

Internal Evidence Tests: PROPHECY

The most common objection to prophecy is: The prophecies were written at, or after, the time of Jesus, and therefore, fulfill themselves. How do we respond to this challenge?¹

ANSWER: If you are not satisfied with 450 B.C. as the historic date for the completion of the Old Testament, then take into consideration the following: The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was initiated in the reign of Ptolemy Philadeiphus (285—246 B.C.). Clearly, if you have a Greek translation initiated in 250 B.C., then you had to have the Hebrew text from which it was written. This will suffice to indicate that there was at least a 250—year gap between the prophecies being written down and their fulfillment in the person of Christ.

1. BORN AT BETHLEHEM

- Prophecy: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2, NAS). **750 BC**
- Fulfillment: Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea (Matthew 2:1; John 7:42).

2. PRECEDED BY MESSENGER

- Prophecy: A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1, NAS) **433 BC**
- Fulfillment: John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:1-3, 11:9-10; Luke 1:17; John 1:23, NAS)

3. HE WAS TO ENTER JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY

- Prophecy: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9, NAS). **520 BC**
- Fulfillment: "And they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their garments on the colt, and put Jesus on it. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road" (Matthew 21:6-11; Luke 19:35-36, NAS).

4. BETRAYED BY A FRIEND

- Prophecy: "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread has lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9, 55:12-14, NAS). **300 BC**

- Fulfillment: "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:1; John 7:42)

5. SOLD FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER

- Prophecy: "And I said to them, 'If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!' So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages" (Zechariah 11:12, NAS). **520 BC**
- Fulfillment: Judas Iscariot asked the price of betrayal, and "they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver." (Matthew 26:15, 27:3, NAS)

6. MONEY TO BE THROWN IN GOD'S HOUSE

- Prophecy: "So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (Zechariah 11:13b, NAS). **520 BC**
- Fulfillment: "And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed (Matthew 27:5a, NAS). And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter's field as a burial place for strangers" (Matthew 27:7, NAS).

7. DUMB BEFORE ACCUSERS

- Prophecy: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7, NAS). **700 BC**
- Fulfillment: "And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer" (Matthew 27:12, NAS).

8. HANDS AND FEET PIERCED

- Prophecy: They pierced my hands and my feet (Psalm 22:16; Isaiah 53:5, NAS). **520 BC**
- Fulfillment: "And when they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified Him" (Luke 23:33, NAS).

The Mathematical Probabilities of Jesus Fulfilling Prophecy:

Peter Stoner has said in *Science Speaks* that by using the modern science of probability in reference to the eight prophecies listed above:

"...we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} (or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000).

Let us try to visualize this chance...Suppose we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these

*eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom."*²

When Stoner considers forty eight prophecies, he says, "We find the chance that any one man fulfilled all forty-eight prophecies to be 1 in 10^{157} ."³

What is one possible explanation for the staggering accuracy of the Old Testament prophecies? (1 Peter 1:20-21)

Probabilities of one man (Jesus) fulfilling 48 Old Testament prophecies:⁴

- Scientific threshold for the absurd is 1 in 10^{50}
- 8 prophecies: 1 in 10^{17}
 - i. Concept Model: State of Texas covered with silver dollars, 2 feet deep.
 - ii. There are only 10^{17} seconds in the history of the universe.
- 16 prophecies: 1 in 10^{45}
 - i. Concept Model: ball of silver dollars: radius 30 times the distance of the Earth to the Sun.
- 48 prophecies: 1 in 10^{157}
 - i. **Concept Model: None, bigger than we can grasp!**

Supplemental Observations:

Total Atoms in the Universe: 10^{66}

Total Particles: 10^{80}

Seconds in 10 billion years: 10^{17}

Conclusion:

For anyone to fulfill forty eight biblical prophecies is scientifically absurd, and yet, the Bible reveals that Jesus did just that!

Anyone who rejects Jesus Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proven more absolutely than any other fact in the world!

¹ McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 144-167.

² Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), ed. Donald W. Stoner, 2002, 29 March 2005 <http://www.geocities.com/stonerdon/science_speaks.html#c2>, chap. 3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Chuck Missler, *Footprints of the Messiah*, audiocassette, Koinonia House, 1991.