



Foundations of

FAITH

The Christ of Prophecy

Lesson 10

Two of the strongest proofs of the inspiration of the Bible are the prophecies in the Old Testament and the person of Christ in the New Testament. These two evidences are united in the Messianic prophecies. The Bible gives us two pictures of Christ – the “picture of prophecy” as found in the Old Testament prediction of the Messiah and the “picture of the eyewitnesses” as found in the account given in the four gospels. That these two pictures coincide remarkably is proof of two things – (1) that the Old Testament prophets were actually able to foretell future events and hence were divinely inspired in their writings and (2) that since Jesus fulfils these prophecies so completely he must be the Messiah (or Christ) promised to the Jews.

It has been said that there are more than 300 distinct prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the Messiah. The Jews in the time of Christ were earnestly looking for this deliverer. When the apostles preached Christ to the Jews they proved by the prophecies that he was the Messiah or “anointed one.” Only a few of the many prophecies can be considered here.

HIS LINEAGE. The Old Testament clearly foretells both the tribe and family from which the Messiah was to come. Of his tribe it is prophesied, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.” (Gen. 49:10) The sceptre is the emblem of kingly authority. The fulfilment is found in Hebrews 7:14. “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah.”

The Christ was to come from the family of Jesse (the father of David) and was to be a descendant of King David himself. We are told, “And there shall come

forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” (Isaiah 11:1) “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant; your seed will I establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations.” (Psalm 89:3-4) Paul shows that this is fulfilled in Christ when he says of David, “Of this man’s seed has God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.” (Acts 13:23)

HIS BIRTH. The very place of birth of the Messiah was foretold in the Old Testament. The prophet Micah predicted, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2) There were two Bethlehems in Palestine and the one described was the “city of David”, a few miles from Jerusalem. Although Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth, a combination of providential circumstances caused Jesus to be born in this insignificant village. Thus we read the fulfilment, “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea.” (Matt. 2:1)

It was prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14) Matthew records the statement of the angel who spoke to Joseph saying, “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” (Matt. 1:20) It has been objected that the Hebrew word in Isaiah 7:14 from which the word virgin is translated

means young woman instead of virgin. The Revised Standard Version has so translated it. This translation has brought much criticism of this version of the Bible. In defence of the use of the word virgin it may be observed – (1) the Hebrew word “almah” from which the word virgin comes may be translated either “young woman” or “virgin”; (2) “virgin” is evidently the intended meaning of the writer since the conception was to be a sign of something out of the ordinary, which would be true of a virgin, but not of a young woman; (3) the translators of the Greek Septuagint in the third century before Christ rendered the word “almah” by a Greek word meaning “virgin”; (4) Matthew quotes the passage from Isaiah and renders it “virgin”. (Matt. 1:23)

HIS HARBINGER. It was prophesied that the Messiah would be preceded by a forerunner who would prepare the way for him. “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” (Isaiah 40:3) “Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.” (Mal. 3:1) “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” (Mal. 4:5) The fulfilment of these prophecies is to be found in the life and work of John the Baptist. We read, “And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” (Matt. 3:1-3. – A.S.V.) John is called Elijah in Luke 1:17, and he possessed the characteristics of Elijah in the way that he dressed and in that his wilderness mission called men to repentance.

HIS SUFFERING. Probably the finest and most complete description of the Messiah is found in Isaiah 53. It was from this chapter that Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch as they rode along the way between Jerusalem and Gaza. (Acts 8:26-40) Notice the following from that chapter. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our

peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:3-7) Notice the agreement between this prophecy and the actual suffering of Christ. (1) He was despised and rejected by his own people. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John 1:11) (2) He was to suffer for others. Of Jesus, Paul says, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Romans 4:25) Through his suffering and death a perfect sin offering was made that all men might be saved. (3) He is pictured by Isaiah as suffering patiently as a lamb brought to the slaughter and as a sheep about to be sheared. When on trial for his life Jesus made no effort to escape or retaliate. “And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace.” (Matt. 26:62-63) “And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.” (Matt. 27:12) “And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.” (Matt. 27:14)

HIS DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION. There are many prophecies that relate to the last days of Christ upon the earth. The Messiah was to enter Jerusalem riding upon an ass. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, the King comes unto you; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” (Zech. 9:9) The fulfilment of this is described in Matthew 21 in which we are told how Jesus entered Jerusalem on an ass a few days before his crucifixion as multitudes cried “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

In Psalm 22:16-18, we read, “They pierced my hands and my feet ... They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” This is a description of the crucifixion of Jesus. As he was hanged on the cross his hands and feet were pierced by the nails that tore into his body. Below him, the soldiers parted his garments and cast lots for his coat. “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a

part; and also his coat: now his coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." (John 19:23-2)

As he was suspended on the cross "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall." (Matt. 27:34) This was a fulfilment of Psalm 69:21. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

That Christ was to be buried with the rich was foretold by Isaiah. "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." (Isaiah 53:9) Matthew gives the fulfilment in detail. "When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple. He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed." (Matt. 27:57-60)

But the Messiah was not to remain in the grave. David predicted, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm 16:10). The Hebrew word here translated as hell is "sheol" and means "The abode of the dead." It should not be confused with the Greek word "Gehenna" which is also translated hell in the New Testament and which means the place of eternal punishment. David's prophecy was that the soul of Christ would not be left in the abode of the dead nor would his body be left in the grave to corrupt. The many passages pertaining to the resurrection of Jesus are ample proof of the fulfilment. Peter quoted the prediction in Acts 2:27 to prove the resurrection of Jesus to the Jews on Pentecost.

What is the significance of the amazing correspondence between these prophecies and their fulfilment? First, they prove the inspiration of the Bible. Second, they show that the New Testament cannot be completely understood without a knowledge of the Old Testament. Third, they prove that Jesus is the Christ and that as the Christ, his commands must be obeyed and his promises may be relied upon.

TEST ON LESSON 10

Fill in the blanks:

1. Two pictures of Christ which the Bible gives us are the picture of
and the picture of the
2. Jesus was of the tribe of..... and was a direct descendant of King
the son of
3. prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.
4. Isaiah's prophecy relating to the virgin birth is quoted in the New Testament by
5. The harbinger of Christ was who was compared by the prophets to
the prophet
6. The most complete prophecy of the Messiah is recorded in chapter of Isaiah.

7. The same psalm which foretold that the Messiah's garments would be parted also prophesied that his hands and feet would be
8. On the cross Jesus was given mingled with gall.
9. He was buried in the tomb of
10. David's prophecy that Christ would not be left in the grave was quoted on Pentecost by

List three conclusions which may be drawn from the agreement of the Messianic prophecies and their fulfilment:

1.
2.
3.

The locations of several Messianic prophecies are given in column 1. In Column 2 the locations of the New Testament fulfilments are listed. Column 3 contains brief statements relating to what is contained in these prophecies. Match column 2 with Column 1 by writing the NUMBERS in the first row of blanks. Then match Column 3 with Column 1 by writing the LETTERS in the second row of blanks. The first one is done correctly.

Column 1			Column 2	Column 3
Micah 5:2	5	J	1. Matthew 27:12	A. Burial
Psalms 16:10			2. Acts 3:22	B. Lineage
Isaiah 50:6			3. John 19:23, 24	C. A prophet
Isaiah 53:7			4. Mark 11:1-10	D. Abuse at trial
Isaiah 53:9			5. Matthew 2:1	E. A messenger before him
Psalms 22:18			6. Matthew 26:14, 15	F. His garments parted
Psalms 89:3, 4			7. Acts 2:27-31	G. Triumphal entry
Deuteronomy 18:15			8. Matthew 11:7, 10	H. Price of betrayal
Zechariah 9:9			9. Acts 13:22, 23	J. Place of birth
Zechariah 11:12			10. Matthew 26:67, 68	K. His demeanour at trial
Malachi 3:1			11. Matthew 27:57-60	L. His body not corrupted

The Eternal Purpose of God

Lesson 9

Answers

These lessons are based on the King James Version, so if you are using another translation the words employed may vary slightly. Sometimes an alternative answer is possible. The following is a useful guide.

Section 1 – 1. Prophecy, eyewitnesses

2. Judah. David, Jesse
3. Micah
4. Matthew
5. John the Baptist, Elijah
6. Fifty-three
7. Pierced
8. Vinegar
9. Joseph (of Arimathea)
10. Peter

Section 2 – (Order not important)

1. Inspiration of the Bible proved.
2. New Testament cannot be completely understood without knowledge of the Old Testament.
3. Jesus is the Christ.

Section 3 – First row down: 7, 10, 1, 11, 3, 9, 2, 4, 6, 8.

Second row down: L, D, K, A, F, B, C, G, H, E.

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