

# Prophecy as Evidence

## Evidence for Christianity Session 3

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Luke 24:25-27 "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

1. What is a Prophet?
  - a. One who speaks for another,
  - b. Prophets of God spoke for God, prophets of Baal spoke for Baal.
  - c. The message might be a prediction of the future, a warning, words of comfort, or a letter such as from the Apostle Paul who had the gift of prophecy
  - d. The meaning of "prophet" is made clear when God called Moses, Ex 2. Moses objects to speaking to Pharaoh so God replies: I'll be a mouth to you, you be a mouth to Aaron, and Aaron will be a mouth to Pharaoh
  - e. Serious business – the OT test of a prophet and penalty for failure is death, Deut. 18:14-22. Discern the spirits I Cor 12:3, 10. I Jn 4:1-3.
  - f. The difference between God's leading and a prophet receiving a word, In the latter case, the prophet could say "declaration of Jehovah"
2. God Spoke in Many Ways
  - a. Heb 1:1-4
  - b. Visions, dreams, illustrations, dictation
  - c. God spoke to Moses in a unique way "face to face" Ex 33:11, though Moses did not see God's face, Jn 1:18
3. Prophets and Scripture
  - a. Heb 1:1-4 "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets ... has spoken to us in His Son..."
  - b. The words of the prophet are described as "declarations of Jehovah"
  - c. II Pet 1:16-21 "... no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation (Gk "origin") for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
  - d. "The writings" – This phrase is used 50 times in the New Testament, 48 times of OT passages, twice in reference to the writings of Paul, indicating that Paul's writings are to be treated as "Scripture"
4. Prophecy as Evidence – Jesus
  - a. Lk 18:31 – Jesus predicted his death and resurrection just as the OT prophets predicted it. Mocked, mistreated, spit upon, scourged, death, resurrection
  - b. Lk 4:21 – Jesus began his ministry by applying predictions of Messiah in Isa 61 to Himself
  - c. Jn 5:39 – "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you will have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me."
  - d. Jn 5:46 – "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me"
  - e. Lk 24:13-27 – "And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself, in all the Scripture."
  - f. Lk 24:44, 46 – "... all things that are written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled... Thus, it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise again the third day, and that repentance and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem."

5. Prophecy as Evidence – The Apostles
  - a. Jn 12:41 – After quoting Isa 53 and Isa 6, John says of Jesus “These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory and spoke of him.”
  - b. Acts 2:22
  - c. Acts 3:18
  - d. \*Acts 3:24 After quoting Deut 18:15 God will raise up a prophet like Moses, Peter applied this to Jesus. “All the prophets have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.”
  - e. Acts 7:52
  - f. Acts 10:43
  - g. Acts 17:2
  - h. Acts 18:28
  - i. Acts 26:22, 23
  - j. \*Acts 28:23, 24 People came to Paul’s lodging in large numbers “and he was explaining to them and solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and from the prophets from morning till evening.”
  
6. Prophecy Needs Concreteness to be Evidence
  - a. Proper timing - far enough in advance
  - b. Specific details – not vague generalities
  - c. Freedom from ambiguity – no double meanings or misleading statements
  - d. Exact fulfilment
  - e. Genuine date and authorship

See Who Says, p. 69, quoting Maxwell Coder and George F. Howe, The Truth Triumphant, 1965
  
7. Characteristics of Biblical Prophecy
  - a. Large number of prophecies – some 330 Messianic prophecies
  - b. Large span of time - between the prediction and fulfillment, see examples later
  - c. Prophecies concerning inanimate objects – climate II Kg 7:1ff; I Kgs 17:1ff
  - d. Many about non-Jewish people - and fulfillment recorded outside of Scripture. Tyre
  - e. Some prophecies require a miracle to fulfil them. The Resurrection.
  
8. Messiah’s Mission and Heritage
  - a. Key Ideas - As soon as sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, God began to reveal his plan to redeem us. This plan is revealed gradually through thousands of years of human history. Adam → Noah → Shem → Abraham → Jacob → Abraham → David → etc
  - b. The seed of Adam will crush the serpent’s head.
  - c. Key Timing: “In the fullness of time, God brought forth his son, born of a virgin” Gal 4:4
  - d. Prophecies identify Messiah centuries before so that He would be recognized when He arrived
  - e. Prophecies point to Jesus as Messiah

		2000	1446	971		AD 26
Adam	Noah	Abraham	Moses	David		Jesus

Row	Predicted	Summary	OT Passage	NT Ref	NT Ref	Halley	Kaiser
1	Eden	Seed of the woman	Gen 3:15	Rom 16:20		488	37
2	Flood	Shem	Gen 9:26				42
3	2000 BC	Abraham	Gen 12:3	Gal 3:8	Heb 11:8	489	46
4	2000 BC	Isaac	Gen 17:19	Heb 11:9-12	Acts 3:25		
5		Isaac	Gen 26:3-6	Heb 11:9-12	Acts 3:25	490	
6		Jacob	Gen 28:14	Heb 11:9-12	Acts 3:25	490	
7		Jacob	Num 24:17	Rev 22:16		492	53
8		Judah	Gen 49:10	Rev 5:5	Heb 7:14	490	50
9	1446 BC	A Prophet like Moses	Deut 18:15, 18	Acts 3:24		179	57
10	1011 BC	David eternal throne	II Sam 7:12-16	Lk 1:32-33		493, 647	77
11	???	Solomon eternal throne	I Kings 9:5			493	
12							
13	971 BC	David's Greater Son	Ps 89 & 132	Jn 7:42	Acts 7:45	496	83, 87
14	971 BC	Mystery of the Incarnation	Ps 8 & 40	Matt 21:16	Heb 10:5ff	323	93, 123
15	971 BC	Rejection of Messiah	Ps 118	Mt 21:9	Mt 21:42	343	100
16	971 BC	Betrayal of Messiah	Ps 69 & 109	Heb 11:8,9	Jn 17:12	496	103
17	971 BC	Death and Beyond	Ps 22 & 2	Mk 9:12	Acts 4:25f	494, 495	111
18	971 BC	Victory over Death	Ps 16 & 102	Acts 2:27; Acts 13:35		494	118, 93
19	971 BC	Messiah's Marriage and Ministry	Ps 45 & 110	Heb 1:8-9	Most quoted	495	127, 94
20	971 BC	Reign of the Glorious King	Ps 72 & 68	Matt 2:11	Eph 4:8	494	130
21							
22	700 BC	Immanuel Child	Isa 7:13, 14	Matt 1:23	Lk 1:31	498	158
23	700 BC	Wonderful Child	Isa 9:1-7	Lk 1:78-79	Lk 1:32-33	498	162
24	700 BC	Reign of the branch from Jesse	Isa 11:1-10	Rev 5:5	Rev 22:16	498	164
25	700 BC	Messiah's miracles	Isa 35:5, 6	Lk 7:22	Acts 26:18	499	
26	700 BC	Messiah tender like a shepherd	Isa 40:5-11	Jn 10:11		499	173
27	700 BC	Messiah to the gentiles	Isa 42:1-11	Matt 12:18ff		500	174
28	700 BC	Messiah suffering	Isa 53	Lk 24:26f	I Pet 1:10f	500	178
29	640 BC	David's branch	Jer 23:5,6	I Cor 1:30f		501	187
30	600 BC	Prince of David's house, shepherd	Ezek 37:24-25	Jn 10:6	Heb 13:20	501	197
35	700 BC	Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt 2:6		465	151
31							
32	600 BC	Four kingdoms until Messiah	Dan 2	Matt 21:42ff		502	199
33	536 BC	Messiah AD29	Dan 9	Matt 24:15		440	201

9. Prophecies Concerning Israel's Disobedience (dates are approximate)
  - a. 1446 BC - Deut 28:15ff promises curses for disobeying the Law, 28:49 the Lord will bring a nation against you from afar
  - b. 931 BC – I Kg 13 after Solomon's death, Jeroboam set up calf worship
  - c. 722 BC – Assyria takes Israel (northern 10 tribes into captivity)
  - d. 606 BC - Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon takes Judah (southern 2 tribes) into captivity, including Jeremiah and Daniel
  - e. 604 BC – Jeremiah 25:11 predicts 70 years of captivity.
  - f. 539 BC – Cyrus the Mede/Darius the Persian take Babylon, he diverted the Euphrates river the night of the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's feast. Belshazzar was killed. Daniel 5
  
10. Prophecy – Messiah & Iron Empire
  - a. 600 BC – Daniel 2 interprets the dream image, four kingdoms until Messiah comes
  - b. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, Messianic Kingdom
  - c. Messiah will come during the "iron" empire and set up his kingdom
  
11. Prophecy – Messiah's Year Predicted
  - a. 540 BC – Daniel 9:24-27 predicts 483 years from decree to rebuilt Jerusalem till Messiah
  - b. 458 BC – Decree by Persian king to rebuild Jerusalem, that puts Messiah at AD 26 when Jesus was baptized
  
12. Prophecy concerning Babylon
  - a. Greatness of Babylon
  - b. Doom Predicted
    - 700 BC – Isa 41:2; 44:28; 45:1 "Cyrus" will deliver God's people from Babylon
    - 604 BC – Jer 25:11-14 predicts 70 years of captivity after which Babylon will be a perpetual desolation
    - 700 BC – Isa 13:19-21 predicts Babylon will never be inhabited, Arabian never pitch his tent there, shepherds will not make fold, no vegetation, wild beasts
  - c. Fulfillment
    - 539 Medes and Persians destroyed Babylon
    - Cyrus son-in-law Xerxes plundered it again later
    - Alexander the Great (Greeks)
    - By the first century AD, Babylon was a foul smelling, decaying ruin inhabited only by wild animals
  
13. Discussion - The Meaning of "Fulfill"
  - a. Sometimes NT writers use the word "fulfill" in a general way
  - b. Matt 1:15; Hos 11:1 "Out of Egypt have I called my Son"
  - c. Hos 11:1 speaks of God's promised protection of His children as illustrated by calling them out of Egypt. Similarly, God protected Mary, Joseph, and Jesus by warning Joseph to leave to Egypt.
  
14. Discussion – Dual Fulfillment
  - a. Two events, centuries apart, are seen by the prophet as a single event
  - b. Example – the first and second coming of Christ are not clearly distinguished in the OT
  - c. Some have called this Prophetic Perspective Shortening

- d. We see dual elements in the famous passage of Isaiah 7:10—9:7 part of which is quoted in Matt 1:23. The passage alternates several times between the child called Immanuel and a child born to Isaiah (8:1-4); and then again far into the future (8:5 and following).

15. The Church Began the Messianic Kingdom

- a. Jesus ascended into heaven and sat on his kingly throne
- b. The kingdom was announced on Pentecost, Peter quoted Joel 2
- c. Jesus preached about the Kingdom, see all references to the Kingdom in Luke
- d. Daniel 9:24 “seventy weeks...to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.”
- e. Some of these Jesus accomplished in his first coming, some are reserved for the second coming
- f. **Elements of the Kingdom**

Theme	Joel	Isaiah	Ezekiel	Amos	Jeremiah
1. Prosperity	3:18			9:13f	
2. Restoration	3:01	11:12-16		9:14	
3. Mt. Zion (Jerusalem)	3:21	11:09	40--48		3:17; 8:19; 14:9
4. The Davidic		11:1,10		9:11	23:5f, 31:14-21
5. The Remnant	2:32	11:12			
6. Holiness	3:17	6:13			
7. The Day of Jehovah	3:14; 1:15			5:18,20	
8. Judgment	3:12	11:04			

16. The Second Coming Will Complete the Messianic Kingdom

- a. Peter on Pentecost quoted Joel 2:28-32 as the beginning of the Kingdom (Acts 2:17).
- b. There are details in Joel that are yet future
- c. This is an example of prophetic perspective shortening, seeing two events as one from the prophet’s point of view (perspective).

**Helpful References**

Halley, Henry. Halley’s Bible Handbook: With the New International Version. Completely revised and expanded 25<sup>th</sup> edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. Especially the chapter titled “The Messiah in the Old Testament: Forshadowings and Predictions of the Coming Messiah” pp 488-504.

Cottrell, Jack.

Kaiser, Walter C, Jr. The Messiah In The Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

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