But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.”
- c) John 19:36 “For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.' “
- V) There would be darkness over the land
- a) Amos 8:9 “‘And it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the Lord God, ‘That

I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight.' “

b) Matthew 27:45 “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.”

W) Obviously, the sheer number of prophecies in the last 24 hours alone (we've recounted 22!) would be impossible for one person to “get right,” even if conspiring with others. What's more, many of the accomplices would have had to have been “fake enemies”--how would Jesus get the soldiers to do what they did, or get the Romans to crucify Him with criminals, or to get the people saying the things they said? How about darkness over the land?

7. The big takeaway from this lesson: we've recounted only 40 prophecies, and, yet, the probability of one person fulfilling all of them accidentally are astronomically low. There are, perhaps, another 260 (or more) prophecies we haven't covered. How could a mere human being contrive and conspire with others to simply *appear* to have fulfilled them all? What would be his motivation, since it led him to be killed by a most gruesome death? How would he get those who hated him to conspire with him? The answer is, of course, is that Jesus was no mere human being. He truly came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. He is the Son of God. Period.