

Question: Can you explain the importance of believing that Jesus was born to be the Messiah and the reasons for believing it? (Part 2 of 2)

In last week's article, I explained that "Messiah" is the Hebrew word for "Christ," the "Anointed One." We also pointed out that the New Testament demonstrates that in his coming Jesus fulfilled the many Old Testament prophecies of God's true "Anointed One" who would come into this world to save us from sin and reign over God's people forever. Today, we will examine attempts of some unbelieving critics to explain fulfilled prophecies of the coming Messiah/Christ.

Some unbelievers have suggested that the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies might be an accident. But mathematician Peter Stoner estimated that the possibility of fulfilling only forty-eight of the prophecies was one chance in a trillion multiplied by a trillion thirteen times. He said this number is equal to the number of atoms in a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, billion universes the size of our universe. Therefore, the odds of Jesus fulfilling all these prophecies by accident are virtually impossible.

Other critics have proposed that the New Testament writers might have falsified the details to give the appearance that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies when he did not. However, the unbelieving Jewish authorities living at that time would have jumped on the opportunity to discredit the gospel stories if they could have done so. Although the Jewish Talmud refers to Jesus in derogatory ways, it never makes the claim that the fulfillment of the prophecies was falsified.

Still other people have thought Jesus may have fulfilled the prophecies intentionally in order to substantiate his claims. This might have been possible for a few of the prophecies. But how could he have controlled the Jewish Sanhedrin's decision to offer Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus? Could a human being unaided by divine power arrange his own place of birth, as well as his method of execution, even to the soldiers who gambled for his clothing but left his legs unbroken? The possibility of intentionally fulfilling the many prophecies of the Messiah's coming is very unlikely.

Truly, Jesus is the only person in all history who has matched the prophetic fingerprint of God's Anointed One, the Messiah. The baby who was born to Mary in Bethlehem and laid in a manger was indeed the Christ. He was the one anointed of God who was sent to rescue the world from the power of sin and to reign in righteousness forever.

During the Christmas season we often listen to Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from his composition "The Messiah." Understanding that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, we can join our hearts in praise upon hearing this musical adaptation of Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in the life of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; And He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!" (Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16).

[Send questions or comments to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12th, Murray, KY 42071 or phone 270-753-1881. This article is reproduced on the web: universitychurchmurray.com] 2015/12/24 or 26?