Prophecies of the Messiah

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To show from Scripture that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah, Christ, Son of God and Savior of the World.

TEXTS:

- 1. LK 24:25-27 (AC 18:28)
- 2. MT 1:18-25 (IS 7:14)
- 3. MT 2:1-6 (MIC 5:2; HEB 7:14)
- 4. LK 4:16-21 (IS 61:1-2)
- 5. ZEC 11:12-13; MT 27:3-10
- 6. PS 22:6-8, 16-18
 - a. MT 27:31 (v. 16)
 - b. MT 27:35 (v. 18) (JN 19:23)
 - c. MT 27:39-43 (vs. 6-8)

- 7. JN 19:31-36 (EX 12:43-46)
- 8. IS 53:7-11
 - a. MT 26:62-63; 27:12-14 (v. 7)
 - b. MT 27:38, 57-60 (v. 9) (LK 23:53)
 - c. LK 23:42-43 (v. 11)
- 9. JN 1:45

THE STUDY:

- 1. In a world with so many religious opinions and viewpoints, how can we be certain that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah that God promised to send? LK 24:25-27 (AC 18:28) The New Testament evangelists showed "from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ". In the same way, God wants us to have confidence through the study of the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures that the claims of Jesus of Nazareth were true.
- 2. What did the Bible foretell about the nature of Christ's birth? MT 1:18-25 (IS 7:14)

 He would be born of a virgin, and this would be a sign. In Mt.1:18-25, Matthew cites the virgin birth as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Isaiah's prophecy was written about 700 B.C.
- 3. Where was the Messiah to be born, and from which tribe of Israel? MT 2:1-6 (MIC 5:2; HEB 7:14)

 Most people know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but not many people realize that the prophet Micah foretold Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah nearly 750 years before Jesus was born! It was also foretold that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah ("of the house and line of David").
- 4. Was the manner of His ministry foretold? LK 4:16-21 (IS 61:1-2)

 While many of the Jews were expecting the Messiah to be a strong military leader, the prophetic description of Messiah's work was of a very different character. Isaiah's prophecy, describing the Messiah's ministry as one of healing, comforting, consoling and good news, was quoted by Jesus as being fulfilled by His earthly ministry. Again, Isaiah prophesied about 700 years before Christ.
- 5. Does the Bible foretell how the Messiah would be betrayed? ZEC 11:12-13; MT 27:3-10

 In an amazingly detailed prophecy, the Bible foretells the amount of the betrayal 30 pieces of silver; where the money would be thrown into the temple; and what the money would finally be used for to buy a potter's field. Note that the prophecy doesn't just say the money would go to the potter, but that it must first pass through the channel of the temple! The striking fulfillment is recorded in Matthew 27:3-10 (for questions on Matthew citing Jeremiah instead of Zechariah, see note at end of study). Zechariah's prophecy was written about 500 B.C.
- 6. Did the prophets foretell what kind of death the Messiah would die? PS 22:6-8, 16-18
 a. He would die by Roman crucifixion MT 27:31 (v. 16)

 Crucifixion as performed by Roman soldiers was unheard of when David wrote this Psalm 1000 years earlier. It was clearly pointing forward to the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary.

b. Lots would be cast for His clothing – MT 27:35 (v. 18) (JN 19:23)

This was fulfilled when the Roman soldiers, not wanting to damage the robe of Christ, as it was a quality woven garment without seam, chose to cast lots to determine who would get it (Jn. 19:23).

- c. The people would ridicule Him, saying "Let God save Him" MT 27:39-43 (vs. 6-8) This is the exact behavior of those standing near the cross, foretold 1000 years beforehand.
- 7. What did the prophets foretell about the Messiah's bones? JN 19:31-36 (EX 12:43-46)

 The Passover lamb, which pointed forward to Jesus (see 1 Co. 5:7), was not to have any of its bones broken. We find a startling fulfillment on the cross, when the command was given to break the legs of all the victims to speed their death. Jesus, being found dead already, did not have his legs broken, just as the prophecy foretold nearly 1500 years beforehand.
- 8. How did the Bible describe the circumstances surrounding His trial and death? IS 53:7-11 a. He would be silent before His accusers MT 26:62-63; 27:12-14 (v. 7)

 Jesus gave no defense for Himself even when His accusers presented the most blatant falsehoods as evidence. Not until commanded under oath did Jesus speak, only to answer a direct question. His meekness under provocation, His lack of any spirit of retaliation, amazed His judges, and fulfilled this prophecy written 700 years before it happened.
 - b. He would die with the wicked but be buried with the rich MT 27:38, 57-60 (v. 9) (LK 23:53)

 Jesus was crucified between two thieves, and would likely not have been buried. According to the Wikipedia article "Crucifixion," "a crucified body was usually left to decay on the cross and therefore would not be preserved..." However, after the crucifixion, a recent disciple named Joseph of Arimathea asked Pontius Pilate for the body of Jesus so he could bury Him in Joseph's own new tomb where no one had been buried. The fact that Jesus was crucified between two criminals, yet buried in a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid before (such a tomb as only a rich person could afford), was yet another striking evidence that He was the Messiah of prophecy.
 - c. He would be satisfied by evidence that His sacrifice was worth it (v. 11) LK 23:42-43 We find the fulfillment of this prophecy in one of the thieves crucified next to Jesus who, coming to the realization that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, accepted Him as Savior and gave Jesus hope that others would follow.

Peter Stoner, in his book Science Speaks (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963) determines the probability of one man fulfilling eight of the prophecies of the Old Testament for the Messiah to be 1 in 10 to the 17th power. To visualize this, imagine taking that many silver dollars (100,000,000,000,000,000) and covering the State of Texas with them (coverage would be about two feet deep). Now mark one of the silver dollars with an "x", stir the whole mass thoroughly, and have a person parachute down to any part of Texas they chose. The chance that the first silver dollar they picked up would be the one marked with an "x" would be the exact same odds of anyone fulfilling just eight of the Messianic prophecies by chance alone. Stoner then goes on to consider the possibility of any one person fulfilling 48 of the prophecies by chance (there are over 300 Messianic prophecies in Scripture). Here the odds jump to 1 in 10 to the 157th power. That number would look like this:

9. Who were the disciples of Jesus convinced they had found? JN 1:45
With only half the fulfillment evidence (as it was prior to Christ's betrayal, trial and crucifixion), the disciples were convinced by Scripture that Jesus was truly the Messiah!

APPEAL:

How about you? Have you found the Messiah? God has given abundant evidence that the Historical Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the World! He wants to be your personal Savior. Is it your desire to accept Him?