

JEWISH PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

G. Michael Cocoris

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INTRODUCTION

Based on reading their Scriptures, we know that the ancient Jews believed a Messiah was coming. What did their Scriptures, the Hebrew Bible (Protestants call the Jewish Scriptures the Old Testament), say the Messiah would be like? Christians are often accused of reinterpreting the Old Testament to fit their own view of the Messiah. So, the issue is not, “What does the New Testament say about the Old Testament?” but rather, “What does the Old Testament, apart from the New Testament, say about the Messiah?” Once that is established, the New Testament view should be considered in light of the Old Testament.

As will be demonstrated, the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies is the intended meaning of the Old Testament authors. It will also be demonstrated that Jesus fulfills those Old Testament prophecies. Some of them were fulfilled in the first coming of Christ and some will be fulfilled in His Second Coming. This study is about the prophecies fulfilled in the first coming of Christ.

Jesus said the Old Testament contained prophecies concerning the Messiah, which were fulfilled in Him. Luke records, “Then He (Jesus) said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ [Christ is the Greek word for Messiah] to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk. 24:25-27).

Later, Luke adds, “Then He (Jesus) said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things’” (Lk. 24:44-48).

The apostle Paul’s custom was to explain that the Old Testament taught that the Messiah had to suffer and rise again and that Jesus was this Messiah (Acts 17:1-4; 28:23). That is also what Apollos did (Acts 18:24-28).

When Jesus said that the Old Testament contained prophecies about Him, He referred to the “Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms” (Lk. 24:44). That was the Jewish threefold division of the Old Testament. According to Jesus, each of these sections contains passages about the Messiah, which means they spoke about Him. The prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ in each of these sections will be examined.

A note about the ancient Jewish texts: The Talmud is a central text of mainstream Judaism. It is a record of discussions by Rabbis (teachers) pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs, and history. The Mishnah was the first major written document of Jewish oral traditions. The Targumim (singular Targum) were explanations of the Jewish scriptures that a Rabbi would give in the common language of the listeners (usually Aramaic). Midrash is a compilation of teachings on the Jewish Scriptures used to try to determine the real meaning of a text.

THE LAW

GENESIS 3:15

“And 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.”

The Prophecy

After Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord, He pronounced judgment on each of them and the serpent. In Genesis 3:14, the Lord addressed the serpent. The grammar of verse 15 seems to continue that discussion, but what is said seems to go beyond the serpent. Enmity is only used of people, not animals. Moreover, verse 15 refers to the seed of the woman and says an individual within that category (“he”) shall “bruise your head,” that is, deliver a fatal blow. These are indications that something more than a snake is involved. Many commentators, both ancient and modern, insist that Genesis 3:15 goes beyond the serpent and speaks directly to Satan, who was the one acting through the snake (Rev. 20:2). In other words, the “you” in Genesis 3:15 refers to Satan, not the serpent.

God tells Satan three things. First, He will put hostility between Satan and Eve. Satan, no doubt, believed that since he had persuaded Eve to believe and obey his word rather than God’s Word that she and her seed would be loyal to him. God says, “Not so.” He promised to put hostility between Satan and Eve.

Second, God will put hostility between Satan’s seed and Eve’s seed. Neither Satan nor Eve was able to produce seed. Only males can do that. Therefore, the two seeds must refer primarily to spiritual progeny. To say the same thing another way, Satan does not have physical descendants. Therefore, Satan’s seed must refer to the spiritual descendants of Satan, that is, unbelievers (Jn. 8:44). The seed of the woman, in the broadest sense of the term, would include all mankind, but in this verse, the seed of the woman are opposite to the seed of Satan. Therefore, the “seed of the woman” here is a reference to the spiritual seed of the woman, that is, believers. This, then, is a forecast of hostility and conflict between unbelievers and believers.

Third, God will put hostility between Satan and “him.” The conflict now narrows to two individuals. “He” will bruise Satan’s head. The imagery is taken from a man stepping on a snake’s head. To bruise the head is to deliver a fatal blow. Satan will bruise his heel. The imagery is taken from a snake biting a man’s heel, a minor injury as compared to a head wound. The point is that while Satan will bruise his heel, he will crush Satan’s head, destroying him.

The Seed of the woman, a Man, will destroy Satan.

The Significance

Who is “he?” Who shall bruise Satan’s head? Ancient Rabbis said he was the Messiah. Rabbi Tanhuma (about 370 AD) said in the name of Rabbi Samuel, “Eve has respect to that Seed which is coming from another place. And who is this? This is the Messiah, the King” (Midrash, Rabbah, 23). Rabbi David Kimhi (1160-1235) said, “As Thou wentest

forth for the salvation of Thy people by the hand of The Messiah the Son of David, who shall wound Satan, the head, the king and prince of the house of the wicked.” According to the Jewish Targum, Genesis 3:16 was regarded as messianic from a very early day. The messianic import of Genesis 3:15 has been accepted by both Jews and Christians.

This prophecy also indicates that the Messiah will be a human (“seed of a woman”), not an angel. Some have suggested that there is even a possible reference to a virgin birth here, because “he” is of the seed of the woman, not the seed of the man.

The Messiah will be a man who will destroy Satan.

The Fulfillment

Jesus was “born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). When He died, He destroyed Satan. The writer to the Hebrews says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). At His second coming, Christ will completely win the victory won at the cross. Paul writes, “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen” (Rom. 16:20).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a man who will destroy Satan. Jesus is a man and He will destroy Satan. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

GENESIS 22:18

“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

The Prophecy

God told Abraham that all the nations of the world would be blessed through his “seed.” The Hebrew word translated “seed” is always in the singular, but it is used in two different ways. It is used as a collective singular, meaning a group, and it is used as an absolute singular, meaning an individual. Here it is clearly a reference to an individual because the promised seed would not be fulfilled in all Abraham’s descendants, but only in one, namely, Isaac (Gen. 21:12). Yet it was understood that a greater man than Isaac would come.

A descendant of Abraham will bless the whole world.

The Significance

Ancient Rabbis said that the “seed” of Abraham is the Messiah (Bermid Rabbah). The descendant of Abraham, who will bless the world, is the Messiah.

The Messiah will be a descendant of Abraham, who will bless the world.

The Fulfillment

Jesus was a descendant of Abraham (Mt. 1:1). Paul says that this prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘*And to your Seed,*’ who is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). Paul says the blessing is that because of Christ, God would justify the Gentiles through faith (Gal. 3:8, 13-14) and they would receive the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:14).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a descendant of Abraham and He will bless the whole world. Jesus is a descendant of Abraham and He blessed the whole world. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

GENESIS 49:10

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.”

The Prophecy

The scepter was a symbol of a royal command. When speaking in public, the king held a long staff. When the king sat on his throne, he rested the staff between his feet, inclining it towards himself. The right to rule will not depart from the tribe of Judah until Shiloh comes. At this time, He will rule and the people will obey Him.

When Shiloh from Judah comes, He will reign and the people will obey Him.

The Significance

The Rabbis said this verse was about the Messiah. “Kings and rulers shall not cease from the house of Judah ... until King Messiah comes” (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, which may have been written as early as the second century). The Rabbis also said Shiloh was the Messiah. “Rabbi Johanan said, ‘The world was created for the sake of the Messiah, what is this Messiah’s name?’ The school of Rabbi Shila said, ‘his name is Shiloh, for it is written until Shiloh comes (Genesis 49:10)’” (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b).

The Messiah will come from Judah, will rule, and the people will obey Him.

The Fulfillment

The New Testament does not directly refer to this verse, but the New Testament does say Jesus was from the tribe of Judah (Mt. 1:2, 2:6; Lk. 3:26; Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5) and He will rule. The angel said to Mary, “Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom, there will be no end” (Lk. 1:30-33).

Conclusion: The Messiah will come from Judah and He will reign. Jesus was from Judah and He will reign. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

To sum up what Genesis teaches about the Messiah, He will be a human (“seed of the woman” in Gen. 3:15), a Jew (“your seed” in Gen. 22:18) from the tribe of Judah (“Judah” in Gen. 49:10), and a King (“scepter” in Gen. 49:10), who will destroy Satan (Gen. 3:15), and bless the world (Gen. 22:18).

NUMBERS 24:17

Balaam says, “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult.”

The Prophecy

Balaam saw a Star and a Scepter coming from Israel in the future. The “star” was a common symbol for a king. The scepter was also a symbol of a king (see Gen. 49:10). This future king from Israel would conquer Moab and *all enemies*.

In the distant future, a King will come from Israel, who will destroy all enemies.

The Significance

Jewish and Christian interpreters have said this King is the Messiah. For example, the Targum of Onkelos (first century) translates this verse like this: “I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but he is not near. When a king shall arise from the house of Jacob, and the Messiah be anointed from the house of Israel, he shall slay the princes of Moab, and rule over all the children of men.” Also, “The Israelites said to God: How long shall we be in bondage? He replied: ‘Till the day comes of which it is said: “There shall come a star out of Jacob”’” (Debarim Rabba, Sec. 1).

The Messiah will be a King from Israel who will destroy all the enemies of Israel.

The Fulfillment

The New Testament does not directly refer to this verse, but it does teach that Jesus will conquer all His enemies: “And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool”(Heb. 10:11-13).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a King from Israel who will destroy all enemies. Jesus is from Israel and He will destroy all enemies. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

DEUTERONOMY 18:15

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.”

The Prophecy

The Lord will raise up a Prophet from Israel like Moses and the people will hear Him. Two passages describe Moses as a prophet (Num. 12:8 and Deut. 34:10-12).

A Prophet like Moses will come from Israel and the people will hear Him.

The Significance

Ancient Rabbis said this verse referred to the Messiah: “He will be with the last deliverer, (Messiah), as with the first (Moses); as the first deliverer revealed himself first to the Israelites and then withdrew, so also will the last deliverer reveal himself to the Israelites and then withdraw for a while” (Midrash Ruth Rabbah 5:6 on Deut. 18:15).

“I will raise up for them a prophet like you (Moses), from among their own people. I will put My words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him. And if anybody fails to heed the words he speaks in My name, I Myself will call him to account” (D’varim on Deut. 18:18-19; see www.uptojerusalem.com).

At the time of Christ, the Jews were still looking for the Prophet. When John the Baptist appeared, the Jews asked him if he was the Prophet (Jn. 1:21, 25).

The Messiah will be a prophet like Moses from Israel and the people will hear Him.

The Fulfillment

Jesus is from Israel (Mt. 1:1). Peter says Jesus was the Prophet: “For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.’ And it shall be *that* every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:22-23).

Stephen says Jesus was the Prophet: “This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear’” (Acts 7:37).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a Prophet like Moses, who will come from Israel. Jesus was a Prophet like Moses, who came from Israel. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

To sum up the references to the Messiah in the Law: the Messiah will be a man, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, who will be a King and a Prophet, and He will destroy Satan and bless the world.

THE PROPHETS

ISAIAH 7:14

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

The Prophecy

At this point in history, Assyria was threatening Syria, the Northern Kingdom (Israel), and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). The kings of Syria and Israel joined forces against Assyria, but they did not have the ability to withstand an Assyrian attack. So they invited Judah to join forces with them, but Ahaz, the King of Judah, refused. Then they attacked Jerusalem but did not prevail (Isa. 7:1-2).

Israel and Syria conspired not only to dethrone Ahaz but to depose the entire House of David (“House of David” in Isa. 7:2 and Isa. 7:13). Then, they would establish a new dynasty in Judah more favorable to an alliance against Assyria (Isa. 7:6). In other words, this was not just an attack on Ahaz; it was an attack on the House of David (Isa. 7:2, 13).

Instead of trusting the Lord, Ahaz, the king of the Southern Kingdom, intended to turn to Assyria for help. God sent Isaiah and his son to tell Ahaz that the plan of Syria and the Northern Kingdom would not come to pass because, within 35 years, Syria and the Northern Kingdom would be defeated (Isa. 7:3-9).

God offers Ahaz a sign, but Ahaz refuses the offer (Isa. 7:10-12).

In Isaiah 7:13, Isaiah no longer addresses Ahaz as an individual. He addresses the entire House of David. That is not apparent in the English translation because in English, “you” can be either singular or plural. But in the Hebrew text, there is a change from the singular “you” in verses 9, 11, 16, and 17 to the plural “you” in verses 13 and 14. Thus the sign of verses 13 and 14 is not for Ahaz; it is for the whole House of Israel. The sign given to Israel as a nation that the nation would not be destroyed is a virgin birth.

The Hebrew word translated “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 (*almah*) means “a young woman of marriageable age.” It occurs six other times in the Old Testament (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Ps. 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Song of Solomon 1:3, 6:8). An examination of those passages indicates that virginity is implied or, at least, allows this meaning. Therefore, it describes a young woman of marriageable age who in Israel would have presumed to have been a virgin.

The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, completed several hundred years before Matthew wrote his gospel, used the Greek word for virgin in Isaiah 7:14. In fact, of the seven occurrences of this Hebrew word (*almah*) in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint only translates it “virgin” twice (Gen.23:43 and Isa. 7:14), which indicates they were extremely careful about translating it “virgin.”

The sign to the nation of Israel is that a virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son named Immanuel, which means “God is with us.” The birth of the son is to be considered as a sign. Would the birth of an ordinary child really be a sign?

In Isaiah 7:15, Isaiah again speaks to Ahaz, which is obvious in the Hebrew text because the “you” in verse 16 is singular. The sign to Ahaz is that before Isaiah’s son is

old enough to distinguish between right and wrong, the kings of Syria and Israel will be deposed.

The sign to Israel that the nation will not be destroyed is that a virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son named Immanuel, which means “God is with us.”

The Significance

Some Rabbis thought Isaiah 7:14 was talking about the Messiah. Hillel, a Rabbi during the time of Christ, said, “There will be no Messiah for Israel because they already had him in the days of Hezekiah.” The mention of Hezekiah is a reference to Isaiah 7:14. Some Rabbis thought that the son of Isaiah 7:14 was Ahaz’s son and successor, Hezekiah. Rabbi Johanan B. Zakkai said: “Prepare a throne for Hezekiah, king of Judah, who is coming” (Talmud, Berakoth 28b). In other words, Hillel thought Isaiah 7:14 was a reference to Hezekiah as the Messiah, which means that he thought Isaiah 7:14 is messianic. Granted, he thought the Messiah had already come, but that does not negate the fact that he believed that Isaiah 7:14 was messianic.

The Messiah will be a virgin-born Son.

The Fulfillment

Matthew says Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled in Jesus Christ: “So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us’” (Mt. 1:22-23).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a virgin-born Son. Jesus was a virgin-born Son. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

ISAIAH 9:6-7

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

The Prophecy

A Child is born in Israel (“unto us”) and a Son is given to Israel (“unto us”). “Child is born” indicates His humanity and “Son is given” implies His deity.

He will be called “Wonderful Counselor.” In Hebrew, the two words “wonderful” and “counselor” comprise one name. The Hebrew word translated “wonderful” is used exclusively of God in the Old Testament. He will be called “mighty God.” The Child who is born is a Son, and He is God. He will be called “everlasting Father,” which should be translated “Father of eternity.” Being eternal, He can confer eternal life. He will be called “Prince of Peace.” He will bring Peace. All four of these names are used elsewhere in Isaiah of God, never of man (Isa. 25:1; 28:29; 10:21; 63:16; 26:3; 26:12).

The divine Son, Who is God, will rule on the throne of David forever, and when He rules, there will be peace and justice.

The Significance

Ancient sages said Isaiah 9:6-7 is a reference to the Messiah (Targum Jonathan; Babylonian Talmud: tract Derech Erez Zutha). Rabbi Jose the Galilean said, “The name of the Messiah too is ‘peace;’ as it is written: ‘God the mighty, the everlasting Father, the ruler of peace’” (Perek Ha Shalom; Numbers Rabbah XI, 16-20).

The Messiah, the divine Son, will rule on the throne of David forever and when He rules, there will be peace and justice.

The Fulfillment

This verse is not referred to in the New Testament, but the angel told Mary her Son would be called “the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom, there will be no end” (Lk. 1:30-33).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a divine Son who will rule on the throne of David forever. Jesus is the divine Son and He will rule on the throne of David forever. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

ISAIAH 40:3-5

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’”

The Prophecy

In ancient times, the roads were notoriously bad. Ordinary roads were normally not surfaced. Surfaced roads were originally built by the king for the king and were only kept in repair as the king needed them. Before the king was due to arrive in a place, a messenger went out to tell the people to prepare the road for the king’s arrival. The road would be straightened and smoothed out in preparation for the coming of their king.

One will cry out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.”

The Significance

One Rabbi said, “Prepare the way! The King Messiah comes... may the mountains abase themselves, may the valleys be filled, may the cedars incline to render him homage. Prostrate yourselves all of you before the Messiah King, and bend your knees before him who is seated at the right hand of the Holy One” (Zohar I, 4b, www.uptojerusalem.com).

This passage is speaking about preparing the way for the King, who is the Messiah.

The Messiah will be preceded by a forerunner.

The Fulfillment

Matthew applies these words to John the Baptist: “For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight’” (Mt. 3:3). Matthew is saying that John is spiritually preparing the way for the coming of Christ, the King. Mark does the same. He says, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight’” (Mk. 1:3; see also Lk. 1:76; Jn. 1:23).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be preceded by a forerunner. Since John the Baptist fulfilled the role of forerunner of the Messiah, Jesus is the Messiah.

ISAIAH 42:1-4

“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice*, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law.”

This is the first of four passages in Isaiah on the Servant of the Lord (see Isa. 42:1–4; 49:1–13; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12).

The Prophecy

God will put His Spirit on His Servant. This Servant will bring justice to the Gentiles (Isa. 42:1) and be a light to the Gentiles (42:6). Light is a reference to salvation (Lk. 1:79; Acts 13:47). He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoking flax (Isa. 42:3).

The Servant will bring salvation to the Gentiles and He will be gentle.

The Significance

In the Targum, this passage is said to be a reference to the Messiah. “Servant” is another name for the Messiah.

The Messiah will be a Servant. Who will bring Salvation to the Gentiles and He will be gentle.

The Fulfillment

Jesus came as a Servant (Mk. 10:45). When Simeon saw the infant Jesus, under the inspiration of the Spirit, he said that Jesus was “a light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles” (Lk. 2:32; see also Acts 9:15; 11:45; 13:47; etc.). With some minor variations, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-4: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax. He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory and in His name Gentiles will trust’” (Mt. 12:17-21).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a Servant, Who will bring salvation to the Gentiles and He will be gentle. Jesus came as a Servant, brought salvation to the Gentiles, and He was gentle. Therefore Jesus is the Messiah.

ISAIAH 49:5-6

“And now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb *to be* His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength), indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

The Prophecy

This entire passage is about the Servant (Isa. 49:3, 5, 6, 7). The Servant in this passage has been taken to be a reference to Israel because of the mention of Israel in verse 3, but it is the Servant who draws Israel back to God (Isa. 49:5). Therefore, the Servant cannot be Israel. The Servant is called Israel because He is the true Israel, the One Who fulfills what Israel should have done. Among many other things, the Servant will be a light to the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6).

The Servant will be a light to the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

The Significance

The Messiah will restore Israel and bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Therefore, the Servant is the Messiah.

The Messiah will be a Servant who will be a light to the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

The Fulfillment

Jesus came as a Servant (Mk. 10:45). The Book of Acts records, “For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth’” (Acts 13:47). To give biblical justification to what they had decided to do, Paul and Barnabas quote Isaiah 49:6, where the Messiah is described as the source of light, not merely to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles; not merely to the Promised Land, but to the ends of the earth. The task of God’s Servant is to be a light to the nations and a means of salvation throughout the world.

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a Servant who will be a light to the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Jesus came as a Servant, is light to the Gentiles, and brings salvation to the ends of the earth. Therefore Jesus is the Messiah.

ISAIAH 50:4-9

“The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him who is* weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck *Me*, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed. *He is* near who justifies Me; who will contend with Me? Let us stand together. Who *is* My adversary? Let him come near Me. Surely the Lord GOD will help Me; who *is* he *who* will condemn Me? Indeed they will all grow old like a garment; the moth will eat them up.” Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God.”

The Prophecy

This is another passage in Isaiah about the Servant of the Lord (see “Servant” in Isa. 50:10). This one reveals the physical suffering of the Servant but stops short of describing His death. Isaiah 50:6 says, “I gave My back to those who struck *Me*, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”

The Servant will suffer physically, including being spat upon.

The Significance

Since the other Servant passages in Isaiah are about the Messiah, so is this one.

The Messiah will be a Servant who will suffer physically, including being spat upon.

The Fulfillment

Jesus came as a Servant (Mk. 10:45). Matthew 27:30, Mark 14:65, and Mark 15:19 say the Roman soldiers spat at Him.

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a Servant, Who will suffer physically, including being spat upon. Jesus came as a Servant and suffered physically, including being spat upon. Therefore Jesus is the Messiah.

ISAIAH 52:13-53:12

Isaiah 52:13 begins a prophecy about “My Servant” that extends to Isaiah 53:12. Before and after the birth of Jesus, Jews applied this passage to the Messiah. In fact, all ancient Jewish writings, including the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Midrashim, etc. say Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is talking about the Messiah (for references, see Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Messianic Christology*, pp. 123-28). One Rabbi said, “I may remark then, that our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah, and we ourselves shall adhere to the same view” (Rabbi Mosheh El-Sheikh, regarding Isaiah 53).

Bruce says the Targums on the Prophets apply Isaiah 52:13-53:12 to the Messiah and as the church adopted that interpretation, it fell out of favor with the synagogue (Bruce, *The Canon of the Scripture*, p. 295). The first Rabbi to suggest otherwise was Rashi (ca. 1050 AD). He proposed that the passage spoke about the nation of Israel, which is the prevailing view among Jews today. The problem with that interpretation is that there are many statements in this passage that cannot be applied to the nation of Israel.

Because of the length of this passage, the explanation of this prophecy and its fulfillment will be given on each verse rather than at the end of the discussion.

The Messiah will be exalted

“Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high” (Isa. 52:13). The Servant is the Messiah, Who will act wisely and be exalted. Some commentators suggest that He was exalted in resurrection, lifted up in ascension, and made very high in glory at God’s right hand.

“Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14). Just as many were astonished at the suffering of Israel, they will be astonished at the physical appearance of the Messiah. As a result of His scourging and crucifixion, the physical appearance of Jesus was marred beyond recognition as a man.

“So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider” (Isa. 52:15). “Sprinkle” refers to cleansing by the priest. Isaiah 52:14 alludes to the Messiah’s suffering and now this verse speaks of His cleansing many people of their sins. When kings see the Servant exalted at His Second Coming, they will be speechless because they will see and understand the message they had not heard.

One Rabbi said, “As long as Israel dwelt in the Holy Land, the rituals and sacrifices they performed (in the Temple) removed all those diseases from the world; now the Messiah removes them from the children of the world” (Zohar 2:212a).

The Messiah will cleanse many nations of their sins and kings will be speechless when they hear what they had not previously heard.

In Romans, Paul quotes this verse: “And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation, but as it is written: ‘To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who have not heard

shall understand” (Rom. 15:20-21). Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 in connection with his ministry. Isaiah speaks of the nations and kings of the earth being told what they had not heard concerning the suffering Servant of the Lord. Likewise, Paul’s ambition was to preach Christ, where he had not preached before. This is an application of Isaiah 52:15.

The Messiah will be despised

“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” (Isa. 53:1). Isaiah asks who has believed the report given by him and the other prophets (see “our”) of the suffering and exalted Messiah (52:13-15). The expected answer is, “Not many.” Consequently, the arm of the Lord, that is, His saving power, has not been revealed to many either. Warren Wiersbe points out, “When God made the universe, He used His fingers (Ps.8:3), and when He delivered Israel from Egypt, it was by His strong hand (Ex. 13:3). But to save lost sinners, He had to bare His mighty arm!”

Not many will believe the report about the Messiah.

In the Gospel of John, John quotes this verse. Concerning those who did not believe, John says, “But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him” (Jn. 12:37). In explaining their unbelief, John quotes Isaiah 53:1, “that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’” (Jn. 12:38), as if to say that it was predictable.

In Romans, Paul quotes this verse: “But they have not all obeyed the gospel for Isaiah says, ‘Lord who has believed our report?’” (Rom. 10:16). In the context of Romans, the “all” refers to Israel (see 9:31; 10:2, 3, 14). God commands all to believe in His Son (Acts 16:31). Israel had not obeyed the command (Jn. 3:36). The obedience referred to in this verse is obviously faith, for Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1 to explain what he means. The problem is that Israel has not believed.

“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, *there is no beauty that we should desire Him*” (Isa. 53:2). The reason (“for”) some do not believe in the Messiah is that He will grow up before God as a tender plant, that is, a shoot that was usually unwanted. Gardeners snip off such shoots when they appear because they rob other plants of nourishment. He will also be a root out of dry ground, meaning He came from the most unlikely soil. Furthermore, He does not have an appealing appearance.

“He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him*” (Isa. 53:3). He will experience sorrows and grief, He will be despised and rejected by people (Jn. 1:12). The people of Israel (“we”) will hide their faces from Him. Since He will not be considered important, He will be despised, a Hebrew word that means to be “considered worthless and unworthy of attention” (Constable).

The Messiah will be despised.

Jesus said, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?” (Mk. 9:12).

The Messiah will suffer vicariously

“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted” (Isa. 53:4). The Messiah will be a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3), but His suffering was for our griefs and sorrows. The Messiah “has borne our griefs.” The Hebrew word translated “borne” means “lift, carry, take, take away” and the one rendered “griefs” means “sickness, disease.” The Messiah will take away sickness. The Messiah will carry our sorrows. The Hebrew word translated “sorrows” means “pain.” Here it refers to physical pain (BDB). The Messiah will carry our physical pain, yet people will consider Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God. Since the Hebrew word for stricken refers to smiting with leprosy in 2 Kings 15:5, a tradition arose among the Jews that Messiah would be a leper.

“Rabbi Yochanan said, ‘The Messiah - what is his name?’... And our Rabbis said, ‘the pale one... is his name,’ as it is written ‘Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows - yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted’” (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98, p. 2). Another said, “The Holy One brought forth the soul of Messiah, and said to him, ‘Art thou willing to be created and to redeem my sons after 6,000 years?’ He replied, ‘I am.’ God replied, ‘If so, thou must take upon thyself chastisements in order to wipe away their iniquity, as it is written, ‘Surely our sicknesses he has carried.’ The Messiah answered, ‘I will take them upon me gladly’” (P’ Siqtha according to Hulsius in “Theologia Judaica;” see uptojerusalem.com).

The Messiah will remove sickness, but people will consider Him stricken by God.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew quotes part of this verse: “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore *our* sicknesses’” (Mt. 8:16-17). Tasker, a New Testament commentator on Matthew, says “bore” means “carried away, that is, “removed.” According to Matthew, this prediction was fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus. It has nothing to do with the atonement.

Conclusion: The Messiah will heal sickness. Jesus healed. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

“But 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” (53:5). The Messiah will be wounded, bruised, and beaten with stripes. Constable, the head of the Bible Department at Dallas Seminary, says, “The Hebrew words behind these terms are the strongest ones in that language for violent and excruciating death. The Messiah will experience all of this for *our* transgressions, for *our* iniquities. In other words, His suffering will be substitutionary for the healing of our sins. The Hebrew word translated ‘healed’ is ‘shalom,’ a Hebrew word that expresses well-being, the fullness of God’s blessing.” The Messiah will suffer the punishment of our sins so we can have peace.

This was the Jewish view: “The Messiah our righteousness has turned from us. We are alarmed, we have no one to justify us. Our sins and the yoke of our transgressions he bore. He was bruised for our iniquities. He carried on his shoulders our sins. With his stripes, we are healed (Isaiah 53). Almighty God, hasten the day that he might come to us anew; that we may hear from Mt. Lebanon (*figurative reference to the Temple*), a second time through the Messiah” (Ancient hymn-prayer by Eliezer Hakkalir sung during the Musaf Service on

Yom Kippur; included in some Siddurs). “Dip your morsel of bread in the vinegar (Ruth 2:14). This refers to the Messiah’s sufferings, for it is said in Isaiah 53:5: ‘He was pierced through for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities’” (Midrash Ruth Rabbah, 2.14).

The Messiah will suffer for our transgressions and iniquities so we can have peace.

In his first epistle, Peter quotes part of Isaiah 53:5: “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24). It is clear from the Isaiah passage as well as from the context of this passage in 1 Peter that “by His stripes, we are healed” is not a reference to physical healing; it is about spiritual healing. In Isaiah 53, both before and after the statement about His stripes healing us, there are references to sin, called “transgressions,” “iniquities” and, “iniquity.” The context in Isaiah is about sin; nothing is said about physical sickness. The same thing is true of the 1 Peter passage. Both before and after the statement about being healed by His stripes, there are references to sin, not sickness. Peter says Christ “bore our sins” and the expression “by whose stripes you were healed” is an explanation of that. The following verse speaks about “going astray,” a reference to sin, not sickness.

In Romans, Paul says, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1).

Conclusion: The Messiah will suffer for our sin. Jesus suffered for our sins. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (53:6). After speaking about our transgressions and our iniquities, Isaiah employs a simile to reinforce his point: We are like sheep that go astray. We are sinners by nature. Every one of us turns his own way. We are sinners by choice. The Lord God will lay the penalty for our sin on the Messiah (see 2 Cor. 5:21).

We are the ones who have sinned, but the penalty of our sin was put on the Messiah.

In 1 Peter, Peter quotes the first part of this verse: “For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls” (1 Pet. 2:25). They were headed away from God and now they have turned back to Him.

The Messiah will be Silent

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Isa. 53:7). Even though the Messiah will be oppressed, afflicted, and led as a sheep to the slaughter (death), He will not open His mouth; He will be silent.

During part of His ordeal, the Messiah will be silent.

When Herod questioned Jesus, “He answered him nothing” (Lk. 23:9). When the high priest asked, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?” Jesus kept silent (Mt. 26:63; Mk. 14:60-61). When Jesus “was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing” (Mt. 27:12). When Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” Jesus “answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly” (Mt. 27:14; Mk. 4-5). Pilate “said to Jesus, ‘Where are You from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer” (Jn. 19:9).

In the book of Acts, Philip heard an Ethiopian reading from the book of Isaiah: “The place in the Scripture which he read was this: ‘He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer *is* silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation, His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth’” (Acts 8:32-33). Luke says, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him” (Acts 8:35).

The Messiah will die

“He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken” (53:8). The Messiah will be taken away from prison and justice. The expression “who will declare His generation (descendants)?” means He will die in the prime of life and leave no descendants. He will be stricken and die (be “cut off”) for transgressions of Israel.

“And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor *was any* deceit in His mouth” (53:9). People will plan to bury the Messiah with the wicked, insinuating that He is wicked, but he was buried with rich people.

The Messiah will be buried with the rich.

Matthew records, “Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed” Mt. 27:57-60; see also Mk. 15:43-46 and Jn. 19:38-42; 1 Pet. 2:22-23).

The Messiah will Satisfy God

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (53:10). The death of the Messiah will not be an accident. It is part of God’s plan. God the Father did not find the sufferings of His Son something pleasurable, but they pleased (satisfied) Him because they fulfilled His plan that the death of the Messiah would be an offering for sin. That offering for sin will produce a great posterity (“seed”); that is, many will believe on Him. The Messiah is going to die at a young age (Isa. 53:8), but God will prolong His days (Isa. 53:10). God will do that by resurrecting Him. The pleasure of the Lord, the death of the Messiah, is His plan that will succeed in the hand of the Messiah.

“He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53:11). When God sees the death of the Messiah, He will be satisfied because the death of the Messiah for sin will justify many.

By His death, the Messiah will justify many.

Paul says, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

“Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12). Because of what the Messiah will do, God will exalt Him (see Phil. 2:9-11). God will greatly reward the Messiah because He poured out His soul to death.

The Messiah will give himself to die.

A number of New Testament passages speak of Jesus giving Himself to die for sin. “*Who gave Himself for our sins* that He might deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal. 1:4, italics added). “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me: and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in *the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*” (Gal. 2:20, italics added). “Walk in love, as *Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us* as an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Eph. 5:2, italics added). “Husbands, love your wives, just as *Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her*” (Eph. 5:25, italics added). “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim. 2:5-6, italics added). “*Who gave himself for us* that He might redeem us from all lawless deeds and purify for Himself *His* special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14, italics added).

Jesus quotes Isaiah 53:12: “For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: ‘and he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For the things concerning Me have an end” (Lk. 22:37).

The Messiah will die for many.

Three times in this extended passage, Isaiah speaks of the work of the Messiah for “many.” He will “sprinkle many nations,” meaning He will cleanse many people of their sins (Isa. 52:15). He will “justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53:11). He will bear “the sin of many” (Isa. 53:12). Many commentators have concluded that New Testament references to “many” are an allusion to Isaiah 53.

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28; see also Mark 10:45). “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt. 26:28; see also Mk. 14:24). “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19). “Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28). The “many” should not be taken to mean the Messiah will not die for all. Paul says Christ “gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6). Perhaps, in the context of Isaiah 52:12-53:12, the word “many” is used to refer to the fact that the Messiah will die for Gentiles as well as Jews (“many nations” in Isa. 52:15).

The Messiah will be numbered with the transgressors, bear the sins of many, and make intercession for sinners.

Conclusion: The Messiah will die for many. Jesus died for many. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

To sum up Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the Messiah will suffer and die for sin, which will result in many being justified, God being satisfied, and the Messiah being exalted.

The New Testament recognizes that the Messiah would die for sin. Paul wrote, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve” (1 Cor. 15:3-5).

Ancient Rabbis recognized that the Messiah would suffer: “The Holy One, blessed be He, will tell him (the Messiah) in detail what will befall him... their sins will cause you to bend down as under a yoke of iron and make you like a calf whose eyes grow dim with suffering and will choke your spirit as with a yoke, and because of their sins your tongue will cleave to the roof of your mouth. Are you willing to endure such things?... The Messiah will say: ‘Master of the universe with joy in my soul and gladness in my heart I take this suffering upon myself provided that not one person in Israel shall perish, so that not only those who are alive be saved in my days, but also those who are dead, who died from the days of Adam up to the time of redemption’” (Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 36.1; Zohar II. 212a). “The Patriarchs will arise and say to the Messiah... ‘our righteous Messiah, even though we are your ancestors, you are greater than we because you did suffer for the iniquities of our children, and terrible ordeals befell you, such ordeals as did not befall earlier generations or later ones for the sake of Israel’” (Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 37:1).

The Rabbis struggled with the biblical descriptions of a suffering Messiah, as found in Isaiah 53, and of a conquering Messiah. To resolve the problem, they posited two Messiahs: Messiah ben Joseph, who would suffer and Messiah ben David, who would conquer.

ISAIAH 61:1-3

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

The Prophecy

One will be anointed with the Spirit of the Lord: 1) to preach good tidings to the poor, 2) to heal the brokenhearted, 3) to proclaim liberty to the captives, 4) to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God, 5) to comfort all who mourn, 6) to console those who mourn in Zion, 7) to give Israel beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

One will be anointed with the Spirit of the Lord to minister to people.

The Significance

The expression “the LORD has anointed Me” is another way of saying, “I am the Messiah.” The Hebrew word translated “Messiah” means “anointed.” Ancient Rabbis interpreted this passage to refer to the Messiah: “And as for the wonders that are not the work of Adonai, when he, that is the Messiah, comes then he will heal the sick, resurrect the dead, and to the poor announce glad tidings” (4Q521, Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran).

The Messiah will be anointed with the Spirit of the Lord to minister to people.

The Fulfillment

Matthew records, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him” (Mt. 3:16).

In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist said that Jesus was not given the “Spirit by measure” (Jn. 3:34). In other words, God did not give the Holy Spirit to Jesus in a limited measure as with human teachers. The Holy Spirit was given to Jesus completely.

Luke says, “So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to

proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’ Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’” (Lk. 4:16-21).

Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2a. He stopped in the middle of verse 2, with the words “to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” He did not read the next phrase “and the day of vengeance of our God.” He applied what He read to His own ministry. In doing so, He is clearly claiming to be the Messiah and He is saying only Isaiah 61:1-2a are being fulfilled at this time. At this time, He will proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of grace. When He returns, He will proclaim the day of the vengeance of God.

Conclusion: The Messiah will be anointed with the Spirit of the Lord to minister to people. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit of the Lord to minister to people. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

JEREMIAH 23:5-6

“Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD, “that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

The Prophecy

Jeremiah says that the Lord will raise up a man from the house of David, a Branch of righteousness, and a King who will execute righteousness on the earth and save Israel. Jeremiah adds that the name of this King is “the Lord our righteousness.”

From the line of David will come a King, whose name is the Lord our Righteousness, and He will save Israel and rule in righteousness.

The Significance

A *man* (Zech. 6:12) from the house of David will rule on the earth. The Hebrew word translated “Lord” is the personal name of God. Notice that in verse 5, the *Lord* says (no one doubts that the Lord in verse 5 is God) and, in verse 6, the name of the King who will rule on the earth is the *Lord* (God!). Conclusion: the Messiah is a God/Man.

The ancient Rabbis always interpreted this verse as a messianic passage: “Behold the days come says the Lord that I will raise up unto David a righteous Messiah and he shall reign as King and understand” (Targum on Jer. 23:5). The Messiah is our Redeemer: “What is the name of the King Messiah? Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana said, ‘His name is the Lord our Righteousness.’” (Midrash Lamentations Rabbah 1.16.51; Pesikta de Rab Kahana 22.5a; Midrash on Psalms 21.2; Baba Bathra 75b, Babylonian Talmud; Yalkut Shimoni, fol. 384: all referring to Jeremiah 23:6, uptojerusalem.com).

The Messiah is called the Branch (see “The Branch of the Lord” in Isa. 4:2; “a Branch” in Isa. 11:1; “a Branch of Righteous in Jer. 23:6; “a Branch of Righteous in Jer. 33:15; “My Servant the Branch” in Zech. 3:8; and “Behold the Man whose name is the Branch” in Zech. 6:12).

The Messiah will be a King from the line of David, whose name is the Lord our Righteousness, and He will save Israel and rule in righteousness.

The Fulfillment

The New Testament declares that Jesus was both God and man (Jn. 1:1, 14).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a King from the line of David, who is both God and man. Jesus is a King from the line of David, who is both God and man. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

MICAH 5:2

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting.”

The Prophecy

Out of insignificant Bethlehem will come One who will rule Israel. The one born in Bethlehem is “from everlasting,” an expression used of God in Psalm 90:2. The One from Bethlehem is from eternity; that is, He is deity.

One from eternity will come out of Bethlehem to rule Israel.

The Significance

The One of Whom Micah speaks will be *born in Bethlehem*, indicating He is a man. He is *from eternity*, indicating He is God. The Messiah is both human and divine.

Ancient Rabbis said this referred to the Messiah: “And you Bethlehem-Ephrathah who are too little to be counted among the thousands of the house of Judah, from you in My name shall come forth the Messiah who is to be ruler in Israel and whose name has been called from eternity, from the days of old” (Targum Jonathan). “The King Messiah... from where does he come forth? From the royal city of Bethlehem in Judah” (Jerusalem Talmud, Berakoth 5a).

The Messiah will be from eternity and will come out of Bethlehem to rule Israel.

The Fulfillment

Matthew writes, “When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born” (Mt. 2:3-4). When the wise men inquired, “Where is He who is born King of the Jews?” Herod gathered “all the chief priests and scribes” together. He wanted to know where this Jewish king was to be born. “So they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel’” (Mt. 2:5-6). The chief priests and the scribes quoted Micah 5:2 and added a few words, which may have been taken from 2 Samuel 5:2. The chief priests and teachers of the Law understood Micah 5:2 to refer to the Messiah.

Conclusion: The Messiah will be from eternity and will come out Bethlehem to rule Israel. Jesus is from eternity and came out of Bethlehem to rule Israel. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

ZECHARIAH 9:9-10

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He *is* just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion *shall be* ‘from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’”

The Prophecy

In Zechariah 9:1-8, God’s judgment is pronounced against Syria (see Hadrach, Damascus, Hamath on Zech. 9:1-2a), Tyre and Sidon (Zech. 9:2b-4), and Philistia (see Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod in Zech. 9:5-7), the nations surrounding Israel, but Israel will be delivered (Zech. 9:8). Most commentators regard Zechariah 9:1-8 as a prophecy of the conquests of Alexander the Great, meaning this was a prophecy given approximately two hundred years before Alexander the Great (see the reference to Greece in Zech. 9:13).

In Zechariah 9:9, Israel is invited to rejoice because their king is coming. He will be a just Person who will bring salvation and will humbly ride on a donkey, that is, a colt, the foal of a donkey. A colt was a young untamed donkey.

In Zechariah 9:10, Israel is told that the King will abolish weapons of war, speak peace to the nations, and rule to the ends of the earth.

The King, who brings salvation and peace to the world, will come riding on a donkey.

The Significance

This passage talks about the Messiah. He is the One who will bring salvation and peace to the earth. The ancient Jews acknowledged Zechariah 9:9 is a Messianic prophecy.

“Rabbi Hillel said, ‘there shall be no Messiah for Israel because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah.’ Rabbi Joseph said, ‘May God forgive him (Hillel) for saying so. Now, when did Hezekiah flourish? During the First Temple. Yet Zechariah, prophesying in the days of the second, proclaimed, ‘rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee! He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass’ (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 99a).

The Messiah, a King who brings salvation and peace to the world, will come riding on a donkey.

The Fulfillment

Matthew says, “Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and

bring *them* to Me and if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.’ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey”’” (Mt. 21:4-5; see also Mk. 11:1-7 and Lk. 19:29-35). The expression “tell the daughters of Zion” is from Isaiah 62:11 and the remainder of the quotation is from Zechariah 9:9. Jesus fulfilled Zechariah 9:9.

Jesus fulfilled Zechariah 9:9 when He came the first time. He will fulfill Zechariah 9:10 when He comes again. The Messiah would come on a donkey the first time and come again a second time as a conquering King on a horse (Rev. 19:11-13). In ancient times, when a king rode into a city on a donkey, he came in peace; but when he rode in on a horse, he came to make war.

Conclusion: The Messiah, a King who brings salvation and peace to the world, will come riding on a donkey. Jesus, a King who brings salvation and peace to the world, came riding on a donkey. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

ZECHARIAH 11:1-17

“Open your doors, O Lebanon, that fire may devour your cedars. Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, because the mighty *trees* are ruined. Wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the thick forest has come down. *There is* the sound of wailing shepherds! For their glory is in ruins. *There is* the sound of roaring lions! For the pride of the Jordan is in ruins” (Zech. 11:1-3).

“Thus says the LORD my God, ‘Feed the flock for slaughter, whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt; those who sell them say, ‘Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich;’ and their shepherds do not pity them. For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land,’ says the LORD. ‘But indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor’s hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver *them* from their hand.’

“So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bonds; and I fed the flock. I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then I said, ‘I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other’s flesh.’ And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it *was* the word of the LORD” (Zech. 11:4-12).

“Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give *me* my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty *pieces* of silver. And the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter (Zech. 11:13-14).

“Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel” (Zech. 11:15).

“And the LORD said to me, ‘Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land *who* will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. Woe to the worthless shepherd, who leaves the flock! A sword *shall be* against his arm and against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded” (Zech. 11:15-17).

The Prophecy

Zechariah 11:1-3 describes the devastation of the entire land of Israel from the north to the south (Lebanon, Bashan, and Jordan). Many commentators say this was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD.

In Zechariah 11:4-11, Zechariah portrays a true shepherd in contrast to a foolish shepherd (Zech. 11:15-17). God tells Zechariah to act out the role of a shepherd who is feeding the flock for slaughter (Zech. 11:4-6). Zechariah does as he is told; he feeds the flock for slaughter (Zech. 11:7) and prepares two staffs, one called Beauty and the other called Bonds. The Hebrew word translated “beauty” means “delightfulness, pleasantness”

(BDB), “beauty, grace” (Strong). The NASB and the NIV translate it “favor.” The Hebrew word rendered “bonds” means “bind, pledge” (BDB). The NASB and the NIV translate it “union.” He also dismisses three shepherds (Zech. 11:8) and abruptly ceases to feed the flock (Zech. 11:9). Then Zechariah breaks the Beauty staff in two, signifying God’s removal of Israel’s protection (Zech. 11:10). The poor of the flock knew that it *was* the word of the Lord (Zech. 11:11).

In Zechariah 11:12-13, when Zechariah as a true shepherd, asked to be paid, he was given 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave who has been gored by an ox (Ex. 21:32). This was an insult. It was like saying you are of no more value than a dead slave. It was more insulting than being paid nothing. The Lord told Zechariah to throw the princely price (irony) to the potter, a person in one of the lowest laboring classes.

In Zechariah 11:14, he breaks the second staff, signifying that the brotherhood between Judah and Israel is broken. There will be strife between the two.

In Zechariah 11:15-17, those who rejected the true shepherd accept a foolish shepherd who will not do the job of a shepherd.

To sum up, Israel will be destroyed because they rejected the true shepherd and accepted a foolish shepherd. Zechariah plays the part of two different shepherds. The value of the true shepherd is put at the worth of a dead slave.

The true Shepherd will be valued at thirty pieces of silver, the price of a dead slave.

The Significance

Since the rejection of the Shepherd results in the destruction of Israel, the Shepherd is the Messiah.

The Messiah is a true Shepherd, who will be valued at thirty pieces of silver, the price of a dead slave.

The Fulfillment

Matthew says, “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver” (Mt. 26:14-16). Judas brought the thirty pieces of silver back, admitted he had sinned by betraying innocent blood, and threw down the pieces of silver in the temple, and hanged himself. Matthew says, “The chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury because they are the price of blood.’ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me’” (Mt. 27:6-10).

Conclusion: The Messiah is a true Shepherd, who will be valued at thirty pieces of silver, the price of a dead slave. Jesus is a Shepherd who was valued at thirty pieces of silver. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

ZECHARIAH 12:10

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”

The Prophecy

Although the Lord will pour out grace on Israel, they will reject Him, but there will come a day when they will look on Whom they pierced and mourn for Him as if they had lost an only son. For an Israelite, mourning for an only son was the deepest form of grief, because it meant the loss of an heir to continue the family name and property. The One pierced is God.

The Israelites will look on the Lord whom they have pierced.

The Significance

Some ancient Rabbis said this is a messianic passage: “What is the cause of the mourning? It is well according to him who explains that the cause is the slaying of Messiah, the son of Joseph, as it is written, ‘And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son’” (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a, uptojerusalem.com).

“‘They shall look unto me,’ for they shall lift up their eyes unto me in perfect repentance, when they see him whom they pierced, that is Messiah, the son of Joseph; for our rabbis, of blessed memory, have said, that he will take upon himself all the guilt of Israel, and shall then be slain in the war to make an atonement, in such a manner, that it shall be accounted as if Israel had pierced him, for on account of their sin he has died; and therefore, in order that it may be reckoned to them as a perfect atonement, they will repent, and look to the blessed One, saying that there is none beside Him to forgive those that mourn on account of him who died for their sin: this is the meaning of ‘They shall look upon me’” (Moses Alshekh).

The Messiah, who is God, will die a violent death by means of piercing.

The Israelites will look on the Messiah, who is God, whom they have pierced.

The Fulfillment

John says, “One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out” (Jn. 19:34) “For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘not one of his bones shall be broken.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘They shall look on Him whom they pierced’” (Jn. 19:36-37).

The side of Jesus was pierced in order to *partially* fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10. When Jesus returns, they will look on Him they have pierced, *completing* the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10.

Conclusion: The Messiah will be pierced. Jesus was pierced. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

ZECHARIAH 13:7

“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones.’”

The Prophecy

God calls the sword, an instrument of death, to be awakened against His Shepherd. In other words, the Shepherd will die. The Shepherd is identified as a Man and as His “Companion.” The Hebrew word translated “companion” means “associate, fellow, relation” (Hebrew lexicon by Brown, Driver, and Briggs). It is used of a near relative, close companion, and a near neighbor. It suggests equality. In fact, De Wete, a rationalist whose standard of truth is reason, translated the word as “My equal” (De Wete, cited by JFB). “Companion” suggests the Shepherd’s deity.

God’s Shepherd will be God and man and He will die.

The Significance

Based on what other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures say about the Messiah, namely that He is a Shepherd, this is a reference to the Messiah. German scholar Delitzsch says, “The idea of nearest one (or fellow) involves not only similarity in vocation, but community of physical or spiritual descent, according to which he whom God calls His neighbor cannot be a mere man, but can only be one who participates in the divine nature, or is essentially divine. The shepherd of Jehovah, whom the sword is to smite, is therefore no other than the Messiah, who is also identified with Jehovah in Zech.12:10.”

The Messiah, God’s Shepherd, will be God and man and He will die.

The Fulfillment

Matthews says, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered’” (Mt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27). Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7 to explain that when He is killed, the disciples will scatter.

Jesus is the Shepherd, the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11, 14), the Great Shepherd, (Heb. 13:20), and the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4).

Conclusion: The Messiah, God’s Shepherd, will be a God/man who will die. Jesus is God’s Shepherd, a God/man who died. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

MALACHI 3:1

“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. ‘Behold, He is coming,’ Says the LORD of hosts.”

The Prophecy

The Lord says He will send His messenger to prepare the way before He comes suddenly to His Temple. The one *being sent* is a messenger (small m), who will prepare the way. The one *coming* is the Messenger (large M) of the covenant.

The Lord will send His messenger to prepare the way before He comes.

The Significance

A Rabbi applied this verse to Elijah as forerunner of the Messiah (Pirqé de R. Eliez. 100:29). The expression “the Messenger of the Covenant” is a messianic title, referring to the One who will bring the message of the New Covenant.

The Messiah will send His messenger to prepare the way before He comes.

The Fulfillment

Matthew writes, “As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?’ But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings’ houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he* of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You’” (Mt. 11:7-10). John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy given in Malachi 3:1.

This explanation of John the Baptist also demonstrates that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Jesus changed the quotation from Malachi. Instead of “before me,” Jesus says, “before you.” In making this change, the passage in Malachi becomes an announcement made by God to the Messiah.

Mark says, “As it is written in the Prophets: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’” “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight’” (Mk. 1:2-3). Mark quotes two prophets, Malachi (Mk. 1:2) and Isaiah (Mk. 1:3). The first quote is from Malachi 3:1. A messenger will prepare the way of the Lord.

Conclusion: The Messiah will be preceded by a forerunner. Since John the Baptist fulfilled the role of forerunner of the Messiah, Jesus is the Messiah.

THE WRITINGS

2 SAMUEL 7:12-16

“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”

The Prophecy

David wanted to build God a house (a temple), but God said He would let Solomon build the Temple and God would build David a royal house (a dynasty of kings and establish his eternal kingdom).

In 2 Samuel 7:12-16, the Lord promises David that after his departure, God would establish a Davidic kingdom. First, David’s immediate descendant, Solomon, would build a temple (“a house for My name”). Then God would establish a Davidic kingdom that would last forever. If any of David’s descendants sinned, God would correct him, but God’s mercy would not cease. Thus David’s kingdom would be eternal. Later, God’s promise to David is called a covenant (2 Sam. 23:5). Hence this is known as the Davidic Covenant.

The Son of David will establish an eternal kingdom.

The Significance

The Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom is the Messiah. A Qumran text (4 Q Florilegium) interprets 2 Samuel 7:16 as a reference to the Messiah (Marshall on Acts 2:30).

The Messiah will be the Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom.

The Fulfillment

Jesus is the son of David. An angel said to Mary, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom, there will be no end” (Lk. 1:31-33). Jesus Christ is the Son of David (Mt. 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 20:31; 21:9, 21:15; 22:42; Mk. 10:47, 10:48; 12:35; Lk. 1:32; 3:31; 18:38, 18:39, 18:39; 20:41; Acts 13:22; Rom. 1:3).

The Jewish people expected the Messiah to be the Son of David. “But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee?’ Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’” (Jn. 7:41-42). This

group expressed their ignorance and their knowledge at the same time. They were ignorant of the fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Because of the long residency of Jesus in Nazareth, He was commonly supposed to have been born there. Yet they knew that the Old Testament taught that the Messiah was to come from the seed of David (Ps. 122:11; Jer. 20:5; Isa. 11:1, 10) and was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

Jesus Himself made the point that the Messiah would be the Son of David. “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘*The Son of David*’” (Mt. 22:41-42; see also Mk. 12:35).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be the Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom. Jesus is the Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

1 CHRONICLES 17:11-14

“And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* who was before you. And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever.”

The Prophecy

This is another account of the Davidic Covenant established in 2 Samuel 7. To the promises of 2 Samuel is added, “And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever.” Ultimately, a son of David will sit on the throne forever. In other words, an eternal person will sit on the throne.

An eternal Son of David will establish an eternal kingdom.

The Significance

The eternal Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom, is the Messiah.
The Messiah is the eternal Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom.

The Fulfillment

The New Testament repeatedly says Jesus is the Son of David (see reference in the discussion of 2 Sam. 7). As the Son of David, Jesus will sit on David’s throne. Remember what the angel told Mary: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom, there will be no end” (Lk. 1:31-33).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be the eternal Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom. Jesus is the Son of David, who will establish an eternal kingdom. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

PSALMS 2:6-9

“Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’”

The Prophecy

It has been suggested that the Psalms are not just devotional material; they are a poetic version of the same message given in the Law and the Prophets.

In Psalm 2:6, God declares that He sets His King on Zion. History makes no mention of a king of Israel being anointed on Zion. So, this does not refer to David or Solomon. Messiah shall rule the earth from Zion’s holy hill.

In Psalm 2:7, the King speaks, declaring that God says, “You are my Son.” The Davidic covenant, which established that the Son of David would sit on the throne of David forever, says, “I will be his father and he shall be my son” (2 Sam. 7:14). This is not just any ordinary representative sitting on the throne; it is the Sovereign’s Son. The Heavenly Father has given His Son the nations, yea the whole earth, as His possession and inheritance (Ps. 2:8). As king of the earth, the King shall put down all rebellion (Ps. 2:9). He shall break them with a rod of iron and shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. In Psalm 2:10-12, the Psalmist says that in light of the fact that God is going to establish His Son as king of the earth, all should submit to His rule.

God’s King is God’s Son, who will rule the world.

The Significance

This passage cannot be about David, because David was never given authority over the whole earth. This passage is about the Messiah, who is said to be the Son of God (Ps. 2:7, 12). Ancient Rabbis said this passage is Messianic. In his commentary on the book of Acts, Bruce says that before the time of Christ, some of the material in the Psalms, especially the royal Psalms, was interpreted in a messianic sense. He cites Psalm 2 (Bruce, pp. 44-45).

“The rabbis have taught, the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to Messiah ben David, may he be revealed soon in our days. ‘Ask of Me anything and I shall give it to you.’ For it is written, Adonai said to me, ‘Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of Me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance (Psalm 2:7-8).’ And when he will see that Messiah ben Joseph will be slain, he will say before Him, ‘Master of the World! I ask nothing of you except life.’ God will say to him, ‘Even before you said, “life,” your father David prophesied about you, as it is written, ‘He asked life of thee, Thou gavest it to him’” (Psalm 21:5), (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a, uptojerusalem.com).

The Messiah, God’s King, is God’s Son, who will rule the world.

In Psalm 2:7, the expression “You are My Son; today I have begotten You” seems to be saying that at some point in *time* (“today”), God the Father begat Christ. Is Christ the eternal Son or did He become the Son in time? No. The Scripture teaches the eternal Sonship of Christ. Christ was the Son *before* incarnation. Indeed, “God sent forth His Son, born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). Psalm 2:7 is simply saying God has decreed that His King (Ps. 2:6) is His Son (Ps. 2:7). “Today” is the coronation day. “I have begotten You” means “I am Your Father.” It is not referring to birth; it is an extended metaphor describing the Father/Son relationship.

The Fulfillment

In Acts, Paul says, “God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You’” (Acts 13:33). Paul is declaring that Jesus is the fulfillment of Psalm 2:7.

The writer to the Hebrews points out, “For to which of the angels did he even say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’” (Heb. 1:5a). The writer to the Hebrews says Jesus is the fulfillment of Psalm 2:7.

The writer to the Hebrews also says, “So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten you’” (Heb. 5:5). The writer to the Hebrews developed the concept of Jesus being the Son-King in the earlier part of this Epistle (1:5-4:13). In this section, he develops the idea of Jesus being the Son-Priest (4:14-7:28). So here he first establishes again that Jesus is the Son.

Conclusion: The Messiah is God’s Son, who will rule the world. Jesus is God’s Son, who will rule the world. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

PSALMS 16:10

“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”

The Prophecy

David declares that God will not leave him in the grave (Sheol), nor will God allow His Holy One to see corruption. For a person to die and the body not experience corruption means the person will be resurrected,

The Lord will resurrect His Holy One.

The Significance

David is talking both about himself (“my soul”) and about God’s Holy One. The Holy One cannot be a reference to David because the Holy One will not see corruption and David did see corruption. He was not resurrected; his body decayed. The expression “Your Holy One” is a reference to the Messiah. The Midrash on Psalm 16:9 indicates that David rejoiced in the Lord Messiah, who would rise up out of him. In his commentary on Acts 13, Wiersbe says the Jews considered Psalm 16 to be a messianic Psalm.

The Messiah will be resurrected.

The Fulfillment

Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11 (Acts 2:25-28). Then he points out that David’s body is still in a tomb (Acts 2:29). Peter concludes, “Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne” (Acts 2:30). In other words, David knew God had promised him that one of his descendants, the Messiah, would sit on his throne (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 89:3-4; 132:11). Then Peter quotes Psalm 16:10 (Acts 2:31). Peter says David was prophesying the resurrection of the Messiah. He knew about the Messiah because of the Davidic covenant.

In Acts 13, Paul quotes this verse. He says, “Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption, but He whom God raised up saw no corruption” (Acts 13:35-37). Paul argues that the expression “The Holy One” in Psalm 16:10 cannot refer to David, who died, was buried, and saw corruption. On the other hand, the Son of David was raised from the dead and did not see corruption, that is, the dissolution of the body.

Conclusion: The Messiah will be resurrected. Jesus was resurrected. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

PSALMS 22:1-31

David writes as he is describing his experience, but there is no recorded incident in his life that fits all the details of this psalm. On the other hand, most of the details fit perfectly with the experience of Jesus, and the New Testament says at least some of the details were fulfilled in the suffering of Jesus (Mt. 27:35; see also Heb. 2:12). So while this psalm records an experience of David, it also goes beyond David's experience.

There are rabbinic applications of this psalm to the Messiah. In Yalkut on Isaiah 60, Psalm 22:7 is applied to the Messiah using almost the same words used in the New Testament of the mocking of Jesus by the Jews at the Cross. Yalkut also applies Psalm 22:15 to the Messiah.

The psalm can be divided into three parts: David's Position (Ps. 22:1-10), David's Prayer (Ps. 22:11-18), and David's Praise (Ps. 22:19-31).

As was done with Isaiah 52:13-53:12, because of the length of this passage, the explanation of this prophecy and its fulfillment will be given on each verse rather than at the end of the discussion.

David felt forsaken by God

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?*" (Ps. 22:1). In the midst of intense suffering ("my groaning" in verse 2), David cries to God, asking why he has been abandoned in his suffering. David wants to know why God does not help him.

"O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent" (Ps. 22:2). David tells God that even though he cried out to Him continuously day and night, He is silent.

David felt abandoned by God

On the cross, Jesus cried out to God, using the very words of the first half of verse 1 (Mt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34).

Conclusion: The fact that Jesus uttered the words of Psalm 22:1 on the cross, at least implies that David is a type of which Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment. Believers feel abandoned, but none like Jesus.

David reminds God of His answers to Prayer

"But You *are* holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel" (Ps. 22:3). In contrast ("but") to feeling abandoned by God, David reminds God that He is holy. He is separated from sin. He is also the sovereign King, who is worthy of praise.

"Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them" (Ps. 22:4). David goes on to say that Israel's forefathers trusted the Lord and He delivered them. David composed this Psalm at Mahanaim, where Jacob wrestled with the angel and was blessed.

"They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed" (Ps. 22:5). In order to emphasize the point, David repeats what he just said, adding that the

past generation “cried” (prayed) and they were not ashamed. The Hebrew word translated means “ashamed.” The NASB and the NIV translate “ashamed” as “disappointed,” but ashamed better fits the transition to the next verse (Mark H. Heinemann, “An Exposition of Psalm 22. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July-September, 1990).

David reminds God of His faithfulness.

David is Mocked

“But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people” (Ps. 22:6). In contrast (“but”) to feeling worthy to receive an answer to prayer (verses 4-5), David not only felt abandoned by God but rejected by people. He felt like he was a worm, that is, less than human (“no man”), an object of reproach. People despised him.

“All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’” (Ps. 22:7-8). Those who saw David’s suffering shook their heads, opened their mouth, and mocked him. The mockers said since he delights in and trusts the Lord, let the Lord deliver him. They ridiculed his faith.

David was mocked

In a similar fashion, Jesus was mocked. “And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ Likewise, the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing” (Mt. 27:39-44; see also 27:27-31).

David reminds God that He has Trusted Him all his life

“But You *are* He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust *while* on My mother’s breasts” (Ps. 22:9). In contrast (“but”), being mocked by the people, David reminds God that it was He Who took him out of the womb. God brought him into the world.

Furthermore, God taught him to trust. In poetic terms, David says, God taught him to trust while on his mother’s breasts. Most commentators interpret this to mean that God taught David to trust from a very early age. Is it possible that the meaning is that God taught David to trust by giving him the experience of trusting his mother’s breast for food?

“I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother’s womb You *have been* My God” (Ps. 22:10). Again, David reminds God that He has been his God all his life.

David is saying that even though he feels abandoned by God and mocked by men, he is still trusting the God he has trusted all his life. He is reminding God of his lifelong faith.

David had a lifelong faith.

In a messianic passage, Isaiah says, “Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My

mother He has made mention of My name (Isa. 49:1). “And now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb *to be His Servant*” (Isa. 49:5).

David is Suffering

“Be not far from Me, for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help” (Ps. 22:11). The question of verse 1 becomes a prayer. Feeling that God is far from him, David pleads with the Lord not to be far away because trouble is near and there is none to help him.

“Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me *with* their mouths, *like* a raging and roaring lion” (Ps. 22:12-13). Bashan was east of the Jordan and north of Gilead. It was known for its rich pasture land. The bulls of Bashan were large, strong, and fierce. David describes his enemies as vicious bulls that have surrounded him. They open their mouths and roar like a hungry lion. They are poised for attack. The odds are overwhelming.

“I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within Me” (22:14). Because of the attack of his enemies, David felt as if he had been poured out like water. The meaning of the expression “I am poured out like water” is that all strength is gone. Joshua 7:5 says, “The hearts of the people melted and became like water.” The expression “my bones are out of joint” indicates that he is unable to help himself. Like wax over a fire, his heart has melted, meaning his courage is gone.

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death” (22:15). His strength is gone. It is as dry as a potsherd, a broken piece of earthenware. Instead of being as strong as an oak tree, he is as weak as a broken piece of pottery. His mouth is dry. His tongue has stuck to the roof of his mouth (compare with Jn. 19:28). When he says God has brought him “to the dust of death,” he means he is at death’s door.

“For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet” (Ps. 22:16). David explains (“for”) he is surrounded by enemies who are like dogs. In the ancient world, dogs were not pets; they were ferocious scavengers. These enemies are wicked people. David is surrounded (22:12, 16). He sees no way of escape. This would be like saying today, “I am surrounded by wolves; I am surrounded by an angry mob bent on my destruction.”

David says they pierced His hands and feet. The Hebrew word translated “pierced” only appears here and in Isaiah 38:13, where it is translated “lion.” If it is translated “lion” here, the translation would be “Like a lion my hands and my feet.” The relationship between a “lion” and “hands and feet” is difficult to explain. There is no logical relationship between them.

The other possibility is that here this Hebrew word is a verb. The Septuagint reads: “They are piercing my hands and my feet” (Perowne says two Hebrew manuscripts agree with the Septuagint). All the ancient versions and interpreters took it to be a verb. Gesenius, a Hebrew scholar, says that it is a verb and means “pierced” (see Barnes).

David says that his hands and feet were pierced.

Being pierced in the hands and feet seems to go far beyond David’s experience, and it certainly describes what happened to Jesus. The New Testament does not apply this verse to Jesus, but Jesus was pierced (Lk. 24:39-40; Jn. 20:27) and the Old Testament says the Messiah will be pierced (Zech. 12:10).

“I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me” (Ps. 22:17). As a result of his suffering, David was so emaciated that his bones were so prominent he could count them. Again David is knocking on death’s door. People just stare at him, probably at his protruding bones.

“They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots” (Ps. 22:18). By looking at him, they decided he was about to die, so they began to divide his clothes among themselves by casting lots.

David’s garments were divided among the people by lots.

Matthew says, “Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots’” (Mt. 27:35; see also Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:34; Jn. 19:24).

David Prays for help

“But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me!” (Ps. 22:19). In contrast (“but”) to his enemies, who have taken his strength, David turns to the Lord to ask for strength. David addresses God as Lord for the first time in this Psalm. Again he asks the Lord to not be far from him (see Ps. 22:1 and 22:11). David urges the Lord to hasten His help, for he is on the doorstep of death.

“Deliver Me from the sword, My precious *life* from the power of the dog” (Ps. 22:20). David asks to be delivered from the sword, the instrument of death. He also asks that his life be spared from the power of the dog, that is, his enemies (Ps. 22:16).

“Save Me from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen!” (Ps. 22:21a). In this prayer, David has asked to be helped (Ps. 22:19), to be delivered (Ps. 22:20) and now he asks to be saved (Ps. 22:21). Again using the images of animals for his enemies, David entreats the Lord to save him from them. David has referred to his enemies as bulls (Ps. 22:12), lions (Ps. 22:13), and dogs (Ps. 22:16). This time, David uses those same animals in reverse order (dogs, lions, oxen—instead of bulls).

David suffered.

Much of what is described in this Psalm could be describing what happened to David, but there some aspects of the suffering that go beyond what David would have experienced, such as having his hands and feet pierced (verse 16) and having his clothes divided by lot (verse 18). Even if taken figuratively, it is highly unlikely that those things actually happened to David. It is much more reasonable to assume that David is going beyond his own experience.

Jesus suffered. Peter says the prophets prophesied “beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (1 Pet. 1:11). Jesus prayed in the midst of His suffering. The writer to the Hebrews says, “Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” (Heb. 5:7). These words are probably a primary reference to Gethsemane, but with application to other times in the life of Christ, for example, John 11:35. These words have also been taken as a reference to the cross.

David Praises the Lord

Abruptly, David declares the Lord has heard his prayer. “You have answered Me” (Ps. 22:21b). In the context of this psalm, that can only mean that David was delivered from death. As applied to Jesus, He was not rescued; He was resurrected.

“I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You” (Ps. 22:22). In response to answered prayer, David declares that he will publicly praise the Lord to his brethren in the assembly. The brethren are spiritual brethren (see the next verse).

David publicly praised the Lord.

The writer to the Hebrews quotes this verse as the word of the Messiah. He writes, “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to you’” (Heb. 2:11-12). The writer to the Hebrews is quoting Psalm 22 to demonstrate that the Messiah and the brethren are one. In the process, he says the Messiah spoke the words of Psalm 22:22.

“You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!” (Ps. 22:23). David invites all who know the Lord and all Israel to praise the Lord. He who was surrounded by enemies bent on his death (verses 12 and 16) is now surrounded by God-fearers.

“For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard” (Ps. 22:24). David says all should praise the Lord (“for”) because He has not abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, nor hid His face from him. David began feeling God had abandoned him. Now he says that was only temporary. God has now heard and answered prayer.

“My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him” (Ps. 22:25). Because God has answered his prayer, David says that he will praise God in the great assembly of God-fearers. David calls this paying his vow. In the midst of his affliction, David probably made a vow that if the Lord answered His prayer, he would publicly praise Him.

“The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever!” (Ps. 22:26). David turns his attention to the people in the congregation, telling them that when the poor seek the Lord, they will be satisfied and will praise Him. He encourages them not to lose heart.

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You” (Ps. 22:27). Again turning his attention to the Lord, David tells Him that there is coming a day when the whole world will remember, turn to, and worship (bow down before) the Lord.

“For the kingdom *is* the LORD’s, and He rules over the nations” (Ps. 22:28). As David explains (“for”), this will take place in the kingdom when the Lord rules all nations.

“All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, even he who cannot keep himself alive” (Ps. 22:29). Eventually all will bow before the Lord, the prosperous who eat as well as the dying.

“A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the *next* generation” (Ps. 22:30). In the meantime, posterity will serve the Lord by telling the next generation about Him.

“They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done *this*” (Ps. 22:31). That generation will tell the next generation that has not yet been born, about the Lord’s righteousness and what He has done, namely, answered their prayers and rescued them. Therefore the Lord can be trusted.

Conclusion: David vividly describes his experience of feeling abandoned by God, pursued almost to death, pleading with God, and praising God, but some of what He says goes beyond his own experience.

There is an amazing correspondence between David’s experience and the experience of Jesus Christ. Jesus cried, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps. 22:1). Jesus was mocked (Ps. 22:6-8). Jesus had His hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16). Jesus had His clothes divided by people casting lots (Ps. 22:18). Matthew says that was the fulfillment of this Psalm (Mt. 27:35) and the writer to the Hebrews says Jesus spoke words in this Psalm (Heb. 2:12). Some in the early church labeled this psalm “the fifth gospel.”

PSALMS 80:17

“Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man *whom* You made strong for Yourself.”

The Prophecy

Throughout Psalm 80, Asaph is pleading with the Shepherd and Husbandman of Israel to save Israel (see verses 3, 7, 14, 19). Asaph requests that God’s hand of favor be on the One who is on His right, namely the Son of Man (Ps. 80:17). He adds, “Then we will not turn back from You; revive us, and we will call upon Your name” (Ps. 80:18). In other words, when the hand of God is on the Son of Man with favor (Ps. 80:17), Israel will return to the Lord, who will make them alive (regeneration), and they will call on the Lord.

When the Son of Man comes, Israel will be saved.

The Significance

In the Targum, Psalm 80:17 paraphrases “the Son of Man” by “King Messiah.” The title “Son of Man” is used in the Old Testament of the Messiah (Dan. 7:13).

When the Messiah comes, Israel will be saved.

The Fulfillment

Jesus is the Son of Man (Mt. 9:6, etc.). As Peter said, “Him (Jesus) God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

Conclusion: The Messiah is the Son of Man who will save Israel. Jesus is the Son of Man who will save Israel. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

PSALMS 110:1

“The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

Prophecy

David says God spoke to ‘My Lord.’ David’s Lord was to sit on God’s right hand, until God’s made His enemies His footstool, that is, to be in complete subjugation.

God told David’s Lord to sit on His right hand until He made His enemies his footstool.

The Significance

The One who will sit on God’s right hand until He makes all His enemies His footstool is David’s Lord, an obvious reference to the Messiah. One ancient rabbi said, “Prepare the way! The King Messiah comes ... may the mountains abase themselves, may the valleys be filled, may the cedars incline to render him homage. Prostrate yourselves all of you before the Messiah King, and bend your knees before him who is seated at the right hand of the Holy One” (Zohar I. 4b, see uptojerusalem.com).

The Messiah will sit on God’s right until all His enemies are put in subjection.

The Fulfillment

This verse is quoted and alluded to many times in the New Testament (Mt. 12:35-37; 22:41-45; 26:64; Mk. 14:62; 16:19; Lk. 20:41-44; 22:69; Acts 2:34-35; 5:31; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:24-25; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 1:13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 3:21). Jewish scholars said it refers to the Messiah (Wiersbe on Mt. 22).

Jesus used this passage. He asked the Pharisees, “‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘*The Son of David.*’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?’” (Mt. 22:41-45). Jesus is arguing that if David addressed the Messiah as ‘the Lord,’ the Messiah must be more than David’s son. The Messiah is superior to David, but David was king. Only God was David’s superior. Thus the Messiah is God. Jesus is the Son of David, but He is far more; He is the Son of God. As David’s Son, He is human. As the David’s Lord, He is God.

This passage was fulfilled when Jesus ascended to heaven. Until He rules, His position is at the right hand of God.

Conclusion: The Messiah will sit on God’s right until all His enemies are put in subjection. Jesus sits at the right hand of God. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

PSALMS 110:4

“The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’” (110:4).

Prophecy

The Lord will not change His mind concerning His solemn oath that the One will be a priest forever, not according to the Aaronic priesthood, but according to the order of Melchizedek. The oath was, no doubt, taken in eternity past. In the context of Psalm 110, the One to whom this is addressed is the One sitting on God’s right hand.

The Lord told the One sitting on His right hand, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Significance

Rabbis applied Psalm 110:1-7 to the Messiah. The Messiah underlies the rendering of Psalm 110:4 in the Targum.

Under the Mosaic Law, men of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron were priests. Their priesthood was inherited from their parents and terminated at death. Melchizedek became a priest by God’s appointment. There is no record in Genesis of his parents, nor is there a record of the beginning or end of his priesthood. The Messiah is the One to whom this promise was made (see Ps. 110:1).

The Messiah will be a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

Fulfillment

The author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 110:4 twice (Heb.5:6 and 7:17). Four times he says Melchizedek is a type of Christ (Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 7:21). As a Priest, Jesus did not offer sacrifices daily as did the Aaronic priests. He sacrificed Himself once for all (Heb. 7:27-26, 10:10). He is the eternal High Priest (Heb. 7:24, 28) of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:13, 9:15). Like Melchizedek, the Messiah is both King and Priest (Gen. 14:18).

Conclusion: The Messiah will be a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. Jesus is a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

Psalm 2 speaks of His coming reign; Psalm 22 describes His crucifixion; Psalm 16 speaks of His resurrection; Psalm 110 pictures His ascension.

PROVERBS 30:4

“Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son’s name, if you know?”

Prophecy

The context makes it clear that the subject is God. Agur says, “Surely I *am* more stupid than *any* man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One” (30:2-3). So when Agur asks the questions recorded in verse 4, he is obviously talking about God. Only God can ascend into heaven and descend from heaven. Only God can gather the winds in His hands, that is, control the wind. Only God can contain the waters, either the clouds or the ocean. Only God can establish the landmasses. Thus, the last question is, “What is God’s name and the name of His Son?”

God has a Son.

The Significance

Elsewhere, the Old Testament reveals that God has a Son (Ps. 2:6-9), who is the Messiah. Ancient Rabbis said Psalm 2 is Messianic. What is not revealed in the Old Testament is the name of the Son.

The Messiah is the Son of God.

Fulfillment

Jesus said that He was the Son of God. He said, “Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?” (Jn. 10:36). Others called Jesus the Son of God (Mk. 1:1; Jn. 1:34; 11:27; 20:31; Acts 9:20).

Conclusion: The Messiah is the Son of God. Jesus is the Son of God. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

DANIEL 9:1-27

“Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, *there shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined” (Dan. 9:25-26).

Prophecy

The backdrop of this prophecy is the exile, which began in 605 BC. Jeremiah predicted that the exile would last for 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10-14). Daniel lived during that 70-year captivity. As Daniel 9 opens, he is reading Jeremiah and it dawns on him that the period of captivity is about to be completed. It was 538 BC, 67 years after the captivity began. Daniel drops to his knees and asks God to re-gather Israel, restore the Temple, and re-institute the sacrifices (Dan. 9:17-19). In response to that prayer, God reveals His future plans for Israel. It begins with the rebuilding of Jerusalem, but it goes far beyond that to the coming of the Messiah.

The key to unraveling the plan is understanding the Hebrew word translated “weeks.” It means “sevens” (plural). It just means “sevens;” it does not indicate seven of any one particular thing. It is like our word “dozen.” “Dozen” means “twelve.” It just means “twelve;” it does not mean “twelve” of any one particular thing. It could be a dozen eggs or a dozen donuts. So the problem in Daniel 9 is seven *what?*

The 70 years of captivity discussed earlier in the chapter implies “years,” and “years” is the only thing that makes sense. Thus, 7 weeks is 49 years, 62 weeks is 434 years, and 69 weeks is 483 years. This passage is saying that 49 years after the command to restore Jerusalem, the streets and the walls will be rebuilt. Then 434 years after that (for a total of 483 years) the Messiah will come and be cut off, but not for Himself.

When was the command to restore Jerusalem? Several suggestions have been made. The traditional view is that it was the Decree of Artaxerxes, the king of Persia (Ezra 7), who in 458 BC issued the decree for Israel to return to the land. At first glance, it seems that the Decree of Artaxerxes concerned the Temple (Ezra 7:19-20), but it clearly included much more than that. Artaxerxes said the Jews could do “whatever seems good to you,” “according to the will of God” (Ezra 7:18). Later Ezra thanked God that He “did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem” (Ezra 9:9). This fits the coming of Christ perfectly. Boutflower dates the decree in 457 BC and concludes that 483 years later is 26 AD, the year the Messiah was made manifest to Israel (Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, pp. 186-191). Archer also dates the decree in 457 BC, but he arrives at 25 AD as the time of Christ’s ministry (Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of the Old Testament Introduction*, p. 387). Wood says the Decree was in 458 BC and the 483 years ended in 26 AD, because only one year elapsed between 1 BC and 1 AD (Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, pp. 252-54).

Significance

Ancient Jews at Qumran believed that Daniel 9 was a prophecy of the time of the coming of the Messiah (Qumran text, 4Q521). Wise and Tabor say, “We know the Qumran group was intensely interested in this seventy weeks prophecy of Daniel. They tried to place themselves within this chronological scheme as they calculated the eschaton” (Michael Wise and James Tabor, “The Messiah at Qumran,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*. November/December 1992, pp. 60-61).

There is simply no question that this passage refers to the Messiah. Daniel uses the very word! Moreover, this Old Testament passage gives a date for the coming of the Messiah after which time He will be “cut off, but not for Himself,” a reference to His death (the Hebrew word translated “cut off” was used of the death penalty; see Lev. 7:20; etc.).

Fulfillment

Needless to say, Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy—on time!

Conclusion: The Messiah will come 483 years after the command to restore Jerusalem and He will die, but not for Himself. Jesus came 483 years after the command to restore Jerusalem and He did not die for Himself. Therefore, Jesus is the Messiah.

Conclusion

Everyone—Jews, Christians, and even unbelievers -- agrees that the Hebrew Scriptures teach a Messiah is coming. Ancient Rabbis recognized that their Hebrew Scriptures taught that a Messiah was coming. In other words, the New Testament is not re-interpreting non-messianic passages in the Old Testament to make them messianic (John H. Sailhamer, “Messiah and the Hebrew Bible.” JETS 44:1, March 2001, p. 14). Apart from the New Testament, the Old Testament describes a coming Messiah.

Broad Outline Here is a simple summary of the broad outline of what the Hebrew Scriptures say about the Messiah. The Hebrew Scriptures predicted the Messiah would be a human, not an angel (Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:16), a Jew, not a Gentile (Gen. 22:18; Num. 24:17), from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10), from the family of David (2 Sam. 7:17), born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) of a virgin (Isa. 7:14); He would die for the sins of many nations (Isa. 52:15; 53:5-6, 53:11) at a specified time (Dan. 9:26), be raised from the dead (Ps. 16:10), and reign on the earth in a kingdom (Dan. 2, 7).

Progressive Revelation The revelation of the Messiah in the Old Testament is progressive. The direct statements concerning the Messiah in the Law provide a brief description of Him. He will be a man, a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Judah, who will be a King and a prophet and He will bless the world. As the remainder of the Old Testament is written, more and more details are revealed. The picture of the Messiah is more fully developed by the end of the Old Testament.

Sailhamer suggests that the messianic passages after the Pentateuch are commentary on the messianic passages in the Pentateuch. He points out that when Psalm 72:17 says the Davidic King will bless all nations, it is drawing directly from Genesis 12:3 and when Psalm 72:9 speaks of the king’s enemies licking the dust, it is a reference to Genesis 3:15 (Sailhamer, pp. 16-17).

“I heard someone recently describe the lens of an old lighthouse along the New England coastline. It was a lighthouse used long before the discovery of electricity. Its light source was a single candle. The lens of its light consisted of literally thousands of triangular surfaces. Each surface focused and refracted a small portion of the original candlelight. The result was a beam of light that was cast 20 miles out to sea. The original light was just a small candle. As it passed through the lens, it became a bright beacon of light. This is not unlike the Hebrew Bible. As the original messianic candlelight passes through, first the Pentateuch, and then the rest of the Tanak (the Hebrew Scriptures), it becomes a bright light that shines on the NT” (Sailhamer, p. 22).

To say the same thing another way, the predictions of the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures were given over a period of about a thousand years. The dates of the biblical books quoted in this study are as follows: Genesis (1446 BC), Numbers (1407 BC), Deuteronomy (1447 BC), Psalms (1000 BC), 1 Samuel (925 BC), Jeremiah (585 BC), Isaiah (680 BC), Zechariah (578 BC), Daniel (530 BC), 1 Chronicles (450 BC), and Malachi (430 BC). In other words, predictions of the Messiah were given from 1446-430 BC. Granted as the years progressed, more and more specific details were given, but all were given at least 400 years before Jesus came.

I grew up in Pensacola, Florida, the city known as the city of five flags because the flags of five countries have flown over it (Spain, France, England, the United States of

America, and the Confederacy). When I was growing up, the city of Pensacola had an annual celebration called the Fiesta of Five Flags. Part of the festivities was a treasure hunt. The daily newspaper would publish one clue a day until someone found the Treasure Chest loaded with coupons for free merchandise from stores all over town. At first, the clues were vague. They got clearer and clearer as the process continued. In a similar fashion, the biblical clues may seem vague at first, but they get more and more specific as the process continues.

Possibilities of Fulfillment What are the chances of these predictions being fulfilled? Some have suggested that the New Testament fulfillments were “accidental,” “chance,” or “coincidental.” The problem with that explanation is the number of details that are given. The more details that are given, the less there is a likelihood of a “chance fulfillment.” There are numerous details in the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures concerning the Messiah, including time, place, and incidents.

Other predictions, both ancient and modern, give only one or two particulars expressed in general and ambiguous terms. Throughout all history, *there is not a single instance of a prediction, expressed in unequivocal language, which has been fulfilled—except those found in the Scripture.*

The odds of one human being fulfilling just eight of these prophecies is 1×10 to the 17th power. That’s one in 100,000,000,000,000,000. To put this into perspective, imagine we have enough silver dollars to cover the entire state of Texas two feet deep. We put an “X” on one of those silver dollars and hide it and stir the whole pile. Then we blindfold a man in Dallas and tell him he can go as far as he wants, but he must pick up the one silver dollar we have marked. That’s the same chance as a human being fulfilling these specific prophecies, many of which he would have no control over, such as his place of birth. If forty-eight of these prophecies were true of one man, the odds increase to 1×10 to the 157th power (Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, pp. 144, 167).

The Problem If the evidence for Jesus being the Christ is so overwhelming, why did the Jews not accept it? Paul explains, “For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame’” (Rom. 9:32-33). Paul quotes two passages from Isaiah. Both passages refer to God himself, but from the beginning, they were applied to the Messiah, even by the Jews (Sandy and Headlam).

The phrase “stumbling stone” is taken from Isaiah 8:14 and here refers to the Messiah. Instead of seeing the Messiah and believing in Him, He became for them a stone over which they stumbled. Being committed to works righteousness, they stumbled over the faith righteousness offered in Christ. This was foreseen by the Scripture. Paul combines Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 8:14 to demonstrate that. Isaiah foretold that the Jews would stumble over God Himself, but those who believe will not be ashamed. Israel’s rejection of the Messiah is her shame. One who believes will not be ashamed.

The New Testament applies this verse to corporate Israel in her ongoing rejection of Jesus as Messiah (Lk. 2:34; Rom. 9:32-33; 1 Pet. 2:8).

The problem with prophecies concerning the Messiah is not a lack of evidence; it is a lack of willingness to believe the evidence. That is tragic because to believe the evidence and trust the Messiah, Jesus Christ, for the gift of eternal life (Jn. 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9), is the only way to have eternal life (Jn. 14:6).

JEWISH PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

OT Reference	Title	Work	References	Significance
		Law		
Genesis 3:15	Seed of woman	destroy Satan	Ancient Rabbis (extra-biblical) Heb. 2:14; Rom. 16:20	Man
Genesis 22:18	Seed of Abraham	bless all nations	Rabbis Gal. 3:8, 14-16	Jew
Genesis 49:10	Shiloh	rule / be obeyed	Rabbis	Judah / King
Numbers 24:17	Star / Scepter	destroy enemies	Rabbis	King
Deuteronomy. 18:15	Prophet	people will hear	Rabbis Acts 3:22-23 Acts 3:22-23	Prophet
		Prophets		
Isaiah 7:14	Son / Immanuel	virgin birth	Rabbis Mt. 1:22-23	Son (God with us)
Isaiah 9:6-7	Wonderful Counselor Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince of Peace	rule	Rabbis Jews / Christians	King (God)
Isaiah 40:3-5	(John the Baptist)	(Forerunner)	Rabbis Mt. 3:3 Mark 1:3	King (God) (Forerunner)
Isaiah 42:1-4	Servant	Gentiles / Gentles	Rabbis Mt. 12:17-21	Servant / gentle
Isaiah 49:1-3	Servant	Redeemer	Acts 13:47	Savior
Isaiah 50:4-9	Suffering Servant	Sufferer	Mk. 14:65 Mk.15:19 Mt. 27:30	Sufferer
Isaiah 52:15 53:1 53:3 53:4 53:5 53:6 53:7	Suffering Servant (Messengers) Suffering Servant Suffering Servant Suffering Servant (we are like sheep) Suffering Servant	save Gentiles (believe) be despised carry our sorrows suffer for our sin (we sin) remained silent	Rabbis Rom. 15:20-21 Jn. 12:38/Rom. 10:16 Mk. 9:12 Mt. 8:16-17 1 Pet. 2:24 1 Pet. 2:25 Mt. 26:63 Mt. 27:12 Mt. 27:14 Mk. 14:60-61 Mk. 15:4-5 Lk. 23:9	Savior Sufferer Healer Savior Sufferer
53:9	Suffering Servant	buried with rich	Jn. 19:9 Acts 8:32-33 Mt. 27:57-60	
53:9 53:11	Suffering Servant	no deceit in mouth	Mk. 15:43-46 Jn. 19:38-42	Sufferer Savior

53:12 53:12	Suffering Servant Suffering Servant Suffering Servant	justify many with transgressors bear sins of many	1 Pet. 2:22-23 Rom. 5:19 Lk. 22:37 Gal. 1:4 Gal. 2:20 Eph. 5:2 Eph. 5:25 1 Tim. 2:5-6 Titus 2:14	Savior Savior
Isaiah 61:1-3	Preacher, etc.	preach, heal, etc.	Rabbis Lk. 4:16-21	Preacher, etc.
Jeremiah 23:5-6	Branch Lord	rule	Rabbis Jn. 1:1, 14	King
Micah 5:2	Ruler	born in Bethlehem	Rabbis Mt. 2:5-6	King
Zechariah 9:9-10	King	riding a donkey	Rabbis Mt. 21:4-5; Mk. 11:1-7 Lk. 19:29-35	King
Zechariah 11:1-17	Shepherd	ask to be paid	Mt. 26:14-16; 27:3-10	Shepherd
Zechariah 12:10	Sufferer	was pierced	Rabbis Jn. 19:31-37	Sufferer (God)
Zechariah 13:7	Shepherd	Shepherd will die sheep will scatter	Mt. 26:31 Mk. 14:27	Shepherd (God)
Malachi 3:1	Messenger (John the Baptist)	come to Temple (Forerunner)	Rabbis Mt. 11:7-10; Mk. 1:2	Messenger (Forerunner)
Writings				
2 Samuel 7:12-16	Son of David	rule	Rabbis Mt. 22:41-42	King
1 Chronicles 17:14	Son of David	rule	Lk. 1:31-33	King
Psalms 2:7-12	Son of God	rule	Rabbis Acts 13:33 Heb. 1:5, 5:5	King Son of God
Psalms 16:1-11	Holy One	be resurrected	Rabbis Acts 2:25-31 Acts 13:35-37	Be resurrected
Psalms 22:1-31	Sufferer Cried Mocked Pierced Cast lots	suffer	Rabbis Mt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34 Mt. 27:39-44, 27:27-31 Lk. 24:39-40; Jn. 20:27 Mt. 27:35; Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:34 Jn. 19:24	Sufferer
Psalms 80:17	Son of Man	sit on right hand	Rabbis Mt. 9:6; Acts 5:31	Sit on right hand
Psalms 110:1	David's Lord	sit on right hand	Rabbis Mt. 12:36	Sit on right hand (God)
Psalms 110:4	Priest	Priest	Rabbis	Enemies subjected

			Heb. 5:6, 6:20 Heb. 7:17, 7:21	
Proverbs 30:4	Son of God	Son of God	Jn. 10:36 Mk. 1:1 Jn. 1:34, 11:27, 20:31 Acts 9:20	Son of God
Daniel 9:1-27	Messiah	Come/die	Rabbis Gal. 4:4	Die not for Himself