

Why All These Prophecies?
An Inconvenient Christmas—part 1
December 3, 2023

DAY 1: Why go to all this trouble?

1. When Mindy and I started a campus ministry at the university years ago, I was always amazed at the skepticism of so many college students. Regarding prophecy, I usually heard a student say, “Well some of these prophecies could have been fulfilled in a lot of famous men. What about J.F. Kennedy or Martin Luther King, Jr. You could find men who could have fulfilled a couple of these prophecies fulfilled in a few men.”

2. These students had no idea that there were sixty major prophecies about the Messiah, and about three hundred in total. Mathematically, its an extremely low probability that any man could fulfill even ten of the major prophecies, let alone sixty, and let alone all three hundred.

3. The simple answer is two-fold:

a. The people were willfully and stubbornly resistant to any of God’s prophets and teachers.

b. God committed to a strategy of “the preponderance of the evidence.” The evidence for Jesus to be the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy is so over-whelming that to still reject Him is “self-domination.” (I “coined” a new word!)

4. The people *naturally, by nature*, didn’t listen to God, didn’t listen to appointed leaders, didn’t listen to God’s word, and didn’t listen to God’s messengers, the prophets.

5. In the verses below, jot down the problem of human nature:

Exodus 32:9 I have seen these people,” the LORD said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people.

2 Chron. 24:19 Although the LORD sent prophets to the people to bring them back to him, and though they testified against them, they would not listen.

Jeremiah 32:33 They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline.

Jeremiah 44:16 We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD!

Zechariah 7:11 But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. ¹² They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets.

6. What strikes you about human nature’s sin problem?

DAY 2: Prophecy of Messiah's Humanity.

1. When you consider over 300 prophecies, that drastically narrows down the field of finding just *one* man to fulfill those prophecies. The likelihood of finding just one man who fits half of the Messianic prophecies is so minute that writer F. John Meldau, who wrote Messiah in Both Testaments will pay you a \$1,000 reward if you can name one man!

2. This week, we'll look at four big prophecy pieces. Next week, we'll look at many detailed prophecies.

3. The first prophecy of a coming Messiah occurred in the Garden of Eden! Adam and Eve were created in Paradise, but when Adam rebelled, all hell broke loose. Planet Earth went from Paradise to tragedy. Life as they knew it drastically fell. Death was introduced as a result of man's sin.

4. The only way to reverse the damage done from the fall of man was to make life hard for man and woman. Only then would people even hear God, let alone return to Him!

5. So, God gave a curse to Adam (and all his "sons"), a curse to Eve (and all her "daughters") and to Satan and his minions. Here is the curse to Satan.

Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

a. Enmity means hatred.

b. Who are Satan's "offspring"? demons? They would do everything they could to destroy Christ and people.

c. Who is "her offspring?" "Her" offspring is one person, indicated by "he." Singular! One particular offspring!

d. You (Satan) will strike His heel. Picture a snake striking the heel of a person. For a poisonous snake, the bite is mortal. When Satan struck Christ, he did everything in his power to get Christ to die on the cross. Satan believed he had won, but his defeat was only a few days away. Christ's death and resurrection bought our freedom out of Satan's clutches and out of slavery to sin, secured our forgiveness, and our place in God's family—all done when we turn to Christ in simple faith.

e. He will crush your head: always means death. Christ's blow to Satan would one day be mortal.

*Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, **God** sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law...*

6. What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 3. Prophecy of Messiah's Identity: Son of God.

Psalm 2:7 I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

1. "It is an undoubted fact, and unanimously admitted even by the recent opposers of its reference to Him, that the Psalm was universally believed by the Jewish people as foretelling the Messiah." McDowell, p152

Acts 13:30-33 But God raised him from the dead, [31] and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

[32] "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers [33] he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'

1 Chron. 17:11-14 When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. [12] He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. [13] I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. [14] I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.'"

3. These prophecies were partially fulfilled in David's son, Solomon, but a lot of these prophecies could not be fulfilled in Solomon. The answer is simple. It has a double meaning.

- The line of David, fulfilled in both Solomon and Jesus.
- A king, fulfilled in both Solomon and Jesus
- Build my house—Solomon built the temple. But a second "house" would begin: the house of His children.
- Throne established forever—Solomon's lasted only a short time. His throne would be overthrown several hundred years later by the Babylonians. In contrast, Messiah's throne will last into eternity.
- I will be His father and he will be my son. His identity clearly established.

4. At Jesus baptism, a dove came out of the heavens and landed on Jesus.

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

5. Peter, James and John went with Jesus up a mountain. Moses and Elijah showed up, one on each side of Jesus, and a cloud appeared that enveloped them all. The disciples were terrified.

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

6. Jesus was asked by his enemies if He was the Son of God, deity, equal to God the Father.

Luke 22:70 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am."

7. What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 4: Prophecy of Messiah's Preexistence.

Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

1. How on earth could any ruler come to power whose "origins are from of old, from ancient times?" My kids used to kid me about "ancient." In reality, from "ancient times" means from "antiquity." We use "antiquity" to describe history before the Middle Ages, or in "ages" ago, meaning over a thousand years. No human being could fulfill this prophecy, could he?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2. In Greek philosophy, the "word" is a very important term. It is the Greek word "logos" from which we get our English word, "logic." In Greek philosophy, the "word" (the "logos") meant the reason, the rationale, the explanation, or the answer.

3. When philosophers asked the great questions, "why are we here? Is there a God?" the answer always came back to the "logos." The answer, the explanation.

4. When John began his gospel with this sentence he was speaking to the highest thinkers in all the world, people who wrestled with the great philosophical questions of the day. And this is what he said about the "logos"

- The logos was "in the beginning"
- The logos was with God
- The logos was God!

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

1 Peter 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

5. What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 5. Prophecy of Messiah's Deity.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

1. Child is born—line of Mary. Son is given—line of Joseph, corroborating the virgin birth
2. But though the initial picture is of a helpless baby boy, he's not "just a boy," because it becomes very clear that deity has come!
3. Names of God: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
4. It's always staggering to me that skepticism can run so deep in people that even after an in-depth lesson minute lesson describing OT and NT prophecy, people can still mumble things like, "Well, it could be a coincidence, couldn't it?" Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* took on that challenge, wanting to quantify just how likely any one man in history could have randomly fulfilled these prophecies as a coincidence. But instead of taking 300 prophecies, or even 60, he chose nine.
 - * Born at Bethlehem. * Preceded by a messenger. * Enter Jerusalem on a donkey
 - * Betrayed by a friend. * Sold for 30 pieces of silver. * Hands and feet pierce.
 - * Crucified. * Dumb before his accusers
 - * Money thrown in God's house; used to buy a potter's field.
5. The probability that any one man in all of history fulfilled all nine of these prophecies is 1×10 to the 17^{th} power. That's a 1 followed by 17 zeroes. To comprehend this probability, suppose that we take 10 to the 17^{th} power silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas! Then, add enough silver dollars already on the ground to cover Texas with silver dollars two feet deep! Next mark **one** of those silver dollars with an "x" and stir it in with all the other silver dollars. Blindfold a man and tell him to randomly pick the one silver dollar that is marked with your "x". What chance would he have of getting the right one? He would have just the same chance as taking these nine prophecies and having them come true in any one man who ever lived right down to 1963. That supposes that the prophets wrote their prophecies based on *their* wisdom.
6. You are left with one of two choices. Either the Spirit of God inspired the prophets to write these prophecies or the men simply wrote them as they thought they should, strictly on their own human understanding. If that was the case they had a 1 in $10 - 17^{\text{th}}$ power of getting it right.
7. Stoner then went on to take the top 48 Messianic prophecies and the probability of all 48 being fulfilled in one man is $1 \times 10 - 157^{\text{th}}$ power.
8. I draw four main conclusions from the study of prophecy.
 - Proves the Divine will behind the Old and New Testaments (Not chance or coincidence)
 - Establishes the reality of a personal and powerful God
 - Authenticates the Deity of Christ
 - Validates the Inspiration of the Bible
9. What strikes you from today's writing?