

# Messianic Prophecy

## An Evidences Study

This study explores the reasonableness of the Christian faith through the lens of messianic prophecy, a cornerstone of early Christian apologetics. Evidences, or apologetics, encompasses areas such as biblical archaeology, the existence of God, the reliability of the Bible, comparative religion, and philosophical proofs. Messianic prophecy was pivotal in the early church, as evidenced by references in **Acts 2:25–28, 2:34–35, 4:11, 4:25–26, 8:32–33, and 13:33–35.**

## Key Prophetic Passages

- **Micah 5:2**
- **Isaiah 7:14**
- **Psalms 110:1**
- **Isaiah 9:1–2, 6**
- **Isaiah 52:13–53:12** (location only)

## Prophecies of Jesus' Birth

The following prophecies foretold the circumstances surrounding the Messiah's birth:

- **To be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).**
  - **OT Verse:** "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."
  - **Explanation:** This specifies the Messiah's birthplace as the small town of Bethlehem, emphasizing his eternal nature.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 2:1-6 – Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and the chief priests and teachers cited this prophecy.
- **To be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."
  - **Explanation:** A sign of divine intervention, with "virgin" (alma in Hebrew, parthenos in Greek Septuagint) indicating a miraculous birth.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 1:18-25 – Mary was a virgin when she conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit.
- **God to become man (Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 9:6).**
  - **OT Verse (Psalm 110:1):** "The Lord says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"
  - **OT Verse (Isaiah 9:6):** "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
  - **Explanation:** These depict the Messiah as divine, seated at God's right hand and called "Mighty God."
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 1:1,14 – "The Word was God... The Word became flesh"; Hebrews 1:3.

- **To be from the seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15).**
  - **OT Verse:** "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."
  - **Explanation:** The first messianic prophecy, hinting at the virgin birth and ultimate victory over evil.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Galatians 4:4 – "God sent his Son, born of a woman."
- **To come from the line of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Genesis 22:18).**
  - **OT Verse (Genesis 12:3):** "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
  - **OT Verse (Genesis 22:18):** "and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."
  - **Explanation:** The Messiah would bring blessing to all nations through Abraham's lineage.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 1:1 – "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham."
- **To be a descendant of Isaac (Genesis 17:19; Genesis 21:12).**
  - **OT Verse (Genesis 17:19):** "Then God said, 'Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.'"
  - **Explanation:** The promise continues through Isaac, not Ishmael.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 3:34 – Jesus' genealogy traces back to Isaac.
- **To be a descendant of Jacob (Numbers 24:17).**
  - **OT Verse:** "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."
  - **Explanation:** A future ruler from Jacob's line, symbolized by a star and scepter.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 3:34 – Genealogy to Jacob; Matthew 2:2 – Star at Jesus' birth.
- **To come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10).**
  - **OT Verse:** "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his."
  - **Explanation:** The royal line through Judah until the Messiah comes.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 3:33 – "the son of Judah"; Hebrews 7:14.
- **To be heir to King David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Isaiah 9:7).**
  - **OT Verse (2 Samuel 7:12-13):** "When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."
  - **Explanation:** An eternal kingdom through David's descendant.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 1:32-33 – "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever."
- **To spend a season in Egypt (Hosea 11:1).**
  - **OT Verse:** "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."
  - **Explanation:** Typological prophecy, applied to the Messiah.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 2:14-15 – Jesus' family flees to Egypt.

- **A massacre of children would occur at the Messiah's birthplace (Jeremiah 31:15).**
  - **OT Verse:** "This is what the Lord says: 'A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.'"
  - **Explanation:** Foreshadows Herod's slaughter.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 2:16-18.
- **To be called a Nazarene (Isaiah 11:1).**
  - **OT Verse:** "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." (Netzer = branch, linked to Nazarene)
  - **Explanation:** Play on words with "branch."
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 2:23 – "He will be called a Nazarene."
- **To be called Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).**
  - **See above for Isaiah 7:14.**
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 1:23.

### Prophecies Concerning His Ministry

The Messiah's ministry was foretold with remarkable detail:

- **To be heralded by John the Baptist (Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6).**
  - **OT Verse (Isaiah 40:3-5):** "A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God... And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.'"
  - **Explanation:** A forerunner to prepare the way.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 1:17.
- **To minister in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress... The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."
  - **Explanation:** Light in the region of Galilee.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 4:12-16.
- **To be a wise counselor (Isaiah 9:6) and champion of the needy (Isaiah 11:1ff).**
  - **OT Verse (Isaiah 9:6):** See above.
  - **OT Verse (Isaiah 11:1-4):** "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse... He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes... but with righteousness he will judge the needy."
  - **Explanation:** Filled with wisdom and justice for the poor.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 11:28-30.
- **To be the shepherd in the spirit of David (Ezekiel 34).**
  - **OT Verse (Ezekiel 34:23-24):** "I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them."
  - **Explanation:** A Davidic shepherd to care for God's flock

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- **NT Fulfillment:** John 10:11-18 – "I am the good shepherd."

- **To heal the sick (Isaiah 53:4).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted."
  - **Explanation:** Bearing infirmities and healing.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 8:16-17.
- **To be rejected by his own people (Psalm 69:8; Isaiah 53:3).**
  - **OT Verse (Isaiah 53:3):** "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain."
  - **Explanation:** The Messiah would be despised.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 1:11; 7:5.
- **To be a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15).**
  - **OT Verse:** "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him."
  - **Explanation:** A prophet like Moses

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- **NT Fulfillment:** Acts 3:20-22.
- **To be declared the Son of God (Psalm 2:7).**
  - **OT Verse:** "I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have become your father.'"
  - **Explanation:** Divine sonship.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 3:17.
- **To speak in parables (Psalm 78:2-4; Isaiah 6:9-10).**
  - **OT Verse (Psalm 78:2):** "I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old."
  - **Explanation:** Teaching through parables.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 13:34-35.
- **To be sent to heal the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1-2).**
  - **OT Verse:** "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted..."
  - **Explanation:** Anointed to bring good news and healing.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 4:18-21.
- **To be a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4).**
  - **OT Verse:** "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'"
  - **Explanation:** Eternal priesthood.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Hebrews 5:5-6.
- **To be called King (Psalm 2:6; Zechariah 9:9).**
  - **OT Verse (Zechariah 9:9):** "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

- **Explanation:** Humble king on a donkey.
- **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 21:4-9.
- **To be praised by little children (Psalm 8:2).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger."
  - **Explanation:** Children's praise silences enemies.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 21:16.

### **Prophecies Concerning His Death**

The prophecies surrounding the Messiah's death are strikingly precise:

- **To enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).**
  - **OT Verse:** See above.
  - **Explanation:** Triumphal entry as king.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 21:1-11.
- **To be betrayed (Psalm 41:9).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me."
  - **Explanation:** Betrayal by a friend.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 13:18 – Judas.
- **To be abandoned by his disciples (Zechariah 13:7).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the Lord Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered..."
  - **Explanation:** Disciples scatter.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 26:31,56.
- **Lots to be cast for his clothes (Psalm 22:18).**
  - **OT Verse:** "They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."
  - **Explanation:** Soldiers gambling for clothing.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 19:23-24.
- **To be crucified (Psalm 22).**
  - **OT Verse (Psalm 22:16):** "Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet."
  - **Explanation:** Crucifixion described centuries before invented.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 19:16-18.
- **To be pierced (Zechariah 12:10).**
  - **OT Verse:** "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child..."
  - **Explanation:** Piercing of side.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 19:34,37.
- **To bear our sins on the cross (Isaiah 53).**

- **OT Verse (Isaiah 53:5-6):** "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
- **Explanation:** Substitutionary atonement.
- **NT Fulfillment:** 1 Peter 2:24; Romans 5:6-8.
- **To be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).**
  - **OT Verse:** "I told them, 'If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.' So they paid me thirty pieces of silver."
  - **Explanation:** Exact price of betrayal.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 26:14-16.
- **The betrayal money used to buy a potter's field (Zechariah 11:13).**
  - **OT Verse:** "And the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord."
  - **Explanation:** Money for field.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 27:3-10.
- **To be accused by false witnesses (Psalm 35:11).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about."
  - **Explanation:** False testimony.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Mark 14:57-58.
- **To be silent before his accusers (Isaiah 53:7).**
  - **OT Verse:** "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."
  - **Explanation:** No defense.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Mark 15:4-5.
- **To be spat upon and struck (Isaiah 50:6).**
  - **OT Verse:** "I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting."
  - **Explanation:** Humiliation.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 26:67.
- **To be hated without cause (Psalm 35:19).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Do not let those gloat over me who are my enemies without cause; do not let those who hate me without reason maliciously wink the eye."
  - **Explanation:** Unjust hatred.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 15:24-25.
- **To be crucified with criminals (Isaiah 53:12).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors."
  - **Explanation:** Associated with sinners.

- **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 23:32-33.
- **Hands and feet to be pierced (Psalm 22:16).**
  - **See above for Psalm 22.**
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 20:25-27.
- **To be mocked and ridiculed (Psalm 22:7-8).**
  - **OT Verse:** "All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. 'He trusts in the Lord,' they say, 'let the Lord rescue him.'"
  - **Explanation:** Taunts at the cross.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 27:39-44.
- **To be given vinegar and gall (Psalm 69:21).**
  - **OT Verse:** "They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst."
  - **Explanation:** Offered sour wine.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 19:28-30.
- **To pray for his enemies (Psalm 109:4).**
  - **OT Verse:** "In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer."
  - **Explanation:** Intercession.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 23:34.
- **No bones to be broken (Psalm 34:20).**
  - **OT Verse:** "he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken."
  - **Explanation:** Like Passover lamb.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** John 19:32-36.
- **To be buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9).**
  - **OT Verse:** "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."
  - **Explanation:** Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 27:57-60.

### **Prophecies Concerning His Resurrection and Ascension**

The Messiah's triumph over death and ascension were also foretold:

- **Divine rescue (foreshadowed in Genesis 22).**
  - **OT Verse (Genesis 22:13-14):** "Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns... So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide."
  - **Explanation:** Sacrifice of Isaac prefigures substitution and resurrection.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Hebrews 11:17-19 – Abraham believed God could raise the dead.
- **Physical resurrection (Psalm 16:10).**
  - **OT Verse:** "because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay."
  - **Explanation:** No decay in grave.

- **NT Fulfillment:** Acts 2:25-32.
- **To ascend to God and receive everlasting dominion (Daniel 7:13–14).**
  - **OT Verse:** "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven... He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away..."
  - **Explanation:** Son of Man receives eternal kingdom.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 1:20-23.
- **To usher in a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31).**
  - **OT Verse:** "'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.'"
  - **Explanation:** New heart and forgiveness.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Hebrews 8:8-12; Luke 22:20.
- **To ascend to heaven (Psalm 68:18).**
  - **OT Verse:** "When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people, even from the rebellious—that you, Lord God, might dwell there."
  - **Explanation:** Ascension with captives.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Ephesians 4:8-10.
- **To be seated at God's right hand (Psalm 110:1).**
  - **OT Verse:** See above.
  - **Explanation:** Honored position.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33-35.

### Additional Prophecies

For a deeper exploration, here are selected additional prophecies from broader lists:

- **The Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6).**
  - **OT Verse:** "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles."
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Luke 2:32.
- **The Messiah would perform miracles (Isaiah 35:5-6).**
  - **OT Verse:** "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy."
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 9:35.
- **The Messiah would be resurrected on the third day (Hosea 6:2; Jonah 1:17).**
  - **OT Verse (Hosea 6:2):** "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence."
  - **Explanation:** Typology from Jonah.
  - **NT Fulfillment:** Matthew 12:40; 1 Corinthians 15:4.
- **The Messiah would conquer death (Isaiah 25:8).**
  - **OT Verse:** "he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces..."

– **NT Fulfillment:** 1 Corinthians 15:54.

### **Understanding Levels of Prophecy**

Prophecies vary in their nature and fulfillment:

- **Foreshadowing: Genesis 22:1–18** (nine parallel details between the sacrifice of Isaac and the sacrifice of Jesus, such as the only beloved son, the wood carried, the provision of a substitute).
- **Prophecy: Psalm 22** (finds deeper fulfillment in events surrounding Jesus, yet retains meaning in its original context as David's lament).
- **Strict Prophecy: Isaiah 52:13–53:12** (explicitly messianic, describing the suffering servant with direct application to Jesus' atonement).
- **Note:** Interpreting prophecy requires caution, as context, intent, and dual fulfillments can be complex. Some prophecies have near and far applications.

### **Conclusion**

The clarity, precision, and sheer number of these prophecies—over 300 in some counts—point undeniably to Jesus as the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament centuries in advance. While this study covers a representative and expanded selection, dozens more exist, further reinforcing the messianic identity of Jesus.