

INTRODUCTION

The difficulty with Messianic prophecy and its fulfillment is that it's very difficult to determine authoritatively what is and what is not a Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible). The following article addresses this:

Messianic Expectations: Old Testament Intimations and Early Jewish Hopes

From the Gospels, we see repeated interest in the question, “Is Jesus the expected Messiah of Israel” (Mark 14:61)? This might lead to the presumption that the Israelites at that time had developed enough of a profile of such a figure to have communal expectations. However, a study of the Old Testament reveals that mention of a coming “Messiah” is rare. It wasn't until the Second Temple period (ca. 500 BC–AD 70) of Jewish history that overt discussion of such a person took place.

Some Old Testament texts were foundational for understanding later messianic expectations. While such texts are hardly predictive, they do seem to develop the groundwork for future-oriented hopes that Israel expressed and built upon later on.

The Terminology of “Anointing”. “Messiah” refers to the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ (*mashiach*), which simply means “anointed one.” Such language was not restricted to a unique person in most occurrences, but served more as a status (i.e. “one who has been specially anointed”). Not unlike the British tradition of “dubbing” knights, Israel “oiled” or “anointed” special persons. Most commonly, anointing was performed on kings (Psa 2:2; 18:50; compare 1 Chr 16:22), though this ritual was applied to priests (Exod 28:41) and prophets (1 Kgs 19:16) as well. When the language of “the anointed one” is used in the Old Testament as a reference to a person, it is often with respect to King David (e.g., 2 Chr 6:42; Psa 132:10, 17).

Daniel 7:13–14. The text that seems to refer to a coming quasi-superhuman actor describes the prophet Daniel having a vision of “one like a son of man,” coming with the clouds of heaven and standing before the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:13 RSV). He was given full reign over the world and its people where “his dominion is an everlasting dominion” (Dan 7:14 RSV). It is unclear whether “son of man” is a distinct title or whether it is merely a way of communicating that this figure looked human (see NRSV, “like a human being”).

Israelite Royal Ideology. Based on how the early Jews and Christians conceived of the (expected) Messiah, there appeared to be a focus on David and an idealization of the divine covenant and dynastic promise. In 2 Samuel 7:12–16, the Lord committed Himself to David and his offspring, establishing the permanence of his kingdom. He also proclaimed a special relationship with his progeny: “I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam 7:14). Largely based on this union of the king and the Lord, Israel naturally associated one with the other, as in Psa 2 where it is proclaimed that the foolish “kings of the earth” rebel and rise up against “the Lord and his anointed” (Psa 2:2). When

such opposition is in view, the king could repeat the Lord's declaration: "You are my son; today I have begotten you" (Psa 2:7).

Looking more to the hope of God in light of present dangers, Isa 11 unfolds the promises of a "shoot" from the "stump" of Jesse (the father of David). He will possess the spirit of the Lord, act in righteousness, teach with authority, and bring peace and restoration (Isa 11:1–10).

Early Jewish Messianic Conversations. As mentioned above, discussions of a Messiah did not become prominent until the Second Temple period, with focused interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1 Enoch, Psalms of Solomon, 4 Ezra, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. In these texts, there are a broad range of activities, images, and terms connected to this person, but homogeneity in the expectations and descriptions cannot be found. The Messiah is generally treated as an eschatological agent of God. That is, he is seen to be a representative sent at a particular, cataclysmic time that God has set forth. This special breaking point in history is one where Israel is in its greatest point of need and anticipated a ruler and deliverer that would:

1. Rule as a David-like king in righteousness.
2. Punish the enemies of Israel.
3. Restore Israel and her temple.
4. Initiate a new age of peace and perfect Torah obedience.

Overall, this Messiah would bring the chaotic world back under the harmonious care of the one God. One emphasis is the dialectic role played by the Messiah—on the one hand as the leader of *Israel*, and, on the other, as an agent that would bring unity and peace to all creatures under the Lord's sovereign authority.

Human or Divine Messiah. The Second Temple texts show no confirmation that the Messiah would be completely human or divine/angelic. Many texts seem to attribute human qualities and capacities to this figure (see 1QM; Pss. Sol. 17–18), but others attribute supernatural knowledge or powers to him (1 Enoch; 4 Ezra). In part, this may be related more to the genres of the texts, rather than explicit theological convictions of the authors and their communities.¹

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CONTINUATION

However, whatever the first century Jews may or may not have thought of as Messianic prophecies in Hebrew scripture does not mean that there were not other valid prophecies present which had not been interpreted as such by Jews in the first century or before. The following articles address the issue from the Christian perspective on Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) prophecies of the Messiah

¹ Gupta, N. K. (2012). Christology. In *Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

What Does the Hebrew Bible Say About the Coming Messiah?

by Michael Rydelnik

How can someone be convinced that Jesus truly is who He claimed to be—the Messiah of Israel and the world? One of the ways Jesus Himself proved this was by citing the Hebrew Bible’s prophecies of the Messiah and how He fulfilled them. For example, Jesus said, “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Lk 24:44).

So, to what prophecies was He referring? Probably not merely to individual messianic texts but to the whole Hebrew Bible. Even so, Jesus fulfilled numerous specific predictions about the coming of the Messiah. In fact, the entire life of the Messiah can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, demonstrating that Jesus is actually the Promised One.

Messiah’s Birth

The Hebrew Bible contains several predictions of the Messiah’s birth. Micah foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem when he wrote, “Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me” (Mc 5:2).

Also, Genesis 49:10 predicted that the Messiah would come by the first century A.D. It says, “The scepter will not depart from Judah, or the staff from between his feet, until He whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to Him.” Besides plainly stating that the messianic King would come from the line of Judah, additionally it says that He would come before the “scepter” and “staff” depart from Judah. The word “scepter” in Hebrew, as used here, refers to tribal identity. The word “staff” means a judge’s staff and refers to judicial authority. The prediction is that the Messiah would come before Judah would lose its tribal identity (lost in A.D. 70 with the destruction of the temple) and judicial authority (lost in A.D. 6 or 7 when the Romans replaced Herod Archelaus with a Roman governor). Based on these two elements, the Messiah needed to come by the first century.

Additionally, Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. King Ahaz and Judah were under a threat from two northern kingdoms that wanted to remove the Davidic king and thereby jeopardize the messianic promise. Isaiah gave two predictions, one of which was a long-term prophecy assuring the people of the enduring nature of the Davidic house until the coming of the Messiah (Is 7:13–15). Isaiah wrote, “The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.” The sign of hope would be the Messiah’s super-natural birth by a virgin in the distant future.

Taking this all together, the Hebrew Bible predicted that the Messiah would be born of a virgin in Bethlehem by the first century.

Messiah’s Nature

Although some have thought that Messiah would just be a glorious king, the Scriptures foretold that He would have a unique nature. For example, the same prophecy that predicted that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (Mc 5:2) also said that His origin would be “from antiquity, from eternity,” indicating His eternal nature.

Isaiah also foresaw that the Messiah would have a divine nature. In a birth announcement, Isaiah gave the royal names of the future messianic king: “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Is 9:6). These glorious titles of deity indicate that the Messiah would be God Himself.

Messiah’s Life

Isaiah foretold the characteristics of the Messiah’s life. In the messianic age, “the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy” (Is 35:5–6). So when the Messiah would make His appearance, He was to be a miracle worker. Isaiah also predicted that the Messiah’s teaching would “bring good news to the poor . . . [and] heal the brokenhearted” (Is 61:1). Despite these many signs, Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would also be “despised and rejected by men” and that His own people would confess that “we didn’t value Him” (Is 53:3).

Messiah’s Death

Daniel 9:26–27 predicted the time of the Messiah’s death. He would be “cut off” before A.D. 70, when the Romans would “destroy the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [the temple].”

King David foretold that the Messiah would die by crucifixion, saying, “They pierced my hands and my feet” (Ps 22:16). So David predicted the Messiah’s crucifixion more than 300 years before that manner of execution was known.

More significant than the time or manner of His death, Isaiah predicted that the Messiah’s death would be as a substitution for humanity’s sin. The Servant of the Lord would be “pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities” (Is 53:5). The Lord would punish Him “for the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:6). The Servant would have “submitted Himself to death,” and as a result, “He bore the sin of many” (Is 53:12).

Messiah’s Resurrection

The prophets not only foretold the Messiah’s death, they anticipated His resurrection as well. In Isaiah 52:13–53:12, after describing the Messiah’s substitutionary death, Isaiah promised that the Lord would “prolong His days” (Is 53:10). David also expressed his own confidence that God would “not abandon [him] to Sheol” because the Messiah, God’s “Faithful One,” would not “see the Pit” (Ps 16:10).

Messiah’s Return

The Hebrew Scriptures present the Messiah in two ways: as a Suffering Servant and as a victorious and righteous King. Although this has confused many, the difficulty is resolved by recognizing that the prophets anticipated two appearances of the Messiah. First, He would come as an atoning sacrifice for sin. Second, He would come to establish His righteous kingdom.

One of the passages that links the two comings is Zechariah 12:10. It speaks of the Messiah coming to deliver Israel at the last battle and then “they will look at Me whom

they pierced.” These verses depict the Messiah’s second coming as the victorious king but also recognize His first appearance as the Pierced One.

Mathematician Peter W. Stoner calculated the probability of one person fulfilling not all the messianic predictions of the Bible, or even the ones mentioned in this article, but just eight messianic predictions. He found that the probability would be 1 in 10^{17} or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. The likelihood of this occurring is comparable to covering Texas with 10^{17} silver dollars, marking only one of them, stirring the mass of dollars, and then having a blindfolded man randomly pick up the marked silver dollar. This is the likelihood of Jesus of Nazareth randomly fulfilling only eight of the Messianic predictions of the Hebrew Bible.²

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FULFILLED PROPHECY

A major feature of the Gospel record is the way it draws the reader’s attention to the fact that Jesus Christ’s earthly life fulfilled a veritable plethora of Old Testament prophecies, some momentous, others seemingly minute. These prophecies start in an area not generally recognized, for the Gospel genealogies point to the startling fact that the core Old Testament genealogies focus on the lineage that ultimately led to Jesus of Nazareth. When one weighs this carefully, one must admit that this fact is utterly phenomenal, for the Old Testament unerringly traced the exact location of the ‘seed’ promised in Gen 3:15. It traced it from Adam to Noah (that part was simple, for only Noah’s family survived the flood), from Noah through Shem to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Judah; and Moses recorded these genealogies fourteen centuries before the Messiah was born. The Book of Ruth then extended this genealogical tracer from Judah to David, and Chronicles takes up the legal line of succession to David’s throne, stopping five centuries before Joseph’s birth from whom Jesus would inherit the title to David’s throne. Then we encounter a seemingly insoluble riddle, for Jer 22:30 placed a curse on Jeconiah that none of his descendants would ever sit on David’s throne, yet God had promised David a descendant who will reign for ever (2 Sam 7:13). Luke 3 solves this riddle by establishing that David’s descendant ‘who will reign forever’ came through Nathan, not Solomon from whom Jeconiah was descended. But Nathan’s line did not have title to David’s throne. However, when Joseph adopted Jesus as his son, Jesus became both David’s direct descendant through Nathan (via Mary), and David’s legal heir through Solomon (via Jeconiah, via Joseph). The odds of unerringly selecting, from the entire earth’s population, just the right line of men who would ultimately give birth to the Messiah are astronomical, yet the Old Testament did this with unerring accuracy for nearly a millennium.

² Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (1351–1353). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

Genesis 3:15 is the first messianic prophecy God gave; notably it classified the coming savior as ‘the seed of the woman,’ a remarkably apt, if veiled, specification for a virgin birth. Right from conception Jesus began fulfilling prophecy, for He was born of a virgin, just as Isa 7:14 prophesied, and was born in Bethlehem just as Mic 5:2 decreed. Indeed, even before He was conceived this inexorable train of fulfilled prophecy began, for Zacharias was told that his son, John the Baptist, was the forerunner Mal 4:6 prophesied. While still a toddler, Jesus was protected from the massacre predicted in Jer 31:15 by being sent into Egypt, again so as to fulfill Hos 11:1. While not as evident, this incident started a remarkable chain of similarities, for God had revealed that the Messiah would be a prophet like Moses (Deut 18:18). As Moses’ life had been threatened by a king, so was Jesus’ life; as Moses had found refuge in Egypt, so did Jesus. In His baptism, Jesus came up from a river, just as Moses was drawn from a river; in so doing Jesus commenced His ministry under the mantle of a prophet ‘like Moses’ (which means ‘drawn out of water’ [Exod 2:10]). But the similarity continues, for while Moses’ ministry ended in the wilderness of Moab, Jesus’ ministry started there with His temptation in the wilderness. As Moses was the only Old Testament prophet to cure a Jewish leper, and that only once, Jesus did likewise, but many times. Moses introduced the Law, Jesus introduced the Gospel of Grace (John 1:17). The subtle parallels go on and on.

The fulfillment of prophecy in the details of Jesus’ ministry are legion. He was heralded by the forerunner prophesied by Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1; etc. His ministry began in Galilee, the tribal lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, as predicted by Isa 9:1. Remarkably, in all Israel’s long history no prophet used both these areas as his headquarters, so God reserved them for His Son so that there could be no mistaking His unique qualification as the Messiah. He alone of all Israel’s prophets filled the messianic specification of giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and healing to the halt (Isa 35:5–6), a fact to which Jesus Himself drew attention (§79). He preached to the Gentiles and they accepted Him, just as Isa 42:1–4 said would be the case. This same passage predicted the gentleness of His ministry, the fact that He would harm no one, and also His personal fortitude, all of which were so plainly fulfilled in Jesus’ ministry. This catalog continues almost *ad infinitum*, but suffice it to note that Jesus’ public ministry even ended in fulfillment of prophecy, for on the very day that Dan 9:25–26 predicted, He presented Himself to Israel as its king in what we call His triumphal entry in exact fulfillment of Zech 9:9.

The Psalms contain many messianic prophecies; indeed, at least forty psalms are distinctly messianic. Psalm 22 gives a phenomenally detailed description of the Messiah’s death, so much so that it is more detailed than any New Testament report of Jesus’ death. There can be no question, on this one ground alone, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. However, the matter does not rest there, for His resurrection is prophesied in Psalm 16, and His ascension to God in Psalm 110. So from His birth to His ascension, Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, and many of them in ways that no man could, or even would, orchestrate. He alone emerged from this incredible maze of prophecy, thereby demonstrating that He is the Messiah, the Christ, prophesied throughout the Old Testament.

Before we leave the subject of prophecy, we should note our Lord’s own prophetic Olivet Discourse, for in it He effectively summarized all the unfulfilled Old Testament

messianic prophecies, explaining that they would be fulfilled at His second advent. The dual advents explain how Jesus could fulfill the prophecies of a suffering Messiah (in His first advent), and those of a reigning Messiah (in His second advent). So, in sum, the Gospels account for all the Old Testament messianic prophecies and insist that they were all fulfilled, or will be fulfilled, in Jesus of Nazareth who is thereby proved to be the Christ.³

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MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

INTRODUCTION.—Importance of subject. Peter's argument on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2. Paul's argument. Acts 9:22; 1:3. Christ's argument. Luke 24:27, 44. There are said to be 333 prophecies and references to Christ in the Old Testament which are expressly cited in the New Testament.

I. Classes of Messianic Prophecies.

1. Explicit prophecies that refer directly and wholly to the coming Messiah.
2. Explicit prophecies that have an immediate reference to contemporaneous or nearly contemporaneous persons and events, but which have their final and complete fulfillment in the Messiah.
3. Passages the Messianic application of which is not explicitly noted but which are fulfilled and marvelously fulfilled in Christ.
4. Types.

To the first class of prophecies—those that refer directly and wholly to the Messiah belong; e. g., Is. 53; Gen. 49:10; Mic. 5:2. A very strong attempt has been and is being made to show that Is. 53 is not Messianic. It is said to refer to suffering Israel. This chapter cannot refer to Israel.

- (a) The sufferer is represented as perfectly innocent and suffering for the sins of others. Vs. 9, 5, 6, 8.
- (b) He is a voluntary and unresisting sufferer. V. 7.
- (c) The sufferer is stricken for the transgression of another than himself, viz., God's people. V. 8. But Israel is God's people, so the sufferer cannot be. This 53d chapter has been accepted by the Jews themselves as Messianic in the Targums, the Talmud, the Zohar. In the Jewish prayers on the Day of Atonement and by the Jews at the present time.

To the second class of prophecies those, etc., belong; e. g., Is. 7:14; Ps. 72:45.

To the third class of prophecies belongs Ps. 22 (vs. 1, 6, 8, 14, 18).

To the types belong all the sacrifices and institutions and personages; e. g., the Passover, Ex. 12, the goats on Day of Atonement, Lev. 16. The typical

³ Mills, M. S. (1999). *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record*. Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.

personages, Joseph, Gen. 37, David, Solomon; e. g., 1 Kings 4:24–34; 10:1–9.

II. The Development of Messianic Prophecy.

Messianic prophecy in the Bible like everything else in God's world and Word grows. First we have only the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Gen. 3:15.

Next it is Shem's descendants. Gen. 9:26, 27.

Then it is the seed of Abraham.

Then it is the tribe of Judah. Gen. 49:10.

Then the Son of David.

Other particulars also are being constantly added.

III. What is Prophesied of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

1. His family. Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16. Of the family of David. He was to be born at a time when that family had been cut down and lost its glory.
2. State of family at His birth. Is. 53:2; 11:11, R. V.
3. The time of His appearing. Gen. 49:10; Hag. 2:9; Dan. 9:25.
4. The place. Mic. 5:2. Bethlehem.
5. His nature.
 - (a) Mic. 5:2; Ps. 45:6; Ps. 110:1; Ps. 2:7; Is. 9:6. Divine.
 - (b) Is. 53:3. Human.
6. His character.
 - (a) Is. 53:7. Meek.
 - (b) Is. 42:3. Gentle.
 - (c) Is. 42:2. Retiring. Avoiding notoriety.
 - (d) Is. 42:1; 11:2. Full of the Spirit.
 - (e) Is. 42:4. Persevering.
 - (f) Is. 11:5. Righteous and faithful.
 - (g) Is. 53:10, 9, 4. Absolutely sinless. (Implied also in vs. 5, 6, 8, 12.)
7. Manner of birth.

Is. 7:14. Born of a virgin (see also Ps. 69:8; 86:16; 116:16).
8. How treated by men.
 - (a) Is. 53:3; Ps. 118:22. Despised and rejected.
 - (b) Ps. 22:3. Kings of earth, etc.
 - (c) Is. 50:6. Scourged, insulted, spit upon.
 - (d) Zech. 11:13. Sold for thirty pieces of silver.
 - (e) Is. 53:7, 8. Killed. Zech. 13:7. Details of His death.
 - (1) Is. 53:5. Pierced. (Heb.) Zech. 12:10.
 - (2) Ps. 22:14, 17.
 - (3) Ps. 22:7, 8. Mocked while dying.
 - (4) Ps. 22:18. Garments parted while dying.
 - (5) Ps. 69:21. Given gall vinegar.
 - (6) Isa. 53:12. Made intercession for transgressors when He bore their sins.
 - (7) Heart breaks. Ps. 69:20; 22:14.
 - (8) Is. 53:12, 9. Numbered with transgressors, made His grave with wicked and with the rich.

- (f) Ps. 110:1, 3, R. V. His people will offer, etc.
- (g) His Resurrection. Is. 53:10, 11; Ps. 16:10.
- (h) Ascension and seating at the right hand of God. Ps. 68:18 (24:7); Ps. 110:1.
- (i) Two advents.
 - (1) Once born as a man to be cut off. Mic. 5:1, 2; Dan. 9:26.
 - (2) Once coming in clouds. Dan. 7:9, 10, 13, 14; Ps. 2:8, 9.
- (j) His work.
 - (1) Is. 53:6, 8, 12. He should die in the place of others. Is. 53:10, R. V., margin.
 - (2) He should be made a guilt offering for sin.
 - (3) Is. 61:1–3.
 - a. Preach good tidings, etc.
 - b. Bind up broken-hearted.
 - c. Proclaim liberty to captives, the opening of prisons, etc.
 - d. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God.
 - e. To comfort all that mourn.
 - f. To give unto those that mourn in Zion a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness.
 - (4) Jer. 23:5, 6. To reign as king and to execute judgment and justice in the earth. Character of His reign. Zech. 9:9.
 - a. Ps. 45:6; 72:5, 17. Eternally.
 - b. Ps. 72:2.
 - c. Ps. 72:4.
 - d. Ps. 72:7.
 - e. Ps. 72:8. Universal.
 - f. Ps. 72:9–11. Absolute.
 - g. Ps. 72:12, 13, 14.
 - (5) Ps. 110:4. A priest.
 - (6) Deut. 18:15–18. A prophet.
 - (7) Is. 42:5, 6; 49:6; 60:1–3. A light of the Gentiles.

IV. Is Jesus of the New Testament this Prophesied Christ of the Old Testament?⁴

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JESUS FULFILLED MESSIANIC PROPHECY

One of the major evidences for the deity of Jesus is fulfilled prophecy. The apostles often appealed to fulfilled prophecy as proof that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. Jesus knew that He fulfilled these futuristic utterances and used this knowledge to confirm His own claims to be the Messiah (the Son of God incarnate). He referred to the teachings of Scripture to reveal Himself to His disciples (Luke 24:25–27) and taught that prophecy about Himself must be fulfilled (Matt. 26:54, 56). He claimed that the entire Bible bore witness to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

⁴ Torrey, R. A. (1901). *How to work for Christ a compendium of effective methods*. (482–490). Chicago; New York: James Nisbet & Company.

The Bible contains several hundred prophecies relating to the birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and future return of Jesus Christ. Almost thirty of them were literally fulfilled in one twenty-four-hour period just prior to His death (e.g., those relating to His betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and burial). Some of the most important prophecies about Christ accurately predicted His birthplace (Mic. 5:2), flight to Egypt (Hos. 11:1), the identity of His forerunner (Mal. 3:1), His entering Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech. 9:9), betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12), humiliation and beating (Isa. 50:6), crucifixion with other prisoners (Isa. 53:12), hand and feet wounds (Ps. 22:16), side wound (Zech. 12:10), soldiers gambling for His clothing (Ps. 22:18), His burial in a rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9), resurrection (Pss. 16:10; 49:15), and second coming (Ps. 50:3–6; Isa. 9:6–7; Dan. 7:13–14; Zech. 14:4–8).

Important Old Testament Prophecies About Jesus

<i>OT Prophecy & Scripture</i>	<i>NT Fulfillment</i>
Born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14)	Matt. 1:22–23
Born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2)	Luke 2:4–7
Preceded by a forerunner (Mal. 3:1)	Matt. 11:10
Entered Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech. 9:9)	Matt. 21:4–5
Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12)	Matt. 26:14–15
Spat on and struck (Isa. 50:6)	Matt. 26:67
Crucified with other prisoners (Isa. 53:12)	Luke 22:37
Pierced through hands and feet (Ps. 22:16)	John 20:25–27
Pierced through His side (Zech. 12:10)	John 19:34–37
Soldiers gambled for clothing (Ps. 22:18)	Matt. 27:35

22:18)

Buried in a rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9) Matt: 27:57–60

Would be resurrected (Ps. 16:10) Matt. 28:5–7

Would return a second time (Dan. 7:13– Rev. 19
14)

Jesus could not have accidentally or deliberately fulfilled these prophecies. Obviously, events such as His birthplace and lineage, method of execution, soldiers casting lots for His garments, or being pierced in the side are events beyond Jesus' control. Peter Stoner and Robert Newman, in their Book *Science Speaks*, demonstrate the statistical improbability of any one man, accidentally or deliberately, from the day of these prophecies down to the present time, fulfilling just eight of the hundreds of prophecies Jesus fulfilled. They demonstrate that the chance of this happening is 1 in 10^{17} power. Stoner gives an illustration that helps visualize the magnitude of such odds:

Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom.

It is mathematically absurd to claim that Jesus accidentally or deliberately fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. Obviously, this evidence stands as a powerful demonstration of Jesus' messiahship.⁵

CONCLUSION

In my view there are an awful lot of Old Testament prophecies which (a) were fulfilled by Christ and (b) were very arguably Messianic and that this is demonstrated by the foregoing. I think this provides a very strong argument that Christ was the Messiah. Indeed if he were not the Messiah, then it is difficult to see how the prophecies can now be fulfilled.

Some as yet unfulfilled prophecies regarding the Messiah will be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ:

⁵ Story, D. (1997). *Defending your faith* (78–80). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (1)

I. The Certainty of His Coming Again.

John 14:3; Heb. 9:28; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Acts 3:20. The coming again referred to in these passages is not an event that has already occurred.

1. Christ's coming at death, not the coming referred to.
 - (a) Whatever coming of the Lord to meet us there may be at death—and there may be in a sense such a coming—He does not descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and all those who sleep in Christ are certainly not raised from their graves at the death of the individual believer. To refer this language to what occurs at death is to transform an inspired apostle into a crazy rhetorician.
 - (b) Jesus clearly and definitely distinguished between death and His coming again in John 21:22.
2. Not the coming of Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit is in a very real sense a coming of Christ. John 14:15–18, 21–23. But it certainly is not the coming referred to in the passages under consideration.
 - (a) This is clear from the fact that all of these promises but one (John 14:3) were made after the coming of the Holy Spirit and referred to something still in the future.
 - (b) It is clear again from the fact that Jesus does not receive us to be with Him at the coming of the Holy Ghost.
 - (c) The various things mentioned as occurring at His coming are all wanting at the coming of the Spirit.
3. Not the destruction of Jerusalem. The destruction of Jerusalem was in some sense the precursor, prophecy and type of the Day of the Lord that is to come. But God's judgment on Jerusalem in its destruction is manifestly not the event predicted in the passages given.

Years after Jerusalem had been destroyed we find John still looking forward to the Lord's second coming as an event lying still in the future. Not any of these three events, death, the coming of the Spirit, the destruction of Jerusalem, nor all of them together, nor any other event of history that has as yet occurred, fulfills the very plain, explicit and definite predictions of Christ and the apostles regarding Christ's coming again.

II. The Manner of His Coming.

1. His coming will be personal. It is Jesus Himself. John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16. "I myself." "Himself." Acts 1:11, R. V. The Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 3:20, R. V.
2. Bodily and visible. Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7; Acts 1:11. So beheld, beheld.
3. With great publicity. 1:7; Matt. 24:26, 27.
4. With great power and glory. Matt. 24:30; Matt. 16:27.
5. Sudden and unexpected. Matt. 24:42, R. V.; Matt. 24:44; Rev. 16:15; Luke 21:34–36.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (2)

I. The Purpose and Results of Christ's Coming Again.

1. John 14:3. Jesus Christ is coming again to receive His own unto Himself, that where He is, there they may be also.
2. Phil. 3:20, 21. Jesus Christ is coming again to fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.
3. 1 John 3:1, 2. Jesus Christ is coming again to bring us unto perfect conformity with Himself.
4. Matt. 25:19 and 16:27. Jesus Christ is coming again to reckon with His servants and to reward them according to their works. 1 Cor. 3:13–15.
5. 2 Thess. 1:10. Jesus Christ is coming “to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed.”
6. Rom. 11:26. Jesus Christ is coming again to deliver Israel and to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Zech. 12–13:6; Ez. 37:23; 36:25–27, 29; Zech. 8:3, 7, 8; Ez. 36:37, 38; Jer. 31:3–7; Ez. 36:33–37; Zech, 8:3–5, R. V.; Zech. 8:23; Isa. 49:22, 23.
7. Jude 14, 15, R. V. Jesus Christ is coming again to “execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” He is coming to render vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2 Thess. 1:7, 8.
8. Luke 19:12, 15; Matt. 25:31; Zech. 14:9. Jesus Christ is coming to reign as a King. Jer. 23:5, 6; Ps. 2:6; Rev. 19:12, 15, 16; 20:4; 11:12; Is. 11:1, 2, 4, 5.
The coming again of Jesus Christ is the solution and only solution of all social problems. Oppression, poverty, crime, greed, injustice, will be at an end. “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Is. 11:9.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (3)

I. When is Christ Coming Again?

1. Mark. 13:32. The exact time of Christ's coming again no man knows, the angels do not know, and even Jesus Christ in the days of His humiliation and self-limitation of knowledge did not know. Jesus Christ wished to so emphasize the utter folly of all attempts to fix the date that as a man He put away the knowledge of it Himself. Deut. 29:29; Acts 1:7.
2. While we cannot set the date of our Lord's return, the Bible does describe the character of the times.
 - (a) It will be at such a time as when His disciples think not. Matt. 24:44.
 - (b) The world will not be looking for some great catastrophe, but will be absorbed in their usual pursuits. Luke 17:26–30.
 - (c) The last days and the time of the coming again of the Son of Man will be a time of apostasy, grievous times, and faith will be hard to find. 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1–5, R. V.; Luke 18:8.

3. The Lord may, for anything we know, come any time, any day, any hour. Mark 13:34–36; Luke 12:36; Matt. 25:13; Matt. 24:42, 44.
“Is not the world to be converted before He comes?” Rev. 1:7; Matt. 25:31, 32; 2 Thess. 2:2–4, 8; Luke 18:8; 21:35; 2 Tim. 3:1–5; Matt. 24:14.
Preaching for a witness is not the conversion of the world. Furthermore, this is before “the end” comes; but the coming of Christ in the air is not the end but the beginning of the end. Further still, the Gospel has in a sense, a biblical sense, too, been already preached to all nations. Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:23, R. V.
2 Thess. 2:1–4. The day of the Lord is not the coming of Christ in the air for His church, but His coming with His church to the earth in judgment. There may be, probably will be, an interval of several years between these two. It is doubtful if the Man of Sin can be revealed until the church is taken out of the way. V. 7.
There is nothing whatever revealed in the Bible that must take place before Christ comes.

II. Our Attitude Toward the Coming of Christ.

1. We should be ready for our Lord’s coming. Matt. 24:44. This is the great Bible argument for a pure, unselfish, devoted, unworldly, active life.
What constitutes readiness for the coming of Christ? Luke 21:34–36. The two parables in Matt. 25. 1 John 2:28.
2. Luke 12:36, R. V. We should be watching and looking for the coming of our Lord.
3. 2 Pet. 3:12, R. V. We should earnestly desire the coming of our Lord. 2 Tim. 4:8.⁶

⁶ Torrey, R. A. (1901). *How to work for Christ a compendium of effective methods.* (486–490). Chicago; New York: James Nisbet & Company.