

Messianic Prophecies

Sunday, October 10, 2010

Intro – If I came up to you and asked, “Why do you believe in Jesus?” What would be your response?
As Christians we base our lives on the life and teaching of Jesus. But why believe in Jesus?

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Why not believe in Buddha as perhaps 1.5 billion people today do?

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Why not believe in Mohammed as about 1.8 billion people do, many of whom are far more committed or devoted to their beliefs than many Christians??

Some statistics show that Islam is growing at a rate of about 6.4 percent per year while Christianity is only growing 1.4. At that rate, by 2050 there will be 6.7 billion Muslims and only 3 billion Christians in the world.

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Why not believe in Karma and reincarnation as Hindu believers do?

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Why believe in anything at all? Why not be atheist or agnostic or simply non-religious? Why should we believe at all?

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Here in the US, where a large portion of the country consider themselves “Christians” we don’t always question why we believe in Jesus.

Today I want to share some reasons why I believe in Jesus.

I hope that if you are new here or if you’ve been doubting in your faith today, what I share will push you beyond those doubts.

If you are a Christian I hope that this will only strengthen your faith further and help you be more effective in sharing the gospel with others.

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Let’s talk about Prophecy – What is prophecy?

The foretelling or prediction of what is to come.

How good are you at predicting the future?

There’s a few things I could take a guess at, but even 5 years down the road I don’t know much of what will happen or what my life will be like.

Read Excerpt of “What will life be like in the year 2000”

How about 50 years from now? What can you predict? How about 500?

We don’t know and we can’t tell.

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Prophecy in the Bible – Let’s talk about the Old Testament.

Written between 1450 BC and 400 BC by over 20 authors, from Kings to priests, to shepherds.

Here’s some dates for some of the books – this is important as we go on.

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In the OT, there are about 300 references to this special person – the Prophet, the one who would rule on David’s throne, the anointed one.

As time went on, the Jews in their studies of the scriptures, began putting all these ideas together and looking forward to this person, The Messiah.

No one knew exactly how it was going to be, some even thought that it would have to be two people to fulfill all the prophecies.

There are about 60 prophecies that are regarded as “messianic.” Ones that specifically say “the messiah will do this or will come from there or will be like that”

By the time of the first century AD, the time when Jesus was living, this messianic expectation was buzzing. You can see it if you read in the gospels, “Could this be the Christ?” (Jn 4:29, Mark 8:28)

If taken one by one, these prophecies are just like pieces. But when you put them all together, you see the whole puzzle.

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Let’s talk about some of these prophecies:

How about where he will be born

Born in Bethlehem

Micah 5:2 Origins from Ancient times, ruler over Israel – this is no normal person.

This prophecy is fulfilled in Matthew 2:1 – Look for yourself, what does it say?

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea

That's not that big of a deal, I could guess that where someone could be born. Yes, but what control does a person have over the location of their birth – none!!

Some have said, "What if Jesus studied the prophecies and decided to fulfill them?" You can't decide where you are born!!

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Born of a virgin – What kind of nonsense is this? How can someone be born of a virgin?

Isaiah 8:14

Immanuel means "God with us"

This one is fulfilled in Matthew 1: 20-25, specifically in vs 25 it says "But he (Joseph) had no union with her until she gave birth to a son".

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That he would enter Jerusalem riding on a Donkey:

Zechariah 9:9-10

This one is fulfilled in Luke 19:29-35

This one Jesus did fulfill consciously.

Keep in mind though, that this was written 500 years before Jesus was ever born.

That's 3 prophecies, let's look at a few that have to do with his death. Its one thing to say "He's going to die" but let's examine prophecies about the details of his death.

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I'll read to you from Psalm 22:16,18

Dogs have surrounded me;

*a band of evil men has encircled me,
they have pierced my hands and my feet.*

*They divide my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing.*

Now look in Luke 23:33-34

Maybe at first glance this doesn't seem that amazing, but here we are talking about a Psalm that David wrote somewhere around 1000 years before Jesus was even born, describing specific details of how Jesus would die.

Crucifixion (death in which the hands and the feet are pierced) had not even been invented when David wrote this. It was invented around 300 or 400 BC.

These are just 5 so far of the dozens that are scattered throughout the Bible.

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Some of the other prophecies include:

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Let's talk now about probability – do you remember probability from High school? The teens do.

To figure out the probability of multiple things happening, you take the probability of one thing and multiply that by the probability of the next etc.

Mathematicians have worked on this regarding these prophecies.

What is the probability that one person could fulfill just eleven of the messianic prophecies? 1×10^{19}

Take a minute to let that sink in. Talk about odds of winning the lottery, one in a million. Its far more than that.

There's a lot more than just eleven.

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How many of you have seen a silver dollar? Bigger than a quarter. To give you an idea of what that probability is like, it would be like covering the entire state of Texas three feet thick with silver dollars. Drop you down in somewhere, asking you to pick one single silver dollar that was different than the rest and you pick it out.

Why should you believe in Jesus?

Because his life was far beyond a coincidence, far beyond something interesting, it was absolutely supernatural. No man could fabricate this on his own.

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Not only did this happen, Jesus knew it and he claimed that he was the fulfillment of these prophecies.

Luke 24:44

Law of Moses, Prophets and Psalms – that’s one way the Jews referred to all their scriptures. They had a three-fold division of what we call the Old Testament.

Jesus is saying “ I told you that everything that was written about me had to be fulfilled and it was”

What will you do with this?

This along with other things fueled the early Christians to witness to everyone around them.

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I want to share three conclusions that I draw from this that I think we need to take with us this week.

1. God is in control. Isaiah 46:9-11

Do you feel worried about your life? Your job? Your future? Will I graduate or get a job or get married.

I don’t know the answers to those questions, but God does. He is working everything out for His glory and our good as his children.

This doesn’t mean that everything will be easy or that we will get everything that we want, but God is in control.

We can trust that he is at the steering wheel guiding this ship exactly where he wants it to go.

As it says in Matthew 6, Don’t worry. Seek God first and all these things will be taken care of.

If God could orchestrate history in the manner he did so that these prophecies would be fulfilled, he is in control and can take care of our lives.

This should bring us peace.

2. God is powerful. Jeremiah 32:27

Nothing is too hard for God. He had different men in totally different time periods and locations write very different types of literature, all of which looked forward to the exact same person: Jesus Christ.

Nothing is too hard for God!!

How can that encourage you this week? In what situation do you need to remember and apply the fact that nothing is too hard for God?

If God could bring about the fulfillment of these prophecies, can he change your marriage? Yes. Nothing is too hard for God!

Can he help you to be more disciplined? Yes, nothing is too hard for God.

What vision do you have for your life? Or what vision would you like to have? Do you feel like you can’t do it, you say I’m too _____ to do that. Nothing is too hard for God.

3. God intensely desires a relationship with you and me – 1 John 4:9-10

How much does God want a relationship with you?

He arranged all of history to show you and I who he is and how much he loves us and wants to know us.

Can you imagine this morning, if when you had gotten out of your car, I was all the way across the parking lot and I started screaming your name and I ran up to you and hugged you and I started crying and I said, “ I love you. I want to be your best friend, I want to share everything with you, and help you and comfort you and encourage you and do anything possible to show my love for you” How would you have felt?

God has already done far, far more than that. He wanted it to be so clear to us, that he gave us signs and signals all throughout a thousand years of writing in the Bible, so that we would get the message. **I am God and I love**

you.

How will you respond? How will I respond today?

Will we turn our backs, will we just nod and say “That’s nice” or will we respond by giving our entire lives to him. For all that he’s done, nothing less will do.

I pray that this has stimulated our minds, touched our hearts and inspired us to trust God more faithfully, to believe more strongly in Jesus and to love more deeply the one that died for us.