

Fulfilled Bible Prophecy Distinguishes the Bible as a Message from God



The Bible makes the colossal claim that it is, in its entirety, the inspired Word of God to mankind. Its central message is God's plan to redeem mankind, and it was written over a span of 1,500 years. But how do we know that it is, in fact, a message from God? The ultimate answer to this question lies in Bible prophecy and its amazing fulfillment. From an evidential perspective, we see that Bible prophecy is amazing due to:

- **its extensiveness (1,000 predictive prophecies, comprising about 1/4 of the Bible¹)**
- **its fulfillment with 100% accuracy (500 prophecies fulfilled literally to date²)**
- **its preciseness (with details and specifics)**
- **its accurate correlation with history**
- **its complete harmony throughout Scripture**
- **its consistent focus on Messiah (the Christ) and His mission to redeem the human race.**

The literal fulfillment of Bible prophecy over the centuries demonstrates that the Bible is divine in origin. It shows that God, who is outside of time and all knowing, has revealed to us "history in advance" on the pages of Scripture. According to the Bible, God's Holy Spirit inspired prophets to testify of future events (1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21). To date, 500 predictions in the Bible have been fulfilled.³ Below is an overview of them.

"Unmistakably, the evidence is overwhelming that God means exactly what He says, as prophecy after prophecy has already been literally fulfilled. When history has run its course, every prophecy will be fulfilled."⁴

— John F. Walvoord (Bible prophecy scholar)

GOD'S ANNOUNCED PURPOSE FOR PROPHECY

In the Book of Isaiah, God declared the purpose of prophecy: to show He is the only true and living God. He also declared He would bring to pass all that He had spoken and planned (Isa. 42:8-9; 46:9-11; 48:3-6).

1



HUNDREDS OF PROPHECIES PERTAINING TO THE PROMISED MESSIAH ("THE CHRIST," THE BIBLE'S CENTRAL FIGURE) HAVE BEEN FULFILLED HISTORICALLY IN JESUS OF NAZARETH.

A. THE GENESIS 3:15 PROPHECIES

The first reference to the gospel, which can be traced throughout the Bible, appears in Genesis 3:15. This passage contains the first two prophecies in Scripture: **[1]** God will judge sin, and **[2]** God will redeem mankind through a Savior. God told the serpent that tempted Eve to sin in the garden, **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."** God was promising a Messiah, the offspring of the woman (her "Seed"). He revealed that Satan would one day bruise Christ's heel, causing Him to suffer and die. However, ultimately Christ would crush Satan's head at the cross, defeating him and the power of death (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:2,10). These two prophecies reveal God's eternal purpose for the cross (Rom. 3:24-25; Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8). Jesus Christ fulfilled God's plan for our redemption by His death and resurrection.⁵

B. THE FIRST COMING OF MESSIAH

The Old Testament (OT) is a collection of 39 ancient books written centuries before the New Testament (NT). They contain over 300 specific prophecies

concerning the first coming of Messiah. The earliest prophet, Moses, prophesied about the Messiah whom God would raise up (Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 3:20-24). In the first century AD, Jesus of Nazareth came to earth at the appointed time (Gal. 4:4). He precisely fulfilled all 300+ messianic prophecies by His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension.^{6,7} The staggering odds that one man could fulfill even 48 of them are 1 in 10¹⁵⁷ according to the science of probability.^{8,9} Some astonishing examples of fulfilled messianic prophecies are:

- **Born of a virgin**
OT prophecy—Isaiah 7:14
NT fulfillment—Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35
- **Born in Bethlehem**
OT prophecy—Micah 5:2
NT fulfillment—Matthew 2:1-6; John 7:42
- **Historic ride into Jerusalem as King**
OT prophecy—Zechariah 9:9; Daniel 9:24-27
NT fulfillment—Mark 11:7-11; Luke 19:35-38
- **Crucifixion (substitutionary sacrifice)**
OT prophecy—Isaiah 53:5
NT fulfillment—Romans 5:6, 8; Matthew 27:26-35
- **Hands and feet pierced**
OT prophecy—Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:16
NT fulfillment—John 19:18; John 20:27-28
- **Resurrection from the dead**
OT prophecy—Psalm 16:10
NT fulfillment—Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8

C. THE DANIEL 9 PROPHECY

Daniel 9:24-27 contains a three-part messianic prophecy, probably the most specific and startling ever recorded. In verse 25, written more than 500 years before the event, Daniel prophesied the exact day Messiah would make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem as King. Daniel stated that from the day of the decree by Persian King Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem's wall (March 5, 444 BC) until the coming of "Messiah the Prince," there would be 173,880 days. (See Neh. 2:7-8; 5:14.) Exactly 173,880 days after that decree, on March 30, AD 33, Jesus Christ made

His historic ride into Jerusalem, hailed as Messiah (Matt. 21:1-9; John 12:12-18). This event is one of the greatest demonstrations of the validity of the claims of Christ to be the Son of God. (For a detailed explanation of the mathematical calculations, see Dr. Harold Hoehner's refinement of Sir Robert Anderson's classic work.)^{10,11}

D. CRUCIFIXION PROPHECIES

The Old Testament contains 41 prophecies about the Messiah's death and crucifixion.¹² Two chapters, Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, are considered to be holy ground. **[1]** Psalm 22 is a graphic portrayal of Christ's crucifixion. The prophet David wrote it approximately 900 years before Christ came (and centuries before crucifixion was even invented), yet it was "fulfilled in flawless detail."¹³ **[2]** Isaiah 53, written by the prophet Isaiah between 740 and 680 BC, contains the most theologically profound Scriptures concerning Jesus' physical torture and substitutionary death (His crucifixion to pay the penalty for the sins of the world). For example, verse 5 states: **"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."** These fulfilled prophecies confirm that the Messiah and His mission were in the mind of God even before creation (1 Peter 1:20; Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8).

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES YET TO BE FULFILLED

The unfulfilled messianic prophecies in the Bible pertain to Messiah's "second coming." Jesus Christ came to earth the first time as the Suffering Servant; He will return one day as the Conquering King. This category of prophecy includes Christ's return for His church, the Great Tribulation, the end of the Gentile Age, the judgments, the millennium, and eternity.¹⁴ These predictions came from the OT prophets, the NT apostles, and from Christ Himself. (The NT contains 318 references to Jesus' second coming.)¹⁵

2 OTHER HISTORICAL PROPHECIES

HUNDREDS OF PROPHECIES PERTAINING TO EVENTS, KINGS, CITIES, PEOPLES, AND NATIONS (ESPECIALLY THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND ISRAEL) HAVE BEEN FULFILLED IN HISTORY.

A. FULFILLED PROPHECIES

Some remarkable examples of fulfilled historical prophecies are: **[1] King Cyrus**—The Old Testament named this Persian king and described his decree 160 years before the king or his kingdom ever existed (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). **[2] The Jewish people**—Seven detailed predictions about Palestine and the Jews have all been fulfilled in history (Lev. 26:31-33; Ezek. 36:33-35). **[3] The city of Tyre**—Six specific and highly improbable prophecies about the city of Tyre have all been fulfilled in history (Ezek. 26:1-21).¹⁶

Other examples of OT prophecies fulfilled in history include:

- *The fall of Nineveh (Isa. 10; Nah. 2:1-13)*
- *The fall of Babylon (Isa. 13 and 47)*
- *Israel's 400 years in Egypt (Gen. 15:13)*
- *The return of Judah (Isa. 6:11-13)*
- *Israel's fruit all over the world (Isa. 27:6)*

B. ISRAEL'S NATIONAL REBIRTH

One major OT prophecy is found in Ezekiel 37:11-14. The prophet Ezekiel (between 592 and 570 BC) prophesied the rebirth of Israel as a nation. Prior to Ezekiel's time, the Israelites had become a divided kingdom—Israel and Judah. The people were displaced from their homeland and taken into captivity. Nevertheless, God revealed through Ezekiel that someday He would bring them back as one people, into one land, as one nation. And it would occur in a single day (Isa. 66:8). Against all odds, the nation Israel was birthed on May 14, 1948, by proclamation of the

United Nations. Despite attempts by several nations over many generations to exterminate the Jews, God preserved them. Never has a people group been dispersed throughout the world for thousands of years and not been absorbed by the nations around them. Yet God protected Israel and maintained its cultural distinctive.¹⁷⁻¹⁸ (For more details, see reference 18.)

"The Bible contains a pattern of prediction and fulfillment that can only be explained by its divine origin. No other document, sacred or secular, contains such clear prophecies of events affecting the destiny of mankind ... which points to supernatural revelation from a sovereign God who is Lord of all history."¹⁹

—Gleason L. Archer, Ph.D., J.D.

CONCLUSION

Bible prophecy is amazing because it proves the authority of the Bible—that indeed it is the living and powerful revelation to us from our loving Creator (Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16). In contrast, all other books and writings regarded as religious authority fall hopelessly short. They contain little if any prophecy, and none dares to claim any significant historical fulfillment.²⁰⁻²¹

Jesus Christ declared and demonstrated that He was the long-awaited Messiah (Heb. 10:7; Luke 24:25-32; Matt. 21:1-9). As the divine Son of God, He fulfilled His mission to die for the sins of the world by shedding His blood on the cross, to offer every person eternal life (Rom. 3:22-26). Jesus was the predicted Passover Lamb (Ex. 12:21-24; Isa. 53; John 1:29). After His crucifixion, He miraculously rose from the dead. Today He stretches forth His loving arms and invites each of us to receive Him as Lord and Savior. Are you ready to start a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

A Prayer to Receive Jesus

"Dear Father God, I desire salvation based on what Jesus Christ did on the cross for me. Thank You for sending Your Son (the Messiah) to redeem us. I believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead. Jesus, please forgive my sins and be my personal Lord and Savior. God, I want to follow You and have a relationship with You now and forever. In Jesus' name, amen."

"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him [Jesus] from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9)

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WHY IS BIBLE PROPHECY SO AMAZING?



by m.j. tyner, m.a.
christian apologetics

biblical christianity