

Christ in Prophecy and there Fulfillment – Part I

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The Unity of the Scriptures

The Bible was written by approximately forty different men, over a period of forty generations (Matt. 1:1), over a sixteen-hundred (1,600) year span. The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses, who was a political and spiritual leader of Israel. He was trained in the University of Egypt—about 1400 B.C. The last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, was written by the Apostle John in approximately A.D. 100 on the Isle of Patmos.

The writers of the Bible used different languages, and lived in different countries and on different continents (Asia, North Africa, Europe and *Israel*); yet they presented one central theme throughout the Bible without variation or contradiction. They used two languages primarily (Hebrew and Greek), with small portions of Aramic. In many instances the writers had no access to the other Books of the Bible dealing with events of their own time; yet they wrote in perfect unity and harmony, complementing what each other wrote.

The unity of the Bible could not have being attained without the infinite-personal, living God having guided the various writers. The Bible is a revealed history with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The Bible is a history of God's revelation. The Bible is the unfolding and accomplishing of God's reign, purpose, and will for man's salvation from sin, shame and guilt, through His Son, Christ Jesus, who is the core, the center-piece of Scripture.

There is nothing like this in other major religions of the world (and in their sacred writings): Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. For the most part their writings are loosely placed together, without order, continuity or unity of any kind. They have no order, progress, or real connection between their parts. In simple fact, there is nothing that can be properly called *history* or prophecy in their sacred books. The Bible on the other hand, is a history with a beginning, a middle, and an end; a history of a revelation of the developing purpose of the infinite-personal, living God. A history of a purpose and a

goal in the revelation of the living God of Himself, and of His will for the salvation of man through His Son, Jesus Christ. This fulfillment of purpose is one of the distinctions that marks out the Bible as unique, and yet there is nothing like this in any other collection of sacred books in the world.

The Old Testament Hebrew Scripture contains a network of interrelated predictions and anticipations of a *Coming One* who would be both God and Man. The prophets of old painted to a very complete picture of this Coming One—the Messiah.

Definition

James Smith biblical commentator: “The term Messiah is not only used in early Jewish literature as often as one might think. It was used in the Apocrypha, once in the Mishnah (Sot. 9.15) it is found in the Qumran literature (seven passages), about a dozen times in the Pseudepigrapha, in the old Jewish prayers, the Targums of the second Century, and later in the Talmud.”¹ The title Messiah is the special title of the Savior promised to the world through the people of Israel. This title Messiah, appeared and was identified in the New Testament twice by Andrew in (John 1: 41), and the Samaritan woman at by the Well in (John 4: 25). On both occasion it referred to Christ. The term Messiah also occurred twice in the Old Testament, in (Daniel 9: 25, 26).

The Term Messianic

The term *Messianic* is used with a much wider range of meanings than *Messiah*. The prophets in the Old Testament all anticipated, and wrote of a great and grand redemption of a personal *Savior*—in the person of the Messiah.

Messianic prophecy—were both general and personal—is not confined to the official prophecy. It is found in the history and devotional books as well as in the prophetic books. Simply, the promise of the Coming One is spread all over the Old Testament as an organic whole that binds the writings together.

The reality of Messianic prophecy rests upon two basic presuppositions: (1) the possibility of prediction, and (2) the omniscience of the infinite-personal God. There is a

¹James Smith, *What The Bible Teaches About The Promised Messiah*, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1993), p. 1.

predictive element in sacred Scripture that can only be understood by the nature of its fulfillment. To deny the genuine predictions in Old Testament prophecy, is to deny facts rooted in the flow of history and reality.

The purpose of Messianic Prophecy

What is prophecy? The word prophecy involves two complementary meanings: fort-telling and fore-telling. “The primary meaning at the time the Old Testament Scriptures were written was probably in the realm of forth-telling, meaning the proclaiming or preaching of God’s message, though the element of fore-telling was also present and became more meaningful with the passing of time.”²

The infinite-personal living God does not gratify human idle curiosity by writing and laying out history beforehand. God has been able to write about the future—through prophecy so it can be read after it is fulfilled, but not before.

The chief purpose of prophecy was to prepare the way for Christ, the Messiah, so that when He should come, He might be identified by a comparison of the prediction with its fulfillment. Christ, regarded the evidence of prophecy as sufficient in itself to prove His claims.

Messianic prophecy—and indeed, all predictive prophecy—lends strong support to the claim of the Scriptures to be the Word of God. It testifies to its Author’s wisdom and sovereignty over the future. Baxter wrote: “Prophecy deals with events and human affairs which do not happen in a causal order, but are unpredictable. A prophecy must be more than a good guess. It must possess sufficient accuracy as to be capable of verification. Predictions in science deal with casual order and are not prophetic predictions.”³ Within the wide range of Biblical prophecy, there are passages that are most difficult to explain which might cause problems in any confrontation with people who simply do not believe the Bible. However, there remains, numerous examples of fulfilled predictions-- which those who oppose the Biblical claims to inspiration—a supernatural Author to inspiration must find difficult to explain on naturalistic grounds.

²Batsell Barrett Baxter, *I Believe Because . . .*, (Baker Book House Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971), p. 186.

³Baxter, p. 186.

There are certain characteristics of Bible prophecy that need to be considered. Real prophecy is particular to the Bible. In the Bible prophecy is not an incidental, or an accidental thing, but is a means of establishing the credibility of the message. Other religions claim some prophetic elements, but none place the strong emphasis upon prophecy as the Old Testament does. We have in two books in the Old Testament, the (Deuteronomy 18:9-22 and Isaiah 41:22-23) indicate this special usefulness of prophecy.

Baxter continued on prophecy: “In many cases the prophecy found in the Scriptures is very minute in specifications. Prophecy frequently dealt with the very remote in time and with people or kingdoms that did not as yet exist. An example is found in Daniel 2. The fulfillment of prophecy was clear, not equivocal or ambiguous. One real case of fulfilled prophecy would establish a supernatural act. Prophecy is occasionally of a nature as to be in exact opposition to what unguided human intelligence would predict. This was especially true of the prophecies concerning great cities or civilizations whose doom was predicted. Examples would include the cities of Jerusalem, Nineveh, and Babylon.”⁴

In order to reduce the effective power of prophecy, liberal theologians, the liberal humanist, and critics of the Bible have leveled several charges: (1) that the language of the prophecy is oftentimes vague, (2) that some of the prophecies are artificially fulfilled, (3) that some of the prophecies were written after the events, and (4) that the same phenomenon occurs in other religions. On the last point, the liberal critic cannot point to any well accredited, or any well established prophecy in religious books outside the Bible. The critic cannot point to any. No, not one! Why? Because those religions have not met the tests required to prove that *those* religious books are of supernatural origin.

C. P. M’Ilvaive adds the following: “The history of pagan nations, indeed, abounds with stories of auguries and oracles, and distance separates all the pretended oracles of paganism from the dignity of the prophecies in the Bible. The avowed end of the former was to satisfy some trivial curiosity, or aid the designs of some military or political leader. . . . Who could think of comparing such pitiful mockeries of divine omniscience with the dignified, and

⁴Baxter, p. 187.

sublime, and holy prophecies which are spread out so openly and widely in the Scriptures?”⁵

***Predictions and Their Fulfillments
of a Specific Nature***

The following list of prophecies is submitted, with suggestions concerning the meaning of the prophecy and its fulfillment. This material is quoted in abbreviated form, and adapted from Barrett Baxter:

1. Hosea

- a. Hosea 1:4, 5, 7. These verses stated that Israel, as a military force and as a national commonwealth, was to pass out of existence. Just the opposite is predicted of Judea. The opposite predictions of the histories of Israel and Judah, and their remarkable fulfillment imply the divine guidance of Hosea.
- b. Hosea 3:4. Here is an amazing prediction that Israel shall be without a king or prince; shall be without a priestly ministry; and shall be without idolatry. This latter point especially could hardly have been guessed by human wisdom.

2. Joel

- a. Joel 2:28-32. This passage contained a promise with the following items:
 1. The Spirit of Jehovah would be poured out in an unprecedented measure;
 2. That all flesh would be recipients of it;
 3. That unusual manifestations would accompany it (dreams, visions, and prophecies);
 4. That there would be no differentiations of sex;
 5. That accompanied with it would be a gracious call to salvation;
 6. That the call would extend to whomever God wished to extend it; and
 7. That this was to be before a great and notable catastrophe would fall upon the Jewish people.This entire prophecy was fulfilled in detail on Pentecost as described in Acts 2.
- b. Joel 3:4-8. This prophecy predicted that Tyre and Sidon would be destroyed as they had formerly destroyed certain portions of Judah.

⁵C. P. M’Ilvaine, as quoted by Baxter, p. 188.

This occurred when Alexander the Great marched down the coast of Palestine.

3. Amos
 - a. Amos 1:3-5. This prophecy predicted that the military strength of Damascus would be broken. It was fulfilled by Tiglath-pileser.
 - b. Amos 1: 6-8. This prophecy declared that Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon would be destroyed. Hezekiah, Sennacherib and Alexander the Great carried out the prophecy.
4. Obadiah
 - a. This book contains the prophecy that the Edomites would be destroyed both by (a) the heathen and by (b) the Jews. Both came to pass.
5. Micah
 - a. Micah 1:6; 3:12. These passages prophesied the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem.
 - b. Micah 5:2. This prophecy spoke of Bethlehem Ephrathah and how that from it there would be that which would go out to bless the thousands. Obviously, this was a foretelling that Jesus would be born there. Matt. 2:6; John 7:42.
 - c. Micah 4:10. This prophesied that God's people would be delivered into the hands of the Babylonians.
6. Nahum

This was a prediction and description of the destruction of Nineveh. It had a number of interesting details.
7. Zechariah
 - a. Zechariah 1:12-21. This passage suggested that the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem were going to be better than of previous generations. Zechariah 1:16; "My house shall be built."
 - b. Zechariah 2:10-11: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord in that day" (KJV). This seemed to be pointing to the time when the Son of God would be dwelling among the people and when His kingdom should be established.

- c. Zechariah 6:9-15. This was obviously a messianic prophecy of the coming of the Lord, the Branch.
 - d. Zechariah 9:9. This was likewise a clear-cut messianic prophecy: “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” (KJV). This passage was quoted in Matthew 21:4-5, as fulfilled in the triumphal entry story.
 - e. Zechariah 11:12. This passage mentioned that the price of the Jews for the Messiah was thirty pieces of silver. It was quoted as being fulfilled in Matthew 26:14-15.
 - f. Zechariah 12:10. “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they pierced” (KJV). This was quoted twice by John (John 19:37 and Rev.1:7) as fulfilled in the crucifixion.
8. Malachi
- a. Malachi 1:11. “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts” (KJV).
 - b. Malachi 4:5. “Behold, I will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (KJV). This is quoted in Matthew 11:14 and Mark 9:11-12, as fulfilled in John the Baptist.