



Blackfoot

Church of Christ

Published by Blackfoot Church of Christ
Blackfoot, ID

Volume 7 Number 43

October 27, 2019

CHRIST IN PROPHECY

The Fulfillment by Christ of Prophecy

By Bill Humble

(An excerpt of an article on Christ in prophecy)

Let it be clearly understood that these statements from the Old Testament were prophecies; they described in exact detail the life of one who was yet to come. Some of these prophecies were made nearly 2000 B.C. and were committed to writing around 1400 B.C. Others came later, but all of them existed centuries before Christ came. This is proved by the existence of the Old Testament as a book and by its being translated into the Greek language, the Septuagint translation, about 285 B.C. These prophecies, then, create a real problem for the modernist. They were in existence hundreds of years before Christ came; they are fulfilled in his life. How is the modernist to account for these facts without being forced to confess the supernaturalism of the Bible? Four questions focus attention on this problem.

The first question to be answered is this:

"Could all of these prophecies have been fulfilled by accident, by pure chance?" The answer is no, for the number, scope and magnitude of these prophecies make it mathematically impossible that they could ever have been fulfilled by blind chance. We are not dealing with a few isolated statements; we are dealing with many. Canon Lid-don has stated that there are 332 distinct Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. It is conceivable that two or three of these might accidentally have been fulfilled in one person, but the cumulative force of many prophecies makes it impossible that all could happen by chance. If a simple prophecy is made, quite likely to occur, there might be a chance of one in two that it would be fulfilled. But if another simple reasonable prophecy were joined with it, the chance would be only one in four that both would be fulfilled by chance. And if two more were added, the chance would be only one in sixteen; but if four more were added the chance would be one in 256. Each additional prophecy would make the chance of accidental fulfillment increasingly remote; yet there are hundreds of Messianic

prophecies in the Old Testament. Consider how unreasonable many of these prophecies were, and how unlikely that each one (to say nothing of all collectively) would ever be fulfilled by chance. What were the chances that a virgin would ever conceive and bear a son? Impossible, by chance! And what were the chances that if she did conceive and bear a son that he would be born in the insignificant little village of Bethlehem? What were the chances that he would be called out of Egypt, that he would be called a Nazarene? What were the chances that he would be crucified, when crucifixion was a method of execution unknown among the Jews? And what were the chances that he would be raised from the dead? Someone has calculated that the mathematical probability that these would all be fulfilled, purely by chance, is one in eighty-four followed by ninety-seven zeros (Hamilton, Basis of the Christian Faith, p. 157).

The second question to be answered is:

"Could all of these prophecies have been fulfilled by some opportunist's design?" That is, could a man (Jesus) have set out deliberately to make himself the Messiah by consciously seeking to fulfill the prophetic statements in his people's historic literature? There are some statements in the New Testament which might seem, superficially, to lend support to this explanation. For example, Matthew relates that on one occasion Christ healed many and then charged them not to make Him known "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Behold, my servant whom I have chosen; . . . He shall not strive nor cry aloud; neither shall anyone hear his voice in the streets" (Matt. 12:15-19). Quite often the Gospel writers use this expression, "that it might be fulfilled," in explaining some occurrence in our Lord's ministry, and in some cases they are prophecies which Christ might have designed to fulfill. On the other hand, many of the Old Testament prophecies involve circumstances and events which were completely beyond the control of Christ; and in the face of these prophecies this "fulfillment by design" theory breaks down. There are the actions and attitudes of other people, historical places and events—all beyond the volition of one who would consciously seek to fulfill prophecy. Suppose that the man Jesus did set out to make himself the Messiah by deliberately fulfilling prophecy. Could a man deliberately will his own virgin birth? How are we to explain the virgin birth? Did it happen? If so, that fact alone is enough to prove the supernatural origin of prophecy and its fulfillment. Is the story of the virgin birth a hoax? The evidences will not permit such a view! And what about the circumstances connected with the death of Christ, when so much depended on the attitudes, hatreds and actions of others. Could a man deliberately plan for one of his own disciples to betray Him? And could he determine the amount of money which bitter enemies would pay for his betrayal? What control could he

have over the place of his burial? How could he be certain that he would make his grave with the rich? And above all, how could such an opportunist consciously design his own resurrection from the dead? This theory that Christ deliberately set out to fulfill prophecy and to make himself the Messiah is impossible and untenable.

The third question is:

"Could all of these prophecies have been fulfilled by some mother's (in this case, Mary's) deliberate design?" There is not a fragment of evidence in the New Testament to support this idea, and every objection to Christ's deliberately fulfilling the prophecies would weigh as heavily against the possibility of some mother's doing it in behalf of her son. It is true that a mother might consciously determine the place of her son's birth (Bethlehem), but could she also determine that he would be virgin-born? The betrayal by a friend, the scattering of his disciples, the hatred of his enemies, the casting lots for his garments, the purchase of the potter's field—could she willfully scheme the accomplishment of these ends? Assuredly not!

The fourth question is:

"Could these prophecies have been fulfilled by the design of Christ's enemies?" There are some prophecies which they could have fulfilled consciously, but what motive could have prompted such action? They knew that when the Messiah came, he would fulfill those prophecies, but they denied Christ's claim that he was the Messiah. They hated Him bitterly. Why, then, would they have strengthened Christ's claim to be the Messiah by consciously fulfilling the prophecies for Him? Such a course would have been unthinkable. It would be more reasonable to think that wherever possible they would consciously refrain from fulfilling the prophecies.

Thus, it is not possible that the Old Testament prophecies could have been fulfilled by the design of Christ, his mother or his enemies. The Miraculous element alone, the virgin birth and resurrection, would preclude the possibility of such a conscious fulfillment. Yet, the fact remains that the prophecies were written hundreds of years before Christ and were fulfilled in his life. The only possible explanation is that the Old Testament prophets spoke by inspiration and that God's wise providence was the foundation of their fulfillment. Certainly, there was a designed fulfillment of these prophecies; but it was God's design, not man's!

Finally:

the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are an indirect evidence for the inspiration of the New Testament. Christ claimed to be the Son of God, and on the basis of that claim he promised to send his apostles the Holy Spirit, who would guide them into all the truth and preserve them from error. If Christ's claim to deity is true, his promise was true, and the Holy Spirit did verbally inspire the writers of the

New Testament. The Messianic prophecies are an unshakable evidence for the deity of Christ, and thus indirectly, for the verbal inspiration of the New Testament.

Conclusion

The evidence is clear and unmistakable. Here are the two pictures of Christ, one painted by Old Testament prophets hundreds of years before the Word became flesh, the other painted by those disciples who saw his miracles, who sorrowed at his death, and who triumphed as witnesses of his resurrection. Here are two pictures, and they coincide in every common detail. No opportunist could have designed the fulfillment of these many prophecies, nor could any mother have schemed to make her son the Messiah. This is the evidence of "Christ in Prophecy," and when we consider its force, we are led to exclaim with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," and with doubting Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Tom Mitchell had a problem with his vision this week. Dr's are monitoring
- David & Catherin are visiting family in GA, returning home this week
- Ben Palmer is traveling back today from NM
- Sylvia Ward, Ross's Mom, starting in-home rehab
- Cameron Bauman brain tumor and radiation treatments
- Scott Boucher (Sparks NV) cancer treatment
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines

Worship Assignments

Today

Song Leader – Chad Mitchell

Lord's Table – Ben Palmer
– David Porter

Wednesday

Song Leader – Ross Ward

Invitation – Chad Mitchell

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



[www.facebook.com @blackfootchurch](http://www.facebook.com/blackfootchurch)
www.blackfootchurch.com