

# Is Jesus Really the Messiah?

## Daystar Church – 12/11/05

“Christmas: Fact or Fiction” Week 2

### **Introduction:**

A. Opening Video: Prophecies of Jesus<sup>1</sup>

B. Emmanuel – “*God with us.*”

1. Did God really come to earth in the form of a child to be with us?
2. This is the question that has baffled literally BILLIONS of souls over the past 2,000 years.
3. Many still struggle with this issue.
4. You may be here today b/c of our ad campaign in the paper promising to answer these questions.

C. Jesus made bold claims about being the Messiah that were hard for many to swallow in those days.

*Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian, told a story about a certain kingdom wherein there was a handsome prince, searching for a woman worthy enough to be his wife and become queen of the land. One day while running an errand for his father he passed through a poor village. As he glanced out the window of his carriage, his eyes fell on a beautiful peasant maiden. During ensuing days, he often passed by the young lady and soon fell in love with her by sight. But he had a problem. How could he seek her hand?*

*He could command her to marry him, but the prince wanted someone who would marry him out of love, not coercion. He could show up at her door in his splendid uniform in a gold carriage drawn by six horses, attendants in tow, and bearing a chest of jewels and gold coins. But then how would he know if she really loved him or if she was just overwhelmed with his splendor? Finally he came up with another solution.*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.sermonspice.com](http://www.sermonspice.com)

*He stripped off his royal robes, put on common dress, moved into the village, and got to know her without revealing his identity. As he lived among the people, the prince and the maiden became friends, shared each other's interests, and talked about their concerns. By and by the young lady grew to love him for who he was and because he first loved her.* <sup>2</sup>

1. This is much like the approach Jesus chose to take in coming to this world.
2. Because He became a simple man, many people had a hard time accepting that He was truly the Messiah.

D. Today's Question: *"Is Jesus Really the Messiah?"*

*If you're in Lake City, Fla., one of these days and happen to run into a 50-something fellow with a sandy moustache, a receding hairline, and aviator glasses, you may be in the presence of "I Am Who I Am". Really. But that's because Columbia County Court turned down his first request for a new name: God. The former Charles Haffey says he wanted a new identity because of lingering feelings of anxiety over his military service in Vietnam.* <sup>3</sup>

1. It would be easier on the world if we could simply accept the name "*Messiah*" as being authentic.
2. However, being the Messiah requires much more than a simple name change.
3. We have to dig much deeper to determine **Who** the Messiah is.

E. I have no problem posing today's question for 2 reasons:

1. Many people today are wondering that very thing – I like to "*scratch where they're itching!*"

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<sup>2</sup> *Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations and Quotes*, p. 483.

<sup>3</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, News Headlines, Oct. 15, 2002.

2. Being the Messiah is no small task – the Biblical requirements are nothing short of staggering!

F. Today we'll answer this question by looking at 2 things:<sup>4</sup>

1. Prophecies about the Messiah.
2. Miracles of Jesus Christ.

## **I. Prophecies about the Messiah.**

A. The volume of Messianic prophecy in the O.T. is staggering.

*The Old Testament contains over three hundred prophetic passages that refer to the first coming of Jesus the Messiah. Forty-eight of these prophecies refer specifically to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. All of them published during an eleven-hundred year period that ended four centuries before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.*<sup>5</sup>

1. In fact, this year I asked that the decorators place little scrolls on the Christmas trees in the Sanctuary.
2. If you were to look at each one of them as a separate specific prophecy about Christ, you can begin to see the enormity of fulfilling Messianic prophecy.

B. Even these trees do not do justice to the sheer numbers.

- Isaiah revealed the manner of the His birth (virgin)
- Micah pinpointed the place of his birth (Bethlehem)
- Genesis/Jeremiah tell of his ancestry (descendent of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, from the tribe of Judah, house of David).

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<sup>4</sup> Josh McDowell, *Beyond Belief to Convictions*, chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> Grant R. Jeffrey, *Jesus, the Great Debate* (Toronto, Ontario: Frontier Research Pub. Inc., 1999), p. 229.

- Psalms foretold his betrayal, false accusations, manner of death (pierced hands/feet, although crucifixion hadn't even been invented yet).
- Psalms tell of his resurrection. <sup>6</sup>

C. Why would God go to such great lengths to identify the Messiah?

1. Because ***“the central issue of Christianity is not the teachings of a man called Jesus but the person of Jesus Christ himself.”***<sup>7</sup>
2. You can't just know His stories, sermons, miracles ... you must KNOW HIM!

D. So, it's as if God said, *“I'm sending you a Messiah and this is exactly how you will identify Him.”*

1. He told the where, when, how of His birth but that wasn't all. He was just getting started (***From Tree***).
  - A messenger will announce his coming (Isa 35:5-6; Mt 3:1,2).
  - He will begin His ministry in Galilee (Isa 9:1; Mt 4:12-17).
  - He will teach in parables (Ps 78:2; Mt 13:34-35).
  - Perform many miracles (Is 35:5-6; Mt 9:35).
  - Ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech 9:9; Mt 21:2; Lu 19:35-37).
  - He will clean house in the temple (Ps 69:9; Mal 3:1; Jn 2:15-16).

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<sup>6</sup> Lee Strobel, *The Case of Christmas*, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> McDowell, p. 61.

E. If this isn't enough, the life of Jesus actually fulfilled 29 separate prophecies in one day:

1. Betrayed by a friend (Ps 41:9; Mt 26:49).
2. Price of betrayal will be 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12; Mt 26:15).
3. His betrayal money will be cast to the floor of the temple (Zech 11:13; Mt 27:5).
4. His betrayal money will be used to buy the potter's field (Zech 11:13; Mt 27:7).
5. Forsaken by His disciples (Zech 13:7; Mk 14:50).
6. Accused by false witnesses (Ps 35:11; Mt 26:59-60).
7. Silent before accusers (Isa 53:7; Mt 27:12).
8. Wounded/bruised (Isa 53:5; Mt 27:26).
9. Hated without cause (Ps 69:4; Jn 15:25).
10. Struck/spit on (Isa 50:6; Mt 26:67).
11. Mocked, ridiculed, rejected (Isa 53:3; Mt 27:27-31; Jn 7:5, 48).
12. Collapse from weakness (Ps 109:24-25; Lu 23:26).
13. Be taunted with specific words (Ps 22:6-8; Mt 27:39-43).
14. People will shake their heads at him (Ps 109:25; Mt 27:39).
15. People will stare at him (Ps 22:17; Lu 23:35).
16. Executed among sinners (Isa 53:12; Mt 27:38).
17. Hands/feet pierced (Ps 22:16; Lu 23:33).
18. Pray for his persecutors (Isa 53:12; Lu 23:34).
19. Friends/family will stand afar off and watch (Ps 38:11; Lu 23:49).
20. Garments will be divided and won by casting lots (Ps 22:18; Jn 19:23-24).
21. He will thirst (Ps 69:21; Jn 19:28).
22. Given gall and vinegar (Ps 69:21; Mt 27:34).
23. Commit himself to God (Ps 31:5; Lu 23:46).
24. Bones will not be broken (Ps 34:20; Jn 19:33).
25. Heart will rupture (Ps 22:14; Jn 19:34).
26. Side will be pierced (Zech 12:10; Jn 19:34).
27. Darkness will come over the land at midday (Amos 8:9; Mt 27:45).
28. Buried in rich man's tomb (Isa 53:9; Mt 27:57-60).

29. Will die 483 yrs after the declaration of Artaxerxes to rebuild the temple in 444 B.C. (Dan 9:24).

F. This is just a sampling of the numerous prophecies that Christ's life fulfilled.

*Professor Peter W. Stoner, in an analysis that was carefully reviewed and pronounced to be sound by the American Scientific Affiliation, states that the probability of the 8 prophecies being fulfilled in one person is 1 in  $10^{17}$  (that's 1 in 1,000,000,000,000,000,000).*

*If you were to take this many silver dollars and spread them across the state of Texas, they would cover the state 2 feet deep. Now, mark one coin with an "X". Blindfold yourself. Start walking. Go from El Paso to Amarillo; from the Rio Grande to the Gulf of Mexico. Stopping just one time and randomly picking up that one marked coin on the first try is the same as the likelihood of Jesus fulfilling just 8 of the more than 300 prophecies of Messiah. <sup>8</sup>*

1. But with each OT prophecy there is a NT record of its fulfillment.
2. The evidence seems rock solid to me.

### **There 3 common objections to this volume of factual data:<sup>9</sup>**

#### **1. The Coincidence Argument.**

- a. Some uninformed doubters actually claim that all of this evidence is simple coincidence.
- b. I refer you to Professor Stoner's research and the number I put on the screen (that number is millions of times greater

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<sup>8</sup> McDowell, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> Strobel, p. 81-84.



### 3. The Intentional Fulfillment Argument.

- a. Some skeptics believe that Jesus merely maneuvered his life to fulfill the prophecies.
- b. That act alone would prove his divinity!
- c. How could Jesus cause the religious leaders to offer 30 pieces of silver to Judas?
- d. How could he arrange his ancestry or the place of his birth?
- e. His method of execution, that soldiers would gamble for his clothing, his legs wouldn't be broken?

## II. One more factor proves He is Messiah to me – the Miracles.

A. Jesus knew that many people would doubt His Messiah-ship.

*John 10:25 NIV*

*The miracles I do ... speak for me,*

*John 10:38 NIV*

*Even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know ... that the Father is in me, and I in the Father*

B. Well, what about those miracles?

1. What do they tell us about Jesus?
2. I mean, many skillful people have fooled the masses by slight of hand.
3. It happened in Moses' day.

C. But the miracles Jesus performed were different.

1. They were not only real and powerful...
2. Each one revealed His purpose:

D. Jesus healed a blind man.

*On a sunny Sabbath afternoon, everyone is exiting the temple and Jesus is being accused of being possessed by a demon. As the religious pass by a blind beggar, Jesus stops to talk to him. They all return to ask Him, "Teacher, why was this man born blind? Was it his sins or his parents' sins?" Notice the tone of judgment in their accusing voices. But Jesus kneels down in the dirt next to the man, places his hand on his shoulder, "It was not b/c of his sins or his parents' sins...He was born blind so the power of God could be seen in him." A man who had never seen his mother's smile, sunlight, waves of wind blowing through the golden grain of a wheat field, never gazed on the face of a blushing girl in love...was about to SEE for the first time b/c Jesus touched Him!*

1. With Jesus there's no time for crass judgment.
2. Only healing.

E. Jesus cleansed the leper.

*Imagine a man sick with a disease so filthy no one would even touch him. He wasn't even allowed to socialize with others, not allowed to even see his own family and friends. From the day he was diagnosed with Leprosy, he hadn't kissed his children, hugged his wife, felt the simple embrace of a friend. BUT THEN HE MET JESUS! The incredible story here is not that Jesus healed him, for He healed every manner of disease (even death) but that the text actually says, "Jesus TOUCHED him." Jesus did the unthinkable. He was actually healing the man's psychological pain before he healed his physical condition.*

1. Again, here we find Jesus accepting people that were rejected by everyone else.

F. We could spend the day marveling at the miracles of Christ:

- Calmed the storm
- Mute spoke
- Fed 5,000 with 5 loaves/2 fish
- Cast out demons

- Walked on water
- Sight to blind
- Told the future
- Healed paralytic
- Rose the dead
- Healed incurable hemorrhaging
- Turned water to wine
- Made lame walk

G. Believe it or not, there is something that amazes me even more than these.

1. There was one miracle that He repeatedly performed.
2. It was His greatest.
3. It infuriated the religious leaders the most.

H. Jesus forgave sinners.

1. Stepped between murderers with stones and an adulterous woman.
2. Forgave the paralyzed man's sins before healing him.
3. Went out of His way to reach a crooked tax collector – actually called him to the ministry.
4. He even washed the feet of his betrayer, Judas.
5. And from the cross, He begged God to forgive His murderers.

### **Conclusion:**

- A. Why would a man forgive those who wanted no forgiveness?
1. Men who hated Him and killed Him?
  2. Because that's simply what Jesus was...

*Luke 19:10 RSV*

*"(I) came to seek and to save the lost."*

B. Many would love to have their sins forgiven.

1. But with all the skepticism in the world, they just can't bring themselves to believe.
2. This man's story sums up the skepticism many have of God.

A man went to a barbershop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed. As the barber began to work, they began to have a good conversation. They talked about so many things and various subjects. When they eventually touched on the subject of God, the barber said: "I don't believe that God exists."

"Why do you say that?" asked the customer.

"Well, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God doesn't exist. Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? IF God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain. I can't imagine a loving God who would allow all of these things."

That customer thought for a moment, but didn't respond b/c he didn't want to start an argument. The barber finished his job and the customer left the shop. Just after he left the barbershop, he saw a man in the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard. He looked dirty and unkempt. The customer turned back and entered the barber shop again and he said to the barber: "You know what? Barbers do not exist."

"How can you say that?" asked the barber. "I am here, and I am a barber. And I just worked on you!"

"No!" the customer exclaimed. "Barbers don't exist b/c if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside."

“Ah, but barbers DO exist! What happens is people don’t come to me.”

“Exactly!” affirmed the customer. “That’s the point!”

God, too, DOES exist! What happens is people don’t go to Him and do not look for Him. That’s why there’s so much pain and suffering in the world.

C. Jesus Christ, not only WAS the Messiah...He WAS, IS and IS TO COME!

1. He is here today to draw you to Himself.
2. He’s here to ease your suffering.
3. He’s here to forever change your life!