

What is the Bible? - Part 2

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the strongest evidences for the existence of God, the divinity of Jesus, and the Scriptures being the Word of God. God tells the Israelites that prophecy was the way they knew that He was the one true God:

“I am the LORD , that is My name, I will not give my glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you” - Isaiah 42:8-9 (NASB)

“Remember the former things long past, For I am God and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning , and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying ‘My purpose will be established and I will accomplish all My good pleasure” - Isaiah 46:9-10 (NASB)

“I declared the former things long ago and they went forth from my mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass...Therefore I declared them to you long ago, before they took place I proclaimed them to you so that you would not say My idol has done them and my graven image and my molten image have commanded them” - Isaiah 48:3 & 5 (NASB)

John Walford in his book, Every Prophecy of the Bible comments that one fourth of the Bible was prophecy when it was written. Since a large portion of the Bible is prophecy, we should understand who the prophets were and the importance of Bible Prophecy. As stated in an earlier handout, prophets were spokesmen for God. Oxford Languages gives the origin of the english word,

“Middle English: from Old French *prophete*, via Latin from Greek *prophētēs* ‘spokesman’, from *pro* ‘before’ + *phētēs* ‘speaker’ (from *phēnai* ‘speak’).”

They would speak to their own people as well as be sent to speak to Gentile nations (See the book of Jonah). God would give words of warning and encouragement through the mouth of the prophet. Two major sections of the Bible are known as the Major and Minor prophets. The only difference between the Major and Minor prophets is that the books of the Major Prophets are longer. They are not the only books that contain prophecy. Other men who were considered prophets are Enoch (Jude 14-16), Noah (2 Peter 2:5), Abraham (Genesis 20:7), Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-19) , Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah - Prophet and Judge (Judges 4:4), [Note another female prophet, Isaiah's wife - Isaiah 8:3], Samuel (1 Samuel 3:20), Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-31), David (Matt 22:41-46, Luke 20:41-44, Acts 1:16), Elijah (1 Kings 17:24), Elisha (2 Kings 2:14) just to name a few. Jesus told the Jewish people John the Baptist the culmination of a prophetic era (Matt 11:11-15, Luke 16:16). He would be the final prophet who would announce the coming of the Messiah who is THE PROPHET Moses prophesied about in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (see also Acts 3:22-26). Harold Willmington compares Jesus to Moses showing that Jesus was that prophet that was like Moses (Bold items added by writer):

Moses	Christ
Four Old Testament books describe his life (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)	Four New Testament books describe His life (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
Pharaoh threatened to kill him as a baby (Exod. 1:15, 16)	Herod threatened to kill Him as a baby (Matt. 2:16)
Enjoyed a special relationship with the Father (Exod. 33:11)	Enjoyed a special relationship with the Father (Matt. 3:17)
Identified with his people (Heb. 11:25) - see also (Exod 32:7-14, Num 12:13, 14:12)	Identified with His people (Heb. 2:10, 11)
Threatened with stoning in the wilderness (Exod. 17:4)	Threatened with stoning in Jerusalem (John 8:59; 10:31)

Known for his meekness (Num. 12:33)	Known for His meekness (Matt. 11:28-30)
Saw the glory of God on a mountain (Exod. 34:29, 35)	Displayed the glory of God on a mountain (Matt. 17:2)
Was greatly burdened over Israel's sin (Exod. 32:31, 32)	Was greatly burdened over Israel's sin (Matt. 23:37; Luke 19:41-44)
Met his wife while sitting beside a well (Exod. 2:15)	Met the Samaritan woman while sitting beside a well (John 4:4, 6)
Was a shepherd of sheep (Exod. 3:1)	Was a shepherd of men (John 10:14, 16)
Appointed 70 elders to assist him (Num. 11:24)	Appointed 70 disciples to assist Him (Luke 10:1)
Was known as a great prophet (Deut. 34:10)	Was known as a great prophet (Matt. 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 4:19)
His God-given mission was to save Israel (Exod. 3:10; Acts 7:35)	His God-given mission was to save sinners (Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10; John 12:47)
He provided bread for the hungry (Exod. 16:14, 15)	He provided bread for the hungry (Matt. 14:19, 20)
He furnished the Law of God (John 1:17a)	He fulfilled the Law of God (John 1:17b; Rom. 10:4)
He was considered a servant in the house of God (Heb. 3:5)	He was considered a son in the house of God (Heb. 3:6)
He returned to earth after his death (Matt. 17:3)	He returned to earth after His death (John 20:11-17)
Israel turns away because of Moses' delay (Exodus 32:1-34)	Christians in danger of sinning because of Christ's delay (Matthew 24:12, 45-25:13)

Willmington, Harold, "Contrasting Moses and Christ" (2018). *Fifteen Contrasts and Comparisons of Biblical Characters*.
11. https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/contrast_compare/11

Prophecy about the Messiah

One of the major prophetic themes of the Bible is the coming of the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled many prophecies at his first coming that made it clear that he was the long awaited Messiah that would be the Savior of the World. The fulfillment of these prophecies are strong evidence for God's existence, Jesus' Messiahship, and the Bible being God's Word. Jesus made it clear that the Scriptures pointed to Him (John 5:39-47, Luke 24:13-35). Psalms 40:7 states "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; the scroll of the book is written of me...'. Let's explore some of these prophecies:

Virgin Birth

Be of the offspring of the woman; shall bruise the serpent's head Be born of a virgin	Genesis 3:14-15 So the Lord God said to the serpent . . . "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Isaiah 7:13-14 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore	Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law. Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death . . . that is, the devil. 1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of
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	the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (God with us)."	the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. Matthew 1:18–23 His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:26–35 God sent the angel . . . to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.
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The very birth of Jesus would be a sign that he was the Messiah (Matt 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-56). The Genesis prophecy is known as the Protoevangelium, God's first presentation of the Gospel. The statement "seed of the woman" points to the virgin birth because a woman does not have seed but the man. The fact that Jesus was not born through normal means allowed him to maintain his sinlessness since the sin nature comes through the male seed (see Genesis 5:3). There were Jews who were aware of the circumstances of His birth, but instead of attributing it to the miraculous, they believed that Jesus' birth was the result of infidelity (John 8:41).

Born in Bethlehem

Be born in the town of Bethlehem of Judea (Judah)	Micah 5:2–5 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."	Matthew 2:1–6 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?"
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God would move Caesar Augustus to take a census to have Joseph and Mary, Jesus' parents, travel to Bethlehem where he would be born according to the prophecy in Micah. Prophecy was taken so seriously by the Jewish scribes that Herod was able to ask them where the Messiah would be born:

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" - Matt 2:1-6 (ESV)

Herod based on this information would fulfill the prophecy in Jeremiah 31:15 by ordering all children two years old and under to be killed in hopes of stopping the Messiah from taking his throne.

Crucifixion

Christ's suffering and crucifixion	Isaiah 53:12 He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. Psalm 22:1-31	Matthew 27:38 Two robbers were crucified with him. Also Mark 15:27–28; Luke 22:37; 23:32–33 Crucifixion Matthew 27:35 They had crucified him. Also John 19:18, 34–37 John 20:25–29 "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands .
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		<p>... and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." . . . Then he said ". . . Reach out your hand and put it into my side." . . .</p> <p>Clothing would be taken and divided John 19:23–24 This garment was seamless . . . "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." Also Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34</p> <p>Mocked and Insulted Matthew 27:31, 39–43; Mark 15:29–32; Luke 23:35–39</p>
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Jesus from the cross quotes the first words of Psalm 22:

About the ninth hour (3pm) Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani? "That is My God My God , why have you forsaken Me?" - Matt 27:46 (Mark 15:34, Luke)

Jesus was not saying that he was forsaken by his Heavenly Father. The Father is always with Jesus (John 16:32), The Father was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinth 5:19), The Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father (John 14:8-13), the Father and Jesus are One (yet not the same) (John 10:30). The Father loves us as much as he loves Jesus (John 17:23), so if he forsakes his Son, that would mean he would forsake us, which we know by Romans 8:35-39 that nothing can separate us from the love of God. The offering of Jesus pleased God (Isaiah 53:10, Eph 5:2). The Father never forsook Israel (Deut 31:6, Heb 13:5). You had a willing Father and a willing son (Genesis 22, Psalm 22, Hebrews 11:17-19). Jesus is quoting the first words of the Psalm 22 to express that what was happening to him was fulfilling the prophecies that were written in Psalm 22. Herbert Lockyer in his book All the Messianic Prophecies of the Bible gives additional commentary on the prophecy in Psalm 22:

"One of the most remarkable features of the Psalm of the cross is the prophecy of the death by Crucifixion, which was unknown among Jews until their captivity, 600 B.C. The Jews executed their criminals by stoning. Crucifixion was a Roman and a Grecian custom, but the Grecian and Roman empires were not in existence in David's time. Yet here is a prophecy written 1,000 years before Christ was born by a man who has never seen or heard of such a method of capital punishment as crucifixion. No other form of death could possibly correspond to the details David gives of the piercing of hands and feet , and the stripping of the tortured one to tell all the bones."

The Resurrection

The Messiah would be raised from the dead	Psalm 16:8–11; 49:15; 86:13	Luke 24:6–8; John 20; Acts 1:3; 2:32; 13:34–37; 2 Timothy 2:8 Acts 2:24–36; 13:30–39; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4
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The very miracle that validates everything that Jesus said and taught as well as the Scriptures is the Resurrection. If Jesus teaching is true, then the Scriptures are true because Jesus teaching was based on the Scriptures. The Resurrection is evidence for his Messiahship and that he was the Son of God (Matthew 16:16, Rom 1:4). The Resurrection is so central to our faith that if it did not happen then Paul says our faith is worthless (1 Corinth 15:12-19). The remaining eleven apostles and the apostle Paul claimed that they were eyewitnesses of Jesus Resurrection (John 1:1-4, 1 Corinth 9:1-2, Acts 1:22, 2 Peter 1:16). If Jesus was not resurrected, they would have given their lives and livelihood for what they would have known to be a lie. The sacrifices of the apostles for the belief is one evidence that the resurrection happened. The other alternatives would have been that the Jewish authorities stole the body, but that would have been against their wish to diffuse the belief in Jesus' resurrection and the Roman authorities would have not stolen the body

because their desire would have been to keep the peace (John McDowell & Don Stewart - Answers to Tough Questions Skeptics Ask About the Christian Faith). The reasonable conclusion would be that Jesus really resurrected from the dead.

Prophecy about Israel

One of the greatest miracles of our time we can see today is the preservation and return of God's people Israel. Paul made clear that God has not rejected his people (Romans 11:1-36). God gave his Special Revelation through his chosen people Israel through whom would come the Messiah that would bless the world (Romans 3:1-2, 9:1-4). Israel would be exiled from the promised land (Canaan) because of their sin of worshiping false gods and disobedience to the covenant (Deut 28:36, 47, 64). Yet, God would still be faithful to his people even in their disobedience and allow a remnant from the Southern kingdom (Judah) to return to the land after 70 years of captivity (Jeremiah 29:10-14, Daniel 9:2). Just like God has preserved the Bible from destruction (Isaiah 40:8) even leading men to protect and translate it though persecution, God has also to this day preserved the Jewish people. God prophesied that Israel would not lose their identity while many ancient cultures have (Jeremiah 46:28). Moses prophesied that even after being exiled, the Jews would once again inhabit the land of Israel (Deut 30:1-5). The current State of Israel is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Ezekiel 36 & 37 give specific prophecies of the restoration of the Jewish land and the Jewish people:

But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people Israel, for they will soon come home. For behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. And I will multiply people on you, the whole house of Israel, all of it. The cities shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt. And I will multiply on you man and beast, and they shall multiply and be fruitful. And I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I will let people walk on you, even my people Israel. And they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance, and you shall no longer bereave them of children. - Eze 36:8-12 (ESV)

Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord." - 37:11-14

In these two prophecies we see the revival of the Jewish land and the return of the Jewish people to that land. After 2000 years of exile, the Jewish State was established May 14, 1948. Another remarkable achievement was the revival of Hebrew as a language. Raymond P. Scheindlin in his book [A Short History of the Jewish People](#) shares the significance of the revival of Hebrew, "The most remarkable collective achievement of the Jewish people in modern times. Perhaps even more remarkable than the establishment of the State of Israel itself, has been the revival of Hebrew. No other language has ever been revived after a long period in which it had ceased to be spoken". Israel today has a thriving economy ranking 31 in the world with a GDP of 383 Billion (<https://www.worldometers.info/gdp/gdp-by-country/>). The major industries of Israel are: high technology products (aviation, medical devices, communications, fiber optics, etc.), wood and paper products, metal products, food, beverages, chemical products, plastics, textiles, diamond cutting (<https://embassies.gov.il/san-francisco/AboutIsrael/Economy/Pages/The-Israeli-Economy-Today.aspx>). Israel is truly a modern day miracle and is evidence for the divine origin of the Book of Books.

Online Resources:

Harold Willmington Online Studies (Make sure to click on "PDF") - <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/sword/>
<https://www.garyhabermas.com/> - free resources on the resurrection

<https://www.gotquestions.org/> - online source for Bible answers to thousands of questions

<https://antiochphilly.org/sermons/> - go to Browse by Series and select - "Knowing and Loving Your Bible: The Prophets"