

# Messianic Prophecy

**Dr. Steven Waterhouse**

A Confirmation that  
The Bible is True  
and  
Jesus is the Promised Savior

## Messianic Prophecy

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## **Messianic Prophecy**

The Old Testament contains numerous predictions about a coming Deliverer, the Messiah. No critic can assert these were written after the facts of the life of Jesus. The Dead Sea Scrolls were copied long before the time of Jesus, and they clearly have these prophecies. The purpose of this study is to establish that these texts were correctly understood and translated from the Hebrew by those who see Jesus as the fulfillment. Messianic prophecy is probably the strongest evidence that the Bible is a book of supernatural origin and that Jesus of Nazareth must be identified as the Messiah, the Savior of all who place their faith in Him and His death on the Cross for our sins.

### **His Birth and Ministry**

#### 1. The First Promise of a Savior

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel (Genesis 3:15).*

Does this curse only mean humans and snakes will harm each other? Or, is Genesis 3:15 the foundational promise of a Deliverer?

A. The Hebrew word for “seed” is used 227 times in the Old Testament. It refers to plants (like English) and humans (unlike English), but “seed” is virtually never used of animal offspring in either language. Thus, the serpent’s “seed” would not be literal baby snakes but Satan’s followers.

B. Revelation 12:9 and Romans 16:20 link the serpent to Satan. Thus, Genesis 3:15 is the foundational Messianic prophecy of a Savior who will destroy Satan and his followers.

#### 2. Messiah’s unique ancestry

A. Descent from Abraham (Genesis 12:3, 22:7-8, 18; Galatians 3:8, 16)

B. Descent from Isaac (Genesis 21:12)

C. Descent from Jacob

*A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel ... One from Jacob shall have dominion ... (Numbers 24:17b, 19a).*

Did the Magi (wise men) know about Daniel's prophecy referring to the time for Messiah to come (see pp. 7-8) and then also make a connection to the "star from Jacob" in the Book of Numbers? Rabbi Onkelos and Rabbi Jonathan both considered Numbers 24:15-19 Messianic.<sup>1</sup>

D. Descent from Judah

*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples (Genesis 49:10).*

(1). Who is "Shiloh?" (This form is only in Genesis 49:10.)

a. Is it a name for the Messiah? (We find this name no where else.)

b. Does it derive from the word for "peace" (*shalom*) meaning "He who gives peace"?

c. Does it mean "to whom it belongs"?

(2). All options are Messianic! The rabbis interpreted Genesis 49:10 as Messianic, and the text obviously refers to a king, "to him shall be the obedience of the people."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Noordtjij, *Numbers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> "From ancient times, (Targums, etc.) this passage has been taken as Messianic." Homer Heater, Hebrew Messianic Exegesis, Unpublished notes, Capital Seminary, 1981. See also Craig A. Evans, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*

E. Descent from Jesse (Isaiah 11:1-4)

F. Descent from David (Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 2 Samuel 7:13, 16)

G. Yet, the Solomonic line was cursed in Jeremiah 22:30 and 36:30. This means the Messiah must have *no blood connection* to the Solomonic line, yet still be a descendent of David and have the legal right to the royal line! This would be a very difficult standard to fulfill.

Conclusion – The Messiah’s prophesied ancestry would be very restricted. By Mary (genealogy in Luke 3:23-38) the Lord Jesus Christ has the blood of David but through his son, Nathan, not through Solomon. Yet, by His adoptive father Joseph He has the legal rights of the royal line (Matthew 1:1-18).

### 3. The Virgin Birth

*Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).*

Some believe the Hebrew word *almah* only means “maiden” not a virgin. Did the early Christians exaggerate the intent of Isaiah 7:14? If the Hebrew word means virgin, this is an impressive prediction. The next most rare thing to a virgin birth is to have ones mother assert a virgin birth! Very few would ever meet this criterion.

A. “Virgin” is within the range of meaning of the Hebrew word *almah*.

(1). In the cognate (related) Ugaritic language *almah* means “virgin.”<sup>3</sup>

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(Nashville: Holman, 2010), p. 256 for ancient Jewish commentaries regarding Genesis 49:10 as Messianic (4Q252 5:1-5).

<sup>3</sup> Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute), 1965, p. 183. See also E. J. Young, *Studies in Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 1:278-291.

(2). In Genesis 24, Rebekah is a virgin in verse 16, “a virgin, and no one had relations with her” and also an *almah* in verse 43. Therefore, *almah* can mean “virgin.”

(3). In Exodus 2, Miriam watched her brother Moses floating in the Nile. The point is that she was too young to be accused of being his mother. Exodus 2:8 calls Miriam an *almah*, i.e., virgin.

B. The context in Isaiah 7:14 calls for a miraculous request, “make it as deep as Sheol or high as heaven” (verse 11).

C. In the Septuagint (LXX) the ancient rabbis translated *almah* as *parthenos* which is the clear Greek word for “virgin.”

D. As astounding as it is, Isaiah 7:14 called for a virgin birth, and Mary asserted this claim for her Son (Matthew 1:16, 18, 23, 25; Luke 1:27, 34.)

4. Called “Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6-7) – The Messiah would be God becoming human. Who else in world history has ever made a credible claim to being God?

5. Born in Bethlehem

*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity ... and He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. This One will be our peace (Micah 5:2, 4, 5a).*

The scribes Herod consulted considered Micah 5:2 to be Messianic (Matthew 2:5-6). Perhaps the reference in Micah 5:4 also reminded them of David being called the “Shepherd of Israel” in 2 Samuel 5:2. No one can artificially fulfill a prediction about his place of birth.

6. The time of Messiah’s birth

A. Cessation of Tribal Authority (Genesis 49:10) – Power would not cease from Judah until the Messiah arrives.

(1). The Babylonian Talmud in *Sabbath* 15a says, “Forty years before the destruction of the Temple ... the Sanhedrin ... did not adjudicate capital cases.” The Palestinian Talmud in *Sanhedrin* 18a and 24b says, “Capital punishment was abolished forty years before the destruction of the Temple.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, by about A.D. 30 judicial powers in Jerusalem (Judah) ended.

(2). When the courts in Judah lost the authority over capital cases, they tied this to the prophecy in Genesis 49:10. Rabbi Rachman says, “When the members of the Sanhedrin found themselves deprived over the right of life and death, a general consternation took possession of them; they covered their heads with ashes, and their bodies with sackcloth, exclaiming, ‘woe unto us, for the sceptre has departed from Judah, and the Messiah has not come.’”<sup>5</sup>

(3). Conclusion: The removal of judicial powers from the court in Judah may have been a time indicator for the presence of the Messiah. (See John 18:31.)

B. Messiah’s coming and 69 “weeks” (seven-year cycles) from Daniel Chapter 9.

*So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary (Daniel 9:25-26a).*

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<sup>4</sup> See Waterhouse, *Jesus and History* (Amarillo, TX: Westcliff Press, 2009), p. 133.

<sup>5</sup> Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade, 1972), p.177.

(1). General Statement – The Messiah would come and be “cut off” (killed) before the rebuilt Temple and City are destroyed. The Messiah must have been in the world before A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed the temple. Who else could it be except Jesus?

(2). Specific calculation – From the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (in Nehemiah’s time) until Messiah would be 69 cycles of seven years. Using 30 day months, Harold Hoehner calculated Daniel’s prediction to end on what we call Palm Sunday (March 30, A.D. 33).<sup>6</sup> This proves the miraculous nature of Scripture and that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

## 7. Types concerning the Messiah’s birth<sup>7</sup>

### A. Mother’s grief, children’s suffering

*Thus says the Lord, a voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more (Jeremiah 31:15). (See also Matthew 2:17-18.)*

In its context Jeremiah considers Rachel (a founding mother in Israel) to be figuratively weeping over her children being dragged into exile from Ramah. Yet, the massacre of the Bethlehem infants by wicked Herod is perhaps an even more appropriate parallel as Rachel’s tomb was actually in Bethlehem (Genesis 35:19).

### B. God’s Son out of Egypt

*And out of Egypt I called My Son (Hosea 11:1).*

Hosea 11:1 refers to the Exodus, but Matthew 2:15 concludes this is a type of Jesus who is the greater Son coming out of Egypt.

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<sup>6</sup> See Harold Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects to the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), pp. 116-139.

<sup>7</sup> A “type” is a person or thing that foreshadows a future person or thing, a parallel occurrence.

8. A Forerunner (John the Baptist)

*Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me (Malachi 3:1a). (See also Matthew 11:10; Luke 1:17.)*

9. Ministry in Galilee

*But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them (Isaiah 9:1-2).*

10. A Prophet

*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him (Deuteronomy 18:15).*

... and Miracle Worker

*Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy (Isaiah 35:5-6a, see also 42:7).*

A. The greatest evidence that Jesus did miracles is that **His enemies agreed He did them**. They just attributed His powers to Beelzebul not God! (John 11:47; Mark 6:14; Luke 23:8; John 3:2; Acts 2:22, 4:16, 10:37-38, 26:26, but see Matthew 9:33-34, 12:22-24; Mark 3:22; John 7:20, 8:48-49, 10:19-21). For extrabiblical examples of Jesus viewed as a sorcerer by His critics see endnote 360 in Waterhouse, *Jesus and History*.

B. Ancient literature outside the Bible shows the Jewish public expected the Messiah to be a miracle worker. Bringing in the Kingdom of God was associated with overpowering Satan, which in turn

demanded supernatural powers of healing and exorcism.<sup>8</sup> It is an historical fact that Jesus must have had a reputation as a miracle worker in order to satisfy the ancient cultural expectations of being a candidate for the Messiah. The masses listened to Jesus not just for His oratory, but rather because He demonstrated powers to back His claims to bring in the Kingdom of God.

C. The “principle of embarrassment” means that embarrassing events must be historical. Unless true, shameful details would not have been recorded. Therefore, John the Baptist must have had doubts about Jesus being the Messiah, but then Jesus’ response to him must be taken as historical fact including Jesus’ claim to working miracles (Matthew 11:2-6).

D. These historical supports showing that the Lord Jesus Christ did miracles prove His claim to fulfill prophecy and be the anointed One, the Messiah.

## 11. The Triumphal Entry

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).*

Zechariah 9:9 prophesies that Israel’s king would come humbly on a donkey. The specific prediction is that he would ride “a colt, the foal of a donkey” into Jerusalem. Riding an untrained animal through a noisy parade route is a specific marker for the Messiah (Matthew 21:1-7). In addition, the Gospel of John claims Lazarus was in the city *after his own funeral* and that witnesses to His resurrection were exciting the crowd to see Jesus coming on the donkey. These are strong evidences that Jesus did miracles. How could one write such claims if they were untrue? But if true, consider what this means about the power of Jesus to raise the dead (John 12:9-11, 17-19)!

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<sup>8</sup> See *The Testament of Moses* written in A.D. 30 and Qumran fragment 4Q521 cited in Waterhouse, *Jesus and History*, pp. 79-80.

### **His Death and Resurrection**

1. Psalm 22:1, 14-18 – Could Psalm 22 be taken only as a reference to David alone? Would Old Testament readers have made the connection to the Great Son of David, the Messiah?

Some of the predictions can not be made to apply to David's life. No one gambled for David's clothes. When did David suffer wounds to his hands and feet? Psalm 22 must have been intended to be Messianic.

#### A. Fulfillments

(1). Words from the Cross (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34) - v. 1

*My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1).*

(2). Hated by the people - v. 6

*But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised by the people (Psalm 22:6).*

(3). Ridiculed, wagging heads (Matthew 27:29-30, 39; Mark 15:29) - v. 7

*All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head ... (Psalm 22:7).*

(4). Insults (Matthew 27:43) - v. 8

*Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him; let him rescue him, because He delights in him (Psalm 22:8).*

(5). Bones out of joint - v. 14

*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint (Psalm 22:14).*

(6). Exhaustion from heat and thirst (more directly from Psalm 69:21, see also John 19:28) - v. 15

*My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws (Psalm 22:15).*

(7). Appointed to death - v. 15c

*And you lay me in the dust of death (Psalm 22:15c).*

B. Impressive fulfillments in terms of apologetics – These prophecies are distinctive, incapable of artificial fulfillment, and uncommon for a king.

(1). Distribution of garments (plural) casting lots for clothing (singular) - v. 18

*They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots (Psalm 22:18).*

a. All four Gospels record fulfillment but only John makes any connection back to Psalm 22 (Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24).

b. My personal conclusion is that Psalm 22:18 is probably a detailed prediction as John 19:23-24 seems to prefer. The four soldiers divided the typical four items of a man's apparel (sandals, headdress, belt, outer garment) but gambled for the singular more valuable robe.<sup>9</sup> There is evidence that the Romans allowed a loincloth in Judea so as to not offend cultural modesty.<sup>10</sup>

*Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another, "let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill Scripture:, "they*

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<sup>9</sup> See Homer Kent, *Light in the Darkness* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), p.209.

<sup>10</sup> *Jubilees* 3.30-31; 7.20.

*divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots” (John 19:23-24).*

(2). Pinning down hands and feet/wounds to hands and feet - v. 16c

... *They pierced my hands and my feet* (Psalm 22:16c).

The New Testament does not mention v. 16 as Messianic, and some modern interpreters do not think it is Messianic e.g., the Net Bible.

a. The Masoretic Text reads, “like a lion my hands and feet.” Critics assert Christians see prophecy when none exists. Perhaps the word picture only refers to restriction. However, this phrase alone still favors *both* restriction and wounds just as would happen in a lion attack (being pinned down and clawed).

b. The Septuagint - Several centuries before the crucifixion, the **Jewish** translators interpreted Psalm 22:16 by a Greek verb that means “they pierced my hands and feet.” Therefore, a Messianic reference to the Cross is not a Christian exaggeration.

c. The Dead Sea Scrolls – the *Nahal Hever* Dead Sea Scroll predates Jesus and reads, “They have pierced my hands and feet.”<sup>11</sup>

d. The New Testament and Psalm 22:16 – Unlike Psalm 22:18, the New Testament never ties Jesus’ nail wounds on his hands or feet back to Psalm 22:16! In fact, reference to any nails at all is only in John and only after the crucifixion narrative as a subordinate event. In John 20:25 Thomas will not accept the resurrection until he sees “the imprint of the nails” and feels “the place of the nails.” Only as an afterthought would we even know about the nails.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Craig A. Evans, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Nashville: Holman, 2010), p. 274.

<sup>12</sup> The invitation to “see my hands and my feet” in Luke 24:39 would not be definitive as to nail scars without the specific reference in John 20.

e. Apologetics and Psalm 22:16 – Bible critics used to assert that only ropes not nails were used to affix a crucifixion victim. However, in 1968 archaeologists found an ossuary of a crucified man named Yehohanan. His leg was broken and had an iron spike through the ankle.<sup>13</sup> The Old Testament predicts the piercing of hands and feet, and both the New Testament and archaeology confirm the fulfillment. The fact that the Gospel authors do not make any connection to fulfilled prophecy in Psalm 22 actually proves they were recording the historical facts regarding Jesus' death and not "fishing" the Old Testament for predictions and conforming their accounts to fit.

f. Conclusion – Psalm 22:16 and 18 are specific and impressive predictions that could not have been artificially fulfilled. They do not refer to David but to David's greater Son. They were written centuries before Jesus. The fact that Psalm 22:16 was not quoted as fulfilled prophecy in the New Testament only serves to show the authors were writing events as they happened not conforming their accounts to the Old Testament.

2. Psalm 41:9 - Just as David's trusted advisor, Ahithophel, betrayed him, so the Messiah would be betrayed. John 13:18 records that Jesus Himself regarded Psalm 41 as a type.

*Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me (Psalm 41:9).*

3. Psalm 69:4, 8-9, 21 – Contrary to the idea of a universally popular Messiah, Psalm 69 portrays one hated and rejected (see also Isaiah 53 and Psalm 118:22). Many New Testament texts teach Psalm 69 as Messianic.

#### A. Psalm 69: Parallels to the Messiah

(1). Verse 4, hated without cause – Jesus in John 15:25 treats Psalm 69:4 as a reference to Himself.

(2). Verse 9, zeal for the Temple – John 2:17 teaches Psalm 69:9 is Messianic.

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<sup>13</sup> See Waterhouse, *Jesus and History*, p. 153.

(3). Verse 9, reproached for God's sake – Paul in Romans 15:3 teaches Psalm 69:9 is Messianic.

B. Parallels with stronger apologetic significance

(1). Verse 8, hated by brothers

*I have become estranged from my brothers and an alien to my mother's sons (Psalm 69:8).*

David's brothers criticized David's bravado of not fearing Goliath (1 Samuel 17:28ff.), but they did not hate him. Jesus' brothers thought He was crazy (Mark 3:20-21) and did not believe Him (John 7:3-5) until after His resurrection appearance (1 Corinthians 15:7). Thus, we have a type of Jesus that is not referenced as such in the New Testament.

(2). Verse 21, thirst, gall and vinegar

*They also gave me gall for my food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:21).*

Both Matthew 27:34, 48 and Mark 15:23, 36 record not only one but two offers of some kind of drink to Jesus. The first time was when the Lord was being nailed to the Cross. He was offered wine mixed with "gall." This is believed to be a pain killer, and the Lord refused it.<sup>14</sup>

Also, the soldiers evidently had some cheap sour wine for themselves. A second time after Jesus said "I thirst" they offered this "wine-vinegar" to Him. John 19:28 ties Jesus' thirst to Psalm 69:21, but no text specifically refers to gall and vinegar. However, we seem to have a specific type of two offers for drink. Jesus was offered both "gall" then "sour wine-vinegar." He refused both.

C. Conclusion – Psalm 69 provides more specific types that were not literally true of David and could not have been artificially fulfilled.

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<sup>14</sup> See *Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), note for Matthew 27:34.

4. Isaiah 50:6, 52:13-53:12 – These texts in Isaiah contain at least twenty Messianic predictions. The Dead Sea Scrolls prove these prophecies pre-date the life of Christ. The first Christians took them as Messianic (e.g., Matthew 8:17 and Acts 8:28-35) but so did Jewish interpreters until the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>15</sup> Then they changed the definition of the “Servant of the Lord” from the Messiah to the nation of Israel. Like the Psalms (22, 41, 69) and Daniel 9:26, Isaiah definitely predicts a Messiah who would be rejected and killed. Some predictions are more impressive than others in terms of apologetics. All of them reveal an impressive Savior and give a rich theology of the Cross.

A. Isaiah 50:6

*I gave my back to those who strike me, and my cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover my face from humiliation and spitting (Isaiah 50:6).*

The Messiah would be beaten on the back, have His beard pulled; and people would spit on Him. The Gospel records spitting both at the Jewish trial (Matthew 26:67; Mark 14:65) and by the Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:30, Mark 15:19) Of course, His back was beaten severely (Matthew 27:26ff, John 19:1ff).

B. Isaiah 52:13-15

(1). Verse 14, a “marred” face

*So His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men (Isaiah 52:14).*

The Messiah would be disfigured. The word “appearance” refers to Rachel in Genesis 29:17 and Esther in Esther 2:7. It can also refer to men: Joseph (Genesis 39:6); David (1 Samuel 16:18); Adonijah (1 Kings 1:6). One can interpret verse 14 as “comparative.” He would be more disfigured than any man. I prefer a “separative” emphasis. He would be “beyond” looking human (Matthew 26:67, 27:30; Mark 14:65, 15:19).

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<sup>15</sup> See *Ryrie Study Bible* note for Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12.

(2). Verse 15, priestly purification

*Thus, He will sprinkle many nations ... (Isaiah 52:15).*

He would sprinkle, i.e., purify the nations of the world (see 1 Peter 1:2).

C. Isaiah 53

(1). Verses 1 and 3, despised/forsaken

*Who has believed our message? .... He was despised and forsaken of men (Isaiah 53:1, 3).*

The true Messiah would be unpopular (John 1:11, 12:37-38; Romans 10:16).

(2). Verse 2

*For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground (Isaiah 53:2).*

The Messiah would have a humble origin.

(3). Verse 2

*He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him (Isaiah 53:2).*

He would not appear as a king.

(4). Verse 3

*And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him (Isaiah 53:3).*

Instead, He would be repulsive in appearance (because of abuse).

(5). Also, verse 3, “forsaken by men” – here is another phrase showing the Messiah would be unpopular. During His ministry even some of His followers abandoned Him (John 6:66ff.).

(6). Verses 3-4

He would be “acquainted with” and “carry” our grief and sorrows. These Hebrew words can refer to emotional/spiritual “grief,” but they can also include a reference to sickness and physical pains.<sup>16</sup> The New Testament at least includes the latter (Matthew 8:14-17; possibly 1 Peter 2:24). It is best to include the basis for healing in the Lord’s past atonement but to qualify that complete removal of suffering is future (e.g., Romans 8:18-23; Revelation 21:4).

(7). Verses 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, substitutionary death –

The Messiah would “bear” and “carry” **our** sorrows (verse 4). He would suffer for **our** “transgressions” and “iniquities” (verse 5). Like the symbolism of one laying hands on an animal sacrifice, “the Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all” (verse 6 KJV). Others deserved the punishment, but Jesus Himself endured the “stroke” (verse 8). Isaiah 53 stresses the substitutionary atonement again in verse 11 ... “He will bear *their* iniquities.”

(8). Verse 5, pierced

*But He was pierced through for our transgressions ... (Isaiah 53:5).*

Just as in Zechariah 12:10, Isaiah 53:5 prophesies the Messiah would be “pierced” (only John 19:34, 37).

(9). Verse 5, scourging (Matthew 27:26)

*And by His scourging we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).*

The Messiah would be scourged. It is possible to interpret the singular as one continuous injury or “welt” (see singular in 1 Peter 2:24).

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<sup>16</sup> See the Net Bible translation.

(10). Verse 7, no defense against accusers

*He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7).*

Jesus did not defend Himself at His trial (Matthew 27:12; Luke 23:9; John 19:9-11). Acts 8:32ff. directly quotes this prophecy as Messianic.

(11). Verse 8, a sham trial and execution

*By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living (Isaiah 53:8, cf. “cut off” in Daniel 9:26).*

The Messiah would be “taken away” (to die) after a corrupt trial.

(12). Verses 12 and 9 –

■ The Messiah would be “numbered with the transgressors”(verse 12) ... ■ expected to be in a criminal’s grave after execution because verse 9 says, “His grave was assigned with wicked men” ...■ Yet, there would be a change, and He would be taken by a rich man after death (“He was with a rich man in His death,” verse 9). These amazing unexpected results give detailed prophecies that could not have been a contrived fulfillment. Jesus died between two criminals (Matthew 27:38) but was taken by Joseph of Arimathea and buried in a rich man’s tomb (Matthew 27:57ff.).

(13). Verse 9, sinless –

The suffering servant would not sin, even with His mouth (1 Peter 2:22). Jesus challenged His enemies to produce evidence of a sin (John 8:46). In its own way this is a remarkable prophecy. The Messiah would have to make a credible claim to being sinless.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Note KJV verse 10, “thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.” Jesus suffered physically, but somehow His **soul** endured the equivalent, but not

(14). Verses 10-11, the resurrection –

Along with Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 53 predicts the death and also the resurrection of the Messiah. In verse 10 “He will see His offspring” and “He will prolong His days.” The Masoretic text in verse 11 says, “He will see and be satisfied.” This alone supports a resurrection. Yet, in one of the few significant changes to the Masoretic text of Isaiah 53, the Dead Sea Scroll text specifically reads “He will see *light* and be satisfied.” While the Dead Sea Scrolls show the careful transmission of the Old Testament, the few variations that actually do occur give even stronger support to traditional interpretations of Messianic prophecy!

D. Conclusions: Isaiah 50-53 seems to contain more Messianic predictions than any other single portion of the Old Testament. It clearly predicts suffering, a corrupt trial, death, and new life. The Messiah would be scourged, pierced, considered a criminal but also buried with the rich, and raised again. This not only identifies Jesus as Messiah, but also teaches He must be a substitutionary sacrifice and would as a priest “sprinkle” or cleanse the nations.

5. Types and prophecies in Zechariah – Concerning the Savior’s death, Zechariah gives two specific types and one prophecy.

A. Zechariah 11:4, 12-13 – betrayal for thirty pieces of silver

*Thus says the Lord my God, “pasture the flock doomed to slaughter” .... I said to them, “if it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!” So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.” So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD (Zechariah 11:4, 12-13).*

The shepherd of Israel would be valued at thirty pieces of silver. In the context Zechariah himself is the shepherd. He tells his listeners to give him what his ministry is worth. Ultimately, this also refers to what

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identical, punishment of eternity in hell times the billions of people who would ever live.

God's ministry was worth to them (verse 13). They give him the price of a slave (30 silver pieces) which he throws to the potter in the Temple.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate Shepherd in Israel. Israel's leaders in His time regarded His life worth 30 pieces of silver. Judas threw the money back in the Temple, and it was ultimately given to buy the Potter's Field. While not a prophecy about the Messiah in its original context, Matthew saw that these parallels were clear Messianic types (Matthew 26:15, 27:3, 5a, 7). Matthew mentions Jeremiah because it was the first book in the prophetic section of the Hebrew Bible, but Matthew 27:9 clearly quotes Zechariah 11 as a Messianic type.<sup>18</sup>

B. Zechariah 13:7 - (followers will scatter)

*... Declares the Lord of hosts. Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered... (Zechariah 13:7).*

Sheep abandon the shepherd in peril. The disciples' abandonment of Jesus became another example of this truth. The Gospels quote this is as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27).

C. Zechariah 12:10 (the Lord pierced)

*... they will look upon Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son (Zechariah 12:10).*

John 19:37 quotes this as a Messianic prophecy. It also supports the Deity of Christ because the Lord God is the antecedent to the "one" who would be pierced.

6. Exodus 12:46 (Passover Lamb without broken bones)

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<sup>18</sup> Babylonian Talmud, *Babba Bathra*, 14b, see John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books 1984), p. 87.

*It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it (Exodus 12:46).*

To be a type of the Passover sacrifice the Messiah could be pierced. Yet, there must be no broken bones. Crucifixion victims would often die of asphyxiation. Hanging by their arms would produce difficulty in breathing. Then a man would push up with his legs producing extreme pain because of the nails in his ankles/feet but at least allowing a breath. To hasten and ensure death the executioner would break the legs. After the report that Jesus was dead, they did not break his legs but pierced His side. This preserved the type of a Passover lamb as taught by John (John 19:33, 36).

#### 7. Psalm 16:10 (the Resurrection) –

Psalm 16:10 says, “You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, neither will you allow your Holy One to undergo decay.” This could have been true of David only short term. Perhaps God protected Him from an immediate threat of death. However, long term David did die and decay. Therefore, the New Testament applies Psalm 16 to Jesus Christ, the Son of David (Acts 2:25-31, 13:35-39). There are two related prophecies:

##### A. Soul not abandoned to Sheol –

Our present study can not consider whether Sheol here refers to the grave or to a pre-cross righteous compartment of the underworld. Either way, the text affirms entrance but not abandonment. Jesus could enter the grave (or His “soul” descend to Hades), but not remain there! It seems that in Hebrew like English “abandonment” would presuppose entrance (one can hardly abandon a hat in the airport without first entering it). The precise Hebrew phrase “abandon to” occurs elsewhere only in Leviticus 19:10, Psalm 49:10, and Job 39:14. It seems to mean “to give to the possession or dominion of another.” Thus, the Messiah would die but never be under the possession or dominion of death. He would come back to life (as in Isaiah 53).

##### B. Body not to experience corruption –

In general this prophesies death but a soon resurrection. We can make a case that the original readers would have understood a resurrection before the fourth day. Rabbinic interpretation suggested the soul hovered around the body until the fourth day.<sup>19</sup>

This is not true theology (2 Corinthians 5:8), but it may explain why the fourth day was significant in the Lazarus account. This understanding may also mean the ancients would have interpreted Psalm 16 to permit a death and resurrection on the third day but only before the fourth day!<sup>20</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Significant prophecies about the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of the Messiah were definitely written centuries before the earthly life of Christ and have been correctly interpreted. This leads to the conclusion that the Bible is a supernatural book of divine origin and that Jesus of Nazareth qualifies as the promised Savior. Apologetics cannot make faith unnecessary, but it does make faith in the Lord Jesus Christ most reasonable. Trusting Jesus as Savior is not a large leap in the dark. It is a small step of faith trusting One who would never lie to us.

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<sup>19</sup> See C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), p. 401 citing *Eccl. R. 12.6; Lev. R 18.1*.

<sup>20</sup> For a full defense of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection see Waterhouse, *Jesus and History*, pp. 168-176.

## Messianic Prophecy

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